



The UNICEF Field Office in Sylhet provides hygiene kits by boat to vulnerable children and families who were affected by the heavy flash floods in northeastern Bangladesh in June 2022. The South Asia Regional Office surged technical experts to the area to accelerate the immediate response.

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Humanitarian Action for Children

South Asia Region

HIGHLIGHTS^{1,2}

- Well over 100 million people, including more than 50 million children³ are projected to need humanitarian assistance in South Asia due to climate-induced natural disasters, economic and nutrition crises, public health emergencies and complex political and refugee crises.
- UNICEF will continue supporting the efforts of governments in crisis-affected contexts to ensure children and adolescents, especially girls, and their caregivers are provided with life-saving health, nutrition, education, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.
- UNICEF will continue partnering with governments and communities to enhance their emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction capacities to ensure child-sensitive and gender-responsive humanitarian action. This includes building shock-responsive systems that can mitigate the growing impact of climate change throughout the region.
- UNICEF requires US\$21.3 million to support humanitarian action throughout the region. This includes US\$9.3 million to address the humanitarian needs of nearly 600,000 people in Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal; and \$12 million to strengthen preparedness for recurrent emergencies and to support emergency response.

IN NEED



500,800
people in need of health assistance⁴



585,000
people in need of nutrition assistance⁵



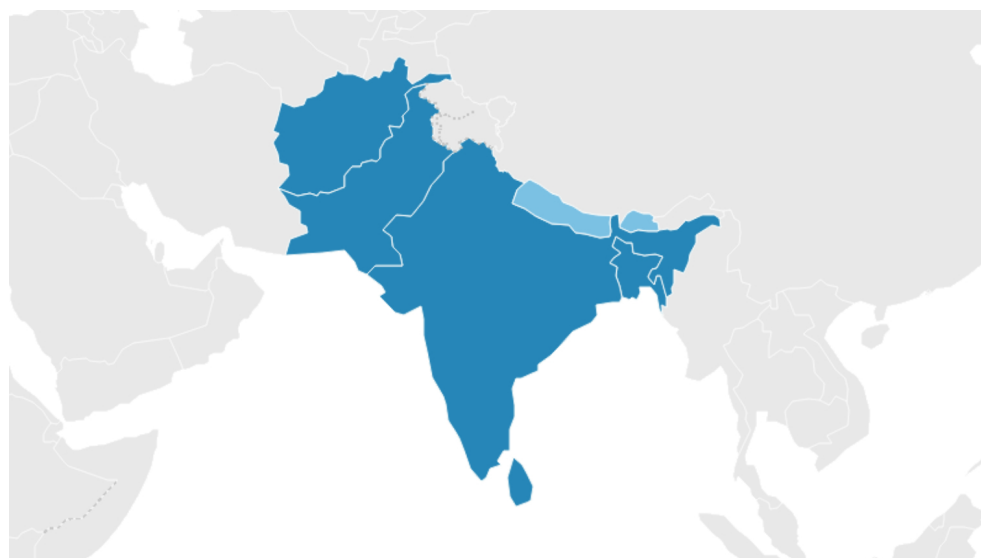
655,000
children in need of protection services⁶



364,000
children in need of education support⁷



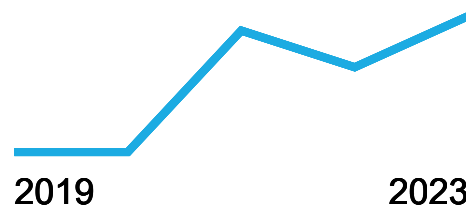
280,000
people lack access to safe water⁸



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$ 21.3 million



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

South Asia is home to more than 616 million children,¹⁰ many exposed to sudden-onset and protracted emergencies including floods, cyclones and earthquakes, along with challenging economic circumstances, food/nutrition crises and political turmoil. In 2022, more than 50 million children required humanitarian assistance.

Up to 71 million children in South Asia are exposed to five or more climate-related hazards,¹¹ which increasingly impacts their lives and livelihoods. Countries including Bangladesh and Pakistan experienced exceptional disasters in 2022. These kinds of situations will dramatically worsen in the decades to come and will lead to further breakdown of coping mechanisms.¹² In addition, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic crippled South Asia, and many countries are yet to recover from the subsequent severe socioeconomic challenges. Several countries are navigating rising inflation and facing difficulties financing fiscal and trade deficits,¹³ compromising the availability of basic services.

In Afghanistan, more than 24 million people, including 13 million children, need humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian situation is complex, driven by a political and economic crisis, drought, high food insecurity, eroded basic services and recurrent natural hazards. Bangladesh, India and Pakistan faced catastrophic floods that severely impacted the lives of nearly 42 million people and damaged more than 1 million homes. The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has contributed to more than 6.3 million people being moderately or severely acute food insecure. All told, 7.6 million children in South Asia suffer from severe wasting - half the global burden.⁹

The countries noted above have standalone appeals. However, several countries in the region also face persistent humanitarian needs. Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal, which are three countries covered under this regional appeal, are highly susceptible to natural hazards. For example, more than 500 disaster events occur annually in Nepal. And Maldives, with an elevation of less than 2 metres above sea level - one of the lowest-lying countries globally - is greatly threatened by rising sea levels, coastal storms and associated inundation.¹⁴ Bhutan is located in one of the most seismically active zones in the Himalayan belt and its risk level is further exacerbated by climate change.¹⁵ Overall, the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters poses critical threats to the well-being of nearly 1 million people (including 400,000 children) in Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal, putting their access to essential and life-saving health, nutrition, education, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services at risk.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

Given the multiple and diverse crises that occur in the region, UNICEF is focusing on an immediate and life-saving response in South Asia. To alleviate the suffering of children and families, multisectoral responses that include health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection and social protection (including humanitarian cash transfers), remain a priority. To facilitate timely, quality humanitarian response, the regional surge roster system has been reinforced and will deploy expert capacity to countries in crisis, when and where required. To mitigate the impact of disasters, UNICEF will focus on systems strengthening and building the resilience of communities faced with recurrent shocks. UNICEF will also prioritize adolescent and youth participation and engagement, gender and disability inclusion and social and behavioural change.

UNICEF's cluster and sector leadership roles, carried out in coordination with national and local stakeholders, will be enhanced as needed. In collaboration with partners, including Governments, UNICEF will also aim to meet its Grand Bargain commitments,¹⁶ promoting localization of humanitarian action, ensuring that accountability to affected populations is integrated into programming and strengthening capacities to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse.

UNICEF will further invest in child-centred disaster risk reduction and preparedness by working closely with regional and national authorities and stakeholders on risk analysis and joint contingency planning. Readiness to respond will be further enhanced through training and simulations guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

In Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal, UNICEF will focus on strengthening partner capacities, enhancing risk analysis and advocating for risk mitigation policies and integrated preparedness and response mechanisms, including the pre-positioning of essential supplies at national and subnational levels. In Nepal, UNICEF will continue to provide life-saving services targeting the most vulnerable and also fulfill its cluster lead and co-lead roles in nutrition, WASH and protection sectors and in the cash and accountability to affected populations working groups. The country offices will also engage with relevant authorities, organizations and communities - including young people - to enable more disaster- and climate-resilient programmes linking humanitarian and development activities.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Alok Kumar Ram, 16, and child club members discuss the seasonal hazard calendar in Harpur, Parsa District, Nepal. Based on this calendar, they inform community members on preparing for emergencies.

16-year-old Alok, who lives in Harpur, in Parsa District in southern Nepal, helps raise awareness in his community about preventing and responding to disasters. He is president of one of the area child clubs, an element of UNICEF's emergency preparedness and child-centred disaster risk reduction programme. Alok, who was trained in search-and-rescue and first aid, has prepared go-bags and lifejackets for those affected by weather-related hazards. He has advocated with the local government to identify and address disaster risks to better arm the public against such threats, and has also conducted campaigns to raise awareness about seasonal hazards. Alok hopes that more children around the country will gain the knowledge and opportunities that he has.

[Read more about this story here](#)

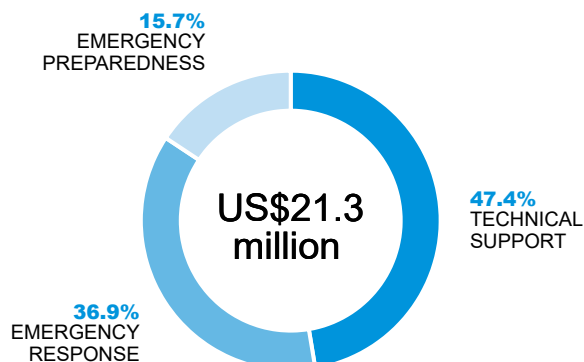
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2023

UNICEF is requesting US\$21.3 million to ensure adequate capacity to meet heightened emergency preparedness and response requirements in South Asia.

These funds will enable UNICEF to provide multisectoral technical support, oversight and quality assurance for ongoing preparedness and response interventions throughout the region. Funds will be utilized for regional technical support to scale up child-centred disaster risk reduction and risk analysis and knowledge management. They will also be used to address the specific needs of Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal in 2023. UNICEF requires \$9.3 million for these three countries to strengthen preparedness and response capacities in close collaboration with regional and national authorities.

Humanitarian funds channeled through the Regional Office will further be allocated to country offices to ensure humanitarian action priorities and gaps are addressed and allowing for immediate support at the onset of disasters. The funds are further needed to support country offices to prepare for and respond to multiple natural and human-caused shocks and hazards.

Without access to funds, UNICEF will be unable to prepare for and immediately provide support to humanitarian crises, and the pressing needs of many vulnerable children and women in this disaster-prone - yet resilient - region would remain unmet.



Sector	2023 requirements (US\$) ¹⁷
Emergency Preparedness	3,344,260 ¹⁸
Emergency Response	7,869,426 ¹⁹
Technical Support	10,094,020 ²⁰
Total	21,307,706

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ENDNOTES

1. This is the sum of people and children in need based on the UNICEF Humanitarian Appeals for Children appeals for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Regional Appeal, which includes Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal.
2. COVID-19 remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern as declared by the World Health Organization in January 2020. On 1 July 2022, UNICEF deactivated its Level 3 Sustained Phase for the global COVID-19 pandemic response. All activities related to COVID-19 pandemic response, including programme targets and funding requirements, have been shifted into regular development programming and operations. While UNICEF's Level 3 emergency response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic was deactivated, the organization is continuing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on children, their families and their communities and on the social systems they rely on.
3. In 2022, 123 million people - including 53 million children - were in need of humanitarian assistance in South Asia, based on inter-agency and government documents. This number is in line with the historic trend over past years - and is likely to increase due to climate change.
4. The numbers are broken down as follows: Bhutan (32,000); Maldives (50,000); and Nepal (418,800).
5. The numbers are broken down as follows: Bhutan (50,000); Maldives (35,000); and Nepal (500,000).
6. The numbers are broken down as follows: Bhutan (30,000); Maldives (25,000); and Nepal (600,000).
7. The numbers are broken down as follows: Bhutan (24,000); Maldives (25,000); and Nepal (315,000).
8. The numbers are broken down as follows: Bhutan (70,000); Maldives (30,000); and Nepal (150,000).
9. UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Levels and trends in child malnutrition: Key findings of the 2021 edition of the joint child malnutrition estimates, WHO, Geneva, 2021.
10. United Nations Statistics Division, 2020.
11. The number of children at risk was calculated from UNICEF Children Climate Risk Index Report, Aug 2021.
12. European Commission Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Center, INFORM collaboration, climate change results and data, available at <<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Climate-Change/Results-and-data>>.
13. World Bank Group, Reshaping Norms: A new way forward, South Asia Economic Focus (April), World Bank Group, Washington, DC., September 2022.
14. World Bank Group, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, available at <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/>.
15. Ibid.
16. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.
17. For 2023, the regional requirements do not include COVID-19-related needs, which have instead been integrated into longer-term development needs. Furthermore, country-related requirements have been integrated into emergency preparedness and response budgets, hence the increase in the funding requirements of these two line items.
18. The emergency preparedness budget line includes funding requirements for Bhutan (US\$685,000), Nepal (US\$1,459,930) and Maldives (US\$350,000) along with South Asia Regional Office technical support (US\$849,330) to build preparedness and disaster risk reduction capacity across country offices in the region and to set, maintain and train the surge roster for emergency preparedness.
19. The emergency response budget line includes funding requirements for Bhutan (US\$80,000) and Nepal (US\$6,702,220) and for the South Asia Regional Office (US\$1,087,206) to support quality and timely response scale-up; this includes technical support and strengthening the capacity of country offices on the Grand Bargain themes, with dedicated focus on the scale-up of humanitarian cash transfers and accountability to affected populations across the region.
20. Technical support: This funding requirement is for the South Asia Regional Office to ensure overall regional capacity in emergency response, preparedness and disaster risk reduction (without duplicating activities already covered in the emergency response and preparedness budget lines); to reinforce evaluations; and to enable country offices to support national efforts in achieving results at scale through innovative, integrated and multisectoral approaches.

