



Students raise their hands at the UNICEF-supported Fatah Girls School in Herat, Afghanistan. The school has 4,000 girls in attendance and is part of UNICEF's WASH in schools programme.

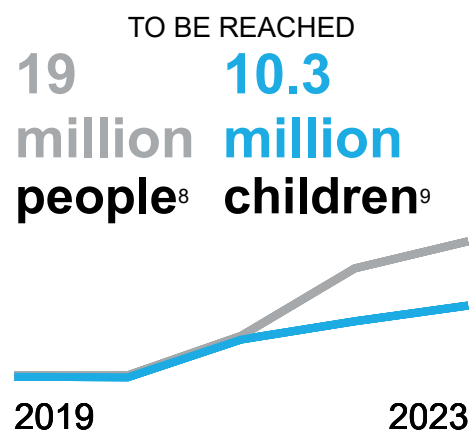
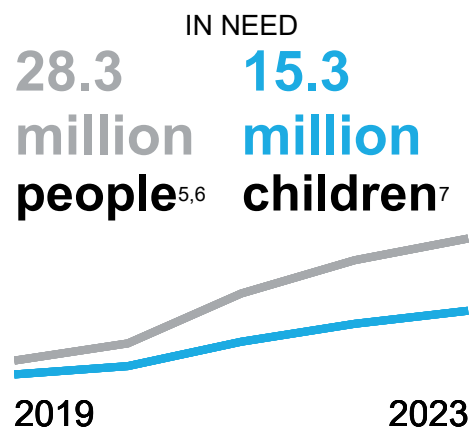
unicef   
for every child

## Humanitarian Action for Children

# Afghanistan

### HIGHLIGHTS<sup>1,2</sup>

- Afghanistan is experiencing unprecedented and rising humanitarian needs. Some 28.3 million people, more than 65 per cent of the population, are projected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023.<sup>3</sup>
- Afghan women and girls are facing a systematic rights crisis. Their exclusion from secondary education and the workforce - and the imposition of rules governing their daily lives - has significantly increased their protection risks. The impacts will be felt for generations to come.
- The economic crisis is expected to continue, with 64 per cent of households unable to meet their basic needs. This is coupled with a historic third La Niña drought, harsh winters and other climate-related risks. Vulnerable populations will be pushed to the brink.
- UNICEF will continue to prioritize life-saving activities in underserved areas with multifaceted needs. Interventions will focus on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, nutrition, education and child protection. The UNICEF response will include gender-based violence services and the use of cash-based assistance to respond to sudden-onset disasters, avert catastrophe and meet existing humanitarian needs.
- US\$1.65 billion is urgently needed to meet the humanitarian needs of 19 million people in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup>



### KEY PLANNED TARGETS



**19 million**

people accessing healthcare services through UNICEF-supported activities



**875,000**

children with severe wasting admitted for treatment



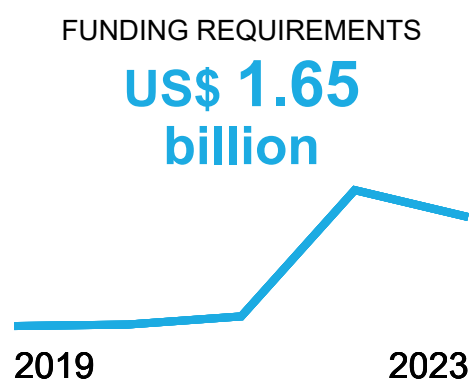
**3.9 million**

children/caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support



**9 million**

people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water



Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

More than more than 64 per cent of people in Afghanistan cannot meet their basic needs due to cascading crises that have shifted from conflict to economic shock, drought and a gender crisis.<sup>10</sup> By December 2022, per capita income in the country is expected to be one-third lower than in 2020.<sup>11</sup> The situation for women and girls has deteriorated: restrictions have created barriers to accessing services, curtailed basic freedoms and deprived many women of income-earning opportunities. The ban on girls' secondary education affects 1.1 million girls, creating significant learning and protection risks. This will impact generations to come.

Historic levels of aid in 2022 largely averted catastrophe. Needs have increased, though, due to economic sanctions, climate-related disasters and the significant reduction in development assistance. Nearly 20 million people are projected to be in crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity.<sup>12</sup> In 15 out of 34 provinces, severe wasting levels are above 3 per cent, with 875,000 children under age 5 requiring life-saving treatment for severe wasting.<sup>13</sup> Without scaled-up multisectoral interventions, the possibility of famine cannot be excluded.

WASH needs will increase with a third consecutive La Niña likely on the horizon. Sixty-four per cent of surveyed households are affected by drought, with 79 percent reporting lack of water and 51 percent reporting no access to improved latrines. outbreaks continue, among them an outbreak of diarrhoea that has sickened more than 2 million people.<sup>14</sup>

While the health system has narrowly avoided collapse, 13.3 million people have no access to health care, largely due to the lack of infrastructure, coupled with high costs. Facilities remain understaffed and under resourced and many are consistently short of medicines and supplies.<sup>15</sup> Approximately 8.7 million children need education support. Negative coping mechanisms are commonplace: 31 per cent of households report at least one child out of school,<sup>16</sup> and 18 per cent report sending children to work. In fact, more than 1 million children are estimated to be working.<sup>17</sup> Before August 2021, 9 out of 10 women were experiencing gender-based violence at some point in their lifetime; post-August 2021, support networks of shelters, legal mechanisms and medical treatment services have collapsed.<sup>18</sup>

Afghanistan is ranked number 5 of the countries that are most climate at-risk worldwide, with a higher warming rate than the global average.<sup>19</sup> Floods and other natural hazards affected more than 223,000 people in 2022 - double the five-year average.

The operating environment in Afghanistan remains highly complex. While physical access to people in need has largely improved, bureaucratic impediments, threats and intimidation of humanitarian workers and restrictions on female humanitarian workers have increased significantly, hindering the delivery of critical life-saving services. UNICEF continues to advocate for unimpeded and principled access to people in need.

## SECTOR NEEDS<sup>20</sup>



**7.2 million**  
people in need of  
nutrition assistance



**7.5 million**  
children/caregivers in  
need of protection  
services



**8.6 million**  
children in need of  
education support



**21.2 million**  
people are in need of  
WASH services

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



For Anar Gul, UNICEF-supported cash assistance means healthy food for her children, checkups at the local clinic and new school supplies for her daughter. "It is better to receive this assistance as cash," says Anar Gul, "because if we're given clothes, we may already have clothes to wear, but we might not have food to eat. Sometimes, we might be given food, but we have no shoes to walk in," she says.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Anar Gul, in Daikundi Province, is seven months pregnant. She recently received cash assistance from UNICEF to help her meet her basic needs and access critical health services.

UNICEF will continue to scale up life-saving humanitarian services in Afghanistan to meet unprecedented and growing needs, while ensuring critical basic services do not collapse. Emergency response interventions to acute needs will be prioritized while investing in nexus programming where feasible, particularly in drought-affected areas to reduce outbreaks and malnutrition. UNICEF's cluster leadership and extensive field presence through five zonal offices and eight outposts allows for a decentralized, targeted and rapid response. UNICEF will deliver a holistic, gender-sensitive, inclusive response to the most vulnerable people in all programme areas.

UNICEF will continue to scale up curative and preventive nutrition services countrywide, including community-based screening and infant and young child feeding counselling. UNICEF will invest in multisectoral cash-based interventions in areas with the highest levels of severe wasting and at risk for Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5, as well as cash assistance to families of children requiring inpatient treatment for severe wasting.<sup>24</sup>

Primary and secondary health-care services will be prioritized, including maintaining critical human resources, medical supplies and equipment. To respond in hard-to-reach and underserved areas, UNICEF will operate more than 200 mobile health and nutrition teams that also integrate psychosocial support services. UNICEF will expand cash-based programming to offset prohibitive costs in accessing life-saving services.

UNICEF will scale up WASH programming. This includes prioritizing drought-responsive water supply to improve resilience in an effort to prevent displacement and reduce malnutrition burdens. UNICEF will undertake WASH interventions in both rural and urban settings through monitoring ground water levels, repair/rehabilitation of existing systems. The goal is to address the growing needs, prevent water systems collapse and reduce disease outbreaks.

UNICEF will continue to advocate for the reopening of secondary schools for girls. UNICEF will also reach vulnerable and shock-affected children through community-based education and both accelerated and temporary learning centres. The most at-risk public schools will be provided with critical support through school environment improvements, basic supplies and teacher training, particularly for female teachers.

To respond to growing protection needs, UNICEF will continue to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to vulnerable children, case management for unaccompanied and separated children, gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation and response as well as targeted strengthening of the social workforce to improve the quality of care services. UNICEF will also expand work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse to ensure functional safe and accessible reporting mechanisms are in place.

UNICEF will continue to scale up the use of humanitarian cash transfers to respond rapidly to sudden-onset disasters, mitigate the impact of harsh winters and support access to life-saving services. Targeted cash-based social assistance will be used to reduce vulnerabilities that lead to negative coping strategies in high-risk areas. Outbreak preparedness and response, including the prepositioning of critical supplies, will be prioritized to ensure an integrated response.



## Health

- **2,050,000** children vaccinated against measles<sup>25</sup>
- **19,000,000** people accessing healthcare services through UNICEF-supported activities<sup>26</sup>



## Nutrition

- **875,000** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **6,975,000** children 6-59 months screened for wasting
- **2,345,000** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



## Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **3,875,000** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- **550,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **1,500,000** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- **3,900,000** children and caregivers provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions



## Education

- **600,000** vulnerable school-aged children (girls and boys) reached through community-based education initiatives
- **5,000,000** children in public education (including shock affected/vulnerable girls and boys) reached with emergency education support



## Water, sanitation and hygiene<sup>27</sup>

- **9,000,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **3,000,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies



## Social protection<sup>28</sup>

- **86,500** households reached with UNICEF-funded social assistance



## Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)

- **9,000,000** people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services
- **100,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms
- **72,300** women and girls accessing lifesaving services through safe spaces



## Emergency preparedness and response

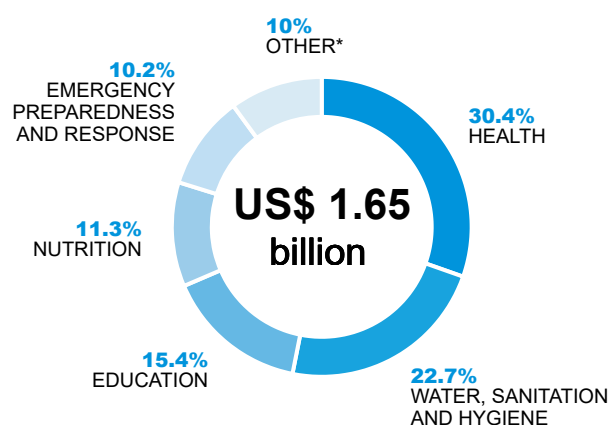
- **115,000** households reached with cash assistance to meet winter needs

## FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2023

UNICEF is requesting US\$1.65 billion for 2023 to meet the critical humanitarian needs of 19 million people in Afghanistan, including 10.3 million children. With needs increasing in all UNICEF programme areas of intervention, it is crucial to provide this support to alleviate acute suffering and preventable deaths. While needs are high and growing, funding requirements are reduced from the 2022 requirement of US\$2 billion due to better costing methodologies, alternative response strategies and implementation measures adopted by UNICEF. The 2023 funding requirement takes into account global inflation, household purchasing power, global and regional shocks and such context-specific factors as the requirement that female humanitarian workers be accompanied by a Maharam (male family member).

Funding support will help 9 million people gain access to safe water, provide more than 800,000 people with life-saving support during harsh winters and enable 600,000 children to attend community-based education classes. Funding will also enable UNICEF to respond to sudden-onset disasters in a rapid and dignified manner and provide targeted multisectoral support to areas that are high risk for famine. Without sufficient, flexible and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the country's continuing crises, including climate-related emergencies. Children in Afghanistan will continue to live in a steady state of threats to their rights without the continuation of critical life-saving funding and the principled humanitarian response it enables.

This 2023 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal is aligned with the 2023 Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan and other inter-agency planning documents. It prioritizes the most vulnerable children and families with multisectoral support to maintain access to life-saving services, reduce morbidity and enable children to access education and protective services.



Sector	2023 requirements (US\$)
Health	502,063,795 <sup>29</sup>
Nutrition	185,999,936
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	92,127,558
Education	254,745,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	375,724,564 <sup>30</sup>
Social protection	42,330,155
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	31,450,000
Emergency preparedness and response	167,693,585 <sup>31</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,652,134,593</b>

\*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Child protection, GBViE and PSEA (5.6%), Social protection (2.6%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (1.9%).

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## ENDNOTES

1. 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.
2. UNICEF activated its Corporate Emergency Level 3 Scale-up Procedure for Afghanistan for the following period: 8 September 2021 to 31 December 2022. UNICEF Emergency Procedures are activated to ensure a timely and effective response to all crises. The emergency procedures provide a tailored package of mandatory actions and simplifications required for all offices responding to Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1 humanitarian situations.
3. United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Afghanistan: 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (draft).
4. The 2023 funding requirement decreased compared to the 2022 requirement of \$2 billion due to improved costing methodologies, alternative response strategies and implementation measures adopted by UNICEF.
5. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized.
6. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
7. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized. According to the draft 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview, children represent 54 per cent of the population.
8. Overall targets are calculated based on people accessing primary and secondary health-care services, both fixed and mobile facilities, to avoid duplication with other sectors. This includes 10,276,703 children (4,948,042 girls and 5,328,661 boys), 4,377,114 women and 1,503,444 people with disabilities, including 811,860 children with disabilities.
9. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized. According to the draft 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview, children represent 54 per cent of the population.
10. World Bank Group, Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey, Round 1, World Bank Group, Washington, DC, March 2022, available at <<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-welfare-monitoring-survey-round-1-march-2022-enfarsips>>.
11. World Bank Group, Afghanistan Development Update April 2022: Towards stabilization and recovery, World Bank Group, April 2022.
12. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (November 2022-March 2023), unpublished, September 2022.
13. SMART surveys, 2022.
14. World Health Organization (WHO), Afghanistan: Infectious disease outbreaks situation report - Epidemiological week 39, no. 60 (25 September - 1 October), WHO.
15. REACH, Annual Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA 2022), October 2022, available at <<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/annual-whole-afghanistan-assessment-woaa-2022-october-2022>>.
16. Ibid.
17. Save the Children, "A fifth of starving families sending children to work as incomes plummet in past six months", press release, Kabul, 14 February 2022, available at <<https://www.savethechildren.net/news/afghanistan-fifth-starving-families-sending-children-work-incomes-plummet-past-six-months>>.
18. Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Death in slow motion - Women and girls under Taliban rule, Amnesty International, London, 2022, available at <[www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5685/2022/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5685/2022/en/)>.
19. World Bank Group, Afghanistan Development Update October 2022: Adjusting to the new realities, World Bank Group, October 2022.
20. OCHA, 2023 Global Humanitarian Needs Overview (draft).
21. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster coordination for the WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. All cluster coordinators costs are included in sectoral programme budgets.
22. This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.
23. 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.
24. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5 is characterized as occurring when households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs, even after full employment of coping strategies. See: <[www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/IPC\\_Famine\\_Factsheet\\_2020Nov.pdf](http://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/IPC_Famine_Factsheet_2020Nov.pdf)>.
25. The target has decreased as a priority in 2023 compared with 2022 and will focus on routine immunization and any localized outbreaks that occur.
26. Health-care services consist of both primary and secondary health care.
27. The WASH targets have been lowered in 2023 compared with 2022 due to an expected increase in partner capacity within the WASH Cluster, and also because of challenges within the operating environment that impact delivering at scale.
28. For 2023, the cash based assistance target has been divided between Social Protection, which will cover regular cash transfers, and Emergency preparedness and response, which covers cash assistance for households affected by extreme winter and sudden onset-disasters. This provides greater visibility to the winter response component. The combined target (201,500) is an increase compared to the 2022 cash assistance target that was entirely under Social Protection.
29. Funding requirements include sustaining access to life-saving primary and secondary health care in over 2000 facilities (increase from over 1000 in 2022) including mobile and static centres, equipment, immunization, medical supplies, and human resources. Costs also include antenatal care services and polio vaccination campaigns.
30. The funding requirement for WASH is impacted by the heavy infrastructure costs which are high, particularly as UNICEF is expanding its programming in both rural and urban settings. In terms of the calculations for provision of safe water, this was calculated at US\$35 per person for water which is the standard cost of the cluster.
31. This line item includes costs for cluster coordination, winter cash assistance, emergency stocks and rapid response.