



Children attend a 'Welcome to School' ceremony at School #88 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, where UNICEF supports provision of hygiene equipment and supplies as well as WASH services.

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Humanitarian Action for Children

Europe and Central Asia Region

HIGHLIGHTS¹

- Multiple hazards - earthquakes, wildfires, floods, conflict and displacement - pose significant risks to children and families in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Earthquakes in Central Asia could affect up to 500,000 people in urban centres.² In 2022, floods, civil unrest and border conflict affected nearly 17,000 people and disrupted school for nearly 500,000 children.³
- The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the war in Ukraine have negatively impacted child poverty, income inequality, livelihoods, fuel availability and food security. This could trigger regional humanitarian consequences related to increased poverty, reduced social cohesion and an increased inflow of migrants and refugees.
- UNICEF continues to invest in enhancing the emergency preparedness, response and disaster risk reduction capacities of governments and partners for effective, child-responsive and climate adaptive humanitarian action and risk mitigation.
- UNICEF requires US\$7.7 million to reduce risks and impact of humanitarian crises on children and their families, address their needs and build their resilience to emergencies.

IN NEED



7.5 million children exposed to riverine floods in the region⁴



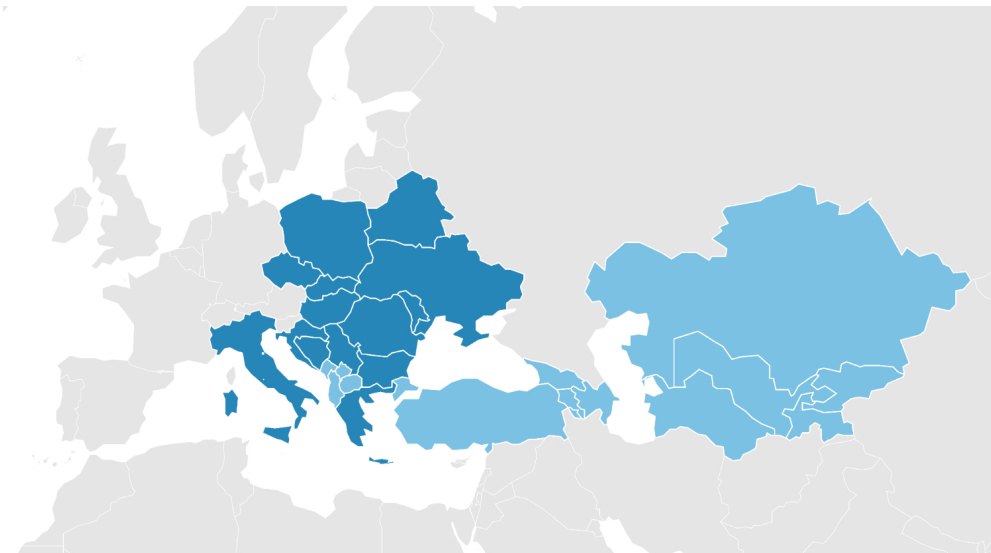
3.7 million people are prone to high earthquake risk⁵



32 million children are highly exposed to water scarcity⁶



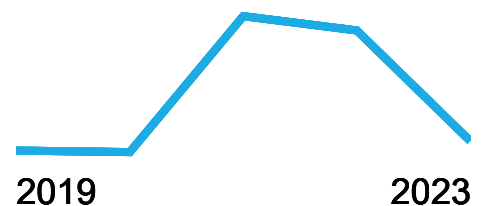
115,460 people internally displaced in 2021⁷



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\$ 7.7 million



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Children and families throughout Europe and Central Asia are exposed to multiple risks, including civil unrest, disease outbreaks and natural hazards. Countries in Central Asia, South Caucasus and the Western Balkans are particularly prone to major earthquakes. Small-scale disasters including floods, landslides, wildfires and droughts pose additional threats regionwide. In 2022, for example, floods affected nearly 1,000 households in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.¹¹ Impacts of disasters are being exacerbated by climate change and urbanization, becoming more frequent and intense. Already, 41.9 million children (57 per cent of the region's children) are exposed to more than six heatwaves per year, 32.4 million children (49 per cent of children) to water scarcity and 7.5 million children (10 per cent of children) to riverine floods.¹⁰ Despite countries' commitments to disaster risk management, vulnerable people remain at risk of loss of lives and livelihood. Political instability, civil unrest and displacement impact families. In 2022, protests in Kazakhstan disrupted education for at least 493,448 children and put 3,000 families⁹ already living under the poverty line at risk, while border conflicts affected 8,510 people in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.¹² The war in Ukraine continues to impact political and socioeconomic conditions regionwide, increasing prices for oil, gas and food, causing influxes of refugees and deepening political polarization. Additional threats of vaccine-preventable diseases and cross-border epidemics, due to the interruption of services during the COVID-19 pandemic and because of large movements of populations,⁸ impact children's lives and development.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY¹³

In 2023, UNICEF will continue working with country offices, governments and partners to enhance emergency preparedness and response capacities, provide technical assistance and strengthen systems for inclusive, child-sensitive humanitarian action. The focus will be on scaling up national preparedness for sudden- and slow-onset emergencies, including disasters triggered by natural and climate-induced hazards, conflict, displacements and epidemics/pandemics; and on delivering life-saving interventions in health, nutrition, education, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, social protection and social and behavioural change. UNICEF will work with authorities and communities to enhance local capacities¹⁴ on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, mitigate the impacts of disasters, strengthen risk-informed programming and reinforce linkages between humanitarian and development programmes. In Central Asia and other subregions, UNICEF will sustain its partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, further building the capacities of government and front-line actors through pre-positioning supplies; strengthening shock responsive social protection systems (including for cash programmes); improving capacities in accountability to affected populations and in WASH and gender in emergencies programming; and promoting school safety and youth engagement. Inter-agency collaboration on preparedness and resilience will continue through co-facilitation of the regional Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative. Regional surge mechanisms, supply procurement support and early action emergency funds will enable immediate response to sudden-onset disasters. Interventions will connect resilience and humanitarian efforts within the broader programme areas, integrating gender-based violence risk mitigation, addressing the needs of adolescents, women, girls and children with disabilities in humanitarian settings and enhancing knowledge management and sharing.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



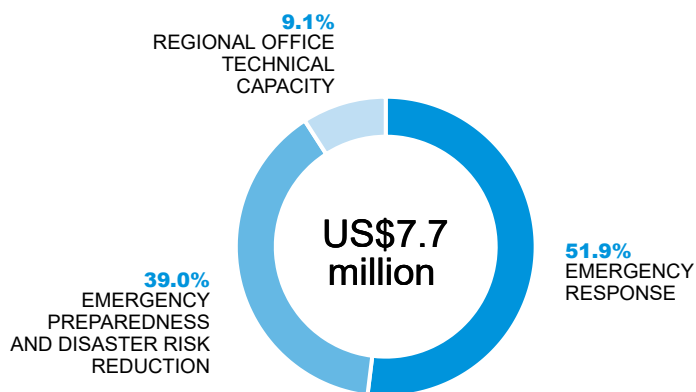
After a decade without a case of polio in Tajikistan, 34 children were paralysed by a new and sudden outbreak that began in early 2021. UNICEF, as a partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, responded quickly, and 4.6 million doses of the oral polio vaccine were shipped to Tajikistan. UNICEF worked alongside the Government to launch a mass immunization campaign. Two-year-old twin sisters Fotima and Zuhro are among the children who received their polio vaccines during this immunization campaign, which had reached around 1.4 million children by July 2022.

[**Read more about this story here**](#)

Twin sisters Zuhro and Fotima, 2, at their home in the village of Burmai Poyon, Tajikistan. The twins received polio vaccine during a nationwide immunization campaign.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2023

In 2023, UNICEF is appealing for US\$7.7 million to address the humanitarian needs of children and their families in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Funding will be instrumental in enabling UNICEF and partners to respond to multiple ongoing and emerging disasters and reduce the impacts of emergencies on vulnerable children and families. This will be done by improving preparedness and disaster management capacities at local, national and regional levels, promoting risk-informed programming, strengthening partnerships and firming up linkages between humanitarian and development programmes. The funding will also enable leveraging early action mechanisms for emerging needs in countries not included in stand-alone or inter-agency humanitarian response appeals. Without these funds, children in the region will suffer greater exposure to the impacts of emergencies and limited access to services for health, WASH, education, child protection and gender-based violence. This could potentially cause irreparable and negative consequences to their physical and mental well-being. Flexible contributions will continue to enable UNICEF and partners to promptly respond to uphold the rights of children and families affected by ongoing and emerging crises in the region.



Sector	2023 requirements (US\$) ¹⁵
Emergency Response	4,000,000
Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction	3,000,000
Regional Office Technical Capacity	700,000
Total	7,700,000

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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 estimate, based on the potential impact in Ashgabat, Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe and Tashkent of a magnitude 9.0 earthquake. Sources: Thurman, Michael, Natural Disaster Risks in Central Asia: A synthesis, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2011; Geohazards International, Lessons for Central Asia from Armenia and Sakhalin: Strategies for urban earthquake risk management for the Central Asian republics, Stanford, Geohazards International, 1997; and the INFORM Risk Index (2023), in which Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan score between 8 and 9 (out of 10) for earthquake risk.
3. Numbers are based on UNICEF country office assessments during the emergencies, provided by Kazakhstan (January 2022), Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (September 2022) and Uzbekistan (April 2022).
4. According to UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index, UNICEF, New York, August 2021, available at <<https://data.unicef.org/resources/childrens-climate-risk-index-report/>>.
5. UNICEF estimate based on country-specific inter-agency contingency plans for earthquakes, 2017-2019, Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee Contingency Plan for Earthquake for Central Asia and South Caucasus, 2016; Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Risk Profiles, Turkmenistan, 2015; and country multiple indicator cluster surveys for 2018 and 2019.
6. UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index.
7. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, displacement data, 2021.
8. Ukraine had low vaccination rates for measles and polio before the war, while there has been a cholera outbreak confirmed in the Syrian Arab Republic.
9. Data provided by the Government of Kazakhstan as of January 2022, in UNICEF, Kazakhstan Humanitarian Situation Report, 15 January 2022, available at <www.unicef.org/documents/kazakhstan-humanitarian-situation-report-15-january-2022>.
10. UNICEF, The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index.
11. Numbers are based on UNICEF country office assessments during the emergencies in April, May and June 2022.
12. Numbers based UNICEF country assessments during response to emergencies (September 2022).
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. For 2023, regional humanitarian requirements exclude coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic-related interventions, because these have been integrated instead into longer-term development needs and regular programmes. Furthermore, the country-related requirements have been integrated into emergency preparedness and response budgets, hence the increase in the funding ask of these two budgets.