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Humanitarian Action for Children

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East Asia and the Pacific

East Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster-stricken region in the world.¹ In 2016, disasters affected more than 86 million people in the region, compared with 40 million people in 2015.² In February 2018, Papua New Guinea was struck by a 7.5 magnitude earthquake which caused devastating landslides and widespread destruction. Some 270,000 people, including 125,000 children, are in need of immediate life-saving assistance.³ Population growth, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation and other factors continue to accelerate and exacerbate hazard trends. In July 2018, a dam collapsed following a typhoon and heavy rains in Lao PDR destroyed 13 villages and displaced several thousand people. Hazards associated with climate change are increasing in frequency and severity and leading to extreme weather events, drought and frequent floods/landslides. The recurrent typhoons in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Philippines, Viet Nam and the Pacific sub-region continue to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, pose new health risks and challenge the establishment and delivery of quality infrastructure and basic services. Internal armed conflicts and ethnic strife, particularly in Myanmar and the Philippines, led to the internal and cross-border displacement and mass migration of more than 1 million people, more than 55 per cent of whom are children and adolescents.⁴ The tense political situation and recent United Nations sanctions have negatively impacted the well-being of children in the DPRK, who were already experiencing an acute nutritional crisis. The growth of populations and infrastructure in hazardous coastal areas, which are becoming disaster hotspots, also represents a key challenge.

Regional humanitarian strategy

UNICEF's East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office will continue to strengthen regional capacities for preparedness and humanitarian response; expand sustainable access to improved nutrition, health, water, sanitation, education and child protection services; and foster social cohesion for greater resilience. The Regional Office will support country cooperation by providing technical support to national stakeholders and strengthening systems and institutions to facilitate quality assurance and standard setting that will improve the delivery of humanitarian action for children. Regional partners and country offices will be supported to contribute to regional and national policies and systems and make these inclusive and child-sensitive. The Regional Office will also work with country offices to strengthen government capacities for child-sensitive risk assessment and planning that supports shock-resistant development interventions and longer-term approaches. Continuing contributions to the regional partnerships with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition will support effective action for children that addresses climate change, resilience building and disaster risk reduction. Knowledge management will be strengthened through research, studies and the documentation of good practices and lessons learned to generate evidence and facilitate greater predictability and accountability in humanitarian response in the context of a changing region. The Regional Office will continue to foster innovation and build country capacities to implement emerging humanitarian response modalities, such as cash transfers in emergencies, the provision of quality health services to reduce the impact of air pollution on child health, and engagement with children, including children with disabilities and adolescents. Given the increasing government capacities for emergency response in the region, the Regional Office will work with country offices to carry out relief efforts through regional mechanisms that draw on country expertise and pool resources to provide surge support. The Regional Office will also invest in its own capacity to cover all facets of its humanitarian-development programming, in line with its child rights mandate.

Results from 2018

As of 31 July 2018, funds received have enabled effective regional support for humanitarian response and enhanced preparedness/disaster risk reduction across the region. This includes the provision of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection and education interventions in response to the earthquakes in Papua New Guinea, the dam collapse in Lao PDR and flooding in Mongolia. With regional support, all 14 country offices have significantly strengthened their emergency preparedness capabilities through implementation of new UNICEF emergency preparedness tools, including on shock-responsive social protection and humanitarian cash transfers, particularly in Myanmar, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Cambodia. In addition, Vietnam and Timor-Leste undertook capacity building initiatives to improve risk-informed programming and DRR interventions. Additionally, an after-action review was conducted in Papua New Guinea in June to strengthen knowledge management for humanitarian action.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

On 26 February 2018, Papua New Guinea was struck by a 7.5 magnitude earthquake, which was followed by hundreds more quakes and tremors. These caused devastating destruction across the four provinces of Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Province and Enga. More than 100 people were killed and many more injured. Some 270,000 people, including 125,000 children, were estimated to be in need of immediate life-saving assistance as they lost access to clean water sources, health facilities, their homes and gardens that they relied on for food.⁵ The emergency situation evolved into a complex emergency, with aftershocks continuing through July 2018 causing more damage, anxiety and stress. In addition, outbreaks of violence and armed conflict in both Hela and Southern Highlands led to the declaration of a second, overlapping State of Emergency. A third State of Emergency for Public Health was declared in early July 2018 due to confirmed cases of polio for the first time in 18 years in the country.

Humanitarian Strategy

The inter-agency strategic objectives agreed by the Disaster Management Team (DMT) for earthquake response included: (i) provision of life-saving assistance to affected populations and re-establishment of basic services; (ii) restoration of livelihoods and self-reliance; and (iii) provision of safety and protection for vulnerable people, including children and women. Working through national and provincial governments, with local faith-based organizations, and in close collaboration with other UN Agencies, UNICEF adapted its original emergency response strategy to the complex emergency situation and the additional needs of women and children arising from the outbreak of violence and the health emergency declaration. The focus remains on life-saving assistance in health and nutrition, access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education, children's access to safe learning spaces and getting back to school, providing wider forms of psychosocial support and protective information and referrals. UNICEF has expanded to more locations where needs have been assessed as critical, while being limited to deferred or remote programming through partners in some areas which are subject to serious prevalence of armed conflict.

2018 Humanitarian Results

Since February 2018, UNICEF's response to earthquakes in the Highlands Region has included integrated maternal and child health campaigns that have thus far reached over 27,000 children with measles and rubella vaccinations and over 23,000 children with micro-nutrient powder. More than 31,000 women have received tetanus vaccinations. Other services include the detection and treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition, de-worming and counseling. An integrated education and child protection campaign has brought child friendly spaces and temporary learning safe spaces to over 5,500 children and is poised to scale up in the next few months. WASH services were initially brought to displaced people and subsequently were integrated into both the health and nutrition campaigns and at schools and child friendly spaces. Thus far more than 64,000 people have been given access to safe drinking water. In close cooperation with WHO and other global polio eradication partners, UNICEF is supporting the Government to respond to the polio outbreak. UNICEF is procuring over a million oral polio vaccines, supporting micro-planning, social mobilization, and in high-risk areas, an integrated earthquake/polio response approach. Thus far, in the first of four vaccination rounds, some 306,000 children have been vaccinated.

2018 PNG Programme Targets

	UNICEF 2018 Target	UNICEF 2018 Results
NUTRITION		
Children < 5 years old with acute malnutrition admitted into therapeutic feeding programmes	850	650
Children 6 to 59 months old receiving micronutrient powder	32,000	23,581
Children 6 to 59 months old receiving Vitamin A	47,617	23,305
Children 12 months to 59 months receiving de-worming tablets	32,000	22,396
Number of pregnant and lactating women counselled on infant and young child feeding	30,000	31,251
HEALTH		
Children 0 to 59 months receiving pentavalent vaccination (any dose)	15,000	11,710
Children 6 months to 59 months receiving measles-rubella vaccination	40,000	27,050
Children 0 to 59 months old receiving polio vaccination	1,000,000	306,000
Women of reproductive age receiving tetanus vaccinations	30,000	28,855
WASH		
People who have access to safe drinking water	75,000	64,017
Girls and boys with access to repaired, improved latrines	15,000	11,413
People who received information on good hygiene practices	70,000	56,813
CHILD PROTECTION		
Children and adolescents reached with psycho-social support services	15,000	5,501
Number of children and adults reached with violence prevention messages	16,000	11,809
EDUCATION		
Children (3-14 years old) who are enrolled in non-formal or formal education, including early learning	10,000	3,914
Teachers provided with teaching kits, supplies for temporary learning spaces and training support	300	306

Funding requirements

EAPRO is requesting US\$20,012,000 for regional and country-level humanitarian activities to support response and strengthen emergency preparedness, and advance disaster risk reduction interventions that will contribute to resilience in East Asia and the Pacific. The funding will allow the Regional Office to continue to support efforts to strengthen the technical and cooperation capacities of country offices and their national partners. It will also allow to respond to the humanitarian needs in small and medium-scale emergencies that may not benefit from inter-agency appeals. The budgeted amount includes the additional US\$13,700,000 for UNICEF's response to the earthquake in Papua New Guinea.

As of August 2018, UNICEF PNG has raised a total of US\$3.65 million in emergency funding. In addition to this funding, and in an effort to ensure a timely response and scale up of UNICEF's humanitarian assistance, UNICEF advanced a loan of US\$1.5 million to the Country Office using the internal UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) mechanism. Funding was also made available from global and regional thematic funds. From the development side, Education Cannot Wait contributed US\$1.5 million to support UNICEF's education work as part of the response.

East Asia/Pacific Region	2018 Requirement (US\$)	Funds Available (US\$)	Funding Gap	
			US\$	%
Emergency Response Support	5,400,000	2,093,391	3,306,609	61
Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Risk Reduction	519,000	353,000	166,000	32
Regional Office technical capacity	393,000	140,000	253,000	64
Total	6,312,000	2,586,391	3,725,609	59

Papua New Guinea	Initial 2018 Requirement (US\$)	Revised 2018 Requirement (US\$)	Funds Available (US\$)	Funding Gap	
				US\$	%
Nutrition	2,197,958	3,000,000	1,546,123	1,453,877	48
Health	2,043,256	3,000,000	820,178	2,179,822	73
WASH	3,496,000	3,200,000	720,314	2,479,686	77
Child Protection	2,530,000	2,000,000	377,978	1,622,022	81
Education	3,523,360	2,500,000	182,535	2,317,465	93
Total	13,790,574	13,700,000	3,647,128	10,052,872	73

¹ The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2017

² The International Disaster Database, 2017

³ PNG Highlands Earthquake Disaster Management Team (DMT) Response Plan, March 2018

⁴ United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, 2017

⁵ PNG Highlands Earthquake Disaster Management Team (DMT) Response Plan, March 2018

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