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# Humanitarian Action for Children

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## East Asia and the Pacific

East Asia and the Pacific, which is home to 70 per cent of people affected by disasters globally,<sup>1</sup> is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Climate change, rapid urbanization, migration and population growth have deepened the risks to the most vulnerable communities. From January to August 2019, 44 major emergency events<sup>2</sup> were recorded in the region, 80 per cent of which were the result of extreme weather events that developed into floods/landslides, storms, epidemics, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g., measles, polio, etc.), vector-borne diseases, drought and snowstorms. Indonesia, the Pacific Islands, the Philippines and Timor-Leste are situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire, which is at high risk of earthquakes and tsunamis. In addition, protracted crises due to unresolved conflict and ethnic strife in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines continue to affect the lives of children and their families. In 2018, over 9.3 million people were internally displaced in East Asia, including 236,000 people internally displaced due to conflict in Myanmar and the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> This accounts for one third of new displacements globally<sup>4</sup> and the trend is likely to increase. Crises in the region also generate the highest number of internally displaced persons associated with natural hazards, and this trend is increasing with the adverse impacts of climate change. There are also growing climate risks, including floods, drought, extreme weather (e.g., hurricanes and cyclones, torrential rains, storm surges, sand or dust storms, heatwaves, wildfires and cold spells). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific reports that these climate-induced events are having “threat multiplying” impacts, not just on economies and populations, but also on national security concerns, conflict, political tension, displacement of people across borders and internally, and the transboundary sharing of scarce natural resources.<sup>5</sup>

### Regional humanitarian strategy

The UNICEF humanitarian strategy in East Asia and the Pacific focuses on seven priorities: 1) strengthening capacities at the country and regional levels to effectively respond to emergencies, including through country office preparedness and response planning, training and simulations, and the expansion of the regional standby emergency deployment roster; 2) providing technical expertise to national actors to provide child-sensitive and inclusive humanitarian action; 3) strengthening risk-informed programming for shocks and stresses by bridging humanitarian action and development programmes, including expanding inclusive shock-responsive social protection activities, promoting the use of cash transfers and safe school initiatives, integrating risk reduction strategies into development plans, and tackling the underlying threat of climate change; 4) strengthening the integration of cross-sectoral programmes to address the needs of children with disabilities, adolescents, women and girls, including preventing gender-based violence in humanitarian settings and upholding UNICEF's commitments on accountability to affected populations and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in emergencies; 5) fostering regional partnerships with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition to ensure effective disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action for children; 6) working towards securing humanitarian access for children in hard-to-reach and/or remote areas; and 7) strengthening knowledge management to support greater predictability and accountability in humanitarian settings and expand humanitarian innovations. Given that regional and national capacities for disaster risk management are improving, albeit at very different paces among countries, UNICEF is increasingly shifting its emphasis from direct response to building national and local government capacities for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. In most cases, however, UNICEF still plans to maintain its internal readiness to respond to emergencies where and when needed.

### Results from 2019

As of 31 August 2019, UNICEF had US\$19.8 million<sup>6</sup> available against the US\$22.4 million appeal (88 per cent funded).<sup>7</sup> This total includes those funds received for the earthquake response in Sulawesi, Indonesia, where some 1.7 million children were vaccinated, over 205,000 people gained access to safe drinking water and more than 25,000 and 58,000 children received psychological and education support, respectively.<sup>8</sup> The UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office supported the responses in Indonesia and Myanmar through regional deployments, technical assistance and the provision of financial support. In addition, emergency preparedness in the Pacific Region was enhanced through the establishment of a new logistics hub with pre-positioned emergency supplies in Brisbane, Australia, which will also benefit Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste; and the provision of in-country training and technical support to eight country offices – the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. The Regional Rapid Response Roster for emergency surge support was revamped, increasing the availability of experts in all UNICEF functional areas for rapid deployment. Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam received technical and financial support from the Regional Office, as well as from the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme, to conduct policy assessments and develop implementation plans to scale up national shock-responsive social protection systems. The regional emergency network meeting contributed to building the capacities of 17 emergency specialists and focal points from 13 country offices in the region, with a focus on disability programming in humanitarian action. The regional emergency technical team and regional emergency management team were established in February 2019, strengthening regional preparedness and providing coordinated support to country offices. UNICEF also provided senior management and country offices with security analysis of events with humanitarian implications.

## Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$8.75 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children affected by emergencies in East Asia and the Pacific. This funding will allow UNICEF to support responses to small- and medium-scale emergencies that may not benefit from inter-agency appeals; build strategic partnerships for humanitarian action; respond to anticipated humanitarian needs generated by slow- and sudden-onset disasters, including public health emergencies; strengthen national and sub-national emergency preparedness and response capacities; build the emergency preparedness and response capacities of UNICEF staff; advance risk-informed programming; and strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and longer-term programme interventions.

Sector	2020 requirements (US\$)
Emergency response support	7,776,000
Emergency preparedness/disaster reduction	635,600
Regional Office technical capacity	340,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,751,800</b>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Red Cross, '2 Billion People Affected by Natural Disasters in Past 10 Years', Australian Red Cross, 2018, <[www.redcross.org.au/news-and-media/news/world-disasters-report-2018](http://www.redcross.org.au/news-and-media/news/world-disasters-report-2018)>, accessed 11 September 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, *International Disaster Database*, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Consolidated figures from UNICEF humanitarian situation reports, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Global Report on Internal Displacement', IDMC, May 2019, <[www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/](http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/)>, accessed 19 September 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 'Asia-Pacific Climate Week', Bangkok, Thailand, 2-6 September 2019, <[www.regionalclimateweeks.org](http://www.regionalclimateweeks.org)>, accessed 19 September 2019. Final report forthcoming.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to US\$6.4 million received in 2019, US\$13.3 million was carried forward from the previous year for ongoing humanitarian action in Indonesia from a country-specific humanitarian appeal. Of this, US\$12.7 million was carried forward from the 2018 Indonesia appeal and US\$600,000 was carried forward from the East Asia and the Pacific regional appeal.

<sup>7</sup> In 2019, out of the US\$6.4 million received from the East Asia and the Pacific regional appeal, US\$6 million was for Indonesia and US\$400,000 was for the region.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Indonesia Humanitarian Situation Report #7', UNICEF, 15 June 2019, <[www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF\\_Indonesia\\_Humanitarian\\_SitRep\\_Mid\\_Year\\_2019.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Indonesia_Humanitarian_SitRep_Mid_Year_2019.pdf)>, accessed 19 September 2019.

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