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Mory, 2, who is wasted, eats ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) at the UNICEF-supported Saint Gabriel Dispensary in Conakry, Guinea, in May 2023. The RUTF will help him to regain weight and recover.

unicef 
for every child

Humanitarian Action for Children

West and Central Africa Region

HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2024, due to the consequences of protracted and acute conflicts, population movements, recurrent and simultaneous public health emergencies, climate change-related disasters and food and nutrition crises, 48.4 million children living in West and Central Africa will continue to require multisectoral assistance to uphold their rights and meet critical needs in nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection, education and social protection.
- UNICEF will support governments, public and private institutions and civil society partners to improve emergency preparedness and response to humanitarian crises, including by strengthening systems and promoting community resilience.
- In this regional appeal, UNICEF is requesting \$52.5 million to reach 5 million out of 6 million children with humanitarian needs in nine countries: the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. An additional eight countries with large-scale emergencies are presenting standalone appeals,¹ and four Gulf of Guinea coastal countries are grouped into a multi-country appeal.²
- This regional appeal also includes the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office support to all 24 countries in the region for multisectoral emergency preparedness and response.

IN NEED^{3,4}



6.9 million
people in need of health assistance



3.4 million
people in need of nutrition assistance



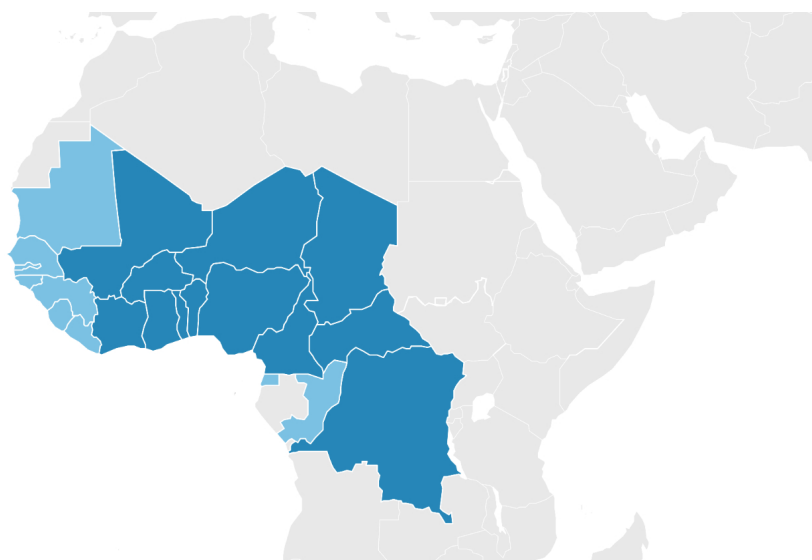
832,000
children in need of protection services



4.3 million
out-of-school children⁵



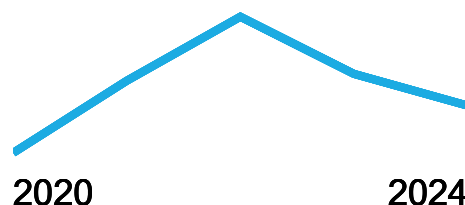
1.3 million
people lacking access to safe water



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\$52.5 million



2020

2024

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

In the entire West and Central Africa region, 48.4 million children¹⁰ require humanitarian assistance due to conflicts, population movements, recurrent and simultaneous public health emergencies, food and nutrition crises and climate change-related disasters. More than 17.2 million people are displaced, with numbers rising steadily as hostilities continue. By the end of 2023, 6.2 million children under 5 years of age will be at risk of severe wasting,¹² more than 31 million people will have an urgent need for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance⁹ and 2.5 million children will be affected by the closure of nearly 13,263 schools.⁸ Social protection coverage is limited – only 9 per cent of people have access to social assistance.

In the nine countries covered by this appeal, low vaccination coverage (which in some countries decreased further during the COVID-19 pandemic) is among the many reasons for concurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, Ebola virus disease, Lassa fever, Marburg virus disease and diphtheria. In 2024, more than 3.6 million⁷ children under 5 years of age will require polio, pentavalent and measles vaccination.

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain widespread. In 2024, 1.4 million children will suffer from wasting in the countries included in this appeal.⁶ Climatic shocks, including recurrent droughts and floods, will also affect several countries, often causing internal displacement or cross-border migration. And armed conflict triggers displacement into countries covered by this appeal, including Mauritania, which currently hosts nearly 86,000 refugees from neighbouring Mali.¹¹

The region is experiencing growing civil unrest and political instability. Strikes by government workers and violent demonstrations in several countries, including Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Senegal, have led to disruptions in access to essential services (including education, health and nutrition care, social services and referrals to social welfare, justice and mental health and psychosocial support). This poses challenges to the right of youth to participation and to their meaningful engagement in decision-making. Overlapping shocks are increasing the risks of exploitation (in the form of child labour), child marriage, migration (including that of unaccompanied and separated children) and gender-based violence, with a disproportionate burden on adolescent girls.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In line with the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, the humanitarian strategy of the West and Central Africa Regional Office is built around ensuring gender-sensitive emergency preparedness and response to humanitarian crises. It also seeks opportunities to strengthen national and local capacities, systems and services and build community resilience. With a growing adolescent population in the region, the need for age- and gender-specific services is essential for ensuring that the region's demographic dividend¹³ – the economic benefit that can accrue by having an increase in working-age population relative to the rest of the population – does not turn into a demographic crisis.

In 2024, the West and Central Africa Regional Office will provide multisectoral technical support to the country offices in the region for implementing humanitarian preparedness and response programmes, renewing partnerships and engaging in inter-agency collaboration.

The Regional Office will promote humanitarian–development–peace nexus approaches to reduce risks and vulnerabilities. This will help to improve people's resilience and underpin the sustainability of the impacts of humanitarian programmes; the nexus approach will also improve coordination, coherence and complementarity.

Other priorities include localization of humanitarian action (empowering and strengthening the capacity and resources of local organizations to lead humanitarian responses and deliver aid in their areas), accountability to affected populations and strengthened protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The regional office will support preparedness and contingency plans along with timely monitoring, the generation and management of information on humanitarian situations and the increased use of smart technology for forecasting and risk analysis.

Anticipatory action, pre-positioning of supplies and early deployment of human resources to support emergency responses will also be part of UNICEF's humanitarian strategic approach in West and Central Africa.

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.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Isha Kanawah, a vaccination nurse in rural Freetown, Sierra Leone is about to administer a COVID-19 vaccine dose to a walk-in patient at the Rokel Community Health Centre. A year ago, this would not have been possible because the health centre had no refrigerator to store the vaccines. Now that it does, more people are seeking vaccination.

According to the last cold chain assessment in 2017, 26 per cent of the 1,080 pieces of cold chain equipment in Sierra Leone were either obsolete or non-functional. To address this, UNICEF procured and distributed 153 new solar-powered refrigerators to 153 health facilities in 15 of the country's 16 districts.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Isha Kanawah returns vaccines from a portable cooler to the new solar-powered vaccine refrigerator provided by UNICEF at the Rokel Community Health Centre in rural Freetown, Sierra Leone.

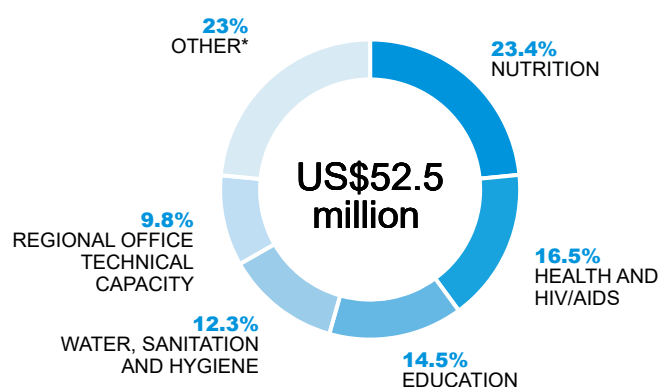
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

In this regional appeal, UNICEF is requesting \$52.5 million to address emergency needs in nine countries: the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The appeal covers urgent actions in these countries to uphold children's rights to nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection, education and social protection and to meet their other cross-cutting needs.

This appeal is determined by a range of pressing factors, notably simultaneous public health crises, the escalating impact of armed conflict and the displacement of large populations. In addition, the appeal includes the support of the West and Central Africa Regional Office to all 24 countries in the region for emergency preparedness and response.

Given the chronic, substantial lack of funding for interventions in such key areas as WASH, UNICEF urgently seeks donor backing to sustain its efforts to deliver positive outcomes for children. Support for this appeal will empower UNICEF to guarantee continued investment in readiness for public health crises and foster enhanced social cohesion and resilience. It will also enable greater investment in monitoring, reporting on and responding to child rights violations. The funding will help UNICEF to reach marginalized populations with vital services, and it will reinforce connections across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

Without adequate and timely financial support, UNICEF will not be able to meet the overwhelming needs of children, their families and their communities in West and Central Africa, leaving millions without critical assistance. Multi-year and flexible resources will be pivotal to UNICEF's capacity to provide high-quality programmes for children in the region.



*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Child protection, GBViE and PSEA (8.1%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (7.0%), Rapid response (3.3%), Social protection (2.6%), Preparedness (2.4%).

Sector	2024 requirements (US\$)
Health and HIV/AIDS	8,667,543
Nutrition	12,303,801
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	4,268,778 ¹⁴
Education	7,587,750
Water, sanitation and hygiene	6,482,077
Social protection	1,390,500
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	3,682,276 ¹⁵
Rapid response	1,715,000 ¹⁶
Preparedness	1,270,000 ¹⁷
Regional Office Technical Capacity	5,137,101 ¹⁸
Total	52,504,826

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ENDNOTES

1. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.
2. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.
3. The in-need figures reflect the number of people with pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports in countries covered by this regional appeal.
4. For each sector, the number of people in need is the sum of people in need in the nine countries covered by this appeal. The figures are calculated at the country office level using UNICEF internal needs assessments, based on estimates/projections, given that in those nine countries there are no inter-agency needs/planning documents.
5. The number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth is based on public estimates used to monitor progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4. It includes girls and boys of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary age for all countries covered by this appeal, except Senegal. It shows the scale of ongoing exclusion from education of the most vulnerable children; it is not a contextual measure of the impact on education of any given crisis or humanitarian situation. As such, it is a contextual indicator that is not linked to calculations of funding requirements, which are based on each country's specific target population, action plan and unit costs. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics/2023 Global Education Monitoring Report.
6. West and Central Africa Regional Office estimates of wasting burden and programmatic targets.
7. This figure was obtained by aggregating data from six of the nine countries covered by this appeal: the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
8. Education Cluster, West and Central Africa: Education in Emergencies Regional Situation – Q2–2023, available at <<https://reliefweb.int/node/3998856>>.
9. WASH sectoral needs figures are based on the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plans for those countries that have one and estimated 2023 needs figures for the non-HRP countries covered by this regional appeal.
10. Humanitarian Response Plan 2023 (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria) and UNICEF estimates (Benin, the Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo).
11. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, SO Bassiknou: Refugees registered (as of 31 August 2023), UNHCR, 19 September 2023, available at <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fbac0c90-4142-45d8-b013-2c88eea54db0/Dashboard_Mberra_Camp_External_August_2023.pdf>.
12. West and Central Africa Regional Office estimates of wasting burden and programmatic target.
13. Demographic dividend, as defined by the United Nations Population Fund, is "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)".
14. Includes \$1,672,500 for child protection interventions; \$1,929,772 for gender-based violence in emergencies interventions; and \$666,506 for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse interventions.
15. Includes \$1,358,776 for humanitarian cash transfers and \$2,323,500 for social and behaviour change activities and community engagement.
16. The West and Central Africa Regional Office will provide multisectoral assistance, including health-care services, to those affected by complex emergencies. These funds will also be used for a timely response to the needs of vulnerable populations undergoing sudden displacement.
17. In 2024, the West and Central Africa Regional Office will provide multisectoral technical support to the country offices in the region for the implementation of humanitarian preparedness and response programmes.
18. This is the overhead cost (for programme support and technical assistance, including support missions, etc.) to maintain comprehensive emergency preparedness and response capacity in the West and Central Africa Regional Office programme and operations sections.