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# Humanitarian Action for Children

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## Middle East and North Africa

The humanitarian crises in the Middle East and North Africa continue to affect a staggering number of people. More than 71 million vulnerable people, including over 35 million children, are in need of assistance.<sup>1</sup> The conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, volatility in Libya and upsurges of violence in the State of Palestine are exposing children to extreme risks, including death, injury and displacement,<sup>2</sup> as well as forced recruitment into armed groups and early marriage. In Yemen, where the response is challenged by the collapsing health system, millions are facing acute food insecurity, the country is confronting one of the largest cholera outbreaks on record, and nearly half a million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. In the Syrian Arab Republic, years of conflict have left more than 2 million children out of school<sup>3</sup> and 3.3 million children<sup>4</sup> exposed to explosive hazards. In Iraq, nearly 1 million children remain displaced, mainly in Ninewa, Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Salah al Din, Sulaymaniyah and Baghdad.<sup>5</sup> Against the backdrop of ongoing violence, the region is also confronting natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks, including in Djibouti and the Sudan. In 2018, Djibouti was affected by both drought and a cyclone.

### Regional humanitarian strategy

The Middle East and North Africa region has the greatest concentration of humanitarian needs in the world, with two Level 3 emergencies (in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen), two Level 2 emergencies (in Iraq and Syrian refugee-hosting countries), and many countries facing protracted conflicts, civil unrest and/or political transition. To enhance the delivery of essential services to the most disadvantaged children and marginalized populations, the 2019 Middle East and North Africa Regional Office strategy will further scale up timely and coordinated technical and quality assurance support for all country offices in the region. This will include supporting preparedness, contingency planning and emergency response, including strengthening disability-inclusive responses and mainstreaming gender, and providing guidance on linking humanitarian response with longer-term development goals to build resilience against shocks. In addition to supporting responses to large-scale crises, UNICEF will address the less visible but no less urgent crises that often receive less assistance than required, such as in Algeria, Djibouti, the State of Palestine and the Sudan. The strategy also focuses on coordinating the cross-border response to the Syrian crisis,<sup>6</sup> and enhancing country office programme excellence by ensuring the quality of strategic thinking in programme design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and alignment and compliance with UNICEF's global guiding frameworks, policies and standards. This is in addition to supporting the No Lost Generation initiative and the newly launched Generation Unlimited<sup>7</sup> initiative; facilitating the exchange of regional lessons learned; strengthening national systems; and investing in the localization<sup>8</sup> of humanitarian and development programming to improve service delivery. Evidence generation will be further enhanced to inform private and public advocacy. A key approach will be to strengthen financial and non-financial partnerships with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins Sans Frontières and humanitarian think tanks to better promote children's rights and well-being. Country offices will be encouraged to further systematize community engagement and accountability to affected people and communities, including through communication for development and platforms for adolescent participation, such as peace and reconciliation efforts. Furthermore, strengthened advice will be provided to support the development and roll-out of institutional humanitarian policies to ensure that country offices are well-equipped to deliver in complex and high-threat environments, and that the regional situation is accurately reflected and considered in the development of global policies.

### Results from 2018

As of 31 October 2018, UNICEF received US\$3.6 million for its US\$2 million appeal (180 per cent funded).<sup>9</sup> The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office provided high- and medium-risk countries with timely support to carry out integrated and resilience-focused humanitarian programming, key preparedness actions to mitigate and respond to risks and scaled-up emergency response.<sup>10</sup> The Regional Office and 16 country offices completed their emergency preparedness plans, and country offices received support to enhance evidence-based advocacy highlighting grave violations of children's rights and their urgent needs. Country offices were also supported to strengthen programme target setting,<sup>11</sup> improve gender and adolescent programming<sup>12</sup> and enhance resource mobilization and the timely allocation of critical funds.<sup>13</sup> In addition, training was provided on humanitarian policies, laws and principles, and best practices<sup>14</sup> were shared from regional operations,<sup>15</sup> including through thematic webinars<sup>16</sup> and the Regional Emergency Network Meeting, in which emergency and operations focal points from 15 country offices participated. The Regional Office also provided regional senior management and country offices with timely and quality analysis of political and security events with humanitarian implications and guidance on humanitarian and public advocacy.<sup>17</sup> UNICEF's efforts to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian action and development programming in the region were highlighted in both internal and external fora.

## Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US\$12.5 million to provide technical support and coordination for emergency preparedness, response and resilience building in the Middle East and North Africa. The protracted nature of the region's crises have necessitated a complex regional agenda. Regional funding will therefore be critical to supporting countries facing Level 3 emergencies, as well as countries facing small-or medium-scale emergencies that do not have individual 2019 inter-agency or Humanitarian Action for Children appeals. UNICEF acknowledges donors' generous support in 2018 and welcomes their continued commitments to addressing the humanitarian needs of vulnerable children in the region.

Sector	2019 requirements (US\$)
Technical assistance	3,200,000
Emergency preparedness	2,000,000
Emergency response <sup>18</sup>	7,300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,500,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> The number of people in need, including children, in 2018, was calculated based on 2018 UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children appeals and updated Syrian refugee numbers drawn from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data portal, accessed 4 November 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Across the region, there are over 13.4 million internally displaced people (over 5.6 million children) and approximately 12.5 million refugees (almost 5.5 million children). Figures are based on 2018 humanitarian needs overview documents for Middle East and North Africa countries and International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR data as of July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> No Lost Generation Initiative, 'We Made a Promise: Ensuring learning pathways and protection for Syrian children and youth', Brussels Conference, April 2018.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Disabled Children, Enabled Futures: Seven years of war in Syria - facts and figures', UNICEF, March 2018.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Iraq Humanitarian Situation Report', UNICEF, July 2018.

<sup>6</sup> The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office manages the Whole of Syria sector coordination and the hub coordination for Jordan (south Syrian Arab Republic) and Turkey (north Syrian Arab Republic).

<sup>7</sup> Generation Unlimited is a new commitment of the United Nations to work with and for young people. It is a global partnership dedicated to increasing opportunities and investments for children and young people aged 10 to 24, with the overarching goal to ensure that every young person is in some form of school, learning, training or employment by 2030.

<sup>8</sup> Between January and June 2018, the Middle East and North Africa region achieved 41 per cent localization.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to the US\$3.6 million received in 2018, US\$876,037 was carried forward from the previous year for ongoing humanitarian action in countries without a specific Humanitarian Action for Children appeal.

<sup>10</sup> For example, emergency response plans for Hodaydah and Derna (Yemen) and Jebel Marra (Sudan) were reviewed and quality assured, and the emergency response plans for acute watery diarrhoea/suspected cholera and nutrition for Iraq, the Sudan and Yemen were reviewed by the Regional Office Cholera Task Force.

<sup>11</sup> Through the development and sharing of a 'results vs. budgets' analytical tool.

<sup>12</sup> The Regional Office continued to promote gender and adolescent programming in humanitarian settings by building the capacities of key partners and strengthening data generation and its use for evidence-based advocacy.

<sup>13</sup> Review and quality assurance of Emergency Programme Fund appeals (such as for Jordan, Lebanon and Whole of Syria), Central Emergency Response Fund proposals, quarterly updates on the consequences of under-funding (for the region and Syrian crisis countries), in addition to the regional winter response appeals.

<sup>14</sup> Such as the drafting and sharing of the access vs. vulnerability mapping for Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, which will feed into the Global Access Framework. In addition, a regional stakeholders' mapping focusing on Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen was completed and is pending implementation.

<sup>15</sup> During the first six months of the year, a training on humanitarian negotiations, including engagement with non-state entities, was conducted by the Center on Competence in Humanitarian Negotiation, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières.

<sup>16</sup> The webinars covered gender and cash assistance in humanitarian action, in addition to conflict dynamics in Yemen (with a focus on Hodaydah).

<sup>17</sup> For example, this was done through the preparation of thematic analytical pieces, the preparation and update of regional humanitarian products and the production of humanitarian newsletters. Humanitarian inputs also fed into external communication products and the review of the Syrian advocacy strategy.

<sup>18</sup> This includes US\$1.2 million for the emergency response in Djibouti and regional technical support for humanitarian response in other countries of the region.

### Who to contact for further information:

**Geert Cappelaere**  
Regional Director, UNICEF  
Middle East and North Africa  
Tel: +962 6 551 8118  
Email: gcappelaere@unicef.org

**Grant Leaity**  
Deputy Director, Office of  
Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7150  
Email: gleaity@unicef.org

**Carla Haddad Mardini**  
Director, Public Partnership  
Division (PPD)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7160  
Email: chaddadmardini@unicef.org