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Humanitarian Action for Children

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East Asia and the Pacific

East Asia and the Pacific region remains extremely prone to natural hazards, with significant human casualties and economic losses – more than 40 million people were affected by disasters in 2015. Children are among the most vulnerable to natural hazards, and suffer short-term and long-lasting negative impacts on health, nutrition, protection and education. Population growth, rapid urbanization and climate change continue to exacerbate the impact of disasters, which are expected to occur more frequently and with greater intensity, and to impact larger populations in the coming years. This threatens the well-being and protection of vulnerable populations, especially children, and prevents them from realizing their full potential. In 2015 and 2016, El Niño led to irregular rainfall patterns, causing both severe drought and flooding, particularly in Indonesia, Mongolia, the Pacific sub-region, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam, affecting more than 10 million people. Typhoons and cyclones disrupted the lives of thousands of children in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Pacific sub-region and Viet Nam. In addition, ethnic strife and protracted conflicts in Myanmar and the Philippines continue to severely impact the survival and well-being of children and other vulnerable populations. In the Philippines, clashes between the Philippine Armed Forces, the Abu Sayyaf group in Basilan and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in Maguindanao continue to drive conflict-related displacement, with mounting concerns regarding grave violations of child rights.¹

Regional humanitarian strategy

The East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) and UNICEF country offices work closely with national authorities to reach the most vulnerable children and their families and protect their rights during humanitarian situations. In response to recurrent monsoons and other disasters in the region, EAPRO will support country offices to deliver assistance to affected children, in line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, particularly in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, education and child protection. At the same time, UNICEF will continue to invest in its partnerships with national governments to strengthen capacities and systems in countries and contribute to national policy and strategy setting on preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR), based on child-centered risk assessment and vulnerability analysis. EAPRO will continue to build regional knowledge management capacity to document best practices and lessons learned to ensure regional exchange and make responses more fit for purpose in fast changing environments. Innovations such as cash transfers in emergencies are being piloted and further developed to support vulnerable groups affected by recurrent disasters. Committed to global agendas, including the World Humanitarian Summit, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Climate Agreement, EAPRO will continue to work closely with its humanitarian partners and regional and sub-regional government bodies to nurture close collaboration and provide effective action for children, while addressing climate change, resilience and DRR. Acknowledging the increased capacity for emergency response among many governments in the region, EAPRO and country offices will rely on regional support mechanisms that draw expertise from and provide surge support to countries in the region by pooling available resources, advocating for improved humanitarian performance monitoring and encouraging further alignment of service delivery in humanitarian and development programmes.

Results in 2016

As of 31 October 2016, UNICEF had received US\$8.46 million against the US\$8.10 million appeal.² These funds allowed EAPRO to support the effective delivery of humanitarian action in its 14 country offices, and ensure investment in preparedness and DRR. Funds accessed through the regional preparedness and response budget supported the response to El Niño-induced drought and flooding in Viet Nam, including the distribution of therapeutic foods and micronutrients to pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6 to 23 months. Critical WASH supplies were delivered to affected families, with additional supplies en route. In response to Tropical Cyclone Winston, the UNICEF Office for the Pacific provided tents and education supplies to affected children, building on the achievements of ongoing development projects. In the Philippines, UNICEF concluded the Typhoon Haiyan response; one of its final contributions was to the development of the implementing regulation of the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act. EAPRO also enhanced country capacities through trainings on preparedness, response and DRR, and initiated knowledge management mechanisms to mitigate the impact of recurrent disasters. EAPRO is also an active DRR partner and in 2016 contributed to child and youth coalitions, preparedness/DRR platforms and inter-governmental events, and initiatives such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the Asia Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Funding requirements

EAPRO is requesting US\$6.11 million to carry out planned regional activities in response, emergency preparedness and DRR. This includes US\$5.32 million to prepare for and respond to emergencies in countries in the region that are not presented in a separate chapter of *Humanitarian Action for Children 2017*, and that do not benefit from inter-agency appeals to respond to small- or medium-scale emergencies. The funding is also critical to strengthening technical and coordination capacities of country offices and their national partners, and deploying surge staff to support children affected by major emergencies, especially in sectors where UNICEF has leadership responsibilities.

Sector	2017 requirements (US\$)
Knowledge management/regional partnerships	243,000
Regional Office technical capacity	540,000
Emergency preparedness and response/disaster risk reduction	5,323,400
Total	6,106,400

¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Humanitarian Bulletin Philippines', OCHA, Issue 10, 1-31 October 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHAPhilippines_Humanarian_Bulletin_No10_October_2016_FINAL.pdf>, accessed 22 November 2016.

² Available funds include funds raised US\$5.57 million against the current appeal and funds carried forward US\$2.89 million from the previous year.

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