



# Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

## West and Central Africa

Children and women in West and Central Africa remain vulnerable to multiple threats, including insecurity, conflict, drought, flooding and epidemics. In the Central African Republic and the Lake Chad basin, widespread violence and armed conflict characterized by grave human rights violations have led to mass displacement both internally and across borders. More than 6 million people in the region remain displaced due to conflict: 874,000 people<sup>1</sup> in the Central African Republic; 1.9 million people<sup>2</sup> in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 2.6 million people<sup>3</sup> in the Lake Chad basin; and more than 172,000 people<sup>4</sup> due to the conflict in Mali. For countries such as Chad and Nigeria, the volatility has increased due to falling oil prices and declines in state revenues. Throughout the region, elections planned for 2017 may create further unrest. Across the Sahel, cyclical drought conditions and chronic food insecurity have caused alarming levels of malnutrition. In addition, severe acute malnutrition (SAM) affects more than 6 million children under 5<sup>5</sup> and more than 46,000 suspected measles cases and 28,900 cholera cases were reported<sup>6</sup> in the region in 2016. Cholera outbreaks continue to affect the Mano River, Lake Chad, Congo River and Niger River basins.

### Regional humanitarian strategy

The West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) will continue to support country offices in the region to respond to emergencies, in line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. WCARO will support preparedness by monitoring risks and providing technical expertise to strengthen capacities to prepare for emergencies, emphasizing contingency planning for high-risk countries. Partnerships for emergency response, capacity building and supply pre-positioning will be strengthened. WCARO will continue to provide multi-sectoral technical support to country offices in the areas of nutrition, health, HIV and AIDS, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Communication for Development, child protection, education and emergency coordination and operations. Country offices will also receive support to respond to cholera, meningitis, measles and other epidemics. UNICEF will continue its integrated nutrition response, focusing on the crises in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. The priority will be the integrated management of acute malnutrition, focusing on life-saving treatment of SAM, as well as the prevention of malnutrition through infant and young child feeding and the promotion of essential family practices. SAM treatment and prevention remains integrated into a package of interventions for health, WASH, education, promotion of essential family practices and psychosocial support. WCARO will support the strengthening of key child protection activities, focusing on cross-border and sub-regional emergency responses, particularly for the Lake Chad basin crisis. The priority will be to reach children associated with armed groups and armed forces, children in detention, and/or children who are unaccompanied and separated from their families, while providing mental health and psychosocial support. WCARO will support the implementation of the Safe Schools Strategy, provide technical guidance to country offices on protective learning environments and strengthen coordination and information management for country offices and clusters. UNICEF will maintain rapid response capacity for mapping and rapid assessment, surge staff deployments and regional supply hubs that pre-position supplies, enabling timely and cost-effective response. WCARO will also support country office capacities for monitoring and evaluation, increase the use of third-party monitoring in hard-to-reach areas and support more timely evidence-based decision making. Public advocacy efforts will continue to focus on countries in crisis to ensure that the rights and well-being of children in emergencies are at the centre of the global agenda and adequate resources are made available.

### Results in 2016

As of 31 October 2016, UNICEF had received US\$27 million against the US\$20 million appeal.<sup>7</sup> In 2016, WCARO provided extensive multi-sectoral support to the responses in the Lake Chad basin, the Central African Republic and to the Ebola crisis, and supported emergency responses in Benin, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. WCARO also supported information management and preparedness in the region. Technical nutrition support was provided for the crises in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. UNICEF reinforced cross-border coordination and information sharing to harmonize programme interventions. A sub-regional child protection strategy was designed in the Lake Chad basin and rolled out across the countries. WCARO WASH support included cholera outbreak control measures and management of the [Regional Cholera Platform](#). The regional Safe Schools Strategy was designed and is being implemented to provide children in emergencies with protective learning environments. This included training 2,000 education personnel and teachers on psychosocial support. Public advocacy initiatives were rolled out in 2016 to highlight the plight of children affected by humanitarian crises.

## Funding requirements

For 2017, UNICEF is requesting US\$27 million to provide technical support and coordination for emergency preparedness and response in the West and Central Africa region. This includes nutrition supplies for the response in the Sahel.<sup>8</sup> Regional funding may also be used to respond to small- or medium-scale emergencies in the region that are not included in a separate appeal of *Humanitarian Action for Children 2017*. In a volatile region, many smaller countries are at risk of civil unrest and support is needed to scale-up preparedness and response programming. UNICEF gratefully acknowledges donors' support in 2016 and welcomes their continued commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of children and women in the region.

| Sector                              | 2017 requirements (US\$) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nutrition                           | 800,000                  |
| Health and HIV/AIDS                 | 400,000                  |
| Water, sanitation and hygiene       | 1,460,000                |
| Child protection                    | 500,000                  |
| Education                           | 800,000                  |
| Sahel nutrition                     | 15,000,000               |
| Emergency preparedness and response | 8,040,000                |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>27,000,000</b>        |

<sup>1</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Internally displaced people and returnees', OCHA, 30 September 2016, <[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rdc\\_personnes\\_deplacees\\_internes\\_et\\_retournees\\_au\\_30092016\\_en.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rdc_personnes_deplacees_internes_et_retournees_au_30092016_en.pdf)>, accessed 26 November 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Lake Chad Basin: Crisis overview', OCHA, 3 October 2016, <[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lac%20Chad%20Snapshot\\_4%20oct%202016.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lac%20Chad%20Snapshot_4%20oct%202016.pdf)>, accessed 26 November 2016.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Demographic Health Survey, available at <<http://dhsprogram.com/>>; Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, available at <<http://mics.unicef.org/>>. Please note that there are 24 countries in the region with different Demographic Health Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey years.

<sup>6</sup> Regional Cholera Platform 2016, available at <[www.platformecholera.info](http://www.platformecholera.info)>.

<sup>7</sup> Available funds included US\$18.5 million received against the 2016 appeal and the US\$8.7 million carried forward from 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Sahel support covers nutrition supplies for Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal.

### Who to contact for further information:

**Marie-Pierre Poirier**  
Regional Director, Western and Central Africa  
Tel: +22 133 869 5858  
Email [mppoirier@unicef.org](mailto:mppoirier@unicef.org)

**Yasmin Haque**  
Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7150  
Email: [yhaque@unicef.org](mailto:yhaque@unicef.org)

**Olav Kjørven**  
Director, Public Partnership Division (PPD)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7160  
Email: [okjorven@unicef.org](mailto:okjorven@unicef.org)