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Mahdi, 16 months, one of 700,000 severely wasted children in the Sudan, holds ready-to-use therapeutic food. UNICEF – as provider of last resort – ensures children receive this life-saving treatment.

## Sudan

### HIGHLIGHTS<sup>1</sup>

- The conflict in the Sudan is a children's crisis: 13.6 million children urgently need humanitarian assistance. Six million people, more than half of whom are children, have fled their homes, and the Sudan is now home to the largest child displacement crisis in the world.
- The cost of inaction is unacceptably high: more than 700,000 children with severe wasting are at high risk of not surviving without treatment; 1.7 million children under age 1 risk missing life-saving vaccinations to protect them from diseases; a generation of children will miss out on education; and millions will lack safety and psychosocial well-being.
- Despite challenges in reaching populations and meeting their needs, UNICEF is staying and delivering for children in the Sudan through a three-pronged strategy: 1) in conflict hotspots – delivering critical and life-saving supplies and services; 2) in states receiving large numbers of displaced persons – providing urgent assistance to displaced and host communities; and 3) across the country – supporting the preservation of systems that deliver basic services.
- UNICEF requires \$840 million to deliver a package of child protection, education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and cash plus interventions to save children's lives, alleviate their suffering and preserve their dignity.

### KEY PLANNED TARGETS



**3 million**

children and women  
accessing primary health  
care



**540,000**

children with severe  
wasting admitted for  
treatment



**1.7 million**

children accessing formal  
or non-formal education,  
including early learning



**5 million**

people accessing a  
sufficient quantity and  
quality of water

**unicef** 

for every child

**Humanitarian  
Action for  
Children**

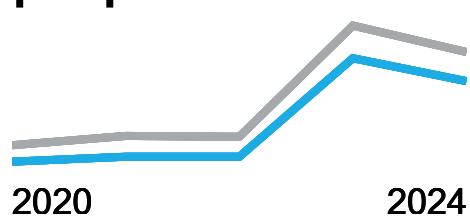
IN NEED

**24.8 million people<sup>2,3</sup>** **13.6 million children<sup>4</sup>**



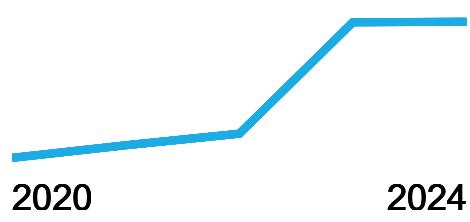
TO BE REACHED

**9.9 million people<sup>5</sup>** **7.6 million children<sup>6</sup>**



FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

**US\$840 million**



## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The conflict in the Sudan has left 24.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 13.6 million children. A staggering 6 million people are on the move, of whom more than 1 million crossed borders in search for safety. The displaced population includes more than 3 million children, making the country home to the largest child displacement crisis in the world. The country already had 3.7 million internally displaced persons prior to the crisis that has unfolded since April 2023, and hosts around 1 million refugees.<sup>7</sup>

The health system in the Sudan is on the brink of collapse: an estimated 70 per cent of health facilities in conflict-affected areas are not functional. UNICEF is particularly worried about the youngest children, including the 1.5 million babies who will be born in the country in the coming year. With many pregnant women trapped in areas of heavy fighting, and others living in overcrowded sites for displaced people or with host communities who are stretched to their limits, tens of thousands of children under 5 years of age might not survive if they cannot access critical health-care services in time.<sup>8</sup>

The Sudan has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition globally. More than 3.5 million children are wasted, of whom more than 700,000 are expected to be severely wasted – and at increased risk of death without timely treatment – in 2024. The nutrition situation is expected to deteriorate given continued fighting, the impact of the lean season and rising food prices.

Most regions in the Sudan must cope with critical levels of water scarcity. As a result, nearly one third of the population (including 7.4 million children) lacks access to water, while two thirds lacks access to sanitation and hygiene services. Many facilities that provide water have been destroyed or damaged, lack water treatment supplies or are inaccessible for repairs and maintenance due to insecurity. WASH-related diseases, mainly diarrhoea and cholera, are putting the lives of 3.5 million children at risk.

In the Sudan, the right to education of 19 million children is at stake. Without urgent action, the learning crisis will become a generational catastrophe. This generation's learning and earning loss is estimated to be \$26 billion per year.<sup>9</sup> Millions of Sudanese children not learning is disastrous for their safety and well-being, engendering such child protection risks as child labour, child marriage and recruitment by armed groups and forces, which are on the rise.<sup>10</sup>

The consequences for children living in this context are dire: 1 out of 18 children will not reach their fifth birthday. Of those that do, the future of many will be irreversibly compromised.

## SECTOR NEEDS<sup>11</sup>



**15.5 million**

people in need of health assistance



**4.8 million**

children and women in need of nutrition assistance



**6.2 million**

children in need of protection services



**9.5 million**

children in need of education support



**19.6 million**

people in need of urgent WASH support

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



UNICEF's health workers examine an infant who just arrived from conflict-affected Khartoum, the capital of the Sudan. The city has been under fire since the start of the conflict in April 2023.

The future of Sudan's 24 million children is at stake. Every passing day, the needs of girls and boys increase, and the youngest are struggling to survive. Destruction of hospitals, disruption of critical health-care services including immunization and lack of critical medical supplies are putting many children's lives at risk.

Across the country, humanitarian workers remain at the front line, providing relief, hope and much needed care for those who require it, especially children.

[Read more about this story here](#)

# HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>

UNICEF is staying and delivering for the children of the Sudan. The strategy is three-pronged: 1) in conflict hotspots – delivering life-saving supplies and services; 2) in states receiving large numbers of displaced persons – providing urgent assistance to displaced and host communities; and 3) across the country – supporting the preservation of systems that deliver basic services. UNICEF expects to reach 9.9 million people, including 7.6 million children.<sup>16</sup>

Humanitarian access to the affected populations due to insecurity and limited capacity on the ground remains a key challenge in scaling up the life-saving emergency response, especially in hotspot areas including Khartoum State and the Kordofan and Darfur regions. UNICEF is advocating for access to populations in need and working strategically to access people affected by the violence and upheaval to provide life-saving assistance.<sup>17</sup> Given the situation in Darfur and the lack of access, for example, UNICEF teams in the Sudan deployed a small team to Chad to coordinate with colleagues there and lead UNICEF cross-border operations to respond to the needs of internally displaced people in Darfur. UNICEF is also paying incentives to critical front-line workers (doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers) – whose salaries have not been paid for months – to prevent a system collapse that would have a devastating impact on children's survival and well-being.

UNICEF leads the Education,<sup>18</sup> Nutrition and WASH clusters and the child protection subcluster and plays a key role in the Health Cluster, the gender-based violence subcluster and the refugee consultation forum. On behalf of the clusters, UNICEF procures and manages the pipeline of core life-saving supplies for treating severe wasting (e.g., ready-to-use therapeutic food), immunization (routine vaccines), maternal and child health (medicines and medical equipment) and emergency WASH supplies.

Life-saving interventions will be prioritized, including access to primary health care and vaccinations against deadly childhood diseases.<sup>19</sup> UNICEF will focus on children in their first 1,000 days of life by providing cash to pregnant women and new mothers combined with an integrated package of basic services. This gender-responsive mother and child cash transfer 'plus' programme (MCCT+) is a core element of resilience programming. It demonstrably saves lives and empowers women in a sustainable way. UNICEF will target 5 million people with access to safe water, appropriate sanitation and hygiene and handwashing services.

Children with severe wasting are at extreme risk and must be prioritized for treatment. Therefore, UNICEF – as provider of last resort and the sole provider of life-saving ready-to-use therapeutic food – aims to reach 540,000 children with such treatment in 2024. In line with the recognized 'simplified approach', UNICEF will treat all severe wasting cases until children are sufficiently recovered and scale up preventive nutrition interventions.

UNICEF aims to reach conflict-affected children on the move with integrated learning, skill development and protection assistance.<sup>20</sup> The Makanaa 'our space' approach provides a place where children can learn, play and heal in safe (learning) spaces while accessing an integrated package of support and referral services. Besides psychosocial support, these encompass family tracing and reunification for unaccompanied and separated children, prevention of and response to gender-based violence and mine risk education.

UNICEF is continuing to support social systems, localization and mutual aid through enhanced community-based and community-led interventions to expand reach and sustainability and strengthen engagement and accountability to affected populations.

Implementation of programmes is risk-informed and conflict-sensitive, aligned with the 'do no harm' approach.

# 2024 PROGRAMME TARGETS<sup>21</sup>



## Health and nutrition

- **1,395,931** children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose<sup>22</sup>
- **2,971,999** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- **5,937,290** children 6-59 months screened for wasting
- **540,000** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment<sup>23</sup>
- **1,584,903** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



## Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **2,044,414** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- **59,176** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **2,866,911** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- **21,966** unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified



## Education

- **1,681,627** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning<sup>24</sup>
- **1,177,139** children receiving individual learning materials



## Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **5,000,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **300,000** people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- **5,000,000** people reached with handwashing behaviour-change programmes
- **500,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies



## Social protection

- **150,000** households benefitting from UNICEF-funded cash plus support.



## Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)

- **5,348,913** people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change
- **1,250,250** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms

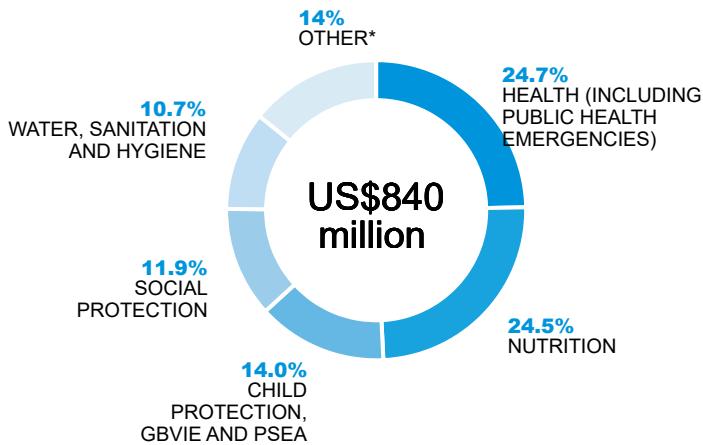
# FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

For 2024, UNICEF requires \$840 million to reach 7.6 million of the most vulnerable children in the Sudan – and 9.9 million people altogether – with child protection, education, health, nutrition, WASH and cash plus interventions.<sup>25</sup> This appeal includes \$50 million for life-saving and life-sustaining social and protection services for refugees living in host communities.

The increase in funding requirements compared with pre-conflict is mainly due to higher-than-ever humanitarian needs and the massive internal displacement caseload (the Sudan is home to the largest displacement crisis in the world). Notable factors in the cost of the humanitarian response are payment of incentives for critical front-line workers (doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers) to prevent system collapse; and operational challenges, including the need for offshore procurement of most supplies (including ready-to-use therapeutic food) due to destruction of local factories and increased logistics and security costs to reach conflict-affected areas.

The cost of inaction in the Sudan is unacceptably high: 13.6 million children will not receive the essential services they require to survive and live in dignity; more than 700,000 children with severe wasting will be at high risk of dying without treatment; 1.7 million children under age 1 risk will miss life-saving vaccinations to protect them from disease outbreaks; a generation of children will miss out on education; and millions of boys and girls will lack safety and psychosocial well-being. UNICEF must be a key partner in addressing all these needs.

Now, more than ever, flexible resources are crucial to allow a timely and efficient humanitarian response to preserve life, dignity and hope for the future for Sudan's children and those who care for them.



Sector	2024 requirements (US\$)
Health (including public health emergencies)	207,360,985
Nutrition	206,170,626
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	117,625,351 <sup>26</sup>
Education	80,103,091
Water, sanitation and hygiene	89,551,000
Social protection	100,000,000
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	39,188,947 <sup>27</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>840,000,000</b>

\*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Education (9.5%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (4.7%).

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## ENDNOTES

1. UNICEF activated its Corporate Emergency Level 3 Scale-up Procedure for Sudan for the following period: 15 June to 14 December 2023. The status will be reviewed on that date. UNICEF Emergency Procedures are activated to ensure a timely and effective response to all crises. The emergency procedures provide a tailored package of mandatory actions and simplifications required for all offices responding to Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1 humanitarian situations.
2. The people in need figure is based on the draft Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024. The people in need figure includes vulnerable residents, internally displaced people, refugees and returnees.
3. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
4. The number of children in need is calculated as 55 per cent of people in need, based on the draft Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
5. The number of people to be reached is calculated based on the highest targeted indicator for each demographic group: 5,937,290 children 6–59 months screened for wasting; 1,681,627 school-age children accessing formal and non-formal education; and 2,250,000 women and men (adult) targeted with WASH interventions. The total number of people to be reached includes 58 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people with disabilities (10 per cent children with disabilities).
6. The number of children to be reached is calculated based on the highest targeted indicator for each demographic group: 5,937,290 children under age 5 screened for wasting; and 1,681,627 school-age children targeted with education/learning material. The total number of children to be reached includes 54 per cent girls and 10 per cent children with disabilities.
7. Heavy fighting, including air and artillery strikes, continues in the active conflict hotspots of Darfur, Khartoum and Kordofan states. At the same time, ethnic divisions and ethnically targeted attacks have resurfaced in some areas, especially in Darfur. Millions remain trapped in conflict zones, with very limited basic services and commodities including health, nutrition, WASH, education and protection. Sudan has for a long time generously hosted refugees, with the second highest refugee population in Africa (mainly from Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and as well as the Central African Republic, Chad and Yemen). Once hosting around 1 million refugees, with the current conflict more than 220,000 refugees and refugee returnees have left Sudan.  
Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, see <[www.unhcr.org/countries/sudan](http://www.unhcr.org/countries/sudan)>.
8. Sudan is currently battling a cholera outbreak, with thousands of cases reported. Urgent action – including treatment in cholera treatment corners and vaccination, as well as improved access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene – is needed to curb the outbreak.
9. UNICEF and Save the Children, 19 million children in Sudan out of school as conflict rages on – UNICEF, Save the Children, press release, 9 October 2023.
10. The conflict in the Sudan is a deepening children's crisis and further exacerbating girls' tenuous claims on their rights including their health, learning and protection. In conflicts and emergencies, women, girls and gender-nonconforming people in all their diversity have specific risks related to exposure to violence, exclusion from services and barriers to engaging in humanitarian action. Girls were already at increased risk of female genital mutilation, child marriage and not returning to school due to gendered expectations of increased domestic labour and mobility and security concerns and trafficking. Boys are targeted for recruitment into armed groups and forces, and families become dependent on them for their livelihoods.
11. All sector needs are based on the draft Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024 and include vulnerable residents, internally displaced people, refugees and returnees.
12. Compared with 2023, UNICEF will focus its humanitarian funding foremost on timely identification and treatment of children with severe wasting, while development funding is used for prevention components.
13. 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.
14. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster coordination for the WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. All cluster coordinator costs are included in sectoral programme budgets.
15. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.
16. UNICEF programming is disability-inclusive and ensures the accessibility of new or temporary structures, modification of existing structures, provision of reasonable accommodations, training of staff and partners on disability inclusion and engaging disability-inclusion advice.
17. UNICEF and its humanitarian partners struggle daily to access areas with active conflict. This affects capacity on the ground, transport of supplies and access to people in need, as well as people's access to basic services. In addition, significant bureaucratic impediments and restrictions by different entities affect the presence and mobility of UNICEF and partners, especially in conflict hotspot areas. UNICEF is working through partners, including non-traditional partners such as community groups such as youth- and women-led groups. At the inter-agency level, advocacy and negotiations for access are also taking place.
18. UNICEF co-leads the Education Cluster with Save the Children.
19. In addition, UNICEF is responding to waterborne and vector-borne disease outbreaks and putting in place epidemic control interventions.
20. UNICEF is utilizing the EiE-GenKit (United Nations Girls Education Initiative, Education Cannot Wait and Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2021) to ensure that girls and boys equally enjoy the protection and learning outcomes that its learning and skills development programme aims to provide. This includes providing gender-responsive instruction and learning processes for implementing partners, a gender audit of the e-learning curriculum, setting-up adolescent girls' clubs and gender-responsive support for teachers and other education personnel.
21. Beyond the UNICEF targets for these interventions, other humanitarian partners are expected to reach the remaining children/families in need.
22. The target is 70 per cent of children under 5 years of age.
23. The target is approximately 84 per cent of the severe wasting caseload in the age group 6–59 months (640,000 children based on the draft Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024). It was reduced from 90 per cent coverage in 2023 due to continued insecurity and subsequent humanitarian access constraints in 17 localities in the Sudan.
24. A total of 9.5 million school-age children are in need of education support, of whom the cluster is targeting 4.2 million (as recommended by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). UNICEF and Save the Children – as co-cluster leads and providers of last resort – agreed to each target 40 per cent (1,681,627 school-age children), and the remaining 20 per cent will be covered by other Education Cluster partners.
25. Per UNICEF's institutional commitment, funding requirements include such disability-inclusive programming as the accessibility of new or temporary structures, modification of existing structures, provision of reasonable accommodations, training of staff and partners on disability inclusion and engaging disability-inclusion advice.
26. This includes \$8,600,733 (7.3 per cent) for providing accessible ways to report sexual exploitation and abuse and \$23,670,400 (20 per cent) for prevention and response to gender-based violence.
27. This includes \$1,250,250 (3.2 per cent) for accountability to affected populations; the remaining amount is for social and behavioural change communication, including community engagement activities.