Burkina Faso’s systemic poverty and paucity of resources have made responding to recent catastrophic flooding and virulent epidemics all the more challenging. Unprecedented floods in Ouagadougou in September 2009 and subsequent torrential rains and flooding in many parts of the country from July through September 2010 affected several hundred thousand people. The flooding dramatically increased the risk of disease and undernutrition. Outbreaks of meningitis resulted in 5,980 cases in the first half of 2010, and 40 per cent of those affected were children under age 5. While the prevalence of global acute malnutrition in Burkina Faso was reduced from 21.2 per cent in 2003 to 11.3 per cent in 2009, the country is still considered to be at emergency undernutrition levels.

The primary threats facing women and children in Burkina Faso stem from high water levels and disease. Flooding in the capital city, Ouagadougou, affected 150,000 people. In addition, from July through September 2010, heavy rainfall caused major flooding in five of the country’s most food-insecure regions, ultimately affecting 140,000 people in 18,000 families. In the context of poor hygiene and sanitation, the aftermath of floods is a major risk for boys and girls, especially those under age 5.

Meningitis also proved deadly in 2010, when five districts crossed the epidemic threshold for the disease, with at least 10 cases per 100,000 persons per week in each district. Another 23 districts reached alarm levels, with 5 cases per 100,000 persons per week in each district. A total of 5,980 cases were recorded in the first half of 2010, with 841 deaths, representing a fatality rate of 14.1 per cent. Children under 5 composed 40 per cent of all cases.

Burkina Faso is also classified as a country with a serious nutrition emergency, with global acute malnutrition at 11.3 per cent of children under age 5. Nearly 3 per cent of children 6–59 months old suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

UNICEF is requesting US$11,480,000 for its 2011 humanitarian work in Burkina Faso in response to the high number of children and women affected by disasters and food insecurity. The organization’s assistance in 2011 will centre on nutrition support, flood relief, epidemic response and emergency preparedness and response. Efforts are expected to benefit 374,000 people, including nearly 190,000 children. UNICEF will also continue to strengthen response capacities of the National Committee of Emergency & Rehabilitation Assistance (CONASUR) and relevant government ministries. It will also ensure planning and pre-positioning of emergency preparedness and response supplies for nutrition, health, WASH, education and non-food items, in line with annual caseloads and other potential risks, as part of the Côte d’Ivoire+4 plan.

**CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN**

Flooding, particularly during the lean season, can have a life-threatening impact on the rural and peri-urban poor populations in Burkina Faso. Floods increase the possibility of waterborne diseases and worsen food security. Children are at risk for undernutrition and are exposed to increased mortality risks long after the floods have ended. Damage to schools and use of schools as temporary shelters also hinder children’s access to education.

Burkina Faso’s high poverty level, at 46.4 per cent of the population and low adult literacy (29 per cent), particularly for women, pose constraints in promoting key family practices to reduce the negative impact of floods on an already vulnerable population. These are particularly acute when trying to address undernutrition and key preventive measures such as exclusive breastfeeding, which remains very low in Burkina Faso, at 6 per cent.

Only 14 per cent of the humanitarian needs of the population affected by the July and August 2010 floods had been met by October 2010, with key sectors like education and protection having yet to receive funding. In addition, limited government resources (human and financial), difficulties in accessing the population before the end of the rainy season and diminished capacities of health and other delivery systems have made providing aid a challenging task.

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010**

In the immediate response to the floods of late July and early August 2010, UNICEF carried out life-saving interventions for those most in need. Based on the early assessment,
UNICEF mobilized US$720,000 from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund to cover immediate life-saving interventions to ensure safe access to potable water, improved sanitation facilities and a hygiene-friendly environment and to prevent undernutrition and treat children under age 5 with severe acute malnutrition. An Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan was created at the beginning of September to cover humanitarian needs related to WASH, nutrition, health, child protection and education, with requested funding of US$14.2 million.

By late 2010, UNICEF had helped to make significant achievements in a vulnerable population’s nutrition status and access to health services, sanitation and hygiene, as well as improvements in the education and welfare of children. To assist facilities and communities offering life-saving treatment to children with severe acute malnutrition, UNICEF provided therapeutic products (ready-to-use therapeutic food and drugs) and technical assistance to all 63 health districts, regional hospitals and to nine international NGOs. More than 21,600 children (6–59 months old) out of 72,000 suffering from severe acute malnutrition were treated from January through July 2010, compared with 26,000 throughout all of 2009.

UNICEF, together with the World Health Organization, helped to contain the meningitis epidemic and manage 5,980 cases in the 23 affected districts. A meningitis vaccination campaign that reached 678,386 people, including 407,031 children 2–17 years old, was also organized in five districts.

In response to the 2009 floods in Ouagadougou, UNICEF provided the ministry of health with consumables, essential drugs and medical equipment, and helped re-establish child health-related services. More than 47,000 people (32 per cent of them children under age 5), attended newly established health services in the districts of Ouagadougou. More than 17,000 people aged 9 months and older received measles vaccination; 11,471 people aged 2 years and older received meningitis vaccination; and 21,601 people were given deworming medication. More than 80,000 people participated in Communication for Development activities implemented by youth associations on safe hygiene practices and the prevention of malaria, cholera and HIV. Six new water points helped 1,800 people in relocation areas to access a permanent supply of safe water. UNICEF also provided improved sanitation facilities and hygiene behaviour promotion services for 1,000 families (7,000 people).

About 15,000 children 3–11 years old benefited from temporary classrooms with tents, renovated classrooms, classroom equipment, playing and learning kits and psychosocial support. In addition, psychologists treated 791 severely traumatized children. Child-friendly spaces and psychosocial support services reached a total of 3,811 affected children, young people and women. UNICEF also worked with municipal councils on a census that allowed for 4,966 flood-affected children to be registered and receive new or replacement birth certificates.
HUMANITARIAN ACTION: BUILDING RESILIENCE

The national multi-risk contingency plan, developed by CONASUR and the UNICEF country and regional offices, was adopted in February 2009 and was central in facilitating the response to the September 2009 floods and those of 2010. UNICEF continued in 2010 to support government partners at local and national levels to revise the contingency plan and strengthen coordination and ownership of the response through the cluster approach. Most importantly, UNICEF’s supply division in Copenhagen, along with the country office, worked to train CONASUR staff in planning and managing emergency stocks, including national and local pre-positioning. UNICEF is also helping to manage and equip two large new CONASUR emergency warehouses.

To meet the pressing need for food among the country’s undernourished women and children, UNICEF supported the operation of the National Nutrition Council, which is led by the Ministry of Health and includes various international agencies, NGOs and research organizations. UNICEF funded the training and operational costs for regional nutrition focal points appointed in 2009. Annual Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys and monthly case reports of severe acute malnutrition from NGOs help to strengthen the system.

PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2011

UNICEF, together with a number of partners, including the Government of Burkina Faso and NGOs, will focus on assisting the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations in the rural areas that have been hard hit by drought, floods and disease. UNICEF expects to reach about 150,000 people living in emergency conditions in 2011, including 80,000 children. The organization will help to ensure the coordination of the humanitarian response for flood-affected populations in the nutrition, health, WASH, child protection and education sectors, and will contribute to achieving key health cluster results for children and women whose lives have been thrown into disarray by the natural disaster.

NUTRITION (US$6,025,000)

To meet the pressing nutritional needs of Burkina Faso’s children and women, UNICEF will focus on treatment of those with severe acute malnutrition and on improving management of the condition through better coordination and surveillance.

- UNICEF will support the identification and treatment of children under age 5 suffering from severe acute malnutrition as well as provide preventive services at the onset of undernutrition among children under 5.
- The nutrition surveillance system will be strengthened, including the implementation of a national nutrition survey.
- Coordination of the emergency nutrition response will be strengthened to improve child survival.

HEALTH (US$1,300,000)

UNICEF will undertake a number of actions to protect and improve the health of about 105,000 people affected by flooding, including 15,000 children under age 5 and nearly 3,200 pregnant women.

- Preventive, curative and educational health services will be provided, including measles immunization and vitamin A distribution. The services will also include setting up temporary health infrastructure, providing drugs and medical supplies, and promoting social mobilization and communication to include efforts related to HIV prevention.
- UNICEF will work to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV in the affected population, where an estimated 3 per cent of expectant mothers are HIV-positive, by providing testing and preventive antiretroviral therapy in health centres caring for displaced pregnant women.
- Conjugate Meningitis A vaccine will be introduced nationwide.
- A thorough review of coordination, surveillance and alert mechanisms and current stock levels will improve planning for emergencies and coordination during crises.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) (US$1,315,000)

UNICEF expects to strengthen coordination in this sector and also meet immediate needs for potable water, basic sanitation and hygiene-friendly environments for an estimated 105,000 people affected by flooding (displaced and host families), including 69,700 women and 15,000 children under age 5.

- Adequate drinking water will help keep an estimated 85,000 flood-affected people and host families healthy.
- Adequate sanitation facilities (excreta disposal, hand washing and showers) will improve the hygienic condition and help prevent disease among 80 per cent of affected populations.
- Education in healthy practices is crucial to the effectiveness of water and sanitation efforts. UNICEF
will help increase awareness of waterborne diseases and help displaced and host populations take adequate preventive actions (hand washing at appropriate times, sanitary toilet use, water and food hygiene, etc.).

**CHILD PROTECTION (US$450,000)**

To enhance the protection and well-being of most vulnerable groups, including 76,500 affected young boys and girls, 13,500 women and 10,000 displaced people. UNICEF will work to ensure timely protection services, including birth registration, HIV prevention, psychosocial support, prevention of gender-based violence and care and support for about 10,000 displaced people.

- Through the child protection cluster and working closely with other partners, UNICEF will provide reliable data in monthly reports on protection concerns regarding children and women.
- Vulnerable children and women will have access to psychosocial support; gender-based violence prevention services; HIV prevention, care, support and treatment services; and birth registration and other civic documentation services.
- UNICEF will ensure that 10,000 vulnerable children and women are informed of the availability of support for resettlement and return, as information is the first step in helping people protect themselves and find support.
- Protection is a need that cuts across all sectors, and UNICEF will assist other humanitarian sectors in incorporating protection into their programmes and preventing and mitigating common protection risks, including those associated with HIV.

**EDUCATION (US$2,390,000)**

The overall goal for 2011 is to provide access to educational facilities (primary schools, early childhood development centres and non-formal education centres) for 14,000 children and adolescents 3–15 years old (420 in preschool, 10,500 in primary school and 3,080 in secondary school) in the flood-affected areas of the Centre-North, East, Plateau-Central and Sahel regions.

- Temporary learning spaces will be created using tents, and recreational and educational kits will be provided for 14,000 children and adolescents affected and displaced as a result of flooding in order to support appropriate learning opportunities. Those children and adolescents will be enrolled in educational structures and will be provided with learning opportunities, including life skills and HIV education.
- 55 educational facilities will be rehabilitated and equipped.
- 350 preschool and primary schoolteachers and caregivers and 60 supervisors will be trained in psychosocial support.

**UNICEF EMERGENCY FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By sector</th>
<th>US$</th>
<th>Total per sector (all beneficiaries)</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>Child protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>14,000</td>
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<td>6,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,480,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>150,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. UNICEF recalculation based on the Demographic and Health Survey 2003, and according to World Health Organization Child Growth Standards.
8. Ibid.
13. Total number of beneficiaries may not equal the sum of beneficiaries per sector, due to overlap in services provided to individuals.