



Children who have fled conflict in Sudan play a game in a UNICEF-supported child-friendly space at Transit Center Renk, Upper Nile State, South Sudan.

unicef 
for every child

Humanitarian Action for Children

South Sudan

HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2025, the children and families of South Sudan are projected to experience increased humanitarian needs, especially as funding gaps to support the UNICEF response in the country have widened. Approximately 9 million people,¹ including 4.9 million children, 2.2 million women,² and 1.4 million people with disabilities,³ will need humanitarian assistance.
- Extensive flooding and climate change, conflicts, disease outbreaks, the influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the Sudan, internal displacements and economic deterioration are intertwining to contribute to the heightened needs.
- UNICEF's humanitarian strategy focuses on addressing critical needs while complementing development initiatives to strengthen resilience. UNICEF prioritizes a context-specific response informed by risk assessments; climate adaptation; and conflict-sensitive approaches. UNICEF works with local structures and puts an emphasis on community feedback and accountability to affected populations.
- UNICEF urgently seeks \$278.2 million in 2025 to uphold children's rights in South Sudan amid the escalating humanitarian crisis.

KEY PLANNED TARGETS



720,000

children and women accessing primary health care



397,292

children with severe wasting admitted for treatment



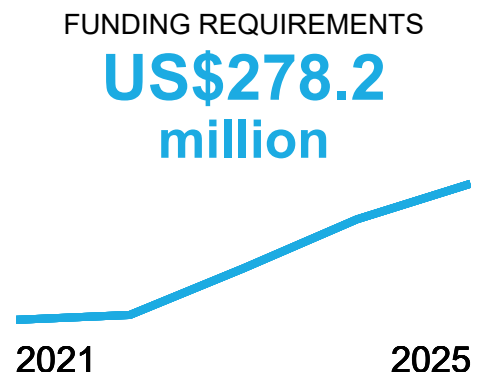
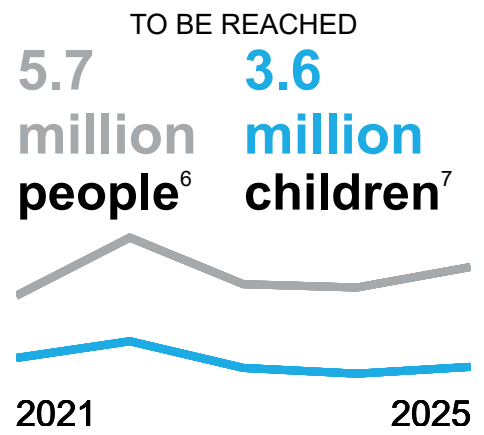
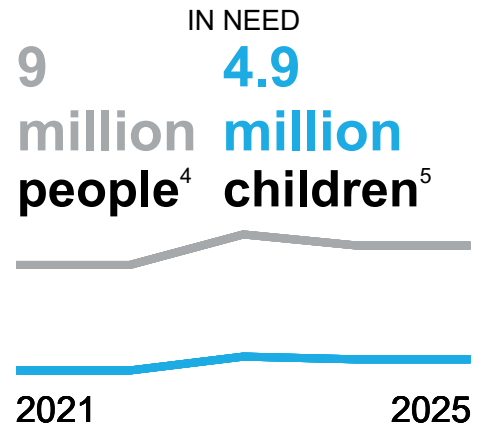
103,125

children/caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support



700,000

people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water



Current figures are based on the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024, pending finalization of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for 2025.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

South Sudan will face a difficult year in 2025, with heightened vulnerabilities of its people, increasing humanitarian needs and substantial cuts to aid budgets. The political environment remains fragile amid a two-year postponement of the general elections that were set for December 2024.⁸ In 2025, an estimated 9 million people, including 4.9 million children, will need humanitarian assistance and protection, with 15 per cent estimated to have a disability.⁹

Widespread flooding, economic deterioration, disease outbreaks and intercommunal conflict are intensifying the already complex and chronic needs of the country's most vulnerable, particularly children – severely affecting people's livelihoods and hindering their access to education, nutrition, water, sanitation and health services. Children are at high risk for abuse, violence, exploitation and psychosocial distress. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of ongoing conflicts, poverty, displacement and gender-based violence, including forced marriage. Limited access to education and livelihood opportunities makes children and youth susceptible to recruitment by armed forces and gangs.

From April 2023 to 10 October 2024, more than 826,000 people, including 415,000 children,¹⁰ crossed into South Sudan, fleeing war in the Sudan. South Sudan now hosts more than 484,000 refugees, and an estimated 2 million people are internally displaced largely due to floods, intercommunal conflicts and food insecurity.¹¹ These crises are stretching scarce resources and services and more than 2.5 million people are at risk of wasting, among a total of 7.1 million people requiring food assistance.¹² In 2024, the health care system continued to grapple with disease outbreaks including anthrax, measles, polio and yellow fever. More than 50 per cent of overall health consultations were for malaria.¹³

Due to the intensifying impact of climate change, it is projected that more than 1 million people will be affected by flooding in 2024.¹⁴ As of 4 October 2024, more than 890,000 people had been affected by flooding, which displaced 226,000 people.¹⁵ Food costs have risen 155 per cent compared with same period in 2023;¹⁶ and since the beginning of 2024, the official exchange rate has depreciated by 160 per cent.¹⁷ Food insecurity remains a big challenge, with 'emergency' levels (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, phase 4) widespread in 38 of 79 counties, affecting more than 2 million people, and 79,000 people facing 'catastrophic' (IPC phase 5) levels.¹⁸ More than 480,000 children aged 6–59 months are projected to be severely wasted in 2024, 37 per cent more than in 2023.¹⁹

SECTOR NEEDS



6.1 million people in need of health assistance²⁰



2.2 million people in need of nutrition assistance²¹



3.7 million children in need of protection services²²



3.4 million children in need of access to school²³



6.1 million people lack access to safe water²⁴

STORY FROM THE FIELD



As of 10 October 2024, more than 826,000 people had fled civil war in the Sudan since April 2023 to seek a safe haven in South Sudan. Crossing into South Sudan was the last resort for Sudanese refugees like Mey Sidig and her family. The mother of five, a former English teacher, was on the run inside the Sudan for months before finally arriving in Renk Town, South Sudan. In the transit area there, UNICEF and partners provide clean water, health services, treatment for wasting in children and mothers and safe spaces for children to play, learn and receive counselling for the traumas they have experienced.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Mey Sidig and her daughter walk through the Transit Center in Renk Town, South Sudan, in April 2024. They found refuge in South Sudan after fleeing war in the Sudan.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

UNICEF will focus on reaching the most vulnerable women and children in the hardest-to-access areas of South Sudan, aligning with the country's Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. Through innovative, multisectoral approaches, UNICEF aims to save lives, reduce suffering, uphold dignity and protect children's rights. Programmes for those most severely affected by multiple vulnerabilities are a priority.

UNICEF will reinforce risk-informed approaches by promoting climate adaptation and building resilience to future shocks. The focus will be on addressing the root causes of vulnerability and instability while enhancing the nexus between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. By applying a conflict-sensitive lens, interventions will be contextualized to address the complex, interrelated risks communities face. Alongside addressing acute needs, UNICEF will continue to foster innovative, durable and community-led solutions.

Preparedness and community-based anticipatory actions will enable timely and quality responses and mitigate the effects of crises. UNICEF will accelerate localization by strengthening local systems and expanding partnerships, particularly with local and women-led organizations. Fifty-one per cent (57 out of 111) of UNICEF partners in South Sudan are local and 10 per cent are women-led organizations.

All interventions will incorporate services for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Disability- and gender-sensitive approaches will enable tailored responses address the unique needs of women, men, children and persons with disabilities. Accountability will prioritize feedback and participation from affected populations, particularly children, women, youth and individuals with disabilities.

UNICEF's WASH actions will prioritize climate-resilient water and sanitation services, strengthening communities' capacity to cope with future shocks.²⁵ Education programmes will target at-risk out-of-school children, providing alternative methods to formal education in remote areas. Child protection initiatives will focus on enhancing linkages between child protection in emergencies, youth and adolescent programmes, gender-based violence prevention and response and systems strengthening. Health initiatives will focus on life-saving interventions, outbreak responses and immunization campaigns to help reduce childhood mortality and morbidity. Nutrition efforts will scale up life-saving treatments for severely wasted children focusing on a multisystem approach to improve quality of diet for young children by engaging food and social protection systems. The social protection portfolio will facilitate emergency cash transfers integrated within nutrition and health interventions.

UNICEF's leadership in cluster coordination, along with its presence through nine field offices, allows for the implementation of multisectoral and scalable programmes that address the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/south-sudan/situation-reports>

2025 PROGRAMME TARGETS



Health (including public health emergencies)

- **720,000** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities²⁶
- **481,308** children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose²⁷
- **884,066** people receiving insecticide treated nets²⁸



Nutrition

- **1,692,386** children 6-59 months screened for wasting²⁹
- **397,292** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment³⁰
- **2,100,000** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling³¹
- **2,958,623** children 6-59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation³²
- **58,543** children aged 6 to 59 months with high risk moderate acute malnutrition (HRMAM) admitted for treatment³³



Child protection and GBViE

- **103,125** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support³⁴
- **120,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions³⁵
- **7,000** children who have received individual case management³⁶
- **105,000** adults trained on EORE and conduct EORE school/community-based awareness sessions reaching children and adults³⁷



Education

- **602,792** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning³⁸
- **602,792** children receiving individual learning materials³⁹
- **6,028** teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support⁴⁰



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **700,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs⁴¹
- **223,000** people accessing appropriate sanitation services⁴²
- **1,400,000** children using safe, accessible and appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces⁴³
- **1,400,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies⁴⁴



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

- **12,000** households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers (including for social protection and other sectors)
- **1,680,000** adolescents and young people who participate in or lead civic engagement initiatives⁴⁵
- **3,003,656** people reached with timely and life-saving information on how and where to access available services⁴⁶
- **250,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms⁴⁷



PSEA

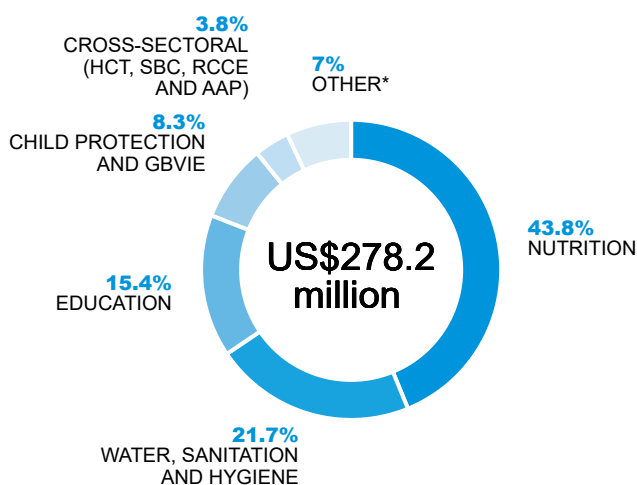
- **1,047,273** people who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers⁴⁸

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2025

In 2025, due to expected escalation of humanitarian needs and increasing costs of delivering humanitarian assistance UNICEF is seeking \$278.2 million to provide essential life-saving support to girls, boys, women and men, including persons with disabilities. A particular focus will be on people in hard-to-reach areas affected by such crises as flooding, conflict, disease outbreaks and displacement. This funding will enable UNICEF to uphold children's rights, alleviate suffering, deliver life-saving assistance and create opportunities for children to achieve their full potential.

The primary needs are in WASH, child protection, education and nutrition. Additionally, UNICEF is focusing on treatment for high-risk moderate acute malnutrition. The total funding request includes a 3 per cent allocation to support programmes across various sectors addressing gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation. The requirements reflect the rising costs of items and the expenses associated with logistics safety throughout the country, including appropriate measures during transportation and storage to reduce the risk of diversion, particularly in remote areas. UNICEF will enhance long-term, sustainable strategies to strengthen resilience, ensuring that aid is maximized and utilized efficiently. The budget also accounts for full-time cluster coordinators and cluster information management specialists, who are vital for creating coherent, evidence-based sector strategies in the child protection, education, nutrition and WASH sectors, and thus extending action for children.

The 2024 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for South Sudan has a significant funding gap of 72 per cent,⁴⁹ particularly in the education, health and WASH sectors. Without sufficient funding for the 2025 appeal, UNICEF will struggle to maintain the progress made in improving children's lives and will be unable to implement programmes aimed at creating lasting positive changes that can help children reach their full potential.



Sector	2025 requirements (US\$) ⁵⁰
Health (including public health emergencies)	8,301,385
Nutrition	121,886,929
Child protection and GBVIE	23,073,255 ⁵¹
Education	42,781,038
Water, sanitation and hygiene	60,427,026
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	10,522,212 ⁵²
PSEA	1,024,929
Emergency preparedness	8,102,467
Cluster coordination	2,065,445
Total	278,184,686

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Health (including public health emergencies) (3.0%), Emergency preparedness (2.9%), Cluster coordination (<1%), PSEA (<1%).

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ENDNOTES

1. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024. A total of 15 per cent of the population in need is estimated to have a disability, and 24 per cent of the people in need are women.
2. A total of 4.9 million children (per the Humanitarian Response Plan 2024) are estimated to need humanitarian assistance. When the Humanitarian Response Plan 2025 is finalized, the figures will be revised.
3. OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
4. The number of people in need is based on the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 and will be adjusted with the release of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025.
5. The number of children in need is based on the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 and will be adjusted with the release of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025.
6. 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. This target is calculated based on the highest programmatic targets of 2,958,236 million children aged 6–59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation; 602,792 children aged 5–18 years accessing formal or non-formal education; and 2,100,000 million primary caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counselling. The total number of people to be reached includes 50 per cent women/girls, 50 per cent men/boys and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities (in the absence of official census data, UNICEF has used the global estimate of 15 per cent).
7. This target is calculated using the highest programmatic targets of 2,958,623 million children aged 6–59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation; and 602,792 children aged 5–18 accessing formal or non-formal education. Of the target, 49 per cent are girls and 51 per cent are boys. Fifteen per cent are estimated to have a disability (in the absence of official census data, UNICEF has used the global estimate of 15 per cent).
8. The Government of South Sudan cited the need to complete crucial procedures such as a national census, a permanent constitution process and the registration of political parties as reasons justifying the postponement of elections planned for December 2024 to December 2026.
9. OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024. The 9 million people in need figure is based on the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024. The total people in need figure includes about 500,000 refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced persons. A total of 15 per cent of all people in need are estimated to have a disability, and 24 per cent of all people in need are women. UNICEF remains dedicated to needs-based targeting. In areas where it holds cluster coordination responsibilities, UNICEF will act as the provider of last resort.
10. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Population movement from Sudan to South Sudan, dashboard, as of 10 October 2024. Of these, 75.76 per cent are South Sudanese returnees and 24.24 per cent are refugees/other nationalities.
11. OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot, August 2024. As of 29 October 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan 2025 has not been developed. Figures will be revised after the 2025 Plan is finalized.
12. OCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024. As of 29 October 2024, the Humanitarian Response Plan 2025 has not been developed. Figures will be revised after the 2025 Plan is finalized.
13. South Sudan Health Cluster Bulletin #5, July–August 2024.
14. OCHA, South Sudan Flood Preparedness and Response Plan: June to December 2024. This figure is based on the moderate impact scenario, similar to the 2022 flooding, and will be revised as progress is monitored. Initial projections stood at 3.3 million people affected by flooding in 2024. As of September, the projections tended towards lower figures.
15. OCHA, South Sudan: Floods snapshot (as of 4 October 2024).
16. South Sudan: Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI), market overview, 1-7 August 2024.
17. World Bank Group fiscal year 2024/25 budget brief, 4 October 2024.
18. South Sudan: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – September 2023–July 2024 (food security) and July 2023–June 2024 (Nutrition), presentation to the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster, 15 November 2023.
19. Ibid.
20. Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. This is a shift from a focus on emergency WASH response to a more sustainable and inclusive approach.
26. The overall health cluster target for 2024 is 3.6 million people in need. This figure will be revised after completion of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025. UNICEF's contribution is 20 per cent of this target for 2025. It includes people affected by new public health emergencies and displacements (floods, conflicts).
27. Ideally, a national campaign should be held in 2025, hence the figures are 95 per cent of the target population (target <1yr (4%)). The target is derived from 2025 population estimates from the 2008 Population and Housing Census (target <1yr (4%): 506,640).
28. The total number of expected pregnant mothers is 884,066 (5.6 per cent) from the total population estimate (15,786,898) for 2025. An estimated 15 per cent have disabilities. Long-lasting insecticidal nets are given to pregnant women during antenatal care visits.
29. This is based on the EPI targets for the number of children under age 5 years.
30. The projected number of children who are severely wasted in 2024 is 484,502 (a 37 per cent increase from 2023). UNICEF targets to treat 82 per cent of this caseload (397,292). Planning was done using 2024 figures because the estimates of children requiring treatment for severe wasting in 2025 have not been finalized.
31. Targets estimated from the EPI targets, routine data on individual counseling and estimates from the National Bureau of Statistics.
32. Estimate based on number of children aged 6–59 months, based on total population, the 2024 mortality rate and fertility rates.
33. SMART survey data from 2020–2022 were used to calculate the prevalence of high-risk moderate acute malnutrition (1.4% of total <5 population), with mid-upper arm circumference at 11.5–11.9 cm. A correction factor of 3.6 and projected population of <5 in 2024 (812,569) were used.

34. A 25 per cent increase is proposed, considering the response rate reported in the current programme cycle. This increase in the target also enables the child protection programme to reach specific groups of children and prioritize their unique needs. Twenty per cent of the overall target is allocated to children under 5 years of age; 66 per cent is allocated to children aged 5–18 years. Additionally, 14 per cent of the overall target is allocated to address the needs of adults. Five per cent of all targeted age groups are people with disabilities. The percentage of targeted children with disabilities has been calculated on the grounds of the beneficiaries effectively reached last year.
35. This is a 20 per cent increase compared with 2024, to meet emerging needs related to the Sudan crises, flooding and intercommunal violence (based on the draft 2025 Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility Humanitarian Needs Analysis).
36. The 2025 target is the combination of the children at risk who receive case management (at least one child protection service) and the children who will receive family tracing and reunification services. The target is broken down as 50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls. 5 per cent of the total target will be children with disabilities. The percentage of targeted children with disabilities has been calculated on the grounds of the beneficiaries effectively reached last year.
37. South Sudan experienced protracted civil conflict which lasted for decades. The conflict led to widespread contamination of explosive ordnance in many parts of the country. Localized intercommunal ethnic conflicts add another layer of complexity, which, despite the use of small arms ammunition, still puts many communities at risk related to explosive ordnance, especially when they are displaced to locations that are contaminated by explosive ordnance. This situation heightens vulnerability to explosive ordnance, particularly among women and children who may unknowingly encounter these dangers in their daily lives.
38. The 2025 target is a 5 per cent increase compared with 2024. It is broken down as follows: 5 per cent of the target is children under 5 years of age (aged 3-5 years in early childhood education), 50 per cent girls, 50 per cent boys; 85 per cent of the target is children aged 5-18 years (40 per cent girls, 60 per cent boys) at the primary and secondary levels; and 10 per cent of the target individuals over 18 years of age (11 per cent female, 89 per cent male). Fifteen per cent of the target is estimated to have a disability.
39. Children aged 3–17 to receive individual learning materials.
40. The teacher-pupil ratio estimated at 1:100, considering 602,792 pupils.
41. Based on overall WASH cluster target for 2024: 6.1 million population in need in the country. UNICEF contribution is 11.5% of this target during 2025. Also based on 15 litres of water per person per day in an emergency context. One tap serves 250 people. One borehole serves 500 people. One motorized water yard serves a minimum of 2,000 people (8 taps). And one surface water treatment plant (SWAT) system serves a minimum of 3,000 people (12 taps).
42. Based on Sphere standards one toilet stance per 50 people in emergency contexts, and one handwashing facility per 50 people.
43. Based on WASH cluster standard of estimated people per the WASH Facilities: 1) Water supply: Borehole = min. 500 people, as per Sphere Standards. Water yard= 2000 people, SWAT system = 3000 people. (1tap serves 250 people). 2.Sanitation: One toilet stance in schools = 30 girls and 60 boys; One handwashing station = 50 pupils; and hygiene promotion sessions in schools (#clubs each with min of 15 pupils). Boys under 18 years of age account for 23%, girls under 18 years of age account for 25%.
44. Through the WASH core pipeline supplies.
45. The social and behaviour change target is based on the assumption that in 2025 UNICEF will support 7,000 Boma Health Workers/community mobilizers under the Health Sector Transformation Project across 79 counties. These workers are responsible for delivering two-way channels, e.g., house-to-house interpersonal communication engagements at a ratio of 1 Boma Health Worker for 40 households, with each household visited at least once. Each household has an estimated six individuals. Persons with disabilities are calculated at 15 per cent of the population, based on global estimates. Children under age 5 years are an estimated 19 per cent of the target, children aged 5–18 years 35 per cent and individuals older than 18 years of age at 46 per cent of the target. The target is comprised of 52 per cent females.
46. This target is based on the experience of national polio coverage in 2024 across the 79 counties that reached 3,003,656 children with polio vaccine information. This assumption is premised on the fact that social and behaviour change response targets caregivers and children for public health and natural and man-made disasters countrywide through one-way channels (radio and community announcements). Persons with disabilities are calculated at 15 per cent, based on global estimates. Children under age 5 years are an estimated 19 per cent of the target, children aged 5–18 years 35 per cent and individuals older than 18 years of age 46 per cent of the target. The target is comprised of 52 per cent females.
47. In 2025, UNICEF will continue to support the 2222 Hotline and other community-based feedback mechanisms, including feedback collection through surveys, focus group discussions, community meetings and other dialogues. The 2025 target is based on 2024 target. Persons with disabilities are calculated at 15 per cent, based on global estimates. Children under age 5 years are an estimated 19 per cent of the target, children aged 5–18 years 35 per cent and individuals older than 18 years of age 46 per cent of the target. The target is comprised of 52 per cent females.
48. This is calculated from overall engagement across sectors.
49. As of 30 September 2024, there was a 72 per cent funding gap for the 2024 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for South Sudan, a gap that is significantly higher than the 55 per cent funding gap for the 2023 appeal on the same date in 2023.
50. In 2025, UNICEF will utilize 1 per cent of the overall budget for preparedness and anticipatory action; 1 per cent for the public health response reflects the budget for the indicator, 'population affected by health emergencies reached with primary health care services', under the health sector response.
51. This line item includes \$6,259,680 for gender-based violence prevention and response targets and \$16,813,575 for other child protection targets.
52. This line item includes \$2,484,000 for humanitarian cash transfers and \$8,038,212 for social and behaviour change, which includes \$6,883,152 for risk communication and community engagement and \$1,155,060 for accountability to affected populations.