One Year after the Floods—Turning towards a Brighter Future
A Progress Report on the Children of Pakistan, July 2011
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Situation Overview: Pakistan in Crisis
In the 12 months after the flash floods in the north of Pakistan, UNICEF mobilized national, regional, and global resources to reach children and women with supplies and services, mounting one of the largest emergency responses in its history in terms of human and financial resources. UNICEF has achieved many remarkable results, contributed to the coordination of the wider humanitarian response, and will continue to support the vital needs of women and children to reduce vulnerability to disaster and build a better future.

The unusually heavy monsoon rainfall in July and August 2010 caused floodwaters to travel through Pakistan, swelling rivers, breaching embankments, and sweeping over farmland in the south. At the peak of the crisis, the floods covered one fifth of Pakistan, an area the size of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut combined were submerged by the floodwaters. More than 18 million people, including three million children under the age of five (600,000 newborns) and 780,000 pregnant women, were affected by floods that devastated rural communities, health facilities, and basic social services across the entire country, from the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea.

As with any emergency, the immediate needs in the aftermath of the floods were food, water, sanitation, and shelter. However, the situation was tremendously complex and required multiple concurrent responses to address the varying needs in different areas. For instance, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab provinces the response efforts allowed families to recover and rebuild quickly, while in Sindh and Balochistan...
provinces the displacement and return patterns fluctuated for many months. One year later, 97 percent of those displaced by the floods have returned home, many to dire conditions.

The impact of the floods will be felt for years. A disaster needs assessment estimated damages at $9.7 billion. Half a million livestock were lost; 1.7 million homes and nearly 10,000 schools were damaged or destroyed; and millions of livelihoods were destroyed. Families hosting displaced relatives for months exhausted their own resources.

As the recovery efforts continue, pre-flood challenges facing Pakistan—widespread chronic malnutrition, inadequate sanitation practices, and lagging school enrollment rates—still confront millions. Many communities lack services, infrastructure, safe drinking water, schools, and health clinics. Without sustained action to ensure recovery, there is a great risk of many people entering a downward spiral of increasing vulnerability.

**UNICEF in Action**
The floods prompted a massive operational response from UNICEF. Field presence was bolstered through the establishment of three new emergency field offices—in Multan (Punjab province) and Sukkur and Hyderabad (both Sindh province). These offices have been instrumental in UNICEF’s reaching the worst-affected children, and in enabling rapid scale up of response. The Sukkur and Multan offices will remain open through December 2011 in readiness for the monsoon rains of 2011. The surge in UNICEF staff and program experts has been particularly critical given the scale of the emergency. Rapid mobilization of resources has allowed UNICEF to expand its usual programming to meet the needs of millions more vulnerable people.

**Health**
The 2010 floods caused extensive damage to Pakistan’s rural health care infrastructure, damaging health facilities and displacing frontline staff. As a result, newborns and children face elevated risks of high morbidity and mortality caused by diarrhea, acute respiratory tract infections, measles, and malaria. Underlying malnutrition has been an aggravating factor, with disease in turn worsening malnutrition.

Collaborating with the World Health Organization and the Government of Pakistan, UNICEF provided all the vaccines for immunization campaigns conducted in 70 flood-affected districts, reaching more than 93 percent (10.5 million) of children under the age of five with measles vaccinations and 98 percent (11.7 million) with polio drops. Nearly 12 million also received vitamin A supplementation.

To restore and maintain community-based health services, UNICEF supported the Lady Health Worker network, providing 47,800 lady health workers in the flood-affected areas with cash incentives and essential supply kits to continue delivering services. To address the flood-driven risk of increasing mortality rates in childbirth, 24 hour emergency obstetric care services have been supported or established at health centers throughout the country. This approach is now being taken forward by the provincial Departments of Health.
Over the year, approximately 939,000 long-lasting insecticide treated nets were distributed to protect mothers and children from malaria, reaching nearly 470,000 families in high-risk areas. Over 900,000 mothers of children under the age of five were provided with education on the major health and disease threats against children—diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, and malnutrition. Prenatal care is an ongoing focus in flood-affected during 2011, with around 88,000 clean delivery kits and 92,000 newborn care supply kits already distributed to families.

Nutrition
Over many decades, poor feeding practices have been a contributing factor in chronic malnutrition. The floods forced millions from remote areas into camps, including many rural poor previously unreached, revealing the extent of the malnutrition problem in Pakistan. Damaging properties, food stocks, and standing crops, while delaying planting, the floods also escalated household food insecurity. The catastrophic level of malnutrition was confirmed by the flood-affected nutrition surveys carried out in late 2010 with the government and partners. Data released by the Departments of Health revealed global acute malnutrition levels of 22.9 and 21.9 percent in North and South Sindh respectively, significantly above emergency thresholds. An ongoing national nutrition survey is also showing alarming levels of micronutrient deficiencies.

UNICEF initially supported 292,500 children under the age of two and pregnant and lactating women with nutritional supplementation, including ready-to-use supplementary food, high-energy biscuits, and micronutrient supplements. Around 2 million children and 600,000 pregnant and lactating women have been screened for malnutrition; the women were also counseled on behavior change in the areas of nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation.

UNICEF has partnered with provincial Departments of Health, lady health workers, community health workers, and volunteers to promote key messages on infant and young child feeding across the country. More than 300,000 mothers and caregivers have been educated in

Photo right
Pakistan: Lal Mai with her newborn grandson waiting for the transport to go back home outside a basic health unit in a village Haji Ghazi. UNICEF has resorted the labor room and equipped with latest equipment and provided staff for round the clock labor services. © UNICEF Pakistan/Zaidi
feeding through more than 10,000 sessions in the affected areas. Around 2,750 health care providers have been trained on feeding to ensure that children receive adequate nutrition, including exclusive breastfeeding, during their first six months of life.

**Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene**

After the floods, 14 million people urgently required safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities. The floods devastated much of the water supply infrastructure and many water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities throughout the country. In affected provinces, the use of toilets dropped drastically from an average of 70 percent to 12 percent. Access to improved water sources fell from 75 to 55 percent in the affected areas. Water quality deterioration has rendered the affected populations vulnerable to WASH-related diseases.

Two months into the response, UNICEF was already reaching over 2.6 million people with clean water, including 1.2 million people who benefited from water that was initially trucked in. Sustainable early recovery interventions, such as water supply repair and restoration and the promotion of household water treatment, have been scaled up, with over 5 million people currently accessing safe water daily across the flood-affected areas. UNICEF and its partners will provide clean water and pre-empt disease outbreaks among 4 million people as the weather gets warmer through the mass chlorination of water sources.

Over the course of the year, almost 4.7 million people, mainly women and children, were reached with hygiene messages. Over 550,000 hygiene kits and 1.4 million bars of soap were distributed. UNICEF and partners supported the training of over 3,000 hygiene promoters at the community level. Community feedback and the low rates of diarrheal diseases reported from health centers indicate positive behavior change, particularly on key areas of hand washing with soap and household water treatment.

To encourage children to stay in school, UNICEF has provided an integrated WASH-in-schools promotion package across flood-affected areas that...
benefits 140,000 children in 1,530 permanent schools and temporary learning centers. The intervention includes rehabilitation and installation of WASH facilities, and hygiene-promotion messaging. Transitional school structures are being equipped with WASH facilities, including hand pumps and separate gender-specific latrines.

**Education**
Before the floods, almost 7 million, or 50 percent, of Pakistan’s children were out of school. The floods immediately affected an estimated 1.8 million children. More than 8,600 schools were either partially or fully damaged, while more than 5,600 schools were used as shelters by displaced people.

Over the year, in the most severely affected districts, UNICEF, along with partners and government, established over 4,250 temporary learning centers benefiting more than 294,000 children, including 112,000 girls. In Sindh, moreover, initial school enrollment drives introduced 218,000 children (40 percent of whom were girls) to the government school system. Despite myriad challenges, 761,000 children benefited from such essential school supplies as school-in-a-box kits, early childhood development kits, tables, chairs, and stationery. In Punjab, UNICEF supported the introduction of early childhood education classes in 150 temporary learning centers, reaching 12,000 children, including 6,400 girls. Mass construction of 500 transitional school structures by December 2011 is underway. These prefabricated structures can be erected in a month and have a lifespan of up to 10 years.

**Child Protection**
Even before the floods, an estimated 32 percent of Pakistani girls married before the age of 18 and 3.3 million children under the age of 14 were engaged in child labor. The floods caused insecurity in household food and income, elevating protection risks. The floods also increased children’s vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, disrupted community protective networks, heightened psychosocial distress and risk of physical and sexual abuse, and reduced the coping abilities of families and individuals. In areas
affected by militant action, flood-affected children also required protection from abandoned weapons and unexploded ordnance.

After just one month, child-friendly spaces (CFSs) were benefiting 13,000 children with education, recreation, and psycho-social support services. Over the past year, coverage has expanded more than 30-fold, reaching as many as 397,000 children (including 186,000 girls) in 1,200 locations. Around 163 safe spaces specifically for women benefited 11,000 women in the four affected provinces. UNICEF established 1,500 child protection committees, reaching 54,000 children with support and service referral. Working with partners, 532,000 non-food items (blankets, shoes, kitchen utensils, etc.) were distributed to vulnerable children and families. UNICEF also supported the establishment of 14 child protection units within Departments of Social Welfare, registering 17,000 children and providing 12,000 of those with services. Through 2011, child protection centers (CPCs) are being established to strengthen national institutions in their provision of sustainable protection for vulnerable children.

Within the Gender Based Violence (GBV) Working Group, UNICEF has supported the development of national standard operating procedures and an information management system to support child survivors. Training of 35 capacity promoters on GBV prevention and response took place in April 2011, with additional training of 30 government staff and partners planned for July 2011. To enhance systems for supporting unaccompanied and separated children. UNICEF is strengthening information management systems and will conduct training for 60 provincial government staff in August 2011.

Risk escalated as receding floodwaters exposed previously hidden unexploded ordnance and land mines; 16 children were injured. UNICEF continued to lead the coordination of the Mine Risk Education Working Group. While supporting these activities in KP, UNICEF has provided 238,000 people (including 184,000 children) with awareness messages.

**Developing the Capacity to Respond**

The magnitude and complexity of the Pakistan flood crisis prompted a concerted effort by UNICEF to strengthen the scale, timeliness, and effectiveness of its emergency response. A vital opportunity exists for UNICEF, the government and partners to address the challenges illuminated by the disaster. UNICEF’s strategy will be to strengthen community and local government capacities, including for disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness. Contingency plans have been made and emergency preparedness actions taken for the 2011 monsoon season. Stocks supplies have been pre-positioned and distribution plans mapped out, with an overall supply budget of $11 million. Partnership agreements are now in place to activate swift emergency response.

**Looking Forward**

Although substantial results have already been achieved, a sense of life-and-death urgency remains. Millions of people are still struggling to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, infrastructure remains weak and unreliable, and most social services still require restoration. Enabling the survival of women and children and establishing an environment in which they can thrive has been the impetus of UNICEF’s
work this past year and continues to be the focus moving forward. Looking ahead, there are clear priorities that must be addressed to enhance the well-being of the most vulnerable children and women. Health, nutrition, and WASH sectors require continued investment to ensure that children survive and that their long-term development is not impaired.

UNICEF and the U.S. Fund sincerely thank all public and private sector donors for the contributions and pledges made so far. Without these timely contributions, the current response would not have been possible. Thanks to the generosity of governments, UNICEF National Committees, inter-organizational arrangements, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other UNICEF Country Offices, UNICEF had received $201.6 million (as of July 6, 2011), with the funding gap remaining at $49.5 million.

UNICEF would especially like to acknowledge donors and supporters who provided immediate and timely funding for rapid early response—granting UNICEF the flexibility to direct resources and critical supplies and interventions where and when they were needed most.