

Media Update

24 June 2022

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING 26 June 2022

This year's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking shines a spotlight on the impact of drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises.

Conflicts, climate disasters, forced displacement and grinding poverty create fertile ground for drug abuse — with COVID-19 making a bad situation even worse. At the same time, people living through humanitarian emergencies are far less likely to have access to the care and treatment they need and deserve.

Meanwhile, criminals are profiting from people's misery, with cocaine production at record highs, and a five-fold increase in seizures of methamphetamines and a near-quadrupling of amphetamine seizures over the last decade.

On this International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, we renew our commitment to ending this scourge and supporting those who fall victim to it.

This includes non-discriminatory policy solutions centred around people, health and human rights, underpinned by strengthened international cooperation to curb the illicit drug trade and hold accountable those who profit from human misery.

We must also strengthen science-based treatment and support services for drug users, and treat them as victims who need treatment rather than

punishment, discrimination and stigma — including treatment for those living with infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

We cannot allow the world’s drug problem to further shadow the lives of the tens of millions of people living through humanitarian crises.

On this important day, let us commit to lifting this shadow once and for all, and giving this issue the attention and action it deserves.

UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE SEAFARER 25 June 2022

The world counts on seafarers.

Their contribution is immeasurable. Ships transport a remarkable 90 per cent of the world’s commodities — from grains and energy, to consumer goods and much more. Without ships and the women and men who work on them, economies would stall and people would starve.

Seafarers worldwide have faced immense challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic — including contracts extended long beyond their expiry dates and maximum periods of service, and challenges related to vaccinations, medical care and shore leave.

This year’s theme — “Your Voyage, Then and Now” — is an opportunity to recognize the vital role seafarers play, and look to the future.

Above all, this means listening to seafarers themselves. They know better than anyone their needs and what this industry needs to do to address key challenges. This includes the expansion of social protection, better working conditions, addressing the crew-change crisis, adopting new digital tools to enhance safety and efficiency, and making this industry greener and more sustainable.

On this International Day of the Seafarer, we renew our commitment to supporting seafarers everywhere, and honouring the knowledge, professionalism and experience they bring to this essential industry.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Global hunger crisis pushing one child into severe malnutrition every minute in 15 crisis-hit countries

Ahead of G7 summit, UNICEF appeals for US\$1.2 billion to meet urgent needs of 8 million children at risk of death from severe wasting

Multimedia content is available to download [here](#)

NEW YORK, 24 June 2022 — Almost 8 million children under 5 in 15 crisis-hit countries are at risk of death from severe wasting unless they receive immediate therapeutic food and care – with the number rising by the minute, UNICEF warned today as world leaders prepare to meet at the G7 summit.

Since the start of the year, the escalating global food crisis has forced an additional 260,000 children – or one child every 60 seconds – to suffer from severe wasting in 15 countries bearing the brunt of the crisis, including in the Horn of Africa and the Central Sahel. This rise in severe wasting is in addition to existing levels of child undernutrition that UNICEF warned amounted to a [‘virtual tinderbox’](#) last month.

“We are now seeing the tinderbox of conditions for extreme levels of child wasting begin to catch fire,” said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. “Food aid is critical, but we cannot save starving children with bags of wheat. We need to reach these children now with therapeutic treatment before it is too late.”

Soaring food prices driven by the war in Ukraine, persistent drought due to climate change in some countries, at times combined with conflict, and the ongoing economic impact of COVID-19 continue to drive up children’s food and nutrition insecurity worldwide, resulting in catastrophic levels of severe malnutrition in children under 5. In response, UNICEF is scaling up its efforts in 15 most affected countries. Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen will be included in an acceleration plan to help avert an explosion of child deaths and mitigate the long-term damage of severe wasting.

Severe wasting – where children are too thin for their height – is the most visible and lethal form of undernutrition. Weakened immune systems increase the risk of death among children under 5 by up to 11 times compared to well-nourished children.

Within the 15 countries, UNICEF estimates that at least 40 million children are severely nutrition insecure, meaning they are not receiving the bare minimum diverse diet they need to grow and develop in early childhood. Further, 21 million children are severely food insecure, meaning they lack access to enough food to meet minimum food needs, leaving them at high risk of severe wasting.

Meanwhile, the price of [ready-to-use therapeutic food](#) to treat severe wasting has soared by 16 per cent in recent weeks due to a sharp rise in the cost of raw ingredients, leaving up to 600,000 additional children without access to life-saving treatment and at risk of death.

As leaders prepare to meet at the G7 summit, UNICEF is calling for US\$ 1.2 billion to:

- Deliver an essential package of nutrition services and care to avert what could be millions of child deaths in 15 highest burden countries, including prevention programmes to protect maternal and child nutrition among pregnant women and young children, early detection and treatment

programmes for children with severe wasting, and the procurement, and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food.

- Prioritize the prevention and treatment of severe wasting in all global food crisis response plans by ensuring budget allocations include preventive nutrition interventions as well as therapeutic food to address the immediate needs of children suffering from severe wasting.

“It is hard to describe what it means for a child to be ‘severely wasted,’ but when you meet a child who is suffering from this most lethal form of malnutrition, you understand – and you never forget,” said Russell. “World leaders gathering in Germany for the G7 Ministerial have a small window of opportunity to act to save these children’s lives. There is no time to waste. Waiting for famine to be declared is waiting for children to die.”

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Notes to Editors

The rate of increase in child wasting is based on publicly available estimates for January and June 2022 as found in National Nutrition Cluster estimates (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and DRC), Integrated Phase Classification Acute Malnutrition Analyses (Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Madagascar and Haiti), Humanitarian Appeals for Children (Ethiopia, Afghanistan), and Humanitarian Needs Overviews (Sudan). The total number of children projected to suffer from severe wasting in January and June 2022 was estimated to be 7,674,098 and 7,934,357 respectively, an increase of 260,259 additional children.

As a result of the global food crisis, UNICEF also estimates that the cost of treatment of child wasting has already increased by an estimated 16 per cent, driven largely by increases in the price of essential nutrition commodities and their raw materials.

For further information, please contact:

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit www.unicef.org

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UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Schools ill-equipped to provide healthy and inclusive learning environments for all children – UNICEF, WHO

NEW YORK, GENEVA, 24 June 2022 – Despite a steady decline in the proportion of schools without basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, deep inequalities persist between and within countries, UNICEF and WHO said today. Schoolchildren in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and fragile contexts are the most affected, and emerging data shows that few schools have disability-accessible WASH services.

“Far too many children go to schools without safe drinking water, clean toilets, and soap for handwashing—making learning difficult,” said Kelly Ann Naylor, UNICEF Director of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Climate, Environment, Energy, and Disaster Risk Reduction. “The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of providing healthy and inclusive learning environments. To protect children’s education, the road to recovery must include equipping schools with the most basic services to fight infectious diseases today and in the future.”

“Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is not only essential for effective infection prevention and control, but also a prerequisite for children’s health, development and well-being,” said Dr Maria Neira, WHO Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health. “Schools should be settings where children thrive and not be subjected to hardship or infections due to lack of, or poorly maintained, basic infrastructure.”

Schools play a critical role in promoting the formation of healthy habits and behaviours, yet many still lacked basic WASH services in 2021. According to the latest data from the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP):

- Globally, 29 per cent of schools still lack basic drinking water services, impacting 546 million schoolchildren; 28 per cent of schools still lack basic sanitation services, impacting 539 million schoolchildren; and 42 per cent of schools still do not have basic hygiene services, 802 million schoolchildren.
- One-third of children without basic services at their school live in LDCs, and over half live in fragile contexts.
- Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are the only two regions where coverage of basic sanitation and hygiene services in schools remains under 50 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa is the only region where coverage of basic drinking water services in schools remains under 50 per cent.
- Achieving universal coverage in schools globally by 2030 requires a 14-fold increase in current rates of progress on basic drinking water, a three-fold increase in rates of progress on basic sanitation, and a five-fold increase in basic hygiene services.
- In LDCs and fragile contexts, achieving universal coverage of basic sanitation services in schools by 2030 would require over 100-fold and 50-fold increases in respective current rates of progress.
- Improving pandemic preparedness and response will require more frequent monitoring of WASH and other elements of infection prevention and control (IPC) in schools, including cleaning, disinfection and solid waste management.
- Providing disability-accessible WASH services in schools is key to achieving inclusive learning for all children. Still, only a limited number of countries report on this indicator and national definitions vary, and far fewer provide disability-accessible WASH.
- Emerging national data shows that disability-accessible WASH coverage is low and varies widely between school levels and urban and rural locations, with schools more likely to have accessible drinking water than accessible sanitation or hygiene.
- In half the countries with data available, less than a quarter of schools had disability-accessible toilets. For example, in Yemen, 8 in 10 schools had toilets, but only 1 in 50 schools had disability-accessible toilets.

- In most countries with data, schools were more likely to have adapted infrastructure and materials – such as ramps, assistive technology, learning materials – than disability-accessible toilets. For example, in El Salvador, 2 in 5 schools have adapted infrastructure and materials, but just 1 in 20 have disability-accessible toilets.

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Notes to editors:

Read the WHO/UNICEF JMP 2022 Data Update on [WASH in schools](#) and download the data [here](#).

Find out more about the WHO/UNICEF JMP [here](#).

Download multimedia content [here](#).

About UNICEF

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About WHO

Dedicated to the well-being of all people and guided by science, the World Health Organization leads and champions global efforts to give everyone, everywhere an equal chance at a safe and healthy life. We are the UN agency for health that connects nations, partners and people on the front lines in 150+ locations – leading the world's response to health emergencies, preventing disease, addressing the root causes of health issues and expanding access to medicines and health care. Our mission is to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

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