Two thirds of South Sudan’s population remain in need of assistance or protection

This year, the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan requests US$1.5 billion to reach 5.6 million people with urgent life-saving assistance.

The United Nations and hundreds of non-governmental humanitarian organizations will work to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition by providing access to basic services like health, water and sanitation; protection to women and children; and promotion of recovery and resilience.

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance remains high due to years of conflict, displacement, lack of investment in basic services, lost food production, destroyed livelihoods, sexual violence and children losing their education.

“Despite a period of relative stability since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement in 2018, some 7.5 million people are still in need of humanitarian assistance or protection and 3.7 million are displaced inside and outside of the country. Women and children continue to be the most affected,” said Alain Noudéhou, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan. He added: “The women, men and children of South Sudan are impatient for peace. The year 2020 offers great hope that the country’s leaders will begin the long road to recovery from conflict.”

Mr. Noudéhou emphasized that with improved access across South Sudan, the United Nations and hundreds of non-governmental humanitarian organizations are committed to working together with the authorities and affected communities to re-build lives.

“Reaching and protecting vulnerable people, especially previously inaccessible communities, is central to the 2020 response,” said Mr. Noudéhou. “We want to reduce hunger, see a decrease in the number of infant and maternal deaths, give people access to the basic services they need to survive, and build resilience in communities so they can cope with continued shocks, like the recent floods.”

Last year, South Sudan experienced unprecedented floods, affecting more than 900,000 people across the country. The disaster was a stark reminder of the need to strengthen people’s resilience.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in 2019, 5.3 million people were reached with assistance and protection through the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan. This is thanks to the dedication of thousands of humanitarian workers, most of whom are South Sudanese, and the generosity of donors who contributed more than $1 billion towards the response.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Two thirds of South Sudan’s population remain in need of assistance or protection  (PG. 1)
- News from UN Agencies, Funds and Programs  (PG. 2,3,4)

February 2020
Standing Firm, Rising Strong, how a World Food Programme initiative is helping communities survive tough times amidst growing needs

Pankar village, some 150 km north-west of Mingkaman, is a community in delight. For the first time in many years, an entire village - 230 families strong - has enough food to stave off hunger at a time of increased needs.

Known as the Food Assistance for Assets, the initiative aims to help build communities’ resilience to shocks while meeting seasonal food needs. People receive food or cash whilst working on constructing or rehabilitating an asset that benefits the whole community once complete.

South Sudan’s hunger levels are expected to worsen in 2020 unless assistance is scaled up. Catastrophic flooding, devastating drought in 2019, poverty and economic challenges have pushed millions to the brink. Some 5.5 million people are projected to need food assistance in early 2020 but more and more people might be in need at the peak of the hunger season in June. WFP’s FFA activity is providing communities such as Pankar with an opportunity to take the first steps out of the poverty trap.

UNICEF Calls on Government to increase its public investment in Education

Linked to the launch on 20 January of a global report ‘Addressing the learning crisis: an urgent need to better finance education for the poorest children’, UNICEF calls the Government of South Sudan to increase its public investment in education. South Sudan only allocates 5.6 per cent of its 2019-2020 national budget to education, while the internationally agreed standard is 20 per cent. This is the lowest public education spending in East Africa.

Bridge repair by Thai peacekeepers provides lifeline for Lakes communities

The repair of a bridge by Thai peacekeepers has provided a lifeline for communities in the Lakes region, enabling traders to travel more easily and ensuring humanitarian relief reaches families in need. “The bridge is far more important than it looks,” said community leader Andelin Lulu. “It’s the only link between us and supplies from Juba. Without it, we will have no medical and humanitarian relief or business supplies.”

The bridge was repaired by Thai engineers serving with UNMISS in partnership with WFP. The work is just part of a much bigger roading rehabilitation project being carried out by the Thai contingent across the Lakes region to facilitate the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and to help build peace.
South Sudan Joins global network to launch accelerator lab and human development report 2019

To address key drivers of inequality in South Sudan, improving access to education, basic services, livelihoods support, and innovative solutions tailored to local needs are needed in order to improve human development indicators.

These intervention points and more were tabled by speakers and panelists during a joint launch event “Accelerating Impact for Transformation in South Sudan” focused on examining the theme of the Human Development Report 2019 “Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: inequalities in human development in the 21st century”.

The report’s new data and methods were highlighted during a presentation by UNDP economists on how inequality affects people’s lives in a way that measures based on averages cannot. South Sudan’s Human Development Index value for 2018 is 0.413—which put the country in the low human development category—positioning it at 186 out of 189 countries and territories.

Also, at the event, was the launch of South Sudan Accelerator Lab. The lab is focused on alleviating poverty through youth employment and empowerment, private sector and value chain development by elevating and scaling local solutions to development challenges. It is located within UNDP South Sudan’s office and is part of UNDP’s global Lab Network now operating in more than 60 countries.

South Sudan strengthens port health services to ensure compliance with international standards

In an effort to strengthen port health services, South Sudan has set up thermal scanner at Juba International Airport to enhance capacities of detecting potential public health emergencies of international concern in compliance to the regional and international health standards.

Under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), Member States are required to establish and maintain emergency response capacities at designated airports and ground crossings to preserve public health security.

“The world is currently experiencing an increased risk of emerging diseases like Ebolavirus, yellow fever, cholera, seasonal and pandemic influenza, and other diseases with a threat to international public health security due to cross-border diseases spread,” said Hon. Dr Reik Gai Kok, South Sudan’s Health Minister.

“Following the declaration of the novel coronavirus 2019 (n-CoV) as Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization, the installation of the thermal scanner at the arrival gate of Juba International Airport will strengthen the screening capacity to identify ill travelers for investigation, isolation and treatment”, said Dr Kok. Read more

The Other Kids Have Their Legs, I Have My Wheels

It has just gone past 3PM and although the school bell sounded hours ago, some students are still on the school premises studying for the end of year examinations.

Among the group of students in the courtyard is 18-year-old Elia Batista Balash, who lost the use of his legs, after being diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis.

“I do not feel left out at school - the other kids have their legs; I have my wheels.”
Life for Elia, who dreams of becoming an engineer has not been easy, but he says he is coping. Read more about Elia here: https://storyteller.iom.int/stories/other-kids-have-their-legs-i-have-my-wheels

Condomize, don’t compromise

In commemoration of World AIDS Day, UNFPA launched the “Condomize” campaign aimed at breaking taboos and stereotypes related to or associated with condoms and condom use. It also aims at amplifying discussions around sex and sexuality education.

Various activities conducted during the launch reached 7,500 people with information on HIV, distributed more than 135,000 condoms, and conducted HIV testing for 291 people. Outreach activities were taken to schools to reach young people who are among the most vulnerable to HIV infection.

Reported HIV cases in South Sudan are low, estimated at around 200,000. However, very few people get tested. Among the people living with HIV, only 10 per cent are receiving anti-retroviral treatment.

Youth at the launch of the UNFPA’s Condomize campaign

Photo Credit: UNFPA