10. DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF UNICEF'S RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY

WHAT IS IT?

UNICEF's response to an emergency is in support of national authorities through the interagency (IA) system and partnerships. UNICEF's level of response is determined by an analysis of the situation, the needs of children and women, the lead and capacity of government and other partners to respond, UNICEF's own capacity to respond in line with the CCCs and its responsibilities and accountabilities for broader sector response and within the sector. The magnitude of the response will be influenced by the degree to which risks have been prevented and/or mitigated and preparedness of the country, UNICEF and partners.

UNICEF has three levels of response to an emergency:

LEVEL 1 EMERGENCY RESPONSE: CO can respond using its own staff, funding, supplies and other resources, and the usual RO/HQ support.

LEVEL 2 EMERGENCY RESPONSE: CO needs additional support from other parts of the organisation (HQ, RO and other COs) to scale up and respond to the crisis. The RD will provide leadership and RO support.

LEVEL 3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE: The Executive Director declares that organisation-wide mobilisation is needed to scale up and respond and appoints a Global Emergency Coordinator (GEC) with members of the Immediate Response Team (IRT) able to be deployed on a "no regrets' basis.

Interagency criteria used by UNICEF for analysis of the situation are: [32]

- **Scale** – *factors*: size of affected areas, number of affected / potentially affected children and women, number of countries affected
- **Urgency** – *factors*: importance of population displacement, intensity of armed conflict

- **Complexity** – *factors*: multi layered emergency, multiple affected countries/across regions, presence of a multitude of actors, lack of humanitarian access, high security risks to staff
- **Capacity** – *factors*: low national response capacity, weak/fragile state, needs outweigh the capacity of CO/ RO to respond
- **Reputational Risk** - *factors*: media and public attention and visibility, expectations of UNICEF by donors, national stakeholders and the public.

As mentioned under the HPC, declaration of an IASC humanitarian system-wide emergency response (IA Level 3 response), based on the five criteria mentioned, activates a **surge in leadership capacity, staffing and funding** to increase the delivery of assistance and protection to people in need. This includes setting up **enhanced leadership and coordination** of the humanitarian system; and engaging IASC member organisations, including UNICEF, to ensure they **put in place the right systems and urgently mobilise resources to contribute to the response** as per their mandate / focus areas.[33] Even without an IASC Level 3 declaration, UNICEF may still independently activate its own Level 3 emergency response.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

At the onset of an emergency, UNICEF's analysis based on the five criteria enables UNICEF to assess its own capacity to respond to the situation, determine gaps, and identify requirements and measures for scaling up capacity to respond and deliver on the CCCs. This in turn affects UNICEF's participation in IA efforts and other partnerships.

---

[32] These are defined within UNICEF's Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP) (CF/EXD/2011-001 and the Addendum).

[33] See Chapter 9 on the "Humanitarian Programme Cycle".

Clarity on the level of response also clarifies the accountabilities within UNICEF for support to the CO-led response.

WHO DOES WHAT AND WHEN IS IT NEEDED?

The CO is ultimately accountable for responding to the crisis regardless of the magnitude of the situation and the level of support provided from RO and HQ.

Within 24 hours of a sudden onset emergency or a significant change in context[34], the Country Representative, in collaboration with the RO and EMOPS, conducts a situational analysis to enable a decision on the level of response[35]. This includes determining key needs and deciding whether the CO has sufficient capacity to respond to the emergency with regular RO / HQ support. Information is checked with the government, other agencies and partners, including whether there is a request for assistance or declaration of an emergency by the national authorities.[36]

If the CO determines, in consultation with the Regional Director (RD), that the emergency, given national and other partner capacity, is beyond the capacity of the CO, the RD can recommend to the Director EMOPS the designation of an L2 emergency response.

If the CO and RD decide that emergency response needs exceed the capacity of both the CO and RO, then based on analysis of the five criteria the Director EMOPS can recommend to the Executive Director the declaration of a L3 emergency response and activation of the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP).

The designation of a UNICEF L2 emergency response or declaration of a UNICEF L3 emergency response

should take place immediately following the analysis and recommendations received in line with the SSOPs.

The initial duration of an L2 emergency response is 3 months and may be extended. L2s should not continue beyond 12 months. The decision to extend or deactivate is based on a review of the five criteria outlined above.

The initial duration of a UNICEF L3 emergency response is 3 months and may be extended up to 6 months in the "L3 surge phase". After review, the L3 may be extended or deactivated and transitioned to an L2 emergency. Within UNICEF the decision to extend or deactivate is based on a review of the situation, the five criteria and the achievement of a set of identified operational benchmarks.

If an L3 emergency is deemed to be a protracted crisis, the L3 may remain in place under a "consolidation phase" for between 6 and 12 months. The decision for the L3 to be extended or deactivated is based on a review of the situation, five criteria and the achievement of an additional set of benchmarks and support measures for this phase.

The determination of the level of the emergency response has implications for the 'pre-emergency' country programme, in that elements may be paused, adapted or removed based on the new context.

SSOPs

There are simplified procedures and mechanisms that apply to all emergency responses, as well as distinct procedures for L3 and L2 responses. See Summary of SSOP simplifications. See full SSOPs.

SUGGESTED TOOLS / GUIDANCE
• SSOPs Level 2 and 3
• Summary of SSOP Simplifications

---

[34] In a slow onset or protracted emergency, the Representative should establish thresholds, monitoring and reporting mechanisms for initiating an emergency response. The 24 hour requirement may not necessarily apply in these situations.

[35] For protracted crises, this would happen in response to ongoing monitoring and analysis of the situation.
[36] Language used to describe response and support should be nuanced and sensitive, given that governments may not always be willing to declare an "emergency".

TIMELINE[37]	First 24 hours	First 48 hours	First 72 hours
GLOBAL EMERGENCY COORDINATOR (L3)	Issue Global Broadcast to UNICEF staff within 24 hours of an L3 declaration	Establish EMT, EMT and GEC Secretariat within 48 hours of an L3 declaration	Conduct L3 SSOP session to guide CO within 72 hours of an L3 declaratio
IRT (L3)	Deploy IRT to CO *24-48 hours after declaration		
NEEDS ASSESSMENT, SUTUATION REPORTING, RESPONSE PLANNING, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION	CO Initial scoping and estimation of immediate needs; Check government emergency declaration /request for assistance; Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) decides on declaration of L3, and activation of clusters; UNICEF Indicates scope of response (L1/L2/L3)		

---

[37] The table explains what actions need to be taken, by whom and when in the response it needs to be done