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# Statement By UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore On Children In Afghanistan

August 23, 2021

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**NEW YORK (August 23, 2021)** – “Today, around 10 million children across Afghanistan need humanitarian assistance to survive. An estimated 1 million children are projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition over the course of this year and could die without treatment. An estimated 4.2 million children are out of school, including more than 2.2 million girls. Since January, the UN has documented over 2,000 grave violations of children’s rights. Approximately 435,000 children and women are internally displaced.

“This is the grim reality facing Afghan children and it remains so regardless of ongoing political developments and changes in government.

“We anticipate that the humanitarian needs of children and women will increase over the coming months amidst a severe drought and consequent water scarcity, the devastating socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of winter.

“That is why, after 65 years in Afghanistan striving to improve the lives of children and women, UNICEF will remain on the ground now and in the days to come. We are deeply committed to the country’s children and there is far more work to be done on their behalf.

“Millions will continue to need essential services, including health, lifesaving vaccination drives against polio and measles, nutrition, protection, shelter, water and sanitation. In recent years, significant strides have been made on increasing girls’ access to education – it is vital that these gains are preserved and advocacy efforts continue so that all girls in Afghanistan receive a quality education.”

“Right now, UNICEF is scaling up its lifesaving programs for children and

women – including through the delivery of health, nutrition and water services to displaced families. We hope to expand these operations to areas that could not previously be reached because of insecurity.

“We urge the Taliban and other parties to ensure that UNICEF and our humanitarian partners have safe, timely and unfettered access to reach children in need wherever they are. In addition, all humanitarian actors must have the space to operate according to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

“Our commitment to Afghanistan’s children is unequivocal and our aim is to see that the rights of each and every one of them are realized and protected.

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### **About UNICEF**

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to pursue a more equitable world for every child. UNICEF has helped save more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more.

UNICEF USA advances the global mission of UNICEF by rallying the American public to support the world’s most vulnerable children. Together, we are working toward a world that upholds the rights of all children and helps every child thrive. For more information, visit [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org) (<https://www.unicefusa.org/>).

### **For more information please contact:**

Erica Vogel, UNICEF USA, [212.922.2480](tel:212.922.2480) (tel:212.922.2480),  
[evogel@unicefusa.org](mailto:evogel@unicefusa.org) (mailto:evogel@unicefusa.org)  
Gabby Arias, UNICEF USA, [917.720.1306](tel:917.720.1306) (tel:917.720.1306),  
[garias@unicefusa.org](mailto:garias@unicefusa.org) (mailto:garias@unicefusa.org)

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