



World Health
Organization
Afghanistan

Alert on Afghanistan's Humanitarian Health Emergency

August 2023

Afghanistan is in the midst of a prolonged humanitarian crisis. Afghans live with an unstable health system and face the daily threat of food insecurity and malnutrition, a high burden of infectious and noncommunicable diseases, ongoing outbreaks, severe drought, and natural disasters. Furthermore, the vulnerability of women has intensified as they face increased obstacles in accessing healthcare due to the ban on education and workforce participation.

In 2023, about 28.8 million people need humanitarian aid (an alarming increase from 18.4 million pre-August 2021). For the health response, 14 million people (including 7.5 million children and 3.1 million women) are currently targeted for health assistance. Of this, **8.4 million people** have been reached in the first six months of 2023.

The health sector, in 2023, requires **USD 413 million to deliver health services to at least 14 million people** nationwide.

14 million people are targeted for health assistance in 2023

7.5 million children



3.1 million women

WHO's presence, strategy, and plan for the second half of 2023

Through its **1,250+** workforce operating in all seven regions of Afghanistan, WHO has a robust presence in all 34 provinces. Together with Health Cluster partners, WHO provides strategic leadership, information management, and technical and operational support to ensure the availability of essential and emergency healthcare services across the country. This is to ensure that vital and life-saving services reach all Afghans in need.

WHO continues to lead Afghanistan's health and humanitarian cluster coordination while serving as a permanent co-chair of the Health Strategic Thematic Working Group (H-STWG). Furthermore, WHO has adopted the “**delivering as one**” approach to enhance the coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the UN at the country level and plays a leadership role in convening key sectors to foster a “**Health in All Policies**” approach to improving health care delivery while playing a high-level mediator role.

WHO has a workforce of over 1,250 operating in all seven regions of Afghanistan – one of the biggest workforces in the country and the largest network within the local humanitarian sector.

The backbone of that workforce is WHO's Polio Eradication and Emergency Preparedness and Response Program, which reaches all **401 districts of the 34 provinces** and includes:

a 80,000—strong campaign workforce comprising both women and men

>49,000 doctors, nurses, community health workers, pharmacists, and healers in the acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance network

In the second half of 2023, WHO will continue working with its partners to tackle critical health emergencies by providing life-saving health interventions and building on the achievements and lessons learned in 2022, to achieve better health for the people in Afghanistan. WHO's strategy is comprised of the following three integrated components:

Protecting people every day by:

Scaling up the response to ongoing emergencies and emerging health needs by:

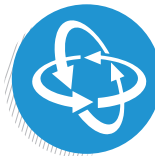


Including the strengthening of disease outbreak preparedness and response



Strengthening the health information management system

Reaching everyone everywhere, and putting mothers and children first by:



Expanding the coverage and increasing the quality of health service delivery, especially in underserved areas



Sustaining the momentum of polio eradication

Leading and coordinating the health sector to:



Respond to health-related needs at national and subnational levels through the Health Strategic Thematic Working Group, Health Cluster and other coordinating platforms



What happens if underfunding in the health sector continues?

Afghanistan's healthcare system is facing a significant funding deficiency, and if left unsupported, will have devastating impact to health of Afghans, especially women and children. Such a deficit will create huge hurdles in the access of healthcare, to those that need it most, which will in turn lead to increased vulnerability, particularly in underserved areas. Failing to address these challenges now will result in dire consequences for the Afghan population.

8 million people will lose access to **essential and potentially lifesaving health assistance.**



450,000

patients will have little to no access to life-saving **trauma care** services, including **blood transfusions and referrals.**



1.6 million people with mental health conditions will have little to no access to **mental health consultation and psychosocial support.**



520 **health facilities,** including hospitals, will remain with **little to no support.**



Over 900 **yearly outbreak ALERTS**



will potentially not be detected, investigated, and responded to.

875,000 **children** will suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

45,000 **children with severe acute malnutrition** with medical complications will have **no means of support.**



300,000 **women** of reproductive age will have little to no access to **reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health services.**



11 million children will potentially **miss their polio vaccination,** and **125,000 polio workers** will be **unable to vaccinate** and **conduct surveillance,** adversely affecting global polio eradication efforts.



According to 2021 estimates,

167

infants die each day of **preventable child mortality causes**, and this number is expected to increase if funding declines.



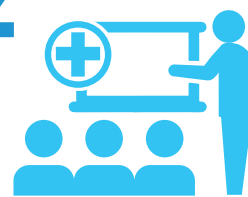
Potential reduction

of **WHO workforce**

1,262



554



According to 2020 estimates,

24

mothers die each day of **preventable**

maternal mortality causes under the current funding, and this number is projected to rise dramatically.



3,000

women and girls will not have access to **emergency women-specialized services**.



1.2 million

people will potentially not be reached with **life-saving information**.



With partners' support, WHO has the capacity to deliver the best possible healthcare to the people of Afghanistan. WHO remains committed to staying on the ground and providing critical operational support.

Leveraging 2022 Gains - WHO's Achievements to date

How WHO Delivers



1,262 robust workforce



8 WHO offices across 34 provinces

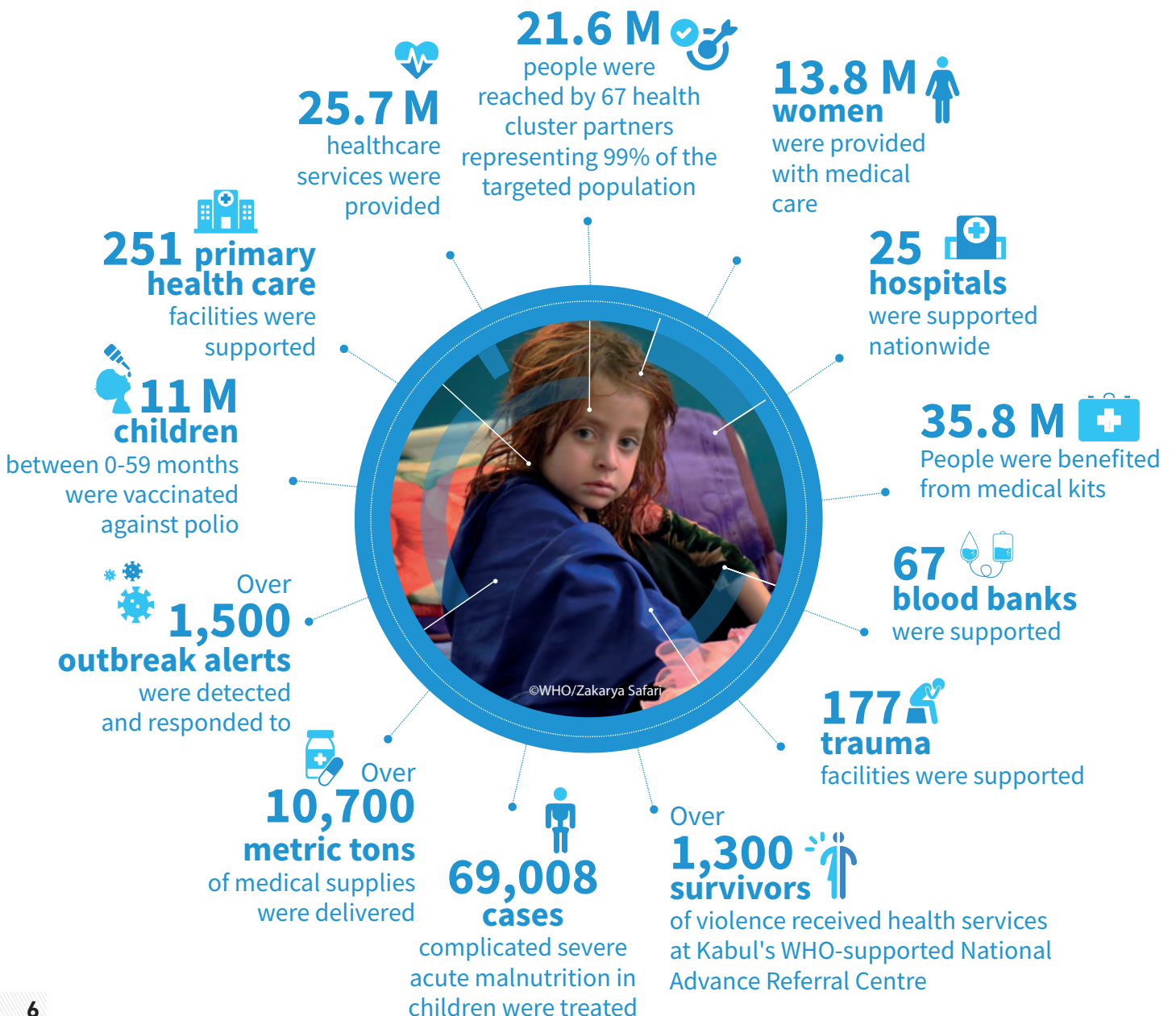


130 surveillance support teams mobilized for outbreak investigations and response



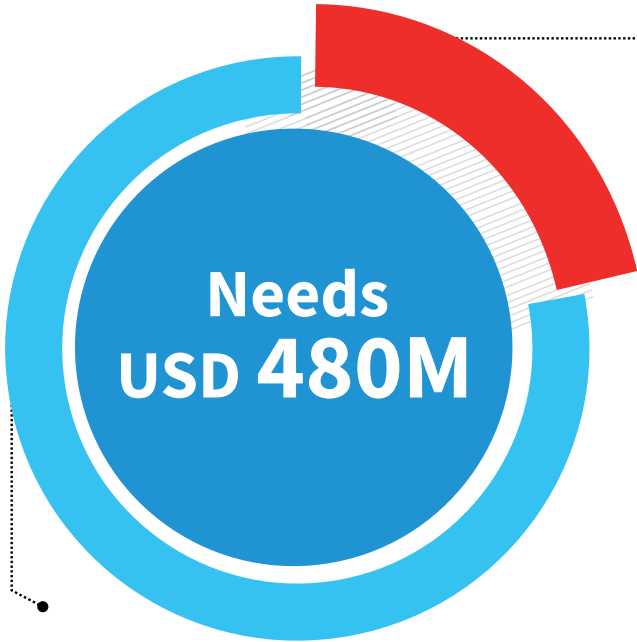
An active **35 monitoring & evaluation officers**

What WHO has delivered - 2022 Biennium to Date



WHO's funding needs for 2022-2023 biennium

Much work still needs to be done to deliver on the three strategic areas (protecting people every day; reaching everyone, everywhere, and putting mothers and children first; leading the health sector by coordinating the health partners sector) and drive impact in delivering effective health services in Afghanistan. WHO will need an additional **USD 125 million** in funding to continue to sustain basic health needs for the remainder of 2023.



Urgent Gap USD 125M

 **Available/
Implementing
USD 355M**

WHO Afghanistan would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our current partners



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