**UNICEF sounds the alarm for children in the SAHEL**

1. Successive droughts, rising food prices and insecurity in the Sahel are pushing families into crisis. **One million children are at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition if immediate action is not taken**.
2. An estimated **15 million people are directly affected** across areas of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.
   * While the people in the Sahel have great resilience, this is a fragile region with chronic vulnerability to drought, conflicts and other external shocks.
   * Since the last drought was only two years ago, families have not had time to recover and remain especially vulnerable. Many were forced to sell their livestock, pull children out of school, borrow money, and reduce the quantity and quality of food.
   * The current “lean season” (the period between harvests) will exacerbate conditions.
3. Insecurity in the Sahel is making the nutrition crisis worse and access more difficult. But we will still deliver. We must.
   * The conflict in Mali has displaced over 200,000 people and increased the demand for emergency assistance.
   * Nigeria, Niger, Mauritania and Mali face security-related threats that limit access.
   * While these threats are real and threaten not only UNICEF, but also local and international NGO partners, we will still work to find the means to deliver and monitor assistance. This will require additional security and thus additional resources.
4. **UNICEF is sounding the alarm for this silent emergency** and is calling upon the global community to help save lives.
   * With earthquakes and floods, we have little or no warning. Here, we know the crisis is coming. There will be no excuses later for not acting now.
5. UNICEF and partners are rapidly scaling up emergency programs to help save the lives of one million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.
   * UNICEF is working with governments, international and local NGOs, and community partners to coordinate nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education and child protection services for the most vulnerable children.
   * We have the ability to save and protect children as long as we have the resources, the access and the right people on the ground.
6. We are calling on all Canadians to help sound the alarm and raise the resources to save lives.
   * **It only costs $100 to save a child from severe acute malnutrition.** This donation provides a child with 60 days of essential nutrition and health supplies.
   * $60 million - 50% of needed funds - are still missing in order to reach every child.
   * Donations can be made at [**unicef.ca/sahelnow**](http://www.unicef.ca/sahelnow)
   * Supporters are encouraged to use social media to spread the word. ([unicef.ca/spreadtheword](http://www.unicef.ca/spreadtheword))
7. UNICEF will be using a phased approach to deal with this year’s emergency as well as the long term problem of malnutrition in the Sahel.

* Last year, UNICEF and partners treated 587,000 children for severe acute malnutrition.
  + **This year we want to reach significantly more children - treating as many as possible of the one million children at risk** **of dying from severe acute malnutrition**. Currently we have a supply pipeline in place that covers the first six months. Additional nutritionists, emergency specialists, logisticians and security personnel have been recruited. Agreements have been reached with government,   
    UN agencies, and NGO partners for coordination and implementation.
  + UNICEF and partners are also working to establish or expand the safety nets for both the prevention and treatment of severe malnutrition.
  + **The** **emergency response in 2012 represents an opportunity to address the structural causes of chronic malnutrition in the Sahel while strengthening the resilience of the communities affected.** This will be pursued through increased and equitable access to basic social services, social protection measures, support to sustainable livelihoods and behavioral change.