

P R E S S E M E L D U N G

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Pakistan floods: 1.4 million children at risk of homelessness and disease

Dhaka/Berlin, 20. Oct. 2020 As many as 1.4 million children¹ face homelessness and disease following some of the worst ever floods in Pakistan, warns Save the Children.

In scenes reminiscent of the devastating floods that swept parts of the country in 2010, children are living outdoors, schools have been destroyed or damaged and agricultural crops have been lost. In many rural districts, people have only five days' worth of food stock left. There are concerns for the spread of COVID-19 and water-borne diseases like malaria and dengue, as a large-scale humanitarian operation gathers pace across Sindh province in Pakistan's south-east.

Khuram Gondal, Save the Children's Country Director in Pakistan, said:
"During the current monsoon, Sindh province has experienced some of the heaviest rainfall for nearly 90 years and more heavy rains are expected.

"More than 4 million people have been impacted by the monsoon floods and that's equivalent to the population of a city the size of Rome.

"Make no mistake, this is an under-reported humanitarian catastrophe deserving of more attention, which would stretch the resources of the most powerful and richest nations on the planet."

One of the major impacts of the floods is on crops and livestock. Hundreds of thousands of acres of farmlands have been damaged, leading to fears for the supply of food.

"We are hearing that in many flood-affected communities only about three per cent of households have received food assistance, with food stocks running out in five to nine days' time, depending on whether people live in rural or urban areas," warned Mr Gondal.

There are worries for the disruption of children's education, too.

"A thorough assessment of the full flood damage to schools is urgently required, but in one district of Sindh our teams found damage to scores of schools, with some destroyed completely.

"As a result, we expect long-term disruption to the education of boys and girls. We are also concerned that the damage to schools may aggravate the high school drop-out ratio of children, especially girls.

"Partially damaged schools are not safe or ready to accommodate students returning after several months of learning gaps due to COVID-19, therefore an urgent rehabilitation and reconstruction approach is needed," said Mr Gondal.

The intense rains and floods that have battered Pakistan's Sindh province raise the alarm for climate change, warns Save the Children.

“We know that extreme and erratic weather events pose a growing threat to children’s ability to thrive. It’s therefore never been more important for climate vulnerable communities to be supported to cope with and adapt to climate change, as well as build their resilience to hazards like floods,” added Mr Gondal.

There are fears that today’s floods could eclipse the floods from a decade ago, especially if the monsoon rains continue as predicted. But during the 2010 floods in Pakistan, international media attention led to a huge humanitarian relief effort.

“The Pakistani authorities are working very hard to support their people, but they need urgent support from the international community,” said Mr Gondal.

In response to the floods, Save the Children has mobilised humanitarian aid workers and supplies to:

- Provide 400 households with emergency tents
- Provide 700 of the most vulnerable households with emergency food rations
- Pump water out of main roads to ensure access to school buildings and basic health units

ENDS

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in über 110 Ländern im Einsatz. Save the Children ist da für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen – seit 100 Jahren und darüber hinaus. Diese Kinder zu schützen, zu stärken und zu fördern ist das zentrale Anliegen der Organisation. Die Schwerpunkte der Arbeit liegen in den Bereichen Schule und Bildung, Schutz vor Ausbeutung und Gewalt sowie Überleben und Gesundheit. Save the Children setzt sich ein für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen können.

ⁱ According to the Health And Nutrition Development Society (HANDS)