

MOZAMBIQUE FLOODS

**UNICEF RESPONDS TO THE IMMEDIATE
NEEDS OF AFFECTED CHILDREN AND WOMEN**



7 JANUARY 2008

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

The Government of Mozambique declared a Red Alert on the afternoon of 3 January 2008 following a meeting of the Council of Ministers in light of the current localised flooding in parts of the country due to heavy rainfall in Mozambique and in neighbouring Zimbabwe and Zambia. National disaster management authorities in Mozambique are evacuating river communities along the rivers in an effort to mitigate the impact of impending floods on these populations. It is estimated that so far 56,000 people in the low-lying districts around the Zambezi, Save, Buzi and Pungue rivers in the Provinces of Sofala, Tete and Zambezia are already affected. As the rains continue, it is likely that the number of people in need will dramatically increase within a very short period of time. The affected population will require assistance, including food and basic services in areas such as health, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection.

In any disaster, including these floods, children suffer the most. Of the estimated affected population more than half are children who are most vulnerable to waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, hunger and trauma in this poverty-stricken region and require urgent assistance in order to survive.

Under the coordination of the IASC Humanitarian Country Team in Mozambique UNICEF and its partners, including sister UN agencies and international and national non-governmental organisations, are working closely with the Government of Mozambique to respond swiftly and effectively to the developing crisis. To finance these efforts, the United Nations is planning to launch a joint appeal in the coming weeks and UNICEF will be part of the joint appeal process.

In the meantime, in order to respond quickly, UNICEF is requesting an initial US\$ 2,425,000 to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas. This request will be folded into the UN joint flash appeal.

2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND ACTIONS

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Issues

With the onset of flooding, many children are without sufficient support to maintain their often already fragile health and nutrition condition. Overcrowding in resettlement and accommodation centres and lack of access to safe water and sanitation will increase the risk of water-borne diseases and acute respiratory infections. Mozambique continues to be afflicted by high incidence of diarrhoea, and incidences of cholera have occurred throughout the country. In total, some 2,556 cases have been reported in 2007, with 24 deaths - the majority of which have occurred in the last quarter of the year. Malaria – an on-going challenge in Mozambique and the number one killer of children under-five – runs the risk of increasing with the occurrence of the floods. Urgent medical supplies, nutrition support and preventive activities such as the provision of malaria nets and key life-saving messages are needed to avert the loss of life.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination of nutrition cluster;
- Distribution of life-saving and critical relief supplies such as plastic sheeting, ORS, malaria nets;
- Cholera mitigation and response including tents, cholera beds, and other support for service-delivery;
- Provision of high-protein biscuits;
- Distribution of medical kits including emergency drugs;
- Communication of life-saving messages including breast-feeding, danger-signs related to ARI, etc.;
- Operational support for medical teams, with special attention to the need for a sufficient number of female medical staff; and
- Monitoring to ensure that women and girls have access to health services.

UNICEF has already dispatched an assessment team and will support the establishment of temporary health facilities as needed, and will work closely with the Ministry of Health and WHO to determine what longer-term actions may be necessary.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Issues

Ensuring access to water and sanitation for the affected populations is the key immediate challenge for the response. Faced with limited options, people will often resort to unsafe sources, which will place with for children in particular will place their already fragile health at great risk. With the increased pressure from expanding population in often crowded conditions, the lack of sanitation facilities means that hazardous water can breed disease. Dysentery and other water-borne diseases pose a particularly grave risk to children.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination of water and sanitation cluster;
- Distribution of water purification tablets, jerry cans, water tanks;
- Trucking of potable water to flood affected areas;
- Establishment of safe water source including water purification plants, rehabilitation of existing water points;
- Provision of hygiene materials, including soap, buckets;
- Communication of life-saving messages including hand-washing and other hygiene messages;
- Provision of latrines; and
- Monitoring situation to ensure sufficient coverage and corrective action is taken as necessary.

UNICEF has already dispatched an assessment team and has provided support with water facilities, sanitation and hygiene related supplies. UNICEF will work to strengthen the response of Government authorities and local partners to provide water and sanitation facilities in affected communities and ensure all households have access to key life-saving messages related to the cluster.

EDUCATION

Issues

Schools have been affected by the flooding and ensuring children are able to start the school year on time at the end of January will be an important component of the humanitarian response. UNICEF's long experience in disasters has demonstrated that returning children to school as quickly as possible is one of the most valuable emergency interventions that can take place. Education is key to children's long-term opportunities, and must not be interrupted. In addition, schools provide children with a sense of normalcy, which is crucial to their psychological well-being. Schools will also provide a very important forum for communicating key life-saving messages.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination of education cluster;
- Provision of learning materials, school-in-a-box, didactic materials and teacher's kits;
- Provision of tents for temporary schools to ensure children can begin classes as scheduled at the end of January in the resettlement and accommodation centres.

PROTECTION

Issues

With the movement of the population into new areas, there is an increased risk to children and women to various forms of abuse. Additional support must therefore be provided to ensure populations which have already been devastated by floods are not also affected by violence or other forms of abuse which are often seen to increase in this situation.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination of protection cluster;
- Provision of basic household kits to the most vulnerable families;
- Distribution of recreation kits;
- Support to local authorities to monitor incidences of violence and also provide a protection environment in resettlement and accommodation centres.

COORDINATION AND LOGISTICS

Issues

Coordination and logistics are critical components of the response to the floods in Mozambique. UNICEF has assumed the cluster leadership in water and sanitation and also nutrition, and is co-leading the clusters of protection and education with the Save the Children Alliance. Under the overall coordination of the IASC Humanitarian Country Team, the clusters map out needs; identify the most appropriate response under the leadership of the government; and ensure efforts are complementary and prevent both overlaps and gaps.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination, monitoring and support of water and sanitation, nutrition, education and protection cluster (the latter two clusters as co-lead with Save the Children Alliance) as well as in the timely and efficient delivery of supplies and management of data communication in key field bases;
- Facilitation of assessments in these clusters;
- Establishment of up to two sub-national locations to act as monitoring and management hubs for UNICEF's response;
- Procurement and distribution of telecommunications and other operational equipment.

UNICEF has already provided communication support to the INGC to enable the national level office to be able to communicate with sub-national level offices, and has facilitated support to the establishment of a communication link with the central hub of the response in Caia. UNICEF will continue to participate in assessment missions and will keep abreast of needs and will lead planning of cluster response in the four clusters in which UNICEF is in a lead role.

3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2008

UNICEF is preparing to work with partners and sister agencies on a United Nations joint flash appeal that will be launched in the coming days. This Immediate Needs document will be folded into the flash appeal. In the meantime and in order to respond quickly, UNICEF is requesting an initial US\$ 2,425,000 to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas for the coming three months.

Table 1: Estimated funding requirements from January to March 2008*

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	750,000
Water and Sanitation	750,000
Education	400,000
Protection	200,000
Programme Communication	150,000
Coordination and Logistics	175,000
Total**	2,425,000

*Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and the medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use these funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

** The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

Details of the Mozambique emergency programme can be obtained from:

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