

NEPAL

THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN AFFECTED BY FLOODS IN SUNSARI



3 SEPTEMBER 2008

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

On August 18th the Koshi River in the Eastern Region of Nepal broke through an eastern retaining wall damaging two dam spurs, roughly 10 Km north of the East West Highway. This is mainly due to poor water resource management as well as poor maintenance and the overall lack of river basin management. In addition, the treaties signed between Nepal and India to manage the dam are outdated.

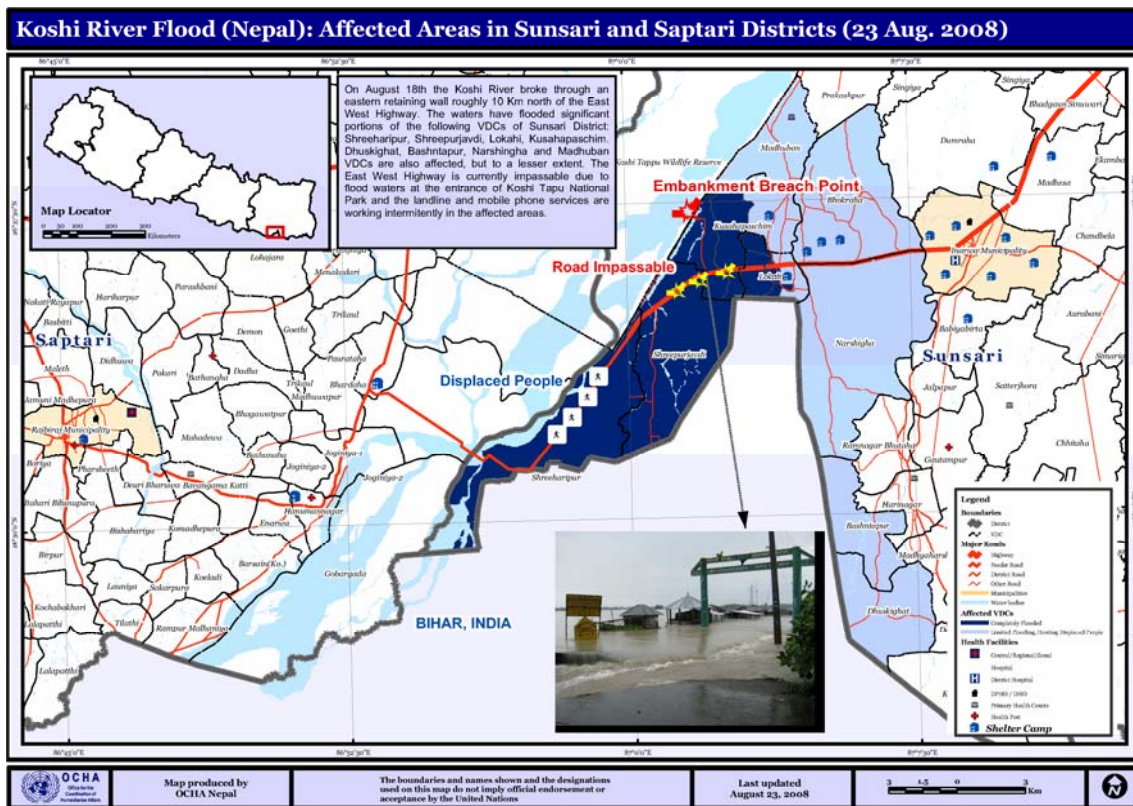
A total of nine Village Development Committees in Sunsari district have been affected, three of them severely. The East West Highway which is the country's main transport corridor remains impassable as a two-mile section of the Highway was swept away at three different points and will take sometime to repair. The latest Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) estimate is that 107,000 people have been affected by the floods. A total of 35,000 people are reported to be displaced in Sunsari and 19,000 in neighbouring Saptari district in the Eastern Region of Nepal, with children comprising up to 50 per cent of the displaced people. A total of 29 shelter sites have been established up to date to accommodate the increasing numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (DPs).

Nepal has a long history of floods and landslides associated with the south-west monsoon. Both 2006 and 2007 saw severe flooding in the country's southern *terai*¹ districts and many hill districts suffered devastating landslides. Flooding and landslides in Nepal are caused mainly by high and prolonged rainfall coupled with the country's topography that result in massive rainwater run-off. The ground becomes saturated and steep hillsides become prone to mud- and landslides. As the water level of rivers rises, people living along river banks and in low-lying areas of the *terai* are especially vulnerable to flooding, forcing many families to move temporarily to higher ground. While the impact of floods tends to be localized, the frequency of flooding in Nepal has become an almost annual occurrence and is mainly associated with poor land and water management.

The main consequences of flooding are the loss of human life, the destruction of houses and crops and damage to infrastructure. UNICEF is concerned that children, being the most vulnerable, are most at risk of attaching diseases, further deterioration of their nutritional status and of losing their lives. Water and sanitation is affected by disruption of existing water distribution systems, inundation of shallow wells and hand pump systems, and damage to sanitation infrastructure. Accessible water is contaminated by debris, overflow of latrines, and raw sewage from destroyed sewage systems, greatly increasing the potential for outbreaks of diarrhoea, dysentery and other water- and vector-borne diseases. Schools and health posts are damaged or destroyed, resulting in closure and loss of essential supplies such as teaching-learning materials or medical supplies and equipment. People lose personal property and belongings, which increases their immediate needs for shelter, essential household equipment, hygiene materials and other survival items, especially among internally displaced persons (IDPs). Moreover, the nutritional status of young children and pregnant and lactating women is threatened by lack of access to appropriate nutritious food. The physical barriers created by floods and landslides impede access to affected populations, making the distribution of aid more difficult and hindering vital child protection measures for the most vulnerable. Young people, especially those who are displaced, exhibit a higher probability of exposure to risky behaviour.

UNICEF and its partners, including sister UN agencies and international and national NGOs, are working closely with the Government of Nepal to provide immediate humanitarian relief assistance to children and women, where most needed. Yet, additional resources are required to ensure that the basic rights of children are met. This Immediate Needs Document for the amount of US\$1,796,000 is based on preliminary assessments of needs to provide humanitarian assistance to children and women in affected areas. The UN Country Team (UNCT) has already issued UN Appeal for the flood response as part of the Transition Appeal. The requirements in this Immediate Needs Document has been integrated into the UN Appeal.

¹ The southern plains of Nepal, bordering India.



2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Immediate response by UNICEF: The humanitarian response by UNICEF has been coordinated from the outset with national authorities and other UN agencies. In this first phase, assistance provided by UNICEF has been directed at improving conditions in IDP camps through interventions in the areas of health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, education, and child protection. In the first days of the emergency, UNICEF was able to distribute 13,000 packets of oral rehydration solution to treat diarrhoea for people in IDP camps. Over 4,800 hygiene kits (one per family), 312,000 water purifying tablets, 94,000 water flocculent and disinfectant powder and over 5000 water buckets with mugs were distributed in IDP camps to ensure good hygiene practices and the availability of safe drinking water. UNICEF in collaboration with other organizations is installing 29 hand pumps, 760 latrines, 60 garbage pits, and 320 bathing space especially for women and adolescent girls and will provide support to install temporary latrines in all shelter sites. With a view to ensuring the protection of children from abuse and to have safe learning space for children in the shelters, UNICEF has deployed staff from the country office to conduct child protection needs assessment and facilitate discussion to initiate child protection interventions including care and counselling support.

As flood contingency planning was undertaken, UNICEF was reasonably well prepared to deal with the onset of this crisis. UNICEF is the lead in the emergency education, water and sanitation, and nutrition clusters, and the child protection sub-cluster. UNICEF participates actively in coordination meetings called by national bodies such as the Central Disaster Coordination Committee led by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) led by UN/OCHA. In addition, UNICEF has developed good working relationships with a number of partners including relevant government departments and district offices, and NGOs such as the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and the Save the Children Alliance among others. These partnerships enabled a fast reaction to the emerging crisis. Rapid assessment tools have been developed for the education and child protection clusters, and UNICEF joined with other partners in conducting joint rapid assessments of the situation, based on the Core Commitment for Children (CCC) monitoring indicators.

As part of UNICEF's general preparedness planning for any emergency, pre-positioned emergency supplies of medicines (e.g., packets of oral rehydration solution (ORS)), insecticide-treated bed nets

(ITNs), water purifying tablets, hygiene kits, equipment for shelter and other related relief materials, child kits and school kits are available for use by children and families in IDP camps. Standing agreements with emergency response partners (particularly Nepal Red Cross Society) has been developed to ensure timely distribution of emergency relief materials.

Constraints: The main constraints in effectively responding to flood affected victims are (i) lack of accessibility to affected villages and communities due to inundation of roads and passages, and (ii) lack of preparedness activities among district partners. A key measure taken by UNICEF in coordination with OCHA this year has been the development of an Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) Tool through an IASC information management workshop conducted in April 2008. This year with support of various national and international agencies including UN agencies, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) has conducted pre-monsoon flood preparation workshops in most of the terai districts. This has enhanced flood response preparedness among the district partners as well as increased coordination among the supporting agencies.

Planned actions: UNICEF will support humanitarian relief interventions for IDP camps (Sunsari and Saptari) and emergency-affected communities. UNICEF is coordinating other UN agencies, the government and other actors in the areas of health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, child protection, and paediatric HIV/AIDS.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 249,000)

The requested amount is expected to meet the requirements of an estimated 8,000 families with provision of ITNs, 8,500 children for immunization, 8,500 children for supplementary feeding, and therapeutic feeding for all severe acute malnourished children.

UNICEF is the lead for the emergency nutrition cluster, which is part of the Emergency Health and Nutrition Working Group (EHNWG) led by WHO. The EHNWG coordinates with the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), District Public Health Offices (DPHOs), District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs), and the NRCS to ensure that affected populations have access to basic health services, including essential drugs, to take care of basic health problems.

Planned actions

- Participate in joint sectoral assessments of affected populations, particularly IDPs.
- Coordinate with DDMCs, NRCS, MOHP and DPHOs to address emergency health needs of affected populations.
- Coordinate through the EHNWG cluster to advocate with/request the MOHP and/or DPHOs to ensure health service provision for IDPs, including screening for severe malnutrition.
- Coordinate with the EHNWG cluster to support adequate response to injured civilians, as needed.
- Support World Food Programme (WFP) with technical assistance for needs assessment, monitoring, and capacity building of implementing partner NGOs for supplementary feeding for vulnerable children and women in affected areas, provided by WFP.
- Coordinate with zonal hospitals and nutrition rehabilitation homes for additional supplies or support for the management of severe malnutrition, if needed.
- Support MOHP organised training on Infant Feeding in Emergencies to health workers and supplementary feeding facilitators assigned to the relief work to promote breastfeeding protection and proper complementary feeding practices. Create safe havens and establish mother–baby-friendly corners for lactating mothers to breastfeed with privacy.
- Distribute ITNs to displaced population in malarial endemic areas.
- Supply DPHOs with additional packets of ORS and zinc for treatment of diarrhoea, where necessary.
- Reprint existing messages on ORS/zinc treatment and distribute together with supplies.
- Support immunization activities and vitamin A supplementation for IDP camp children with the MOHP's Child Health Division and DPHOs.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 743,000)

The requested amount is expected to fund water supply requirement of 61,000 people, water purification supply needs of 7,300 families for one month period, access to latrines of 77,000 people and provision of hygiene kits to 10,000 families.

UNICEF is the lead in the emergency water, sanitation and hygiene cluster and is taking the lead in coordination of the WASH response and working closely with relevant government and UN agencies, including the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage, Oxfam, Concern, World Vision International and NRCS to ensure safe water supply, sanitation and means for basic hygiene are provided to the affected and displaced people estimated at 50,000 people (10,000 families).

Planned actions

- Participate in joint rapid assessments of affected populations.
- Provide water purification products, buckets and hygiene kits to displaced population to be distributed through government partners and the NRCS.
- Provide funds and arrange with other relief partners the procurement of material and installation of tubewells, temporary latrines, bathing facilities and solid waste management and clean-up systems in temporary and permanent shelters for IDPs.
- Together with other agencies conduct hygiene education and promotion campaigns in the shelters, disseminate information on water treatment, hand washing with soap and treatment of diarrhea with ORS through printed materials, interpersonal communications and radio messages.
- Support rehabilitation work by providing the affected population with hand pumps and household latrines.
- Funds will be used to replenish the stock for water treatment tablets and flocculent/disinfection powder, buckets, and hygiene kits.

EDUCATION (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 442,000)

The requested amount is expected to cover the needs of 10,000 children with ECD kits, 9,200 kits for primary students and 150 school kits for 15,000 primary school students.

UNICEF in partnership with the Save the Children Alliance is the lead in the emergency education cluster. UNICEF coordinates with other partners to ensure that children in IDP camps have access to appropriate learning spaces and education materials; and that the education system can be re-established as smoothly as possible in affected areas after the emergency has ended.

Planned actions

- Participate in joint sectoral assessments of affected populations, particularly IDPs.
- Establish emergency working groups and communication networks from central to district levels.
- Establish plans with cluster for addressing education of displaced children and for ensuring children in temporary spaces are registered with schools and/or District Education Offices (DEOs) for the 2008/09 academic year.
- Deploy tents, tarpaulins, extra child kits, Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits and school kits, as needed.
- Contract with NGOs for temporary learning spaces and training of para-teachers, as necessary.
- Deploy child kits, tin trunks, learning materials and tarpaulins for use in IDP camps, as needed.
- Support local NGOs to deliver psychosocial classroom activities.
- Mobilize partners to implement assessment of school closures, and school and equipment damage (provide assessment tools; collect data; undertake preliminary analysis; and communicate findings).
- Leverage funds for rehabilitation of schools.
- Deliver child kits and school kits for rehabilitated schools, as and when they are ready.

CHILD PROTECTION (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 241,000)

The requested amount is expected to meet basic protection requirements of 15,000 children and 3,000 pregnant and lactating women. In addition, 30 safe spaces will be created for 9,000 children.

UNICEF is the lead in the emergency child protection sub-cluster, and a member of the Working Group for Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG), the Task Force for Monitoring UNSCR 1612, and the Mine Action Joint Working Group (MAJWG). UNICEF coordinates with other partners to assist children caught up in the emergency who are in need of child protection services (legal aid, transportation to medical care, psychosocial counselling, temporary shelter and related relief, family reunification, etc.). It also imparts mine risk education to help prevent victim-activated explosions of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), landmines, and other explosive remnants of war (ERWs), etc.

Planned actions

- Participate in joint sectoral assessments of affected populations, particularly IDPs.
- Conduct child protection assessment including psychosocial needs assessment, and commence psychosocial support activities.
- Work with education and cluster partners on starting child-friendly spaces and psychosocial support activities in IDP camps.

UNICEF is working with the government and other partners to ensure that children are protected from abuse, violence and exploitation during the emergency. Partners include government agencies (Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Nepal Police, Central and District Child Welfare Boards, etc.) and NGOs such as Save the Children Alliance, International Rescue Committee (IRC), NRCS, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, etc.

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 25,000)

UNICEF's Communication Section coordinates with all other sections and their partners, as needed, to ensure that programme messages are disseminated effectively. In this case, UNICEF will ensure that families know how to access relief assistance and receive adequate information on how to utilize relief materials effectively.

Planned actions

- Adapt IEC materials developed by Programme Communication Unit and disseminate messages to affected population through print, street dramas and audiovisual media.
- Disseminate messages through FM radios in local languages on relief activities and proper utilization of relief materials.

UNICEF has worked in the past with various media agencies/media houses; these organizations are being mobilized again for this activity.

ACTIONS TO ENHANCE PREPAREDNESS (initial estimate of requirements: US\$ 96,000)

UNICEF seeks US\$ 96,000 to enhance preparedness measures. These funds should be seen as the first instalment of response to the next disaster. The funds will be used for the following.

The current humanitarian crisis is highlighting once again the importance of preparedness for rapid response. The immediate availability of basic humanitarian supplies and the ability to dispatch them rapidly to the populations in affected areas saves lives in crisis situations.

In this emergency, essential supplies were rapidly made available by UNICEF to meet the basic needs of the population in IDP camps, due to maintenance of pre positioned relief materials in stocks. In addition, prior training of local volunteers in the proper use of water purification tablets ensured that water treatment was effective. Prior agreements established with local suppliers ensured that UNICEF could respond quickly in the first days of the emergency, purchasing some additional relief materials (shelter, relief materials, etc.) and ensuring basic services (water, hygiene kits, etc.) were maintained. Preparedness measures are all the more important now. The response capacities of Nepal's

government and other national partners have been overstretched by the response to the current crisis. UNICEF seeks to ensure that the most basic needs of children in the affected areas will be met, by ensuring the availability of key supplies and their prompt distribution in case of a new emergency in the area in the coming three months.

Planned actions

- Capacity building with national authorities and partners to enhance their capacity for preparedness activities and to assess present availability of key supplies for children in emergencies at national level.
- Pre-positioning of some key supplies for rapid dispatch in case of disaster.
- Logistics costs for distribution of key supplies to children.

3. IMPACT OF UNICEF'S ACTION

- Injured civilians, especially women and children, receive adequate and timely treatment and support.
- Displaced people in IDP camps and affected communities receive adequate health and nutrition services, including screening and treatment for severe malnutrition. Mothers in IDP camps are able to breastfeed with dignity. Families in IDP camps and affected communities are protected from malaria with ITNs. Children (and others) in IDP camps have access to ORS and zinc tablets for the treatment of diarrhoea. Measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases are controlled in affected areas.
- Vulnerable children and women in affected areas receive supplementary feeding.
- IDPs have access to temporary water and sanitation facilities. IDPs have adequate knowledge of good practices to purify their drinking water and maintain a healthy level of personal hygiene. Garbage in IDP camps is removed to maintain an adequate level of environmental sanitation. Damaged water supply schemes are restored to normal operation as quickly as possible.
- Children from affected communities and IDP camps are registered with education authorities. Children from affected communities and IDP camps receive child kits to maintain their schooling, and adequate learning spaces and teaching staff are made available. Young children in IDP camps have access to ECD facilities. Children and teachers from affected communities and IDP camps receive appropriate psychosocial support. Schools in affected areas are able to re-open when the emergency ends. Damaged schools are rehabilitated and receive school kits for re-opening.
- Children in need have access to child protection services such as legal aid, transportation to medical care, counselling, and temporary shelter and related relief. Children in IDP camps have access to child-friendly spaces and psychosocial support.
- Affected families have adequate access to relief assistance and are able to utilize relief materials effectively.
- A monitoring system is in place to ensure that Core Commitments for Children in emergency situation are fully implemented.

4. CURRENT FUNDING PRIORITIES

UNICEF is requesting a total amount of **US\$ 1,796,000** to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas over a six month period.

It is important to stress that early funding not only saves more lives but also ensures a more cost-effective response. For example, ensuring that displaced families have access to safe drinking water and hygiene materials as quickly as possible lessens the potential for outbreaks of serious water-borne disease such as dysentery and cholera that would require more costly and urgent health interventions to prevent numerous deaths.

If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term requirements outlined in this appeal document, UNICEF will use those funds to support other under-funded emergencies. Therefore, donors are encouraged to provide flexible, thematic humanitarian funding, which will enable UNICEF to use funds effectively where they are most needed.

Table 1. Estimated funding requirements from August 2008 to January 2009**

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	249,000
Water and Environmental Sanitation	743,000
Education	442,000
Child Protection	241,000
Programme Communication	25,000
Emergency Preparedness	96,000
Total*	1,796,000

*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 2006/07 dated 9 June 2006.

**Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and 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 those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in Nepal can be obtained from:

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