

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

BANGLADESH CYCLONE SIDR

27 NOVEMBER 2007

UNICEF IS SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN THE AREAS OF WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE, HEALTH AND NUTRITION, EDUCATION, AND CHILD PROTECTION

- According to the latest Government figures 7 million people are affected - half of them are children.
- 2.6 million people are in need of immediate life-saving assistance
- More than 1 million houses have been damaged and 366,000 houses are totally destroyed.



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh on the evening of 15 November. The cyclone hit offshore islands at approximately 1830 hours and made landfall across the southern coast from Cox's Bazaar to Satkhira districts at 2030 hours local time. Wind speeds reached up to 240 km per hour. The accompanying tidal wave was as high as 12-14 feet on Sandweep Island. A total of 30 districts were affected, - the five worst-affected districts being Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat, Barisal and Pirojpur. More than 3,000 deaths have been confirmed to date and still a large number of people are missing on the islands and coastal areas. Electricity systems have failed throughout the country, cutting off channels of communication, including mobile phone networks in the worst-affected areas. The infrastructural damage to houses, public buildings, schools and roads, is extensive. From the onset of crisis, the government has expressed the need for support from the international community to safeguard essential drugs, dry food and safe drinking water for the affected population.

The early warning and preparedness systems of the Government of Bangladesh were activated prior to the cyclone hitting landfall. One of the government's disaster preparedness measures included the evacuation of approximately 3.2 million people to safe places from along the coastline in 15 districts. The majority of the affected people have lost their homes: 366,000 houses were totally destroyed, and 845,000 partially damaged. Approximately half of the affected people are children and an estimated 600,000 of them are under the age of five. As the weather will soon get cold, vulnerable children and women require urgent life-saving assistance to be able to survive. Road access to all districts throughout the affected region is open. Difficulties still persist in reaching some small villages within the districts.

A major immediate priority is ensuring access to safe water supply and sanitation facilities, and to mitigate the possible impact of malnutrition in further exacerbating vulnerability of children and women. Many of the affected people returning to their homes found that their water points and household latrines have been damaged or destroyed. The cyclone has flooded many tubewells with saline water and this has also ruined surface water sources. With poor access to water supply and sanitation facilities, there is a great risk of outbreaks of waterborne diseases, such as cholera and dysentery. Children are most at risk from these diseases. Currently, a total of 732 medical teams are functioning in the affected districts.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS

From the onset of the disaster, UNICEF's humanitarian response has been coordinated with the UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) and with the Government of Bangladesh - the Disaster Management Bureau and the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. The UNDMT immediately formed five joint UN Assessment teams comprised of WFP, WHO, UNDP and UNICEF. The teams were dispatched to four most affected districts and have provided their complete assessment.

UNICEF will support the national response in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) nutrition, education, child protection, education and the provision of non-food items. Six clusters have been put in place by the UN Country Team (UNCT) in the areas of food, WASH, health, emergency shelter, logistics and early recovery. UNICEF is taking the lead in the WASH cluster. In addition, UNICEF is facilitating sectoral coordination among the developing partners and the NGOs in four other areas: Nutrition, Education, Protection -together with Save the Children- and emergency telecommunications. These clusters and sectoral coordination groups were engaged in identifying critical immediate needs and planning the coordinated responses as outlined below.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

A major immediate concern is to re-establish access to safe water supply and sanitation facilities. Affected populations do not have access to safe water supply and sanitation facilities as most water points and latrines are damaged or destroyed. Traditionally, ponds are a major source of water in the coastal areas, and all the ponds are now polluted with debris, dead bodies and salt water. They are no longer safe for drinking and household use. The possibility for developing alternative sources is

slim and so there will be a need to provide emergency water supply for the next 6 months, until the rains arrive.

UNICEF is supporting the lead government agency, the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in responding to the immediate needs. The pre-positioning of various supplies with DPHE, such as Water Purification Tablets (WPT), tube well spare parts, and jerry cans, has allowed an immediate response to take place. A total of 7.3 million WPT available in DPHE and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) are being mobilized for immediate distribution. UNICEF has purchased additional 10,000 jerry cans locally and 100,000 jerry cans from India to transport water. More jerry cans may be necessary, as well as other water storage devices, such as plastic and flexible tanks. UNICEF has provided cash assistance to DPHE for transportation of water, purchase jerry cans locally and repair tubewells to provide immediate support. DPHE has deployed many of their staff from other non-affected districts for assessment of the situation and providing immediate support in repairing tubewells and operation of mobile treatment plants. DPHE has mobilised 10 mobile treatment plants to treat water in the areas where fresh surface water is located.

There is a need of additional support to the affected population for next 5-6 months. UNICEF will continue to provide cash assistance and supplies to DPHE for rehabilitate damaged water points, construct new water points where possible, such as very shallow tubewells and deep tubewells, continuation of transporting water, rehabilitation or construction of latrines and promotion of hygiene. It may also be necessary to bring in more sophisticated water treatment plants capable of purifying the saline water.

UNICEF is responsible for coordinating the response in WASH with UN agencies and other implementing partners, through the cluster system. UNICEF will support the management of information concerning the situation and the response, including mapping of the problem areas and the response.

Immediate Actions

- Carry out short term transportation of water to populations who do not have any access at all (including provide enough jerry cans)
- Treat surface water using a)WPT, b) PuR water treatment sachets, c) mobile treatment plants
- Procure Reverse Osmosis plants for the areas with no water sources
- Clean up surface water sources where possible (ponds)
- Repair damaged tube wells
- Repair damaged surface water installations, such as pond sand filters
- Install Very Shallow Shrouded Tubewells
- Install some new deep tube wells
- Promote hygiene practices and provide hygiene materials
- Procurement and distribution of soap and other hygiene material
- Procurement and distribution of rings/slabs for the construction of latrines
- Cluster support activities; Running the cluster, Mapping of problems and interventions, Carrying out assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and Produce guidelines on technical procedures

HEALTH

An estimated 523,000 people in the cyclone-affected districts are in need of medicine or medical supplies and services. The pre-positioning of essential drugs, medicines including WPT was a major advantage in terms of preparedness and early response. Sufficient quantities of essential drugs are currently available at the Central Medical Store Department (CMSD) and District Reserve Stores to meet the increased needs in affected districts. In addition, both WHO and UNICEF have pre-positioned a sizeable quantity of essential drugs at CMSD. Distribution by the MOHFW is being expedited to the affected areas where the population is facing possible outbreaks of waterborne diseases. At the request of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, UNICEF will consider immediate support to facilitate distribution of essential drugs and movement of medical teams in the most-affected districts. Reports of possible damage to cold chain equipment and deterioration in

vaccine potency due to prolonged power outages have been received. Although the magnitude and scale are not yet determined, UNICEF envisages that the restoration of cold chain may become immediate needs. The disruption to routine immunization activities means that many young children are unable to receive essential vaccinations. A vaccination campaign is also essential to prevent outbreaks of measles and a re-emergence of polio. The cold weather is approaching and vulnerability to cold, hunger, diarrhea and other communicable diseases will increase many fold unless urgent life saving assistance is provided to the women and children hit by the cyclone.

Immediate Action:

- Support to expedite distribution of essential drugs from CMSD and district stores to affected areas
- Support to facilitate movement of medical teams and maintenance of cold chain
- Supply of water purification tablets (WPT), ORS and IV saline
- Continued assessment of damage to cold chains and vaccines storage, and the restoration of EPI capacity.
- Crash immunization programme in cyclone affected areas, with special focus on measles

NUTRITION

Millions of people seriously affected by the cyclone are now struggling to survive without food, safe drinking water and medicines. Moreover, the destruction of crops is expected to lead to an increase in food prices. In addition, the number of cattle, buffalos, goats and poultry lost was high. Malnutrition rates are therefore likely to rise, placing thousands of children and women at increased risk of illness and death.

To prevent a further deterioration in the nutritional status of vulnerable groups (children under 5 years of age, pregnant, and lactating women), UNICEF will complement WFP family food rations with high nutritional value (BP5 and blended food) supplementary foods. BP5 will be used for the immediate response as it does not require cooking, but will be replaced soon by blended food, which will be distributed for approximately three months. The beneficiaries of this intervention will be 338,000 children under five years of age and 123,500 pregnant/lactating women. About 92 MT of BP-5, which was procured for pre-positioning, arrived at Chittagong port on the 21st of November and will be distributed immediately after custom clearance and according to the distribution plan agreed upon with WFP, in five severely affected districts: Patuakhali, Barguna, Barisal, Bagerhat and Pirojpur. UNICEF is procuring another 90 MT for pre-positioning. Furthermore, a donation in-kind of additional BP5 from some donors is under discussion.

UNICEF, in collaboration with Bangladesh Breast-feeding Foundation and other partners will immediately put in place sensitization activities for the promotion and protection of breast-feeding practices (early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months of life, and ensuring privacy to protect breastfeeding). It will also promote improved age-appropriate foods and feeding practices as well as hygienic practices such as hand-washing.

All children under 1-5 years of age in the affected districts will receive Vitamin A to boost their immune status and reduce mortality from infectious diseases.

A nutrition assessment will also be conducted and a system for monitoring the nutrition situation will be put in place. Appropriate care will be provided for children affected by acute malnutrition.

As Cluster lead in Nutrition, UNICEF already called a first meeting with stakeholders on the 21st of November 2007 and will continue this coordination effort with all partners in order to ensure an effective, coherent and timely response.

Immediate Action:

- Immediate distribution of 92MT BP-5 through pre-qualified NGOs to children and pregnant and lactating women of 46,000 very vulnerable families in the five most affected districts.

- Distribution of BP-5, to be received as a donation –in-kind,
- Procurement and distribution of blended food
- Promotion and support of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding for young children
- Vitamin A supplementation linking to immunization campaigns
- Nutrition survey and nutrition monitoring system in the affected districts

EDUCATION

Information received from the Government and UNICEF field offices shows that a total of 3,046 government primary schools (646 heavily and 2400 partially) are damaged in worst affected 63 Upazilas in the 9 worst affected districts. Information on the number of schools run by NGOs is in the process of being collected. News media is reporting that in total over 10,000 schools (including NGO supported schools and Secondary Schools) are affected. All heavily affected and more than 60% of partially affected schools are closed. The types of damage and loss reported by DPE, NGOs and UNICEF field offices are (a) damage to the physical structure of schools, (b) loss of class room supplies, and (c) loss of student supplies (learning materials). UNICEF's response in education will be planned based on a more detailed assessment of the situation of schools and children in the affected areas. UNICEF will also take the lead in coordinating the education response with UN agencies and other implementing partners. Response in education sector is expected to pick up speed from coming weeks.

Immediate Action:

- Initiation of Sectoral Coordination: the Government has declared that it is going to allocate about US\$ 10 million from its revenue budget for immediate rehabilitation of partially damaged schools. UNICEF has been working with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to support them in prompt release of these funds and to mobilise additional funds for re-construction of heavily damaged primary schools.
- Conduct a rapid assessment with the NGOs on schools, using common assessment tools to assess exact nature and scope of damage and the needs
- Besides providing financial and logistical support from its own resources, UNICEF is advocating for the early release of the government resources and mobilisation of additional resources for the restoration of access to education for affected children in order to restore a sense of normalcy in their lives and minimize disruption.
- Provide teaching materials and support for teachers as appropriate
- Provide recreational and learning materials for children
- Working with the NGOs to establish temporary safe learning spaces in places where structures are not safe to use or no longer available. Will coordinate with Protection and the CFS supported by them.
- Training of teachers to run temporary learning centres
- Advocacy and community mobilization, including orientation of School Management Committee members on proper utilisation of funds to be provided by the government.

CHILD PROTECTION

During emergencies, traditional care arrangements are not functional due to the breakdown of family and social structures. This leads to serious child protection failures which leave children vulnerable. Key elements to promote the recovery of children not only involve meeting basic needs but also building their resilience. This entails the ability to overcome adversity and difficult life challenges and to continue with normal growth and development, which is to be promoted through community-based protection. Child friendly spaces where children can go to play and socialise do not only give relief to overwhelmed caregivers, but it also establishes a routine that contributes to normalization. In addition, it provides protection from abuse, violence and exploitation.

Initial assessments of the affected areas show the crucial need for protection support especially for the children. Many children have lost their homes and are now displaced, which is creating a sense of

insecurity. Some may also have lost family members and friends. Schools and health centres have been damaged and destroyed creating a need for protective environments.

UNICEF has already started supporting recreational and psycho-social activities in 18 child friendly spaces involving approximately 1,850 children. This is being conducted by trained NGO partners and adolescents from the community who provide volunteer work as animators. Moreover, a support and care system will be developed through existing local communities and NGOs to address separated and unaccompanied children. Through social mobilisation, community care support will be strengthened to create a protective environment for children.

UNICEF is planning to support a total of 380 child friendly spaces. The targeted beneficiaries are approximately 19,000 children in the following three age groups: 2-5 years, 6-11 years, and 12-18 years. The latter children will also be trained to participate in the care taker activities for the younger children in the safe spaces as adolescent volunteers.

A Child Protection Coordination Team has been set up with organisations carrying out child protection interventions following the cyclone. Common priorities were identified and modalities and funding requirements have been shared. UNICEF and the Save the Children Alliance will work closely with local partners, government bodies, to ensure that needs are being met as timely and efficiently as possible.

Immediate Action:

- Rapid assessment to identify protection needs for medium and long-term interventions. In the meantime, figures, reports, case stories, experiences and obstacles will be compiled from all the organisations working on child protection interventions.
- Provide psychosocial support to protect children from trauma and shock. UNICEF and partners will establish “child friendly spaces” at the community level where children can gather for some hours of the day, and receive care and recreation by trained NGO staff and volunteers. For the recreational activities, 1,900 recreational kits already made available by UNICEF, as pre-positioning, will be used. Some of them need to be relocated to the affected areas.
- Support Save the Children Alliance and local NGOs to establish 380 child friendly spaces within the communities in the 18 most affected Upazilas. This will also include support to the training of facilitators and adolescent volunteers. It is expected that the CFS will function for approximately three months.
- Separated and unaccompanied children will be identified and registered in view of their integration within their extended families and communities, through Union Parishad offices, NGOs, community authorities and the Social Welfare Officers. Currently the government is providing some support to the extended families who are hosting separated children.
- To minimize the risk for these children to be sent to orphanages, UNICEF with other members of the Child Protection Team will work closely with Upazila Social Welfare Officers and field supervisors to set up a referral mechanism to existing Drop-In Centers run by NGOs, while the NGOs are tracing the children’s families. Special attention will be given to girls separated from their families as they are the most vulnerable to dangers of trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Monitoring the re-integration or alternative arrangement made for separated and unaccompanied children will be ensured through the local NGOs and local district administration.
- Replenishment of recreational materials being used.

NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

The most vulnerable families are either living in shelters or in open places, as they have lost their homes and most or all of their belongings. These families are being provided support with the family kits, plastic sheeting, blankets and clothing for children. UNICEF will procure these non-food items and arrange transportation in the affected districts. With the winter chill gradually setting in, children require urgent life-saving assistance in the form of warm clothing and shelter. As part of non-food assistance 100,000 blankets, 60,000 children’s clothes, 60,000 family kits (containing 14 essential items), 30,000 tarpaulins and 30,000 plastic sheets need to be provided to the affected areas.

Immediate Action:

- Procurement and distribution of family kits, including women's *saris*, plates, spoons and mugs, bucket, soap, a plastic sheet, etc.
- Blankets and tarpaulin will be distributed by the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management as they are the consignee. On the other hand, plastic sheets, cloths and family kits will be distributed in close coordination with local government officials and other organizations to avoid overlapping and duplication.

EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The cyclone affected all major telecommunication infrastructures on the ground. It has been noted that apart from UNICEF and UNDSS, none of all other agencies has any available stock of telecom equipment. UNICEF has been coordinating the inter-agency telecom response from the onset of the emergency. Two assessments completed for UNICEF offices in Barisal and Jessore. A third telecom assessment mission is ongoing in the affected areas to the South with special attention to Barguna. A fourth assessment is expected to Bagerhat in coordination with WFP.

The assessments revealed the need for reliable connectivity in all affected areas. Almost no connectivity exists after the cyclone, therefore, it is important to ensure the UN staff operating in the area are equipped with emergency radio telecom in addition to provide datacomm services to UN missions and other agencies. At the moment, there is an ongoing installation of emergency telecommunication equipment in Barguna, which is expected to be completed within few days. Further analysis is required to identify the coverage area of the VHF network. The ICT team is currently installing BGAN equipment as part of the inter-agency telecom response in Barisal and Barguna area in addition to trying to improve the data and voice telecommunications in Jessore. It is important to note that the improvement of telecommunication infrastructure for data and voice connectivity will result into removing the obstacles on staff ability to work effectively and efficiently within the affected areas in response to the emergency. Therefore, and in order to control the movement of missions, two radio rooms are being established in Barisal and Barguna. Another radio room will be established in Bagerhat.

Immediate Actions:

- Conduct immediate ICT assessment in Bagerhat
- Improve power situation in Barisal office, which includes immediate need for a 10 KV generator, given additional equipment introduced. Another generator is needed for Barguna and possibly for Bagerhat.
- Immediate need for an iDirect VSAT station in Barisal, Burgona and Bagerhat
- Improve telecommunication capacity of field staff: GPRS/EDGE cards, DC/DC chargers, additional VHF handsets with spare batteries and charger,
- Install minimum two additional PSTN lines in Barisal and Jessore
- Establish the radio room in UN joint office in Barisal and Barguna with radio control during working hours
- Implementation of weekly radio checks on VHF (UNDSS inter-agency) in Barisal and HF with UNDSS Dhaka, UNDSS Jessore and UNDSS Barguna
- Establish additional computer workstations with UPS, scanner and printers and installation of BGAN in UN joint office in Barisal and Jessore
- Additional IT and Telecom responder capacities to be identified.

3. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

CERF applications were made to support a portion of the multi-sector response and US\$2,975,290 has been approved for the responses in WASH, nutrition, education, non-food items, child protection and emergency telecommunication. As part of the initial response, UNICEF regular resources for emergency preparedness have been used to meet the immediate needs in WASH and Health. Temporary allocations from the regular programme have been used to cover additional needs in the

areas of nutrition and non-food assistance to families. These resources will be replenished with funds raised in the coming weeks.

The UNCT together with the Government of Bangladesh will issue a Cyclone Response Plan in the coming weeks and UNICEF will actively be involved in this process.

Table 1: Funds Received against Appeal

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	6,184,500	556,400	5,628,100	91%
Health	200,000	0	200,000	100%
Nutrition	13,500,000	885,000	12,615,000	93%
Education	3,000,000	0	3,000,000	100%
Non-Food Items	4,550,000	1,678,769	2,871,231	63%
Child Protection	1,500,000	50,290	1,449,710	96%
Emergency Telecommunications	326,000	250,000	76,000	23%
Total*	29,260,500	3,420,459**	25,840,041	88.3%

*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.

**UNICEF has also received indications from the Government of Japan (US\$ 1,091,400), the Government of Sweden (US\$ 285,714.29) and the Belgian national committee for UNICEF (US\$ 68,399). These funds have not yet been received but are expected shortly.

Details on the Bangladesh emergency response programme can be obtained from:

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