

## UNICEF SITUATION REPORT INDIA FLOODS - EXTERNAL 24 AUGUST 2007

### HIGHLIGHTS

- As per the Government's estimates as at the 23 of August, the floods in India have affected 41.07 million people. As many as 36,025 villages have been affected and 370,862 houses have been fully damaged. The number of human lives lost to floods in India this year has reached 2,117 in total.
- The overall situation in Bihar slightly eased with moderate rains in the catchment areas of the major rivers. However, water released from Valmiki Nagar barrage in Nepal in the last one week has adversely affected the flood situation in East Champaran district. The major rivers are flowing above the danger level but are likely to recede. The death toll in the current spell of flood has shot up to 420.
- With the flood situation showing signs of improvement, the State Government in Bihar decided to stop air-dropping relief materials as of the 22 August. There is no evidence of serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation but the threat of a health epidemic remains very acute. UNICEF interventions are in full force.
- In Uttar Pradesh, due to rainfall in the upper reaches of the Ghaghara and Sharada rivers in Uttarakhand and Nepal, the water level has risen once again. Overall 1,436 villages in 19 districts with a population of 1.2 million people are reported to be affected in the state. The death toll as per official figures has risen to 216.
- The flood situation in Orissa and Assam are largely under control, although there have been localised floods in few districts of both the states in the last week. Various humanitarian needs persist and the relief action is ongoing.
- The focus of UNICEF's multi-sectoral interventions, as well as of major international NGOs, is in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, followed by Assam and Orissa.
- The Inter-agency meetings are taking place in the affected states on a regular basis. UNICEF is playing a lead role in coordination with NGOs and government agencies. The Unified Response Strategy (URS) continues its efforts to contribute to the coordinated response in Bihar, Assam and Orissa.

### BIHAR Situation

Nearly 17 million people in 9,064 villages in 20 districts in North Bihar have been affected by flooding. Crops worth more than \$70 million in 1.23 million hectares and over 170,000 houses have been damaged by floods. The eight worst-affected districts are Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, East Champaran, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Sheohar, and Khagaria. The major rivers including Ganga, Punpun, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Adhwara group of rivers, Kosi and Mahananda are flowing above the danger level but are likely to recede.

The District Superintendent of Education (DSE) of all flood-affected districts has been instructed by Education Secretary to resume all educational and mid-day meals in all schools.

The Unified Response Control Room (URCR) is operational and agencies engaged in the distribution of relief materials maintain a village-wise count of relief operations to prevent duplication of efforts. The representatives of the Government, and NGOs such as Action Aid, OXFAM, Caritas India, TDH Concern World, National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, World Vision, CNRI and CRS participate in the URS coordination efforts.

### UNICEF Response in Bihar

## **Nutrition**

A total of 21,065 children (6 months - 5 years of age) have been assessed by 40 teams.

- **Counselling of Mothers:** During the rapid assessment, a total of 2,893 mothers were counselled on exclusive breast feeding, complementary feeding and hygiene practices. Mothers of severe and acute malnourished children were advised to feed the child as frequently as possible with small soft feeds.
- **Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs):** With the support from the State Health Society and District Administration, locations to set up NRCs have been identified in the two worst-off districts: Muzaffarpur and East Champaran. These centres are now under renovation to become child- friendly. Medical teams will be in place shortly and the NRCs are planned to be functional in a week's time.
- **Community Kitchens:** Presently, 28 NGOs are supported to ensure nutritious meals through community kitchens. This initiative has reached to 11,500 children and 1,390 pregnant mothers. The process of supporting more NGOs to operate Community Kitchens is in progress.

## **Health**

A comprehensive disease surveillance and containment plan is in place for early detection and prevention of outbreaks of gastroenteritis, malaria, measles, and leptospirosis.

Over 280,000 people have been treated since the initiation of relief efforts by the mobile medical teams and fixed site teams mobilized jointly by the Government and UNICEF. There have been 18,897 cases of fever, 383 cases of fever with rash, 56 cases of jaundice, 11,200 cases of ARI (cough) and 13,599 cases of diarrhoea. As of 18/08/07, more than 22,000 children have been immunised with measles and were given Vitamin A supplementation.

In order to reach out to the far-flung areas with difficult access, a partnership effort has been launched with partners like CRS and Indian Medical Association (IMA).

UNICEF and the Govt. of Bihar are also partnering in an effort to provide essential maternal health services to the displaced populations and in areas where health facilities have not resumed functioning. UNICEF is supporting this endeavour by providing tents, midwifery kits and emergency health kits. Equipments for setting up 3 such units in each district are being sent to the districts of Begusarai, Khagaria and Samastipur. UNICEF staff members will be providing the technical support to the District Administration to operationalise these units.

The activities to be taken up in the near future include: providing essential health services through fixed sites and also outreach services; re-establishing immunization services including measles and vitamin A vaccination; preventing the spread of malaria through health education and provision of bed nets; strengthening the process of re- operationalisation of health centres and providing treatment at facility level for cases of severe malnutrition.

## **Water and Sanitation**

The Government agencies have repaired 13,685 hand pumps, reconstructed 1,385 hand pumps with raised platforms and installed 585 temporary hand pumps and 269 toilet sets in relief camps with UNICEF support. District action plans have been developed with the government for repair and rejuvenation of about 150,000 hand pumps in 19 flood affected districts.

UNICEF is also working with NGO partners to disinfect water in households through use of halozone tablets/bleaching powder, promote hand washing and hygiene in temporary shelters and affected villages, construct toilets in temporary shelters and provide toilets as an integral part of family housing for the flood rehabilitation in affected villages. UNICEF has expanded its partnership with Action for Community Empowerment, an NGO specialised in capacity building/orientation, coordination, monitoring and reporting of Government and NGO's flood mitigation activities.

## **Communication and Social Mobilization**

A mass awareness campaign is ongoing in coordination with all Government Departments and partners to promote the practice of key behaviours related to health, nutrition, safe drinking water, hygiene etc. The campaign includes dissemination of IEC material, radio spots and training of all Anganwadi workers to communicate key messages with families.

### **Education**

The assessment on the status of schools is currently ongoing. Based on the outcome, UNICEF supplies and support in terms of TLM and TLE will be determined. Alternative Learning Centres for about 300,000 children will be set up, where schools are damaged or used as camps in the eight worst affected districts.

### **Child Protection**

An assessment supported by UNICEF has been conducted in two districts, Samastipur and Madhubani, to assess the child protection concerns due to floods. The study is looking at indicators such as missing, orphaned, children heading households (working without parents), no. of children who left the district to earn livelihood for child labor, no. of children reported to have been trafficked, no. of families who have no access to services, no. of women, children reportedly victims of violence and abuse.

### **UTTAR PRADESH (U.P.) Situation**

Due to rainfall in the upper reaches of the Ghaghara and Sharda rivers in Uttarakhand and Nepal the water level had risen once again. Overall 1,436 villages in 19 districts with a population of 1.2 million people are affected in the state.

In the districts of Barabanki, Bahraich, Lakhimpur Khiri and Pilibhit around 150 villages again became marooned and over 1,000 families had to move to the embankments for shelter. At present over 2,000 families (10,000 people, including over 2,500 children) are still living on embankments. They are likely to continue living there for a month.

The Government of UP has distributed dry rations and household utilities to the families living in temporary shelters. In most places hand pumps have been provided near the camps for safe drinking water. Chlorine tablets, oral rehydration salts (ORS) and other essential drugs are reaching most camps.

### **UNICEF Response in Uttar Pradesh**

#### **Health and Nutrition**

The assessment of the damage to health centres and cold chain equipment is ongoing.

71 mobile clinics, out of 105 planned, are now operational and cover 449 villages. The mobile clinic teams have reached approx. 25,000 people, including 8,524 children, with immunization, ORS distribution and health-hygiene education. Essential drugs have been ordered and one million ORS packets have been provided to district health authorities; 20,000 IEC leaflets on diarrhea management have been distributed. Health workers have been trained in disease prevention and management with a focus on water-borne diseases, safe water, hygiene, breast-feeding and nutrition. UNICEF has worked closely with NGO partners regarding a coordinated distribution of tarpaulins, jerry cans, Halogen and other supplies.

#### **Water and Sanitation**

NGOs, with UNICEF support, have begun the work of disinfection and solid waste disposal in five districts. The location for new hand pumps are being identified in consultation with Government partners. Installation of Ecosan toilets is in progress in Barabanki district.

Over 5,000 families have received safe drinking water storage devices and over 10,000 families have received temporary shelter.

### **Education**

Sites have been identified for opening of approx. 50 temporary schools, each school is planned to provide learning space for 50 children between 3-14 years.

### **ASSAM Situation**

The situation has been constantly improving in spite of rainfall in different parts of the state. Due to release of excess water in Bhutan some parts of Barpeta district were flooded this week. As per official data, the population affected by 2007 floods in Assam stands at 6.8 million and 42 casualties have been reported. About 4,300 people are still living in 12 relief camps.

### **UNICEF Response in Assam**

UNICEF Assam achieved an effective co-ordination with the State Disaster Management Unit/Relief Commissioner's Office, Health & PHED departments, district administrations and partner NGOs on rapid response. All pre-positioned items were used immediately.

Advocacy with the Health Department on measles immunization for all children (9 months to 14 years) in camps has resulted in the Govt. of Assam agreeing to conduct measles immunization with Vitamin A supplementation in six worst affected districts; ORS (20,000) and PuR (200,000) sachets made available to the Health department to work; 2,000 mosquito nets distributed in four areas through NGO partners to address malarial outbreak.

Advocacy with PHED on improving sanitation and hygiene conditions in camps and affected villages; 100,000 PuR sachets were made available to PHED.

Participation in Sphere-URS co-ordination Meeting (22 August) at which UNICEF's leadership in working with the government departments, notably Health, ICDS and PHED, was highlighted and the participants briefed on activities underway, as well as supplies being provided to government as well as NGOs.

### **ORISSA Situation**

The overall flood situation has improved in Orissa as flood waters are reported to be receding. However, some areas still remain submerged in Balasore district. Moderate to heavy rains continued in some districts and overflows were reported from nine districts.

A total of 1,590 villages in seven districts with population of about 1.3 million are reported to be affected. Balasore, Bhadrak and Kendrapara are the worst affected districts.

Three days food assistance is being provided by the local administration from 21 August in four severely affected blocks and 12 free kitchen centers are operational. Water pouches and Halazone tablets are also made available at block level. Five medical teams have been deployed at affected blocks with sufficient medicine stocks to combat any epidemic situation. No epidemic outbreak is reported till now.

Relief and Rescue measures are also being undertaken by the district administration in Raigada, Bhadrak and other flood affected districts.

### **UNICEF Response in Orissa**

A joint assessment visit was undertaken by UNDP and UNICEF in Balasore on 22 August. The water level is receding but the danger of epidemic and spreading of diarrhea is large among the affected population.

UNICEF is assisting the government in assessing the current emergency supply stock position and replenishing supplies to ensure that emergency supplies like bleaching powder, PuR, Halazone, ORS etc are adequately maintained - not only to cover the current relief operations but also as pre-positioning strategy for a fresh round of floods in near future.

UNICEF is engaged in developing a plan with the State Water & Sanitation Mission for raising awareness at the community levels on preparedness. The plan includes building capacities of volunteers for demonstrating use of PuR, Halazone, ORS etc. at the community level focusing on women & children.

UNICEF continues to closely monitor the situation with other UN Agencies like UNDP & UNFPA and NGOs. Meetings and interactions have been held with the agencies on coordination, response strategies and information-sharing.