

## UNICEF SITUATION REPORT INDIA FLOODS - EXTERNAL 31 AUGUST 2007

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The government of India estimates that the floods across the country have affected some 44 million people as of 29 August. As many as 36,838 villages have been flooded and 482,330 houses fully damaged. The number of human lives lost to floods has reached 2,281 in total this year.
- The overall flood situation in Bihar has slightly improved with nil to moderate rains in the catchment areas of the major rivers. The major rivers are still flowing above the danger level at certain points, but have maintained their receding trend.
- In Uttar Pradesh and Assam states, the overall flood situation has improved although some rivers are still flowing over the danger mark and flooding some villages. In Assam there was an outbreak of gastro-intestinal disease but it was quickly contained.
- There has been an outbreak of cholera in three southern districts of Orissa. More than 130 people have died and the outbreak is still not fully contained.
- UNICEF continues its intensive emergency response – the current focus of interventions is in Bihar, followed by Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Assam.
- The Inter-agency meetings take place in the affected states on a regular basis. The Unified Response Strategy (URS) continues its efforts to contribute to the coordinated response in Bihar, Assam and Orissa.

### BIHAR Situation

- The overall flood situation in Bihar has slightly improved with moderate rains in the catchment areas of the major rivers. The major rivers, such as Ganga, Punpun, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, are flowing above the danger level at certain points along their course but have maintained their receding trend. As per Government sources, almost 21 million people have been affected by this year's floods in Bihar.
- Almost 300,000 people continue to be displaced. Most of the displaced have settled along embankments and highways. More than 1,300 relief camps are functional.
- The State Government has sanctioned a sum of \$40 million to compensate the losses suffered by the flood victims across the state.
- Air dropping of relief material, which was stopped on 22 August has resumed in Begusarai district. Food packets distribution has continued elsewhere.

### UNICEF Response in Bihar

UNICEF has increased the flood relief activities through its NGO network from 8 to 11 most-affected districts.

**Nutrition** – A Rapid Assessment of children, to identify severe and acute malnutrition, has now been completed in nine districts. Among nearly 55,000 children (6m – 5yrs), 1,404 were found to be severely malnourished. To date, 8,743 mothers have been counselled and supported to give more frequent feeds to the malnourished children.

**Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs):** The referral service to rehabilitate children with severe and acute grade of malnutrition started on 30 August in two NRCs in Muzaffarpur and East Champaran. The facilitators are providing on-the-job training to the staff.

Community Kitchens: 21,481 beneficiary children six months to five yrs of age and pregnant/ lactating mothers are receiving nutritious meals through 194 kitchens across eight districts.

Health - over 300,000 people have been treated by medical teams mobilized jointly by the Government of Bihar and UNICEF. There have been 29,099 cases of fever, 456 cases of fever with rash, 92 cases of jaundice, 15,568 cases of ARI (cough) and 19,948 cases of diarrhoea. As of August 27, more than 30,000 children have been immunised with measles and given Vitamin A supplementation. The medical teams, equipped with necessary medications and logistic support to reach out to the far-flung areas, were formed through NGO partners.

UNICEF and the Government of Bihar also 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.

Water and Sanitation – Government agencies have to date repaired 13,685, reconstructed 1,652 and installed 77 new hand pumps with raised platforms in the affected villages, and installed 743 temporary hand pumps and 328 toilet sets in relief camps with UNICEF support. Through NGO partners, UNICEF has supported hygiene campaigns, hand pumps disinfection, setting up temporary shelters with toilets and promotion of ecosan toilets.

Communication and Social Mobilisation – A communication and social mobilisation strategy has been implemented to communicate key messages related to hygiene, sanitation, health, nutrition and child protection to families and communities so that they can practice key child survival behaviours. This has been achieved through partner NGOs, mass media and government functionaries.

Child Protection – A rapid assessment, carried out in 85 villages of SamastiPUR and Madhubani districts, indicates a rising trend of children migrating for child labor; it identifies children vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and neglect and the need for providing psychosocial support. UNICEF and partners plan for counseling to children in schools and psychosocial support to families and children in camps in SamastiPUR and MuzaffarPUR.

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

- The overall flood situation has improved and most rivers are flowing at levels below the danger mark. However, 1,200 villages are still affected, of which 400 remain marooned. On 30 August, about 250 villages in Bahraich and Barabanki district have been inundated due to rising water in Ghahara River.
- In villages where the water has receded, people have started moving back. Poor sanitation condition remains one of the biggest challenges.
- The State Government continues to distribute their dry ration packages and other household utilities to families living in temporary shelters.
- Hand pumps have been provided near most camps for safe drinking water. Chlorine tablets, oral rehydration salts (ORS) and other essential supplies and drugs are reaching most camps.

### **UNICEF response in U.P.**

Water and Sanitation - Installation of ecosan toilets was completed in Barabanki and progress was made in Bahraich districts. The NGO partners have begun the work of disinfection and solid waste disposal in five districts. Over 100,000 families have received Halogen tablets, about 12,500 families have been accommodated with temporary shelter, and approximately 3,500 families jerry cans.

Health and Nutrition - 97 mobile clinics are now operational. So far, more than 100,000 people including 38,235 children have been treated. Immunization, chlorination, ORS distribution and health hygiene education is part of the clinics' work and 1 million ORS packets, 10,000 impregnated bed-nets for malaria prevention and 200,000 IEC leaflets on diarrhea management have been distributed.

Behavior Change Communication – In six districts, 900 volunteers are in the process of being trained on key health and hygiene behaviors, and 130,000 folders describing key health and hygiene behaviors were dispatched for distribution. UNICEF in partnership with National Cadet Corps (NCC) and Art of Living Foundation (AOL), continues to provide relief support.

### **ASSAM Situation**

- Heavy rainfall has been reported in the Barak Valley, but not in the rest of the state. Due to heavy rainfall in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, flash floods have been reported in Sibsagar district in Upper Assam affecting about 40,000 people.
- In Barpeta District, the water level remains stagnant with around 400 families in temporary shelters along the roads and on high ground. Rations are being provided by the district administration.
- The Sphere-URS meeting was held on 22 August where the activities of all state partners in the flood affected areas and relief camps were documented.
- On 21 August, there was an outbreak of gastrointestinal disease in Padampukhri, a low-income settlement in Assam's capital Guwahati. The affected area is part of a slum cluster in Uzan Bazar area, spread over about one acre of land.

### **UNICEF Response in Assam**

UNICEF carried out a rapid assessment in Barpeta district. Health camps were subsequently organised for health check up and measles vaccination. PUR sachets have been distributed to the affected population.

UNICEF team along with partners facilitated health camps on "chars" (riverine islands) off Dibrugarh district. UNICEF supplies (PUR sachets, jerry cans and mosquito nets) were distributed to affected populations.

Measles immunisation and administration of Vitamin A has been initiated in six worst-affected districts from 23 August. An estimated 60,000 children will be covered.

Active case finding pertaining to malnutrition levels of children in Anganwadi centres has been initiated, to be followed by appropriate counselling of mothers.

Implementation of the Total Sanitation Campaign in the six districts is geared up to address sanitation needs of the affected people who are setting up or repairing their homes.

Gastrointestinal outbreak - On the 21 of August, the media reported an outbreak of gastrointestinal disease in Guwahati. On the 22 of August, a total of 11 cases of gastroenteritis were admitted to two private clinics in the Uzan Bazar area; three of them died (one a 10-year old boy). In the affected area, although some households have latrines, most families are using open latrines where the lack of maintenance has led to choked toilets and broken septic tanks. Although there are several water sources in the area, water supply is intermittent and of poor quality (low levels of chlorination).

The Government took immediate action by setting up a health camp in the local school with doctors and other paramedical staff posted round-the-clock with ambulance services. Stool samples were examined and PUR sachets (supplied by UNICEF) and halogen tablets were rushed to the affected area. Active house-to-house surveillance started through medical teams. Public information messages were released through local media. As of 28 August, a total of 104 families reported illness and 66 persons visited the health camp. No fresh cases of cholera have been reported as on 30 August.

### **ORISSA Situation**

- The flood situation is improving in the Orissa. Although a low pressure is forming in the south, no major developments have taken place during the past week in the state.
- Southern Orissa is reeling under an outbreak of Cholera. The affected districts are Rayagada, Koraput and Kalahandi. Alerts have also been issued by the government in the neighbouring districts.
- As per report of the Disease Surveillance Cell on 29 August, the death toll is 64 in Rayagada, 17 in Kalahandi and 53 in Koraput. So far, the suspected cases are as follows: 3,316 in Rayagada, 228 in Kalahandi and 644 in Koraput.

- The government has initiated a daily surveillance system for all affected and adjacent blocks. As per technical advice from the State Task Force and WHO/UNICEF, the government is sending a clear treatment protocol to improve the quality of hygiene in particular.
- The administration has set up Diarrhoea Treatment Centres (DTCs) in several locations. Medical and paramedical staff have been mobilised from adjacent areas and Mobile Health teams have been deployed. There are also ambulances deployed at the DTCs. The administration reportedly has sufficient quantities of drugs.
- Due to active case search and mobilisation, the inflow of patients to the DTCs has increased and the number of deaths is reducing. The treatment in DTCs is good, but they are overcrowded with poor sanitary conditions.
- Disinfection of water sources is carried out by the Rural Water Supply & Sanitation department regularly. Drinking water supply is available in villages, but in some places with inadequate chlorination. The Government provided ORS and Halogen tablets at the family level, however, concerns remain in terms of adequate quantities.
- A team from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) was deputed by the Central Government to take stock of the health situation. It ascertained that the strain of bacteria isolated from most specimens is the Vibrio cholera 01 strain and is controllable.

### **UNICEF Response in Orissa**

UNICEF collaborates closely with the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) and is part of the state-level discussions.

UNICEF pre-positioned supplies of Halazone, ORS and PUR have been used for immediate distribution. Additionally, UNICEF provided 4,000 units of Ringer Lactate IV fluid. Non-pharma items including gloves, aprons, plastic sheets, plastic buckets and mugs have been provided to DTCs.

UNICEF has deployed a team of doctors to Rayagada and Koraput districts to assist the administration in epidemiological assessment and treatment protocols. A WES officer is also positioned in Koraput district assisting the administration in assessing water quality and sanitation issues.

UNICEF conducted orientation of NGOs and volunteers in Koraput district for mobilisation of communities on preventive aspects of the outbreak.

### **Coordination with international NGOs and other UN agencies**

- UNICEF, WHO and UNDP have created a technical team that is supporting the affected districts to improve epidemiological surveillance, provide technical support for treatment protocols for managing cases and create a public health fire wall.
- UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA have initiated an IEC and social mobilization campaign in the affected areas of Rayagada and Koraput involving the available NGO networks.
- UNICEF coordination with OXFAM helped in providing temporary toilets in Rayagada. OXFAM and CRS are interacting with UNICEF for developing their response strategies.
- Pre-positioned supply stock availability as well as efforts for raising community awareness by UNICEF is shared with the members of the Inter Agency Group (IAG).