

UNICEF Situation Report Solomon Islands - External 19 June, 2007

Major Developments

A Tsunami Lessons Learnt Workshop was held in Honiara from 11-14 June. The workshop was organized to learn from different emergency programme implementers' experiences as well as to get suggestions from the participants about updating the National Emergency Management Plan of 1987 and the 1989 amendment of the National Disaster Council Act. A total of 60 participants from the National Disaster Council, National Disaster Management Office, various ministries, UN and donor agencies, NGOs and the private sector attended the workshop. In addition, the Premier of Western Province and Choiseul and the Provincial Secretaries of different provinces, including those of Western Province and Choiseul, also attended.

The main recommendations made during this workshop were as follows:

A. National Level:

Better coordination, adequate training, risk analysis, common assessment methodology, standardized operational procedures, clear responsibilities at different levels, building codes, funding, logistics, information sharing, regular meetings of National Disaster Council (NDC) and Provincial Disaster Council (PDC), detailed plans, regular contact mechanism, emergency communication centre, baseline demographic data, development of response plan, celebration of emergency day, best practices, sectoral service delivery plan, tax incentives, an alternative emergency centre outside Honiara, psycho-social support mechanism, a new Ministry of Disaster Management, inventory management, more preparedness workshops, and identification of sectoral weaknesses and taking necessary actions.

B. Provincial Level:

Trained sectoral officials from national to provincial level to be deputed, awareness building, capacity for rapid assessment, adequate training, use of common assessment methodology, appropriate warning systems, identification of command responsibility, greater power for the PDC, decentralization of authority, establishment of guidelines and lines of authority, establishment of provincial emergency operation centre, common data template and use of GIS, and arrangement of trust fund.

C. Community Level:

Establishment and specification of functions of Village Disaster Committees and building capacity, use of common assessment methodology, means of communication, adequate training, mock drills and exercises, community awareness, local level plans, self-help system, NGO operations, beneficiary listing, and establishment of guidelines and lines of authority.

Needs Assessment

The Solomon Islands Government presented the Recovery Action Plan (RAP) to donors on Monday 18 June.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) initial infrastructure assessment of all clinics in affected areas is being finalized and will provide an overview of damage caused to the Primary Health Care system and related costs of rehabilitation. Report on the World Social Situation (RWSS) has completed assessments on Rendova, Simbo and Ranonga Islands. Assessments for Vona Vona lagoon are still pending. The ADB infrastructure assessment focused on features such as roads, wharfs and bridges is expected shortly.

UNICEF Response

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Work Agreement for water and sanitation projects in Western Province, between UNICEF, RWSS, PWD, OXFAM, Save the Children, World Vision and CARITAS has been signed by all parties on 13 June. Another agreement has been signed between UNICEF and Gizo hospital on water quality testing to practice 400 water tests in the 3 coming months. Water quality tests continue at Gizo hospital twice a week. A total of 50 water samples has been analyzed so far and still shows small amounts of fecal contamination in the water supplied. Nevertheless, in some cases higher levels of contamination have been measured, mainly in dams. UNICEF has requested Oxfam and PWD to start a full water testing survey in all Gizo Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps and Gizo town stand pipes.

UNICEF and Public Works Department are working on rehabilitation of the Gizo Hospital water supply. A plan has been established and material ordered. The work implementation should start next week.

UNICEF, RWSS and CARITAS sent a charter boat on Tuesday 12 June to Shortlands Islands containing Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) materials. Three water supplies will be rehabilitated in Nila, Tomua and Pirumeri. 1000 water containers provided by UNICEF will also be distributed in these areas.

UNICEF has provided 60 water containers to Ringi School to use in the class rooms.

The first 10 (100 liter) rubbish bins, supported by a galvanized iron frame, are under construction and will be implemented in Gizo camps, for solid waste collection.

Shelter

A Shelter Coordination Group at the Honiara level is currently finalising a shelter strategy for private housing, with assistance from UNDP.

Health and Nutrition

The first phase of the UNICEF supported Health Promotion Campaign with the MHMS was completed on 8 June. During this six week campaign, teams of Health Promotion Officers (HPO) delivered a health and hygiene promotion outreach program to more than eighty villages/camps on Ghizo, Rendova, Ranonga, Shortlands, Simbo and Vella Lavella, Kolombangra and Choiseul Islands. Planning with the MHMS and other partners is underway for the next phase of health promotion activities that will start mid-July. The focus will be on nutrition including breast feeding, hygiene, and safe sex.

WHO has completed an asbestos assessment on Ghizo Island from 8-11 June with UNICEF's assistance. A plan is now being formulated based on the assessment, while funding is being sought from a variety of donors to implement the clean-up. UNICEF is currently producing communication materials (radio spots, posters and leaflets) for children and parents endangered by asbestos.

UNICEF is assisting the MHMS with strengthening the disease surveillance system in the Western Province. The system will build on the current outpatient register data collection protocols and focus on diseases relevant to post-tsunami disaster situations as a result of overcrowding and poor sanitation. This will allow early response and control of outbreaks.

UNICEF is supporting the MHMS in improving the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) coverage in areas not covered by the post-tsunami measles and routine catch-up campaign. The goal is to have 90 per cent routine coverage across Western and Choiseul Provinces.

UNICEF is also supporting the rehabilitation of damaged clinics on all affected islands in Western and Choiseul provinces. This includes essential equipment and supplies provided to assist the facilities once rebuilt to function optimally.

Supported by SCA and UNICEF, youth volunteers are also continuing to deliver community based life skills activities with young people in the IDP camps.

Education

The Emergency Education Assessment report is under final review by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) Executive and will be released soon. As previously noted, the Sector Damage Assessment Summary has been finalized and sent to the Technical Advisory Team (TAT). The Summary confirms schooling of 18,258 (89 per cent of those assessed) children has been significantly disrupted. It also reports that 56 per cent of students in the affected areas (11,578) will not have permanent schools until full or partial rehabilitation takes place. In addition 44 per cent of education staff housing has suffered complete destruction or major damage.

A monitoring plan for the distribution of initial supplies is wrapping up in Choiseul and is completed in the Western Province. It is being developed by education staff in Gizo and Honiara.

The MEHRD Education in Emergency Task Force has begun work on Response and Recovery Plan. In addition to the costing for replacement of capital costs in the Damage Assessment Summary, indicative costs for the 6-month response and recovery plan have been produced. The work taking place on the MEHRD Recovery Plan is being coordinated by the Technical Advisory Team of the National Disaster Management Office. The Recovery Action Plan (RAP) process will sustain upcoming donor meetings and the lessons learned meeting this coming week.