

UNICEF Situation Report Solomon Islands - EXTERNAL Tsunami-Earthquake Emergency Programme 2 May 2007

Major Developments

Overall an estimated 9,000 - 10,000¹ people, including approximately 5,000 children, have been displaced by the crisis, in the islands of Gizo, Ranonnga, Vella la Vella, parts of the southern coast of Choiseul, Simbo, Shortlands, Munda and Kolombangra. IDP camps are now established in approximately 132 sites.

The Government has established relief operations in the Gizo, Western Province through the Provincial Disaster Council (PDC), while operations in Choiseul are being managed by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and National Disaster Council (NDC) from Honiara. The Government has established a Technical Advisory Team (TAT) to lead the planning for early recovery and response. Five sector working groups, Health, Education (also responsible for Welfare), Shelter, Infrastructure and Energy report to the TAT, which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Planning Aid Coordination. Working groups were required to report to the TAT on Tuesday, 1 May. A meeting between the NDMO and donors is scheduled for Friday 4 May.

Needs Assessment

Several assessments have been carried out by various organizations on different islands, but the complexity of transport and limited analysis has not allowed a comprehensive picture to be formed yet. NDC/PDC has been conducting an independent assessment of all affected areas. Reports are still being collated from Choiseul and Western Provinces and the anticipated release by NDC of a consolidated assessment on the 30th of April did not take place.

A detailed water and sanitation assessment form was developed for ongoing assessments and a database of all affected villages is under development, based on previous assessments by UNICEF, Oxfam and ADF, in a form suitable for water and sanitation and other sectors. This database is being kept consistent with the camp database currently being prepared by the PDC.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) staff conducting assessments of all Health Clinics in Western Province and Choiseul arrived back in Honiara on Friday (27.04/2007). The MHMS is expected to make a decision this week on the priorities for further assessment.

The Ministry of Education Assessment teams have now gone out into the field. As reported in the last sitrep, the emerging complication is of communities relocating from where the school was and where livelihoods and some infrastructure remain. Another concern is of school buildings that are unsafe still being used. Four out of the 7 teams have now returned and UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry to quickly plan and act on the priority situations over the coming weeks. At the end of the assessment the teams aim to have visited all schools in the affected communities within one week and report back immediately to the National Level for further decisions and action.

UNICEF Response

WASH

An agreement was reached between the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Division, UNICEF and Oxfam to fund the rehabilitation of water systems for affected sites in Shortland Island.

A detailed water and sanitation assessment of all camps in Gizo will be completed next week. The

¹ Final numbers yet to be confirmed.

assessment is identifying preliminary designs for medium term water supply systems for camps which may be expected to exist for six months or more. So far four camps have been identified.

Two outboard motors and a boat arrived in Gizo on 28 April. One motor was "broken in" on 29 April and the other will be fitted to the existing RWSS boat. Detailed water and sanitation assessments on other islands by RWSS and UNICEF staff can now commence. One boat will visit Ranongga for a four day period and the existing RWSS boat with one of the new motors will be used for one day assessments on islands close to Gizo until the motor is "broken in".

Shelter

The national government's Central Property Unit will be in Gizo to conduct a survey on government housing and properties. Discussions held at Honiara are working to develop a standardized design for all implementers. They are also considering permanent housing which can be completed in one and half months, hence it is not clear whether Oxfam transitory shelters will go ahead.

Oxfam and Habitat for Humanity (arrived in Gizo on 1.05.07) are the only organizations dedicating technical assistance to transitory and permanent shelter.

UNICEF has taken a complementary role in this sector, by providing plastic tarpaulins (for play and recreation areas), family tents (will be distributed in partnership with NDC/PDC to families and health workers) whose homes have been completely destroyed in Western and Choiseul Provinces and tents for Health Clinics.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF is currently supporting the MHMS to undertake a measles Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) for children aged 6 months to 5 years in the affected areas. Five teams are currently working in the Western and Choiseul Provinces and are progressing well and the campaign should be largely completed by this weekend. In addition children are being given vitamin A and children less than 1 year who have lost their immunisation record are being given new cards and catch up immunisations. The MHMS is also being supported to assess the impact of the disaster on the cold chain as the nurses' travel around during the SIA.

Some SIA teams are also conducting rapid diagnostic tests (RDT) for malaria in clinics around the province. On April 27, 12 out of 15 RDT's were positive on Simbo Island but levels have not been so elevated in other areas. Results from the Malaria team in Choiseul report almost 10% prevalence of malaria in villages (108/1099 RDT positives in six villages) whilst a prevalence of 4% were found to be positive in Western Province. The MHMS will continue to roll out the Malaria Control Programme and closely monitor the situation through the disease surveillance system.

Concerns remain for the health of those living in the camps. UNICEF is encouraging the MHMS to undertake outreach activities regularly in camps where temporary clinics have not been set up. UNICEF in partnership with Health Promotion Units of Honiara, Gizo and Oxfam have trained 20 volunteers as community mobilizers to work with camp residents, targeting different age groups on key hygiene, sanitation and health messages. UNICEF is in the process of recruiting a health promotion coordinator (for a few weeks) to work with the Health Promotion team of the MHMS and WVI to plan further activities aimed to inform people on other islands. Multi-micronutrient powder "Vitalita" targeting children 6 to 59 months, micronutrient supplements for pregnant and lactating women, soap, ORS and IEC materials are also planned to be distributed through the campaign.

It has been recognized that people may not be receiving adequate food and a rapid qualitative assessment in the camps in Gizo will be conducted this week to assess this situation.

Many clinics are not currently functioning due to structural damage and UNICEF is assisting in assessment of clinics and equipment replacement. Many staff are personally affected, have lost some or all their belongings, and are requesting leave from work to attend to personal issues. UNICEF has

provided assistance with 60 tents for temporary clinics and housing, and will assist the MHMS with their staff planning.

Health worker and community awareness of HIV and sexual health issues are generally poor and UNICEF is working with UNFPA to identify approaches. Life skills' training is being planned with the Adolescent Health and Development Coordinators (MHMS) and Save the Children and STI and HIV awareness will be included in the Health Promotion campaign with MHMS.

Education

Many broader education decisions are expected to be made by the government once the results from the general assessment which commenced on the 25th of April become available. After the first day in the field for the Gizo assessment team another two 'School-in-a-Box' kits were delivered on the weekend to two school locations in Gizo. Today saw two school locations in Kolombangara receiving, with the MOE team, the school-in-a-box, tarpaulins and recreation kits.

As teams have begun to return and give information, an urgent planning list is being compiled with priority areas. This list now includes another 20 schools recognized as locations for immediate roll out this week. This will be done in combination with the play/recreation activities. UNICEF now has 54 (with four now released) School-in-a-Box kits on the ground in Gizo with 30 on their way and it is expected that there will be a continued roll out to the most neglected communities over the next two weeks. This will be done with Recreation Kits using the transitional education model.

Protection

As mentioned in the last Sitrep an emerging issue is that of the vulnerabilities of communities to sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF drafted and has secured support to a commitment statement of humanitarian agencies in line with the UN Code of Conduct to start an initial awareness-raising of the issues. This has been circulated since Friday evening with much success.

As of the 2nd of May, 16 Play safe areas have been set up in Gizo (11) and Simbo (5) in partnership with Save the Children. Another 4 have been built in Vella La Vella today and will be functioning by next sitrep. On average 140 children in each of these 11 areas are benefiting from play. It is expected that 10 more will commence in Simbo and Vella La Vella locations over the next week.

The Social Welfare Division (SWD), with the support of UNICEF, started a new office in Gizo yesterday. They have also made a plan for the Community Welfare Volunteer Network (pilot model). Last Friday saw the start of this plan commence with the SWD team going out in Gizo camps to identify potential volunteers. As of today there have been 13 Community Welfare Volunteers identified in Gizo, 13 in Vella La Vella and 11 in Kolombangara. The team is expected to get back from Rendova today. It is hoped that this network could serve as a Social Service System pilot model for the Solomon Islands.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

Following UNDAC's departure UNICEF is the only UN Agency present in Gizo. It is still expected that UNDP will field one or two persons to lead the early-recovery phase and ensure formal coordination with key Governmental counterparts. OCHA's Regional Disaster Response Advisor arrived on the 20th of April and will depart on the 4th of May. A UN Coordination will be held on the 3rd of May.

Supply and Logistics

The complexity of the humanitarian response is underlined by the logistic constraints affecting the relief operations. Gizo and Taro (Choiseul) is served by a small airstrip only, and all the other affected locations are reachable by boat.

In summary, the following supply items are being distributed to the affected populations:

Item	Quantity	Partner	Distribution
Family tents	250	NDMO, PDC	Distribution in progress: 62 health workers (Western Province); 188 families (Choiseul and Western Province)
School in a box kits	80	Ministry of Education	Distributed: 4 communities Planned: Approx 6,000 children in 36 schools completely destroyed and 37 schools partly damaged
Recreation kits	94 (and further 50 ordered)	Ministry of Education and Save the Children	Planned: Approx 6,000 children in 36 schools completely destroyed and 37 schools partly damaged Distributed: Approx 1600 children in Gizo camps
Tarpaulins	72 (and further 50 ordered)	Ministry of Education and Save the Children	As above for Rec Kits Further Distributed: 9 to Vella La Vella
Collapsible water containers	4400	RWSS, Save the Children	Distributed: 3,600 to families affected in Western Province
Water Bladders	5	RWSS	Planned: Western Province
Emergency Health Kits	8	Ministry of Health	Distributed: three kits sent to hospitals (Gizo, Shortlands (Western) and Taro (Choiseul))
Oral Rehydration Salts	30,000 sachets	Ministry of Health	Distributed: 3,000 sent to health centres (Gizo (Western) and Taro (Choiseul)); health promotion teams
Vitalita	90,000 sachets	Ministry of Health	Distributed: 9,000 sachets to Ranonga (Western Province) Planned: through measles campaign (15,000 children)
Soap	6500 bars	Ministry of Health	Planned: through Gizo SIA team, WASH