

MALAWI

UNICEF RESPONDS TO THE IMMEDIATE
NEEDS FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN
AFFECTED BY THE EARTHQUAKE

December 2009 to March 2010



1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

After 3 months of low intensity seismological activity in the Karonga district of Malawi, the area was hit by a sequence of stronger earthquakes ranging from 5.4 to 6.0 on the Richter scale between 6 and 20 December 2009. Seismological activity continues and is taking the form of an earthquake swarm. There is no certainty about when this is expected to halt. The district of Karonga is located in the northern part of the country, bordered by Lake Malawi on the East, by the Songwe River (border with Tanzania) on the North, and the Nyika Plateau and highlands on the West and South. Approximately 270,000 people live in this area, and they depend on subsistence agriculture (cassava, maize, sweet potatoes and rice) and fishery for their survival.

The Department of Disaster Management Affairs of the Government of Malawi appealed for assistance to support over 200,000 people living in the area. Initial information from the technical teams confirm that there are over 31,220 people whose housing was partially or completely destroyed and have moved into a camp or host communities. A camp has been set up in the Ngerenge area in Mulinda village and no formal headcount has been taken to date; although, it is estimated that around 5,000 people are living in the camp. The camp is also a distribution point for relief for 17 villages. Over 200 people have been wounded, and four have been killed. Following the last quake, there is much uncertainty in the area. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs has indicated that shelter, water and sanitation needs are to be regarded as urgent.

The Government of Malawi provided some assistance to the affected population under the leadership of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs and with support from line ministries. This included food items, water supplies and health interventions (equipment, staff and medicine). District authorities have been assigned as the coordination focal points at the local level and multi-sectoral emergency teams have been established. The district was divided into five zones and the Malawi Red Cross, Plan International and World Vision were assigned as logistics coordinators in the zones. UN agencies deployed multi-disciplinary technical teams to the affected district to assess the situation and humanitarian needs. They are identifying unmet immediate humanitarian needs and assessing early recovery needs.

Malawi is a densely populated country, approximately 14 million inhabitants, with more than half of the population (52%) living below the poverty line and 83% of the total population living in rural areas. Malawi is ranked 160 out of 182 countries in the 2009 Human Development Index, indicating that Malawi is one of the least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural which accounts for more than one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The health and nutrition situation is critical showing increasing prevalence of malnutrition among children and high incidence of HIV/AIDS, with some areas in the southern region recording prevalence rates as high as 30%. This is further compounded by increasing food prices with some areas observing as high as a 79% increase, leaving a great contingent of the population with very limited access to basic foods and deteriorating their household food security. Pregnant women and children are especially affected, with 45% of children suffering chronic malnutrition characterized by stunting. The population living in the southern part of the country has had their situation aggravated by floods and cholera.

2. UNICEF'S PLANNED EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Health and Nutrition

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, and in particular the health district authorities in Karonga, UNICEF interventions on health and nutrition will be undertaken in cooperation with WFP, UNFPA and other partners such as World Vision, Plan Malawi and MSF in the affected areas as well as in district hospitals. Close monitoring of the food security and nutrition situation in the affected areas will be critical for the next three months.

Urgent Actions

- Nutrition Assessment;
- Provide emergency medical kits to support the district health authorities to respond to the needs of the 31,220 affected people;
- Provide survival kits (comprised of non-food items) to the affected population;

- Provision of relevant information about nutrition programme activities, life-saving messages including breast-feeding, etc.;
- Operational and logistics support for medical teams;
- Identifying gaps in response to disease outbreak and the emergency health care delivery system; and offering prompt gap-filling interventions, including for HIV/AIDS;
- Establish nutrition surveillance system in coordination with the health authorities;
- Monitoring emergency health response activities with partners.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and in coordination with the partners in this sector, UNICEF plans to support the existing water and sanitation response in the affected areas, especially in the Ngerenge/Mulinda camp and in critical facilities, such as, schools and health centers in the district.

Urgent Actions

- Assessment of existing water supplies and hygiene facilities in health centers and schools;
- Provide temporary sanitation facilities in Ngerenge/Mulinda camp;
- Provide over 5,000 families with jerricans, water purification tablets, soap bars as part of the family kits;
- Hygiene promotion and education materials and activities;
- Supply and construction of emergency sanitation facilities in strategic locations;
- Provision of safe drinking water to affected population.

Child Protection

UNICEF plans to work with the Ministry of Social Affairs in collaboration with other partners to prevent and respond to child protection concerns. UNICEF field team reported that women and children are suffering from shock and trauma due to the earthquakes. There are also people living in fear of a recurrence of higher impact earthquakes. Additional support must therefore be provided to ensure that children and women, who have already been affected by the crisis, are not victims of violence or other forms of abuse.

Urgent Actions

- Support the establishment of child friendly spaces;
- Support registration of women and children in Ngerenge/Mulinda camp, especially separated children. Support family tracing and reunification (if applicable);
- Provide psychosocial support to children and their caregivers who have been traumatized;
- Key messages will be formulated and broadcasted on safety measures, and to prevent family separation and promote family-based care;
- Distribution of recreation kits for children in camp and schools;
- Support the establishment of monitoring and reporting mechanisms of grave child rights violations.

Education

The education team is currently in Karonga liaising with the districts authorities distributing supplies and establishing temporary schools to ensure resumption of education on 4th January 2010. Initial assessment results show that 17 schools are currently affected and not functional. Extra tents and supplies are needed to accommodate the affected schools. UNICEF's long experience in disasters has demonstrated that returning children to school as quickly as possible is one of the most valuable emergency educational interventions that can take place. Schools provide children with a sense of normalcy, which is crucial to their psychological well-being. In addition, schools will also provide a very important forum for communicating key life-saving messages.

Urgent Actions

- Assessment of the extent of the damages in schools;
- Provision of tents and plastic sheeting for temporary schools to ensure children can begin classes;
- Provision of learning materials, school-in-a-box, didactic materials and teacher's kits;
- Capacity building of teachers in psychosocial support and multi-grade teaching;

- Logistics and coordination support to the district' Education authorities;
- Establish linkages with other sectors especially WASH and health to ensure water and latrines are provided, as well as other essential supplies;

Shelter

Currently, over 31,220 people have had their housing partially or completely destroyed and around 5,000 people are living in the Ngerenge/Mulinda camp. UNICEF and the Malawi Red Cross are providing plastic sheeting and tents to the affected population.

Urgent Actions

- Provision of plastic sheeting for temporary service facilities and houses for affected families.

Coordination, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

The UNICEF multidisciplinary team is continuing its support to the Government and humanitarian partners on the ground in the affected areas. The UNCT team is assessing the following technical areas:

- a. District Coordination structures (UNICEF)
- b. Food security (WFP/FAO)
- c. Health and Nutrition (UNICEF/UNFPA)
- d. Water, sanitation and hygiene (UNICEF)
- e. Education (UNICEF)

Urgent Actions

- Operational and logistics support to field assessments, monitoring and coordination;
- Provide Information and Communications Technology and equipment.

3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM DECEMBER 2009 TO MARCH 2010

Table 1: Estimated funding requirements from December 2009 to March 2010*

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	250,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	600,000
Education	100,000
Child Protection	100,000
Shelter	200,000
Coordination and Logistics	150,000
Total**	1,400,000

* Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

** 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.

Further information on the UNICEF Malawi emergency programme can be obtained from:

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