

UNICEF Situation Report Solomon Islands - EXTERNAL Tsunami-Earthquake Emergency Programme 25 April 2007

Major Developments

Well into the fourth week of the crisis, information about the detailed needs in all locations affected by the earthquakes and tsunamis of 2 April is still incomplete, mainly due to a very complex transport logistics.

Overall an estimated 10,276¹ people have been directly affected by the crisis, on the islands of Gizo, Ranonnga, Vella la Vella, parts of southern coast of Choiseul, Simbo, Shortlands, Munda, and Kolombangra. Approximately 5,200 are children below the age of 18.

The Government has established relief operations in 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.

Needs Assessment

Several assessments have been carried out by various organizations on different islands, but due to the complexity of transport and limited analysis this has not yet provided a comprehensive picture. Currently, NDC/PDC is conducting an independent assessment of all affected areas. WHO assessed the Gizo camps and the report will be presented to NDC/PDC.

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 the Australian Defense Forces (ADF). This database is being kept consistent with the camp database currently being prepared by the PDC.

Previous assessments of health clinics carried out by the Australian Defense Forces will be built on by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) staff that arrived in Gizo on the 24th of April to initiate an assessment of all Health Clinics in Western Province and Choiseul.

The Education assessment started on the 25th of April, with an orientation programme taking place in Gizo facilitated by UNICEF. The assessment will provide information from each community on children (by age and sex) and their displacement, as well as play and learning resources (teachers and materials) and spaces (including temporary and permanent infrastructure) for immediate and longer-term response planning. Seven teams of 4 people from the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs will reach all affected communities within one week and report back immediately to the National Level for further decisions and action.

¹ Final numbers yet to be confirmed

UNICEF Response

WASH

A draft program was prepared for improvement of water supply and sanitation facilities in tsunami and earthquake-affected areas in the Western Province.

Water containers (approximately 1,000 x 10L) were distributed to camps and villages by RWSS as well as a small number of boxes of soap. Water purification tablets supplied by Save the Children were also provided with the water containers. Save the Children were also provided with additional containers (380 x 10L or approximately 1,100 in total to date) for use in its water purification program. These containers are used in several IDP camps near Gizo town and on nearby islands.

Materials (timber, tools and plastic) purchased previously and provided to RWSS are being used to assist their operations. UNICEF continues to collaborate closely with Oxfam in latrine construction by RWSS for IDP camps on Gizo. Several pieces of timber (approximately 20 x 12' x 5" x 1") have been made available to Oxfam to assist in completion of latrine platforms.

Shelter

A coordination meeting on Shelter was held in Gizo on 25 April, involving PDC, Ministry of Health, Oxfam, Rotary, Red Cross and UNICEF. Oxfam is the only organization 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) and family tents (to will be distributed in partnership with NDC/PDC to families (including health workers) whose homes have been completely destroyed in Western and Choiseul Provinces.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF is currently supporting the Ministry of Health to undertake a measles SIA for children aged 6 months to 5 years in affected areas. Five teams are currently working in the Western Province and Choiseul and it is anticipated the campaign may take up to two weeks. In addition children are being given vitamin A, children below the age of 1 who have lost their immunization record are being given new cards and catch-up immunizations are being provided. UNICEF also supports the Ministry in assessing the impact of the disaster on the cold chain during the SIA.

Multi-micronutrient powder "Vitalita" targeting children from 6 to 59 months, soap and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials will also be distributed through the campaign. Vitalita has been prioritized for Ranonga (Western Province) where vitamin deficiencies are likely because gardens have been destroyed, while further supplies of Vitalita are awaited for Gizo. UNICEF supports the MHMS nutritionists who are currently formulating the approach for further nutrition interventions.

Oral rehydration salt (ORS) sachets are being distributed and health promotion and disease surveillance activities undertaken opportunistically.

UNICEF is concerned about the health of those living in camps. Although no unusual outbreaks of disease have been noted at this stage, UNICEF is encouraging the MHMS to regularly undertake outreach activities in camps where temporary clinics have not been set

up. UNICEF, in partnership with Health Promotion Units of Honiara and Gizo and Oxfam, has trained 20 volunteers as community mobilizers to work with camp residents targeting different age groups on key hygiene, sanitation and health messages.

Many clinics are currently not functioning due to structural damage and the fact that many staff are personally affected by the disaster. Many have lost some or all of their belongings and are requesting leave from work to attend to personal issues. UNICEF is providing assistance with 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 in three weeks time.

Education

The Government is expected to make decisions on the response of the Ministry of Education once the results of the ongoing education assessment become available. UNICEF has provided a briefing to the Ministry of Education on its support on the 25th of April.

The first 'School-in -a-Box' was delivered on the 24th of April to the Titiana Camp in Gizo. Some non-formal classes are expected to start today in combination with the play / recreation activities that commenced last week in this community. UNICEF now has 30 School-in-a-Box kits on the ground in Gizo (and a further 50 in transit to Honiara) and it is expected that there will be a continued roll-out to the most affected and vulnerable communities over the next week. This will be carried out with School-in-a-Box and Recreation Kits using the transitional education model.

Protection

On the 24th of April, the Social Welfare Division (SWD) chaired the first Inter-agency Working group on Social Welfare at the Gizo level. They were able to share their plan, with the technical advice of UNICEF, to develop a Community Welfare Volunteer Network in the affected areas. UNICEF had a number of meetings yesterday with the DSW and it is hoped that this network could serve as a Social Service System pilot model for the Solomon Islands. Further planning with the SWD will take place over the coming days on how we go about rolling this out and what further technical support UNICEF can provide.

As of 25 April, 9 play safe areas have been set up in Gizo in partnership with Save the Children. On average 100 children in each of these 9 areas are benefiting from play. It is expected that 10 more will commence in two other locations over the next week.

The first non-governmental protection coordination meeting in Gizo took place on the 21st of April, chaired by UNICEF. One emerging problem that came out of this meeting was coordination and overlap. Save the Children and World Vision are targeting the same two islands which means two affected locations are not covered. UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Education and SWD to ensure broader coverage in play and recreation in these initial weeks while transitioning into more formal schooling.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

Following UNDAC's departure, UNICEF is the only UN Agency present in Gizo. It is 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 stay for about three weeks to support the NDMO.

Supply and Logistics

The complexity of the humanitarian response is underlined by the logistic constraints affecting the relief operations. Gizo and Taro (Choiseul) are served by a small airstrip only, and all the other affected locations are reachable by boat. Support from Australian Defense Forces (ADF) and the United States Navy helicopters to transport people and supplies (albeit in small quantities) from Gizo to the affected areas has ended.

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

Item	Quantity	Partner	Distribution
Family tents	250	NDMO, PDC	Planned: 50 health workers (Western Province); 200 families (Choiseul and Western Province)
School in a box kits	80	Ministry of Education	Planned: Approx 6,000 children in 36 schools completed 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 completed destroyed and 37 schools partly damaged Distributed: Approx 900 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: 2,000 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 measles campaign (15,000 children)