Haiti has been in a general shut down for 11 days, due to demonstrations and fights between national police and demonstrators that flared across the country since 7 February. Violent protests resulted in business closure and populations had narrow or no access to essential services and goods such as fuel, electricity, water, domestic gas, and food.

Economic difficulties, complications for Haitian government to pay civil servants, food and fuel price hikes (inflation of up to 30% for basic goods in last 12 months) and devaluation of the national currency (which has lost 25% of its value in the last year) have prompted Haitians to take the streets.

Situation Overview

- An "apparent calm" now reigns in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and the regions of the country on this Monday, Feb 18th, after 9 days of high tension. However, the situation remains volatile and may change anytime as there are rumors of new protests planned by the opposition.
- Schools have not reopened due to fears of a possible resurgence of violence in the capital.
- Public services and commercial activities are picking up quite timidly in Port-au-Prince.
- Some of the major roads linking the capital to main departments remain blocked by barricades and burning tires with reports of people ransoming drivers who on inter-urban roads.
- Institutions such as hospitals, prisons and children without parental care residential centers face shortage of water and basic supplies, due to insecurity.
- Main partners NGOs have not been able to implement programming normally during last 2 weeks, due to the insecurity.
- UNICEF's cholera response teams have limited capacity to move and respond to suspected cases, causing concerns of new possible outbreaks.

Feb 19th, 2019

Feb 7th, 2019: Initial protests, on the anniversary of the President taking of office.

Feb 9th: Armed gangs joining the protests.

Feb 12-15th: protests continue and security situation in Port-Au-Prince and major cities is delicate. Difficulties with provision of main supplies (gasoline, water, food, gas) is generalized in the country.

Several Health, Juvenile Justice and Children Social institutions reaching out to UNICEF for need of drinking water, gas and food.

Feb 16-18th: protests have decreased; economic activities and movements have slowly restarted, while situation remains volatile.
Response, Assessment and Coordination Actions
A brief description of immediate and anticipated action taken by government, Inter agency partners and UNICEF. If relevant, please include a section per sector

**WASH**

- Since 14 February, UNICEF supported the National Water and Sanitation Directorate (DINEPA) through its emergency stand-by NGO partners:
  - 9 children centers supplied with safe drinking water through DINEPA and NGO partners support, benefiting to 576 children and 64 caregivers personal.
  - 1 juvenile detention centre with 84 children and 1 women’s prison with 206 women and 12 girls were supplied with 15 trucks of drinking water.
- In addition, to address the critical shortage of fuel for 18 water pumping stations managed by DINEPA in the capital city and few other major cities, UNICEF supported DINEPA through the delivery of 18,000 gallons of fuel, ensuring water supply to at least 900,000 people.
- Following an intersectoral meeting confirming that several hospitals throughout the country needed safe water, UNICEF and DINEPA are supporting a quick assessment in coordination with PAHO-WHO and Ministry of Health. First results reported that Port de Paix and Bassin Bleu hospitals in the North West Department face water supply shortage, while most other assessed hospitals are supplied by on-site wells, thus not impacted by the crisis.
- Regarding DINEPA pumping stations at risk of breakdown due to fuel shortage for the power generators, UNICEF envisages supporting with the feasibility of alternative energy sources (solar) so that similar events will not affect the pumping capacity in the future.

**CHOLERA**

- According to partial data from Ministry of Health and UNICEF partners, 14 suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Artibonite from 10 to 16 February, in line with the low trend of past weeks.
- Community response capacity is currently reduced, raising concerns about the control of the epidemic, with risks of new outbreaks of cholera and diarrheal diseases in areas of current active transmission, where safe water access is disrupted.
- The national laboratory is closed and does not provide epidemiological/bacteriological monitoring, while the laboratory Saint-Marc (Artibonite Department) resumed its activities with UNICEF financial support.
- One UNICEF rapid response team is active in L’Estere (Artibonite) where recent confirmed cholera cases were reported. To facilitate access to the community, the team supervised by UNICEF partner ACF is composed of a local nurse and voluntary community health worker.
- Also, in L’Estere, ACF has prepositioned an advanced supply stock to ensure the team can undertake full rapid response to suspected cholera cases.
- In Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, UNICEF partner Solidarites International has activated a contingency plan aiming to work with local volunteers equipped with 3 cholera kits, chlorine and one disinfection sprayer.
- French Red Cross, UNICEF partner in Centre and Artibonite, had stopped its activities in the field but ensures remote epidemiological monitoring in health care facilities.

**NUTRITION**

- Nutrition, Protection and Health are the key sectors of concern if the situation extends. UNICEF sector leads are in constant communication with Govt institutions and partners, to monitor the situation and plan a potential response if deemed necessary.
- In the current context, the nutritional status of children could deteriorate rapidly. Because of their dependence on food purchases, urban populations are the most affected by a purchasing power crisis combined with a paralysis of
the economy due to current social movements. The metropolitan area and other major cities of the country would then represent priority areas due to the size of their population and the absolute number of children under 5 years.

- UNICEF is proposing, for a possible response, to increase the coverage of the package of curative and preventive nutrition interventions in major urban centers, particularly in the most vulnerable neighborhoods. This would include treating acute malnutrition in children under 5 and preventing essential micronutrient deficiencies in children under 2 years of age.

- Discussions are ongoing with OCHA and CERF Secretariat, to obtain emergency funds focused on Food Security and Nutrition, based on the country pre-crisis situation further worsened by the unrest. UNICEF and WFP are jointly elaborating a proposal.

**HEALTH**

- Several hospitals, maternity, neonatology and health centers reported difficulties with supply of drinking water, medicines and sanitary consumables (oxygen, delivery kits, essential drugs, etc.). Laboratories and pharmacies in Port-au-Prince are closed. Maternity hospitals have difficulties in providing neonatal care. Most of health personnel cannot report to work due to insecurity, while replacement of existing staff is necessary.

- State University of Haiti Hospital (Port-au-Prince), because of its position near the Champs de Mars and National Palace, faced difficulties receiving medicines and other essential supplies. The Verrettes Hospital (Reference Hospital of the Artibonite Department) reported no oxygen in stock. Treatment centers for people living with HIV / AIDS no longer work, including the Gheskio center which hosts 15,000 patients and La Saline maternity hospital, which intervenes on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Difficulties in refueling vaccinating centers with vaccines and propane gas are reported.

- Given the power cuts, vaccine losses at peripheral vaccinating centers are to be feared, with the risk of interruption of vaccination activities, in the event of a break in the cold chain. UNICEF, in collaboration with PAHO / WHO, is identifying the needs of the most impacted health centers to plan a rapid response intervention in coordination with Ministry of Health.

- The main emergency response actions identified by UNICEF in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Centers are:
  - Strengthening of the cold chain by supplying sanitary institutions / and vaccination centres with propane gas and inputs.
  - Provision of health institutions - especially maternity and neonatology - and hospitals with delivery, midwifery and new-born kits.
  - Provision of basic kits and medicines to peripheral health centres, in coordination with the MSPP.

**CHILD PROTECTION**

- Beyond immediate concerns, the current crisis is likely to exacerbate risks of violence, sexual exploitation (exchanges of sexual services for money), begging, family separation, and child domestic work.

- UNICEF is supporting the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) Emergency Cell which works remotely and monitors child protection needs alerts to coordinate possible responses.

- 188, the phone number of the National Police Brigade for protection of minors (BPM) is operational for reports child abuse cases.

**EDUCATION**

Schools in the country had been totally closed since the beginning of the crisis which may compromise the validation of the school year. Since Feb 19th school activities are slowly resuming with some difficulties. If the insecurity persists, it will increase the negative impacts on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable families, thus reducing the chances of children
to return to school. There may be needs for back-to-school campaigns and building synergies with child protection on family and psychosocial support programs.

Next update: 22/02/2018

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