UNICEF Comoros Humanitarian Situation Report 5 – May 2019

SITUATION OVERVIEW AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

The Union of Comoros experienced significant impact from Cyclone Kenneth on 25 April, a category one storm. While the cyclone was focused west of Ngazidja, the entire territory was affected by heavy rainfall and strong winds of 70 km/h (see map of the affected areas).

Flooding occurred in high risk areas of the entire archipelago, mainly on the costal lines. Water tanks lost their covers and were seriously polluted with garbage or filled with sea water in many villages. Multi-sectoral needs assessment teams were deployed by the Government (with support from the UN and partners including UNICEF). Analysis of the data gathered found that 345,130 people are affected, with 185,880 in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. According to the assessment, 19,372 people are

Highlights

- More than 185,000 people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance following Cyclone Kenneth, which hit Comoros on 25 April. Most of those in need are on the island of Grande Comoros (Ngazidja).
- The passage of the cyclone left seven dead, 182 injured and 19,372 displaced. More than 4,480 houses and 96 water tanks were destroyed, as well as 465 classrooms damaged.
- With UNICEF support, education kits have been distributed benefitting 1376 children and 38 teachers.
- In response to the destruction of the water pumping system, UNICEF donated a 75 kV generator to SONEDE (national water company) to pump safe water for the 80,000-populated capital city and surrounding areas.

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displaced, and the number is likely to increase once a better indication of how many households were destroyed is available and accurate figures from Anjouan and Mohéli are obtained. Limited access due to damaged roads is hampering data collection, as well as the ability to respond.

The cyclone also caused the destruction of 3,818 houses and the partial destruction of 7,013 houses. Sixty-three percent of food crops were damaged, and 35 per cent of cash crops and 34 per cent of fruit trees were destroyed, as well as 2,055 cattle. The cyclone also damaged 465 classrooms including 213 that were completely destroyed. The electricity grid, which was damaged from the cyclone, has been up and running since 20 May in the capital city, however, other locations are without power.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

The Comorian Government has taken the lead to respond to the crisis with support from UN agencies, the Red Crescent and local NGOs. The Government decided, in an extraordinary Council of Ministers meeting, to withhold 10 per cent of civil servants’ salaries to address the emergency and the President has also indicated that he will provide special funds in addition to salary cuts.

However, Government capacity to respond remains a key issue, particularly weak sectoral response. Partners on the ground have limited capacity and there is no cluster system in Comoros. The UNCT deployed the members of the inter-agency DRR/DRM Task Force to assist the Government in the preparedness and rapid assessment activities, including inter-sectoral coordination with the national authorities and humanitarian actors.

Several clusters were activated - food security, health and nutrition, WASH, shelter and NFIs, education and protection, and logistics (including communication and security). The UNCT has provided the logistical support the rapid assessment teams. Emergencies supplies have also been positioned for the health, education, nutrition and WASH sectors. The UNCT has identified and reprogrammed funding to be available within 24 hours to strengthen the Government response capacity.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

Major recommendations from the needs assessments were the mobilization of human and financial resources to respond to immediate needs, strengthening coordination, and ensuring that response efforts are inter-sectoral. UNICEF’s strategy consists of interventions in health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection and Communication for Development (C4D). Interventions are currently being coordinated with the national level government, and have been guided by assessments, including by the Government and UN under the leadership of the COSEP. UNICEF humanitarian interventions are complementary to government action. UNICEF’s strategy aims at providing timely immediate humanitarian assistance to children and women while addressing long-term development needs by focusing on:

- **Nutrition**: address nutritional status of children under 5-years.
- **Health**: support the Government to re-establish health services for affected communities and to ensure critical health supplies are available for outreach services.
- **WASH**: support sector coordination and evaluate reconstruction needs, re-establish access to drinking water, water purification, access to appropriate sanitation and hygiene facilities (for most vulnerable); access to essential NFIs (soap and water container) for the most vulnerable.
- **Education**: support children affected by the cyclone to access quality learning opportunities and recreational activities by ensuring learning resumes in temporary learning spaces in damaged schools.
- **Child Protection**: women and children access gender-based violence prevention and response services.
- **C4D**: people will be reached with key life-saving and behavior change messages on health, WASH nutrition, education and protection.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME RESPONSE

UNICEF Comoros has launched its contingency and immediate response plan to provide an immediate response to the humanitarian situation as it unfolds. UNICEF staff have been deployed in the field to determine the impact and assess the situation with Government and partners.
Health

UNICEF has begun the distribution of 200 insecticide-treated mosquito nets to the Ministry of Health. An additional 15,000 mosquito nets are being delivered to the disaster areas.

UNICEF Comoros has also delivered the following kits to the Ministry of Health:

- One basic interagency kit able to support 1000 people for three months
- One delivery kit consisting of medicines, equipment and consumables for 50 to 100 child birth deliveries including complications and caesareans.
- Three newborn resuscitation kits
- An oxygen concentrator to control the oxygen saturation of patients, this concentrator has a battery that allows operation during power cuts.

Nutrition

UNICEF is providing the Ministry of Health with nutrition materials for the treatment of SAM cases. The following materials have been provided so far:

- 20 cartons of rehydration fluids for the malnourished
- 20 packs of armbands to measure brachial perimeters
- 50 cartons of energy biscuits
- 50 boxes plumpy-nut

Training and logistical support for active acute case screening through MUAC, and the referral and treatment of SAM children is also being planned.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - WASH:

In terms of the WASH response, UNICEF donated a 75 kVa generator to SONEDE (the national water company) to pump water for the capital city, Moroni, with a population of around 80,000 people. The generator will increase the availability of water in Moroni as one of the pumping stations had stopped functioning following the cyclone. UNICEF is in the process of commissioning another generator for the water company. UNICEF has signed an agreement with SONEDE to ensure the purchase of fuel for the operation of the island's pumping stations for a period of one month. Three temporary supply points (flexible tanks) have been installed in the areas of Moroni that do not receive water supply through water trucking.

UNICEF has provided 550 menstrual hygiene kits and WASH related NFIs to the Red Crescent for distribution to households in affected areas. UNICEF is also supporting the cleaning of water tanks in the south of Grande Comore, and 150 tanks will be cleaned by the end of May.

Education

On 15 May, UNICEF and the Ministry of National Education with support from the Directorate General of Civil Security started the distributing school kits consisting of school supplies, sports and recreation equipment, as well as tarpaulins for temporary learning spaces. The distribution targeted the prefectures of Badjini West and Hambou and involved 12 primary schools; benefiting 1376 children and 38 teachers. Additional kits have been procured and are en-route for distribution to other affected areas on the three islands. The additional kits will reach 2,000 preschool children and 7,680 primary school children.

Communication for Development (C4D)

UNICEF has supported the development of communication materials for sensitization and behaviour change, which have been sent to the Ministry of Health. The C4D materials will be used by 450 community health workers in the country to raise awareness to affected community.
Funding
UNICEF received US$983,500 from CERF to respond to the emergency over the next six months. With the US$100,000 received from UNICEF HQ, this brings the response budget to US$ 1.98 million. With this funding, UNICEF will continue to work with its sectoral partners to accelerate implementation of the emergency response plans.

Photos of UNICEF Comoros team responding to the cyclone
Distribution of education kits and MILDs. Photo © 2019/UNICEF Comores

UNICEF is giving water to affected areas in the Capital.
UNICEF Comoros has submitted to the Ministry of Health neonatal kits, Nutrition materials mosquito nets impregnated with insecticides to help the victims.

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