HIGHLIGHTS

- UNICEF, in partnership with WVI & MOSD, carried out a Child Protection Rapid Assessment. Key issues that emerged from the assessment were: separation of children from families due to labor in and out of the country, sexual and physical abuse of both girls and boys and cases of child marriage.
- UNICEF continues to carry out media activities to raise awareness on the impact that the drought is having on children. A special publication on Child Protection was presented in the local media and radio to heighten local awareness/sensitization on the issue.
- UNICEF delivered 21 cartons of therapeutic food to health facilities across the country for the treatment of 1,400 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In addition, UNICEF delivered 10 cartons (14,000 tablets per carton) of water purifying tablets benefiting close to 1,000 children.
- Ten delivery kits to support 500 deliveries were distributed by UNICEF to the most affected regions of the country, with addition support provided by UNFPA.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

UNICEF and partners conducted a market assessment survey and found that prices of staple food are increasing which may lead to an increase in the number of vulnerable people in the country. The survey estimated that out of 63 councils surveyed, 28 (44%) are in need of cash transfers in order to reach their food consumption needs, 26 (41%) are in need of food vouchers, 1 is in need of both cash transfer and food vouchers and 9 (14%) are in need of Food In-Kind to meet their daily food needs.

The rains commenced in February and are predicted to continue until Mid – April. However the consensus is that the short rains will not be sufficient to relieve the negative effects from the prolonged drought conditions.

UNICEF is urgently following up a reported cases of bloody diarrhea (dysentery). UNICEF is working with partners to confirm these cases by lab tests, which should be completed shortly. In addition, UNICEF is working with partners and the MoH to conduct a countrywide yellow fever vaccination campaign.
**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

An Inter-Ministerial Task Force has been established to support coordination efforts by the Disaster Management Authority. To further strengthen the humanitarian coordination, UN agencies together with NGOs have established a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). This coordination mechanism seeks to optimise the collective efforts of the UN, non-governmental organisations and other partners to strengthen the overall drought response.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF is supporting the Government’s response to the humanitarian needs of 534,508 people (a quarter of the country’s population). Working with partners, UNICEF is working to scale up life-saving responses in health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection and social protection. UNICEF is using the Child Grant Programme (CGP) as a platform for reaching the most affected, identified as the poor, elderly, people living with HIV and disabled. The CGP, implemented jointly by UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) with financial support from EU, will be expanded to address key drivers of vulnerabilities. During the emergency period, a cash grant is being provided to 23,000 households (approximately 115,000 people, 58,000 of whom are children), with a monthly cash benefit of US $25 as top-up on the national cash transfer programme to help rural households meet the costs of increased staple foods. UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health to treat severe acute malnutrition and diarrhoea diseases, and is working with the health sector to ensure people previously on ART’s continue to receive care and treatment throughout the emergency period. In addition, UNICEF continues to ensure families in the most affected areas have access to safe water and basic sanitation facilities and supplies.

**Summary Analysis of Programme Response**

UNICEF continues to intervene in child protection, social protection, education, health and HIV/AIDS, nutrition and water and sanitation. To ensure protection against the abuse of children, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Disaster Management Authority, led and funded a multi-agency Child Protection Rapid Assessment (CPRA), comprising of MOSD, World Vision and UNICEF to better understand the impact of the drought on the occurrence of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children and caregivers as well as availability of relevant services to support affected children and their families/caregivers. Key CPRA findings noted included incidents of sexual and physical abuse, children separated from their parents/caregivers, a need for psycho-social support (PSS) and a need to strengthen referral mechanisms.

UNICEF also contributed to a market assessment survey and found that prices of staple foods are increasing which may lead to increase in the number of vulnerable people in the country. In addition, UNICEF has delivered 21 cartoons of therapeutic foods to health facilities across the country for the treatment of about 1,400 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

**Communications for Development (C4D)**

A radio and television discussion on child protection is planned for this and next week to disseminate the findings of the multi-agency Child Protection Rapid Assessment. Plans are underway for the sensitization of communities on the usage of water purifying tablets given the lack of fuel for boiling water in many communities.
Supply and Logistics
An additional 10 cartons (14,000 tablets per carton) of water purification tablets were ordered in February and are in the pipeline. The MoH has also ordered (through UNICEF procurement) an addition 15 cartons; therapeutic (5,000 children) and supplementary feeding (1,500) food.

Media and External Communication
A special publication on child protection is planned this week for the local media to heighten awareness/sensitization on child protection issues in the country.

Funding
In 2016, UNICEF is appealing for US $9.134 million in order to meet the humanitarian needs of women and children in Lesotho. This funding will facilitate the continuity of basic services and enable affected communities to absorb future shocks by building their resilience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>Requirements ($US)</th>
<th>Funds Received</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
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<tbody>
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