Highlights

- WASH supplies for 2,000 families handed over to provincial government in Tanna Island by UNICEF
- 48 cartons of health supplies arrived in Port Vila by air, and 5 containers ready for dispatch with WASH, health, education supplies
- 3,370 people are in evacuation centres (Source: National Disaster Management Office) but registration confirmation is still awaited from all islands
- UNICEF-supported measles immunisation campaign continues in Port Vila and Efate.
- Supplies ready for flight to Tuvalu, where up to 42% of families in northern islands had homes, crops, water sources, public and private services all damaged
- For the country of Solomon Islands, aerial assessment shows damage not extensive, although situation on ground is not confirmed.
- UNICEF has committed WASH & other supplies in response to Solomon Islands NDMO call for assistance for people in Malaita, Temotu, Guadalcanal, Isabel and Makira provinces

Vanuatu:
171,000 people estimated by WFP to be affected (Source: WFP 18 March)
Including 82,000 children

48 evacuation centres with 3,370 people
(Source: NDMO 16 March)

Thousands more with damaged homes staying with friends, relatives

48 cartons of UNICEF health supplies arrive Port Vila
5 containers ready for dispatch

34 schools in use as evacuation centres

Solomon Islands:
Communities in 5 Provinces in Solomon
Overview

Assessment flights are undertaken daily with reports of extensive damage to Shefa, Tafea and Malampa provinces. Aerial surveys show damage to crops, houses, schools, coasts and roads. Although stocks of food are available, there are reports of food and water shortages particularly in Tanna. France may support subnational distribution of supplies and assessments.

Government has established a coordination mechanism for all assessments to ensure systematic coverage and standardized information. All assessment teams are requested to carry essential supplies to reach affected families.

WASH materials were on the flight to Tanna today, along with medical personnel. UNICEF is also preparing to ship additional water and shelter equipment with the ferry boat to Tanna.

The measles immunization campaign continues on schedule.

Evacuation centres are managed by different NGOs. Education and child protection cluster members are working with the government to ensure services are made available, including for children with disabilities.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is coordinating the response with support from various agencies, Governments and major partners. NDMO met partners today to guide all players and present a response structure, which is now in place.

NDMO is now in touch with chairmen from all provincials’ disaster committees through satellite phones and have started receiving updates from the field. Rapid assessment teams have been deployed.

The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is functional with 24 hour radio broadcasts relayed throughout the country, and monitoring supported by the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) members. Two UNICEF staff members have been assigned support roles within the EOC. A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team arrived in Port Vila on 16 March as well as staff from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to provide additional support to NDMO.

The newly appointed United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator arrived in Vanuatu on 18 March.

UNICEF’s response

Education

The UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education has been deployed to Vanuatu to support Save the Children as cluster co-lead with the Ministry of Education.

A total of 34 schools are being used as evacuation centres in Efate, Torba and Penama. UNICEF will ship two batches of education supplies this week. This will include school-in-a-box kits, backpacks, recreational kits, early childhood development kits, tents and tarpaulins.

The Education Cluster is targeting about 57,000 affected school aged children from early childhood to secondary school. Infrastructure, facilities and resources are damaged in a majority of schools in Efate, Tafea, Torba and Penama. The Education Cluster leadership and operation has yet to reach full capacity, however assessments of schools in Port Vila in particular those used as Evacuation Centres have been conducted. A Rapid Assessment of Tanna confirmed that most of the schools were completely damaged and the few classrooms
that remained standing are used as evacuation centres by people who lost their homes. A number of deaths in Tanna were reported to be as a result of collapsed classrooms during the peak of Cyclone Pam.

Communication and access within and between islands remains the greatest challenge. The rapid assessment teams together with teachers hiked all over Tanna to inspect school damage as all the roads are impassable. The rapid assessment team, which was the first to arrive on the island, reported that the immediate needs are food and water.

Health and nutrition

Six teams comprising nurses from the Ministry of Health were deployed to communities around Port Vila to provide vaccination against measles, polio and tetanus. These teams also conducted rapid assessments, distributed bed nets and provided health education to the affected communities. The teams reached a total 1,750 children under age five years. In the next stage, it is planned to reach 10,500 children aged between 6 to 59 months with measles vaccine, Vitamin A and deworming tablets.

A UNICEF Cold Chain Specialist accompanied the above teams to assess the cold chain situation and provide on-site repairs and training. Technical support on proper care for vaccines as well as record keeping were also given to the team. The EPI national cold room now has electricity restored.

NDMO has given clearance for a wider cold chain assessment as a priority and this will mean priority for seats on aircraft.

UNICEF will join the nine member assessment team to be deployed to Tanna tomorrow. Medical and emergency supplies such as ORS, vitamin A and Albendazole arrived in Port Vila. UNICEF delivered a large tent to the national referral hospital to manage the influx of patients.

A core coordination team of UNICEF, WHO and MoH nutritionists are working closely to map capacities of the humanitarian partners and existing community and health structures for nutrition interventions, particularly focused on support to infant and young child feeding. Coordination has been initiated with the Food Security Cluster to ensure that the nutrition needs of young children and pregnant and lactating women are being prioritized in the planning of food distributions.

Thanks to emergency preparedness support from UNICEF, the national referral hospital is equipped to treat children for severe acute malnutrition. Supplies and paediatric staff trained in management of malnutrition cases are in place. There are currently no children admitted for treatment. Capacity for outpatient treatment of severe acute malnutrition can be installed in the national referral hospital as soon as ready-to-use therapeutic foods arrive in country.

Screening for severe wasting is currently limited to the children who present at the hospital; health staff have been encouraged to reinforce screening and ensure that children are referred for appropriate treatment. Key infant and young child feeding messages have been translated and will be broadcast via radio. Information, Education and Counseling materials are being identified for printing and dissemination.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

While awaiting more solid information and analysis, the WASH sector assumes that 60% of the population of Shefa and Tafea has been affected and have no access to drinking water. Based on numerous and consistent anecdotal reports, access to water emerges as the biggest need, along with food. This is confirmed by people from Shefa provincial government who shared observations from their assessment reports. Based on the
individual reports: Mataso (400 people), Etas (3,000 people), Eratap (1,300 people), Salini (200 people), Prima (200 people) have no access to water. This is due to the lack of power to operate the piped water supply, ground water sources being contaminated and rainwater harvesting structures having been destroyed.

UNELCO water supply is safe to drink and is verified by the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources. DGWMR and UNICEF reconnected private water supply systems in Teoumaville in the outskirts of Port Vila. UNICEF will also support partners with generators, fuel and water trucking.

UNICEF handed over WASH supplies for 2,000 families to the provincial government of Tanna. Additional supplies are ready for dispatch from Fiji, and orders for more have been placed.

There are no analysed assessment reports available which will guide plans and identify the needs. Communication and logistical challenges as well as limited supplies in-country are some of the difficulties being faced by the WASH sector.

Child protection

Known needs specifically in relation to gender and protection are limited to evacuation centres in and around Port Vila. The NDMO has set up an Evacuation Centre Working Group. UNICEF supported NDMO to conduct an Evacuation Centre Surveys in 16 of the Evacuation Centres in Port Vila. Standards vary greatly between centres, but common themes are over-crowding, lack of privacy and bathing facilities, lack of lighting and emergency power supply, and unstable structures. A small number of pregnant women were identified as being in the centres, and a small number of infants. Further information is expected as service provision expands.

In addition to the national Child Protection officer, and a Child Protection specialist from Fiji, UNICEF Pacific is deploying a Child Protection in emergencies from Indonesia.

The Gender & Protection cluster will now convene daily meetings at NDMO. UNICEF facilitated the inclusion of the Vanuatu Society for Disable People (VSDP) to be an active member of Gender & Protection and Education cluster groups.

The Gender & Protection cluster participated in two of the five rapid assessment teams deployed to Emae, Tongoa, Epi, Ambrym & Penama. The Ministry of Justice Disability Desk is working with Vanuatu Society for disabled people for their community based rehabilitation programmes on Efate. Community based psychosocial first aid training are needed to address most vulnerable groups – women, children, elderly and disability. UNICEF is also taking into consideration the need to identify and strengthen local coping mechanisms.

Communications for communities

There is still no radio or telephone communication with the outer islands. Digicel and TVL are working together to get communications back up. Australian Broadcasting Corporation is doing an assessment of radio transmitters and reports that there is a need to send temporary mobile medium wave transmitters pending longer term repairs.

The NDMO has a communication plan in place which includes:

- Radio: pre-recorded messages with VBTC national radio
- TV: advert prepared for airing on national TV when this is functional
- Mobile phones: emergency text messages with updated information will be sent to all TVL and Digicel phone users.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation staff are working with Vanuatu BTC to operationalize this plan once radio broadcasts are working again.
Supply and logistics

UNICEF has faced challenges in Fiji to secure carriers for emergency supplies. Five containers are ready for shipment with important items to support health, WASH, education, child protection interventions.

Prepositioned supplies available in Port Vila have been mobilised for the hospital, as well as for immediate water supply needs. 48 cartons of health supplies, including basic emergency health kits, Oral Rehydration Salt sachets, zinc tablets, Vitamin A tablets and de-worming tablets have arrived by air to Port Vila. The basic health kits will be distributed to affected islands. 15,000 water purification tablets were given to Save the Children today for use in evacuation centres. 17m3 of storage space were made available to Oxfam for hygiene kits.

Civil Aviation Authority agreed with UNICEF to allocate space at the airport for temporary storage space for humanitarian assistance supplies. That space now needs to be secured to receive all the airlifted consignments for all UN agencies, NGOs and Government counterparts. UNICEF provided one 42 m2 tent to be used as office space for the NDMO. An additional tent, will be used as a meeting space for NDMO staff.

Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati

TUVALU

Five days into Tuvalu's declaration of a State of Emergency, details of TC Pam's impacts on outer islands remain sketchy. Funafuti the most populous island (about 4,500 people) was comparatively unscathed by the cyclone.

Government of Tuvalu (GoT) is keenly awaiting details from a TC Pam rapid assessment team that left Funafuti for the central islands (Nui, Vaitupu and Nukufetau) on Sunday evening. Lack of power and communication on Nui has hampered field reporting. Initial reports suggest Nui, and to a lesser extent other Islands, have been substantially impacted by heavy seas and storm surge that inundated houses, undermined building foundations, flooded Pulaka pits (the main source of food), damaged crops and killed livestock. Damaged and sea-water inundated water tanks have taken a heavy toll on water reserves on the worst impacted islands.

Reports suggest that the impact have been severe on some islands (particularly Nui and Nanumaga) but are largely restricted to storm surge. Media reports suggesting that 45% of Tuvalu's population was displaced appears to be inaccurate. Most island communities will likely be returning to their homes. GoT believes that most islands have adequate supplies of food and water to meet immediate needs. Mobile coverage is out on Funafuti (unrelated to cyclone) and internet access is unpredictable.

Red Cross and UNICEF supplies are scheduled to be delivered on 19 March.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Tropical Cyclone Pam brought widespread heavy rain to most provinces in Solomon Islands. Temotu province experienced hurricane force winds as the tropical cyclone intensified and moved out of the Solomon Island territory. Some vulnerable families have been displaced and food gardens destroyed. Accessibility to and from communities has been difficult or impossible due to flooding, fallen trees and very rough seas.

An aerial survey shows Anuta Island (a small islands of 3x1.5 km with a population of less than 150 or about 20-25 households) was most affected but overall damage to infrastructure in other islands in the group is limited. The Provincial Disaster Council (PDC) teams has started surveys from yesterday.

UNICEF supplies of at least 100 collapsible jerry cans to store water, 10 cartons of antibacterial soaps (1,440 soaps), and 1,000 strips of chlorine tabs will be provided. Given the prohibitive cost of travel and logistics to affected areas, essential supplies will be loaded on the boat. Once distributions are complete, remaining stocks if any will be prepositioned at the Temotu Provincial hospital in Lata.

Unrelated to TC Pam, the Ministry of Health has declared an outbreak of the Zika virus.
KIRIBATI

Four metre high waves were experienced in Kiribati on 13 March, causing extensive damage to the Dai Nippon Causeway. On the southern islands Tamana and Arorae 20 houses along the shore on Arorae were destroyed, and families are now housed in schools. Some have started rebuilding their houses further inland. No figures yet from Tamana on how many houses affected. Onotoa Island reported that the causeway was damaged preventing vehicles from crossing to the islet, but no information is available on the extent of the damage and how many people are affected.

In Tarawa, the causeway connecting Betio and Bairiki reopened, but with limited load of not more than 2tons. Road condition is very bad throughout the atoll. Tabonkabwaeua Bairiki seawall on the Oceanside is badly damaged causing power outage. Tebikenkora Eita Village seawalls are badly damaged and seawater is running into all ten houses of this community.

The Betio national hospital and maternity ward was damaged and patients had to be temporarily relocated. Repairs have been undertaken and patients were moved back to wards on Monday 16th March. No disease outbreaks reported so far. Schools are open but many children especially senior secondary schools cannot reach school on time due to lack of transport as hardly any buses now operate. Town councils now provide trucks to transport school kids. Government provides transport for government workers. The disaster management Committee is monitoring progress and assisting communities to build or strengthen sea walls with local contractors.

A small contingent of UNICEF emergency supplies is available from prepositioned stocks in Tarawa, and an additional consignment is expected to arrive on 24th March.

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