UNICEF PARTNER UPDATE TC Winston & News from the Pacific

Partner Update
Cyclone Winston in Fiji & News from the Pacific

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Reporting Period 1 May – 30 June 2016

Photo: Merelati Baleta, teacher at Nakudumudu kindergarten on Koro Island, demonstrating proper hand washing techniques to her students.

TC Winston Highlights

- The Fijian Government has placed the total cost of damages at US$1.4 billion (approximately one third of Fiji’s annual GDP)
- The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) hosted an inter-cluster meeting to address the significant, ongoing needs on Koro Island
- More than 23,000 people in 120 villages have been reached through eight weeks of integrated family health mobile outreach activities supported by the MoHMS, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO
- National guidelines for the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition finalised and frontline health workers being trained
- UNICEF field monitors visited 140 communities to confirm the delivery and assess the usefulness of supplies and activities

As of 30 June 2016 in Fiji:

- 30,800 children benefiting from teaching and learning materials
- 23,000+ people reached through mobile health outreach activities
- 10,860 children reached through the ‘Just Play Emergency Programme’
- 17,000 people issued with replacement birth certificates
- 12,000+ radio public service announcements broadcast in English, i-Taukei and Hindi languages
- 140,000+ people sent disaster readiness, disaster response and recovery messages via SMS messages

Highlights from around the Pacific

- The UNICEF Pacific supported OFC Just Play programme won a Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Foundation for Children Award in Paris, France. The award was for improving the lives of children in the Pacific. Just Play uses sport to support children’s development and has reached more than 210,000 children in the Pacific.
- The Government of Nauru has reinforced its commitment to children’s rights by adopting a comprehensive and forward-looking Child Protection and Welfare Act, bringing Nauru into alignment with many international standards, and strengthening the protection of children’s right under various international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- A number of emergency preparedness activities took place in Vanuatu including an Education in Emergencies workshop, training on Child Protection in Emergencies and a Mass Evacuation in Natural Disasters exercise.
- UNICEF deployed a child protection specialist to the Republic of the Marshall Islands to identify key areas of child protection needs and interventions in response to the El Niño drought.
- Operational research on using the Hepatitis B vaccine (birth dose) ‘outside the cold chain’ in Solomon Islands has more than doubled the coverage rate of the Hepatitis B birth dose for infants in target locations.
- The Government of Samoa presented its combined second to fourth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, in compliance with their reporting obligations as a state party to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC).
Overview of TC Winston and flooding in Fiji

More than four months have passed since Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji with devastating impact. According to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, some 540,400 people, (62 per cent of the population - and more than initially estimated in rapid assessments) were affected, more than 31,000 houses were damaged or destroyed, schools and medical services were interrupted and livelihoods were destroyed. Forestry, fisheries and agriculture were hit especially hard, with total crop losses in some locations, including in areas that were already suffering from water shortages due to El Niño. Compounding the suffering, just six weeks after TC Winston, Category 2 Tropical Cyclone Zena brought heavy rainfall and widespread flooding to villages, urban neighbourhoods, schools and health facilities, roads and bridges, deepening vulnerabilities of families affected multiple times. The Fijian Government has placed the total cost of damages at US$1.4 billion (approximately one third of Fiji’s annual GDP).

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) hosted an inter-cluster meeting to specifically address the significant, ongoing needs on Koro Island. OCHA is undertaking an inter-agency exercise to gather evidence of ongoing needs, completed and ongoing humanitarian interventions and capacity to expand support to Koro Island. Findings from this exercise will be shared at a meeting with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) on 1 July, so that evidence based actions can be agreed and taken, in a coordinated approach. Koro Island’s low lying villages were among the worst affected in Fiji. Reports from various humanitarian actors indicate significant needs related to shelter, food security, livelihoods, health, nutrition, education, psychosocial support and debris removal. The scale of the destruction and challenges involved with reaching these communities has hampered the progress of recovery efforts.

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) held an After-Action Review workshop to reflect on lessons learned, identify and formulate recommendations to improve future humanitarian response operations and enhance disaster preparedness. Similar After-Action Reviews for Government-led clusters and inter-cluster coordination are scheduled for July.

UNICEF continues to provide humanitarian action and intervention for education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), maternal and child health and nutrition and communicating with communities, while simultaneously working on early recovery measures. UNICEF’s early recovery approaches include strengthening capacity, resilience, risk reduction, preparedness and prevention of possible medium to long term adverse effects of cyclones and flooding, such as poor health and malnutrition, drop in school attendance and protection challenges. UNICEF is also supporting monitoring and evaluation, reporting and lessons learned exercises.

Education

Nearly 37,000 Fijian children and their teachers continue to attend classes in temporary learning spaces, including 33,000 children using tents and tarpaulins provided by UNICEF. Additional tents have arrived in Fiji and will be used to provide more temporary learning spaces and teacher living quarters, while schools are being rehabilitated. Additional teaching and learning materials such as school-in-a-box kits, backpacks with student stationary, and early childhood development kits will be distributed to schools and early childhood education centres that have not yet received emergency education materials. These additional resources have been funded by the Governments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Sweden.

To assist schools in becoming fully operational, UNICEF received a grant from the Government of Australia to procure 75 generators and 75 photocopy machines for rural schools that do not have access to the electricity grid. The purchase of this equipment will support schools that have already depleted their schools grants to respond to emergency needs and would otherwise have to wait another year for the next grant allocation. The list of target schools is currently being finalised by Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MoEHA) and UNICEF. The distribution of these materials will start in July 2016.

While psychosocial support activities have been rolled out on a national scale, reports from teachers and education partners indicate that many children continue to display signs of distress, anxiety and fear following TC Winston. To support these children with the additional psychosocial support they need, UNICEF supported the development of a set of materials to help children heal, be resilient and adjust back to normal daily life. Some 20,000 children are expected to benefit from these materials, which includes 10,000 colouring books to support children with expressing their feelings, 2,000 sets of six children’s reading books with real life Fijian stories related to children
and their families affected by TC Winston, and 3,000 teacher/adult caregiver guides to support them with providing psychosocial first aid to children. These materials will be distributed in July, through funding from the Government of Australia.

UNICEF supported MoEHA to organise and run a school lunch programme at 38 Cyclone affected schools in Koro, Vanuabalavu and Ovalau. The programme is providing more than 4,700 children with a nutritious, cooked meal that greatly increases school attendance in addition to increasing calorie and vitamin intake. School gardens have also been established or re-established to complement the purchased food, which consists of rice, lentils, canned tuna and other food items. This programme is supported through funding from UN OCHA’s Central Emergency Response Fund and by the Government of Australia.

WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

While some emergency level WASH needs are still being addressed, recovery priorities identified by Cluster members include the repair and disaster resilience of water and sanitation systems, strengthening of water quality monitoring and analysis, and improving waste management systems. The WASH Cluster is currently undertaking a capacity mapping and coordination performance review, to better guide recovery work. Initial results point to a need to strengthen intra and inter-sector coordination, advocacy, disaster risk reduction, water quality monitoring and governance. UNICEF and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS) will host a national WASH Cluster Coordination Workshop in July to strengthen and improve coordination at national and subnational level.

UNICEF is supporting a consultant for MoHMS to strengthen drinking water quality monitoring systems and partnerships with relevant government ministries and departments. A rapid capacity assessment of four national agencies’ Drinking Water Quality Monitoring (DWQM) systems found a need for a coordinated national drinking water quality surveillance system with a strong focus on rural communities. Subsequently, a community drinking water and waterborne disease risk assessment methodology was developed and is currently being piloted combining water quality testing, sanitation surveys and waterborne disease surveillance information. A framework for integrating drinking water and waterborne illness information has also been developed, and the national drinking water quality database has been revised to calculate community risk of waterborne disease based on integrated health and water quality data.

A baseline study on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) is being carried out by UNICEF, Fijian Teacher’s Association, Project Heaven and the Ministry of Education in nine schools in the Western division. As part of the ongoing recovery efforts for WASH, the study will highlight MHM-related challenges faced by schoolgirls and make recommendations to inform future school-based MHM programmes and policies in Fiji. The findings will be available at the end of August.

Three WASH in Schools workshops were organised by UNICEF, MoEHA, Project Heaven and the Fiji Teachers Association for 67 of the most affected schools in the Western Division. More than 200 head teachers, teachers and school managers were trained on the Three Star Approach to WASH in Schools and participants prepared individual School WASH Action Plans focusing on key improvements needed in their schools to improve hygiene behaviour and access to water and sanitation.

Health and Nutrition

More than 23,000 people in 120 villages have been reached through eight weeks of integrated family health mobile outreach activities jointly supported by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS), UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO. Eight teams, composed of an outpatient practitioner, nutritionist/dietician, midwife, specialist in integrated management of childhood illness and specialist in maternal and child health, were deployed to villages severely affected by TC Winston but with limited access to health services. Sites visited were in Savusavu, Bua, Koro, Vanuabalavu, Cicia, Levuka, Ra Highland, Ra Coastal and Ba Highland. These roving teams helped to maintain immunisation coverage above 90%, ensure the continuation of antenatal care, supported the integrated management of childhood illnesses and early referrals to clinics where the necessary follow-up screening for severe acute malnutrition, non-communicable diseases and other serious health problems could take place. A debrief was
organised in the Western and Northern divisions to reflect on the achievements and lessons learned from the outreach teams, and these lessons have been integrated into plans for the second round of mobile outreach activities.

National guidelines for the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition have been finalised. UNICEF supported a Train-the-Trainer workshop on Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition for 36 health care workers to introduce the new guidelines and strengthen the capacity of MoHMS to screen, identify and treat cases of severe acute malnutrition. In the coming months, these trainers will be supported to train fellow health workers.

UNICEF provided MoHMS with therapeutic milk, micronutrient powder, Vitamin A and deworming tablets to support the treatment and management of severe acute malnutrition, improve children’s immunity and prevent anaemia. To date, more than 2,680 children have received Vitamin A drops and deworming tablets. UNICEF is also support MoHMS for an eight week distribution programme of Vitamin A, micronutrient powder and deworming tablets, which aims to reach 24,000 children in hard-to-reach areas affected by TC Winston.

UNICEF continues to provide technical and financial assistance to the MoHMS to rebuild the vaccine cold chain system after TC Winston. Thanks to generous support from the Government of Australia, the new cold chain equipment will use sustainable, environmentally friendly and disaster resilient technology. UNICEF procured 74 solar powered refrigerators and 17 ice-lined refrigerators that are expected to arrive in Suva port in July. UNICEF also procured 15 solar power systems to provide power for selected health facilities. UNICEF will deploy a cold chain specialist, starting in July, to provide technical support to MoHMS on the installation and maintenance of the equipment, including training on how to dismantle and safely store the equipment before a cyclone, as well as support to align vaccine management practices to WHO standards.

Safety and Protection (including Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence)

The Safety and Protection Cluster has reached 46,741 children with psychosocial support, including 40,962 children reached through UNICEF initiatives. Psychosocial activities include the provision of support through the seven Women Friendly Spaces established by UNFPA, psychological first aid provided by NGO partners, health services, gender-based violence support services, school-based psychosocial support and the UNICEF sponsored Just Play Emergency Programme activities.

The Just Play Emergency Programme trainings for phase one and phase two are now complete, with 385 newly qualified volunteers carrying out activities in 12 of the most affected locations in Fiji. To date, 10,867 children have taken part in Just Play activities in schools and community festivals. The Just Play activities are very popular with children, teachers and parents. They promote psychosocial strength through sports and help children aged 6-16 years learn and practice good hygiene, healthy eating and other life skills. Children are also guided to safely share and reflect on the emotional impact that TC Winston had on themselves, their families and their communities. Feedback so far has reinforced the need to continue psychosocial assistance within communities. Children, teachers and caregivers have acknowledged the positive impact of the programme and the chance to let ‘children be children again’ in spite of all they have been through. The programme aims to reach 15,000 children affected by TC Winston.

Through its partnership with the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, UNICEF is supporting social welfare officers to provide psychosocial support and refer clinical cases of psychological trauma for professional medical care.

UNICEF is supporting the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages Office to provide replacement birth certificates, free of charge, to people in the worst-affected areas who lost their identification papers during the cyclone. This service will ensure that people affected by TC Winston are able to access health, education, housing relief and recovery services. To date 17,000 people have been issued with replacement birth certificates and an additional 10,000 people are expected to be reached by the end of July.

Following TC Winston, the Safety and Protection Cluster partners have identified gaps in protection quality assurance and service delivery, including minimal understanding of the roles and responsibilities of reporting agencies to the Department of Social Welfare, as mandated by the Child Welfare Decree (2010). The Child Protection sub Cluster is working with government ministries to strengthen case management and referrals
systems and is developing database systems that will support tracking and referrals of child protection cases. In addition, during the second half of 2016, in response to numerous assessment and feedback findings, priority will be given to strengthen coordination and delivery of psychosocial support and psychological first aid.

Communication
UNICEF continues to support the MoHMS to deliver a comprehensive “communicating with communities” emergency programme. This includes disseminating key messages on handwashing, boiling water, destroying mosquito breeding sites, rubbish disposal, nutrition (including breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding), emotional well-being, child protection, family health and family planning through radio broadcasts, SMS messages, information, education and communication (IEC) print materials and interpersonal communication through social mobilisation and community outreach. More than 12,000 radio public service announcements have been broadcast in English, i-Taukei and Hindi languages and SMS messages sent to more than 140,000 people.

MoHMS, with support from UNICEF, participated in the three-day “Butu Pala and Bati Ni Tanoa” Live Road Show and Live Concert organised by the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation from 26 to 28 May in Vanua Levu, an island northeast of Suva that was among the hardest hit by TC Winston. An estimated 1,800 people from 19 villages listened to health and hygiene messages and more than 225 people were screened by the MoHMS Wellness bus. A further 5,200 people attended a concert in Labasa, which included messages on handwashing and ‘fight the bite’ (mosquito) campaign as well as hand washing and teeth brushing demonstrations for children. More than 1,000 IEC materials were distributed including UNICEF emergency pocket guides, handwashing stickers, brochures on coping after natural disasters, mosquito control posters and psychosocial support booklets.

UNICEF also supported the Health Communications team from MoHMS to plan and facilitate an integrated social mobilisation workshop for 55 community outreach workers from faith-based organisations and women and youth groups. The workshop aimed to ensure that all ongoing social mobilisation activities delivered identical pre-agreed messages.

UNICEF is providing technical support for the Fiji adaptation of U-Report and its roll out as a feedback mechanism for TC Winston. U-Report is a community participation tool that uses mobile phone technology to collect confidential information to better understand what people want or need and what services and supplies they have already received or accessed by age group, geographical area and gender. This will be the first time that U-Report will be rolled out in the Pacific. The technical integration of Facebook Messenger, Twitter, SMS integration with Vodafone and Digicel, Apps and website are complete and linked to the RapidPro platform. Delays have occurred due to changes in the Government Steering Committee Leadership, however recruitment of a Project Manager is underway and the media strategy is being finalised with the expectation that U-Report will be launched soon.

Supply and logistics
UNICEF has a new temperature controlled warehouse in Fiji, which has significantly expanded UNICEF’s storage capacity for health and nutrition supplies. The new warehouse will be a supply hub for contingency supplies for Fiji, and other South Pacific Island Countries. Replenishment of pre-positioned contingency supplies for Fiji that were dispatched for TC Winston is now underway for up to 10,000 people. UNICEF is also replenishing pre-positioned emergency contingency supplies in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which also were used for TC Winston. UNICEF is working with the Defence Forces of New Zealand on an airlift of many of these supplies.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Round one of UNICEF field monitoring of supplies and activities delivered to communities in response to Cyclone Winston is complete. Led by a field monitoring coordinator, six field monitors working in teams of two have visited approximately 140 communities from 4 May - 22 June to confirm the delivery of assistance provided by UNICEF and discuss its usefulness with teachers, nurses and community members. UNICEF worked in close consultation with the relevant Government ministries and local authorities to plan field monitoring missions. Initial feedback from the field monitoring is being shared with implementing partners to guide corrective actions, including filling gaps, where appropriate. Monitoring of programmes such as WASH in Schools and School Feeding, will be included in Round Two.
### Humanitarian Performance Indicator Table for Cyclone Winston in Fiji – 30 June 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>Cluster (including UNICEF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td># affected children benefitting from provision of temporary learning spaces (tents and tarpaulins)</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>33,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># children benefiting from learning materials</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>30,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
<td># people with access to safe water</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>11,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of people provided with sanitation or hygiene kits or key hygiene items</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>21,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of children in school/learning programmes with access to safe water through WASH in Schools kits</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>19,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of children with access to appropriately-designed, gender-segregated toilets</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>action plans being finalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Nutrition</strong></td>
<td># health facilities with cold rooms/cold chain equipment restored or improved</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Procured equipment arrives in July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of children aged 6-59 months reached by Vitamin A and deworming</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and Protection</strong></td>
<td># children provided with psychosocial support</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>40,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># youths trained as peer educators</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating with</strong></td>
<td># prime time radio spots on health and hygiene messages</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cluster Coordination</strong></td>
<td># personnel deployed for technical assistance to ministries that are leading Clusters</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three for the WASH Cluster, two for the Education Cluster, three for Health and Nutrition Cluster and two for the Safety and Protection Cluster*

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### Impact of El Niño and other natural hazards in Pacific Island Countries

The extreme El Niño conditions of 2015-2016 have diminished, but recovery is slow. Recent rainfall has eased short-term fresh water deficiencies in some areas but there are still water shortages in other areas, where below average rainfall is predicted through August. Many meteorological models foresee a weak La Niña developing sometime between June to August and about 75 per cent chance of it occurring from September to February. This would mean increased risk of typhoons for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau for the rest of the year and for Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands starting in November. Aside from strong wind speeds, storm surges could also create damage particularly to communities along the coasts. There is also the possibility that the La Niña event could bring less rain to countries near the equator such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru, which could affect water and food supply and may increase incidence of waterborne, vector-borne and foodborne disease. Another ongoing concern is saltwater intrusion on freshwater caused by a variety of factors.

As part of its preparedness activities, UNICEF has identified possible impacts that La Niña may have on Pacific Island children, particularly those who live where their families’ coping capacities have already been stretched. UNICEF has developed Early Warning, Early Action scenarios and is replenishing its pre-positioned emergency WASH, health and nutrition supplies in six countries, based on a minimum level of readiness for these scenarios. UNICEF’s WASH programme throughout the Pacific reflects building resilience to climate change and natural disasters, with interventions tailored to each local environment and population.
Republic of the Marshall Islands
UNICEF deployed a child protection specialist to the Republic of the Marshall Islands to identify key areas of child protection needs and interventions in response to the adverse impact of El Niño, and UNICEF is planning a Child Protection in Emergencies training for the third quarter of the year. Long term technical assistance will also be provided to support the strengthening of child protection systems based on the recommendations of the 2012 Child Protection Baseline Report, which highlights the need for better and more reliable data on child protection, including data on the frequency and type of child protection cases, and improved monitoring of the situation of children whose parents migrate to main islands and other countries in search of economic opportunities.

Kiribati
The Government has re-activated the National Water and Sanitation Committee and has requested UNICEF support for coordination. Actions are underway to strengthen government’s disaster preparedness capacity. One is the ongoing discussion to amend the Disaster Response Act and another is the creation of a climate change committee that is tasked to assess and improve government’s capacity to prepare and respond to disasters. The Community Led Total Sanitation approach continues, with high level political as well as community enthusiasm to end open defecation and promote handwashing in schools, health clinics and homes.

Vanuatu
May and June brought welcome widespread rain across most of Vanuatu, benefitting agriculture and alleviating water shortages caused by months of El Niño-related conditions. The UNICEF-funded water delivery to the small islands in the Shepherds group transitioned from regular deliveries to a ‘call down’ basis as determined by the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources. Training on Drinking Water Safety Planning was conducted on Tanna Island.

Preliminary results of the national immunisation coverage survey show evidence of improved immunisation coverage since 2013. The refurbished National and Shefa Provincial Vaccine Storage facilities opened - facilities now meet WHO international standards. Training for health workers on vaccine management, disease surveillance and health education on immunisation was rolled out across Vanuatu.

An Education in Emergencies train-the-trainer workshop was held to build capacity for effective education in emergencies response. Child Protection in Emergencies training events were held for staff from government, NGOs and for community leaders.

182,327 people have benefited from mobile birth registration campaign since Cyclone Pam, including 57,231 children and 125,096 adults.

UNICEF Vanuatu publishes its own Partner Update: More information on UNICEF support in WASH, Education, Child Protection and Health and Nutrition in Vanuatu can be found by clicking here

More news about children from around the Pacific

Nauru
The Government of Nauru has reinforced its commitment to children’s rights by adopting a comprehensive and forward-looking Child Protection and Welfare Act in June. This Act brings Nauru into alignment with many international standards, and enforces the protection of children’s right under various international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The new Child Protection and Welfare Act defines ‘children’ as all people under the age of 18 and takes a family-focused approach to child welfare and protection. The new legislation includes mandatory reporting of any sexual abuse or exploitation of a child by persons in authority in a school, church or other religious institution, health facility, prison or corrections facility, or any other places where children are supervised or cared. This sends a signal that sexual abuse or exploitation will not be tolerated and supports child victims to safely report abuse and seek help. The law also gives the Ministry of Home Affairs the mandate to take action to prevent and protect children from harm. UNICEF supported the Government of Nauru in developing the Act and will continue to work with the Government and communities to support its implementation and ongoing efforts to protect and support the children of Nauru.
Samoa

The Government of Samoa presented its second to fourth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, in compliance with their reporting obligations as a state party to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Hon. Minister for Women, Community and Social Development led the delegation, which also included representatives from ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Health. The concluding Recommendations and Observations of the Committee have been issued to the Government for consideration and implementation. Samoa is the first and only Pacific Island Country to ratify all three CRC optional protocols.

Solomon Islands

UNICEF partnered with the Government and US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, to conduct a pilot study on using the Hepatitis B vaccine (birth dose) ‘outside the cold chain’ in selected provinces of Solomon Islands. The initial evaluation has revealed that the coverage rate of the Hepatitis B birth dose has more than doubled, from 30 per cent to 68 per cent for infants born at health facilities. Coverage of the Hepatitis B birth dose also significantly increased for children born at home from 4 per cent to 23 per cent. This initiative has a great potential to be extended to other Pacific Island Countries where power supply and refrigeration for vaccines is not always possible.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has identified major constraints and gaps in the National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2010) and is holding a series of consultations with partners, including government ministries, UNICEF and other UN agencies and NGO partners to improve coordination, strengthen emergency preparedness and build national capacity to respond to disasters. The areas or responsibility of the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC), National Disaster Operations Committees (N-DOC), NDMO and the National Disaster Council are being reviewed as part of this process and two workshops were held to address the challenges of the NEOC structure and its processes for disaster assessments.

Funding acknowledgement

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