UNICEF Weekly Situation Report
Solomon Islands - Earthquake and Tsunami
22 February 2013

Reporting period 15-22 February 2013

Highlights

- UNICEF Assessment and Monitoring Team, consisting of the Chief of Field Office and Child Protection Officer, was deployed to Temotu on 19 February.
- UNICEF has released additional supplies at the request of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development to meet needs for damaged schools and displaced students. These include prepositioned tents, school-in-a-box kits, and recreation kits.

Situation Overview

Assessments of 1,479 households found that 581 had been completely destroyed and 479 partially damaged affecting 5,612 people.

Individual sectors are now conducting Detailed Sector Assessments. Limited means of transport and remoteness have hindered the pace at which these assessments are able to be completed.

A multi-agency Humanitarian Action Plan is currently being drafted to ensure a coordinated humanitarian response.

The production of safe water is now sufficient in most areas, however distribution remains a challenge. Recent assessments of villages on the steep northern coast of Santa Cruz Island indicate disruptions and damages to water sources due to earthquake damage and landslides. The water system that supplies Graciosa Bay and Lata is working but will require rehabilitation in the medium-term. Water samples from the Graciosa Bay and Lata water system were found to be compliant with drinking water standards. Other methods of water production, such as the NOMAD Water Purification Systems are helping to ensure that affected people can access a minimum of 5 liters of water per day whilst traditional water sources are being rehabilitated.

The geologist and seismologist from the Solomon Islands Government left Lata on Sunday, 17 February. Two people from the United States Geological Survey are now in Lata working with a risk reduction specialist from SPC to undertake a threat assessment and produce products to support recovery and rebuilding planning.

Humanitarian Needs

Health & Nutrition

- No major disease outbreaks have been reported. MHMS assessments show that the most commonly reported health issues include flu-like symptoms and fever, and to a lesser extent, cases of diarrhoea and eye infection. Nevertheless, MHMS recommends to undertake outbreak preparedness and response.
- The cold chain at Lata hospital has been affected by the power outage, causing all vaccines to be damaged.
- Radios are not available or not working at many health centers and clinics, making communication difficult.
Assessments of camps indicate that affected populations are in need of psychosocial support. There are currently no mental health nurses deployed within Temotu.

Increases in severe malnutrition is not expected and has not been observed, though the medium to long term food security of affected communities may be affected and may need to be addressed.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- **Access to safe water**: Safe water production capacity is sufficient for the affected population, though distribution remains a challenge. Water samples from the Lata system were found to be compliant with drinking water standards, indicating that it is safe for consumption.
- **Access to sanitation**: Before the earthquake and tsunami, many people used the bush and sea as a toilet with a higher concentration of latrines in Lata. Following the earthquake and tsunami, people are using open pits located close to higher concentrations of people.
- **Hygiene promotion**: Although safe water production is sufficient for drinking purposes, most families do not have enough water for washing or cleaning. Adequate water and hygiene promotion is needed to avoid spread of disease.
- One NOMAD water purification system, provided by the SIRC, is producing around 15,000 litres per day. An additional Nomad unit was provided by Australian Red Cross. World Vision is providing LifeStraws and bottled water to affected populations. ADRA has provided rainwater harvesting systems to communities on the western coast of Santa Cruz, which should assist displaced populations in accessing safe water once they return to their villages.
- Hygiene promotion is ongoing through the water distribution and health teams. WASH partners have standardized messages, particularly on safe sanitation options for displaced people and on the importance of handwashing. Additional staff from the MHMS Health Promotion Unit are being deployed to Lata, and additional field teams are being trained.

Education

- Initial assessment by the Temotu Province Education Authority reports that the disaster has disrupted 2,714 students and 221 teachers from 21 schools. The ongoing assessment will provide accurate information needed about the schools affected and the response needed. MEHRD has already requested tents for temporary learning spaces, school-in-a-box kits, early childhood development kits, and recreation kits.
- The Education in Emergencies Taskforce and Ministry of Infrastructure Development have identified six schools that have sustained structural damage. Temporary classrooms are needed for Venga Primary School and possibly Baenga School.
- According to the Provincial Chief Education Officer, children are still traumatized and do not want to go out and play outside, fearing that a tsunami will strike again.

Child Protection

- Specific Child Protection needs are yet to be assessed by cross-sectoral NDMO and inter-agency assessment team.

Inter-Agency Collaboration/Cluster Leadership and Key Partnerships


UNICEF Response

- The UNICEF Field Office in Solomon Islands has activated emergency response and released pre-positioned emergency items.
- The Chief of Field Office and the Child Protection Officer visited affected areas for an assessment and monitoring mission from 19 February.
- The Emergency Specialist was deployed to Honiara to support coordination of emergency response.
**Health & Nutrition**

- MHMS delivered one ice-land refrigerator for support to vaccine storage, and 3 cold boxes to help distribute vaccines to other health facilities/campaigns to Lata Hospital. Replacement vaccines arrived on February 16, and power has been restored to the cold chain. UNICEF is working with MHMS, WHO, and other partners to assess the need for a possible measles catch-up campaign for Santa Cruz islands.
- UNICEF ordered oral rehydration salts for distribution to treat affected populations in cases of diarrhoea. MHMS has also taken stock of essential supplies to prepare for outbreaks.
- A nutrition assessment is planned within 1-2 months as the impacts of reduced food supply would be felt by the affected population. Teams are continuing to carry out baseline assessments and surveillance of the camps.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

- A consolidated WASH distribution plan and schedule for water and WASH kits has been developed for all camps to ensure provision of a minimum of 5 litres per person per day. Additional boats were sent to Lata to aide in distribution, which has been slow.
- UNICEF has provided 654 WASH kits to Lata and five 1500 litre collapsible water tanks. Distribution of the WASH kits has begun for Lord Howe Island.

**Education**

- UNICEF has released additional supplies on 22 February at the request of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) to meet needs for damaged schools and displaced students. These include prepositioned tents, school-in-a-box kits, and recreation kits. Additional items will arrive for release to MEHRD next week.
- Three UNICEF-provided tents are being used for temporary learning spaces at Luesalemba School.

**Child Protection**

- A Protection Cluster meeting was held today between partners in order to discuss a joint approach to the Humanitarian Action Plan. UNICEF facilitated coordination with Welfare and IDP Cluster as well as humanitarian partners.

**Supply and Logistics**

There are no updates since the last UNICEF Situation Report (#3).

**Human Resources and Surge Capacity**

The earthquake and tsunami is localised in one province and this emergency can be handled by the UNICEF SI Team with support from UNICEF-Pacific office in Fiji.

**Media and Communication**

Key spokesperson is Ms. Isabelle Austin, Deputy Representative who speaks English and French. For any interviews, please contact Ms. Donna Hoerder, Communications Specialist – External Relations, 679-9265 518.

**Funding**

Funding for emergency supplies replenishment and related costs may be required in the upcoming stage. A proposal to the New Zealand National Committee is under preparation to support selected activities defined in the draft HAP.
Next steps

Key areas of interventions planned:

- Cluster committees continuing to meet as assessment reports are received.
- UNICEF will closely monitor situation and participate in existing NDMO led coordination arrangements and relevant cluster committee meetings.

Date of next SitRep: 1 March 2013

For further information please contact

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