Highlights

The second phase of the response focused on supporting the recovery of victims is now underway. Following the 14 August floods and landslides, the displaced victims have been given the option to be housed in communities or be voluntary relocated to a more permanent shelter solution. Two sites have been selected for voluntary relocation: the Old Skool compound in Hill Station and Juba barracks in Lumley. Options are also being considered for humanitarian cash transfers to support the affected households that opt to remain within their communities.

Over the weekend, UNICEF supported the Office of National Security and partners in establishing the shelter for the displaced landslide and flood victims at the Old Skool site. With DFID funds, UNICEF established 14 large tents, water supply, washing areas and toilets at Old Skool. UNICEF is also supporting the establishment of a Child Friendly Space and Protection Desk and provision of non-food items to the families. Approximately 30 children accompanied by their mothers and caregivers have already moved to the Old Skool site. It is expected that additional people will be relocated over the holiday weekend.

UNICEF continued supporting the affected communities at the temporary displacement centres in Regent, Kaningo and Pentagon through provision and supply of WASH services, as well as supporting affected children, including provision of psychosocial support and identification of child protection concerns. UNICEF also continued to support Don Bosco through the provision of essential supplies for 204 children and their mothers who lost their homes and are being temporarily housed there.

In the meantime, the heavy rains are continuing in Freetown and the districts. Over the weekend, additional floods were reported. UNICEF is coordinating with its field offices and partners to assess the damages and needs.

UNICEF’s Response with partners

Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

WASH support to communities (who are directly affected) in the most affected locations

- UNICEF, in partnership with implementing partner Catholic Relief Services, continued to support the daily provision and delivery of water to the affected communities. To date, 506,000 litres of water has been supplied through water trucking (293,000 liters in Regent, 128,000 litres in Kaningo and 85,000 litres in Pentagon), benefiting approximately 5,300 people (including day visitors) over the past two weeks.

- The rain water harvesting systems installed in Regent, Kaningo and Pentagon are now fully functional. An additional harvesting system has been installed at the Old Skool shelter. In total, the harvesting systems in the four centres have a capacity to harvest and store 120,000 litres of water. To date, over 100,000 litres of rain water have been harvested. This has eased the burden of water trucking especially at Kaningo and Pentagon, which are difficult to access during the rainy season. It is envisaged that over half of the population at the holding centres will now be served from water sourced from rain water harvesting.
UNICEF continued to provide sanitation services at the three temporary displacement centres in Regent, Kaningo and Pentagon, benefitting approximately 5,300 people including day visitors. Sanitation provision includes construction of trench latrines, repair of existing latrines as well as desludging of mobile latrines. The installation of temporary latrines and bath shelters at the Old Skool shelter was also completed during the reporting period.

Promotion of handwashing continued in the temporary displacement centres, through the provision of handwashing stations, water and soap, as well as hygiene education to communities at the temporary displacement centres and neighboring communities. Hygiene education focused on proper handwashing and prevention of diarrheal diseases in children. Over 14,820 people received hygiene education including 5,563 in Regent, 2,211 in Kaningo, 4,748 in Pentagon, 493 in Kamayama and 1,805 in Connaught, 34 Military, PCMH and Lumley hospitals.

WASH support to communities in Western Area

- 61,190 Aquatabs were distributed to 1,220 households directly affected by the floods and landslide [49,500 in Kaningo (990 households), 5,330 in Regent (107 households) and 6,360 in Pentagon/Kamayama respectively (127 households)]. The distribution was accompanied by hygiene education on effective use of the Aquatabs and safe water usage.

WASH infection prevention and control support in health facilities (hospitals and participating peripheral health units)

- Support to WASH related infection prevention and control (IPC) continued in Connaught, 34 Military, PCMH and Lumley hospitals. Support to WASH IPC has also started at Kaningo Community Health Post (CHP).
- Distribution of water, soap and disinfectants and installation of permanent handwashing stations was done at all the four hospitals listed above and the CHP. Health education training focusing on infection prevention and control was carried out in and around the four hospitals and CHP. The training benefitted 1,625 participants, including 601 children, 552 women and 472 men.

Pillar coordination

- UNICEF continued to support the WASH pillar coordination with joint monitoring of ongoing response activities, conduct of regular coordination meetings, and technical advisory support.
- UNICEF also supported the WASH pillar to conduct a rapid situation assessment regarding safety of drinking water in all the affected areas using RapidPro. The findings from this report have been used by the pillar and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) to inform the design of the next phase of community WASH support to affected communities. Results of the U-Report are available here https://sierraleone.ureport.in/poll/2215/.

Health

Cholera outbreak preparedness and case management

- As part of cholera preparedness planning, UNICEF in collaboration with WHO, Médecins sans Frontières and Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) contributed technical support in the development of Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign application to the International Coordinating Group (ICG), which has just been approved.
- UNICEF in collaboration with MOHS, WHO and other partners contributed technical support to the assessment of 12 facilities out of which seven were identified to serve as cholera treatment centers/units (CTC/CTU). As a result, UNICEF has prepositioned two cholera kits one each at Connaught and 34 military Hospitals which have the capacity to manage 200 severe or 800 mild cases of cholera in the event of an outbreak. MOHS has prepositioned one kit in Ola During Hospital. For the remaining hospitals, mini-kits are being prepared for prepositioning. UNICEF is also arranging for an additional ten kits to be made available.

Infection Prevention and control

- In collaboration with MOHS, UNICEF supplied materials to five IPC teams to establish effective IPC systems in seven sites (Regent, Culvert, Dwarzark, Don Bosco, Kaningo, Kamayama and Old Skool). UNICEF also supplied IPC materials to four burial teams of 10 persons, three decontamination teams and 20 diggers which contributed to the preparation and burials of bodies.
- UNICEF supported in-country distribution of drugs and infection prevention and control (IPC) supplies to implementing partner DIP, Connaught Hospital, Regent CHC, 34 Military Hospital, the Emergency Operations Centre, the Directorate of Drugs and Medical Supplies, the Western Area District Medical Store, and the Office of National Security Command Centres in Regent, Kamayama and Old Skool.

Delivery of health services to surviving victims at the camps
UNICEF in collaboration with MOHS provided emergency medical supplies (including cannulas, suture packs, syringes, blood collection needles, gloves, etc.) to the Regent CHC which contributed to the care of 390 victims including women and children during outreach services to the camp.

Child Protection

Child Friendly Spaces and Psychological First Aid

- Through its implementing partner, Family Homes Movement (FHM), UNICEF established four Child Friendly Spaces in Regent, Kaningo, Kamayama, and Pentagon. Since 24 August, 1,604 children have attended the Child Friendly Spaces in the four locations, and 237 children received Psychological First Aid in the same locations. An additional Child Friendly Space and a Psychosocial Support tent were established by FHM in Old Skool with UNICEF providing on-site child protection technical support, and activities are to begin on 31 August following the arrival of affected individuals at the site.
- On 30 August, UNICEF and MSWGCA co-led a coordination meeting on Psychological First Aid and Psychosocial Support with relevant child protection actors as well as MOHS, WHO, and their partners, who are taking the lead on the provision of mental health care services.

Protection desks

- Four Protection Desks are in the process of being established with FSU and MSWGCA’s field-level presence in Regent, Kaningo, Kamayama, and Old Skool.

Family tracing and reunification and alternative care

- On 28 August, UNICEF and MSWGCA co-led a coordination meeting on Family Tracing and Reunification mechanism with child protection actors working with separated and unaccompanied children to ensure coordination in their identification and referral.
- UNICEF is continuing to support Don Bosco through the provision of essential supplies for 204 children and their mothers who lost their homes. Supplies that have been distributed include 200 mattresses and pillows, and 300 bednets, as well as recreational supplies. Four children that have lost a caregiver have been identified and will be supported through the FTR process.

Pillar coordination

- UNICEF has been supporting MSWGCA in the coordination of the Protection, Psychosocial Support and Gender Pillar, including a mapping of organization activities on the ground.

Education

Rapid Assessment of 116 Schools, as well as nurseries and pre-schools in affected communities

- A needs assessment of schools in the areas affected by the mudslide and floods showed that more than 40 schools were affected. Some schools had classrooms damaged while others had WASH facilities and teaching and learning materials lost. The assessment was conducted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in collaboration with UNICEF to ensure the needs of schools are addressed before schools reopen on 11 September.
- UNICEF supported the MEST to convene a meeting of all education stakeholders to devise a coordinated approach to ensure smooth reopening of schools in the affected areas. Following the meeting, working groups were formed to coordinate school/classroom rehabilitation, provision of teaching and learning materials, placement and reintegration of displaced children into schools, among other interventions. The meeting was attended by donors (DFID, World Bank), United Nations, as well as NGO partners. This will be followed by development of a plan of intervention.

Children and schools, nurseries, and preschools affected by Floods/Landslide supported with Teaching and Learning materials

- UNICEF Education team in collaboration with the Child Protection team continued to support young children to access the child friendly spaces which have been set up in the temporary displacement places. 14 staff members (3 women and 11 men) from FHM, were trained on the use of ECD kits provided for the Child Friendly Spaces. To date 13 ECD kits and 15 recreation kits have been provided benefiting more than 750 children.
- In preparation for school reopening, UNICEF provided learning materials, exercise books, pencils, sharpeners, rulers and other materials to the MEST Western Urban District Education Office (DEO). The learning materials will benefit more than 400 children affected by mudslides and floods to go back to school.

Nutrition

Screening of children to identify the severely malnourished (SAM) at holding centers and community sites including case management at OTPs and IPFs

- A three-day joint rapid assessment and quick response mission led by the Directorate of Food and Nutrition and the Scaling Up Nutrition National Secretariat, together with key United Nations agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WFP) was completed on 25 August. In coordination with implementing partners (DIP) and community health workers (CHW), five affected areas were visited to assess the availability of nutrition services and ensure delivery of key nutrition services.
- At the end of the assessment, 437 children under-five years of age were screened. Of the children screened, nine (2 per cent) had severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and eight out of nine children with SAM were referred to the nearest outpatient therapeutic programme (OTP) site. Fifty five (13 per cent) out of the 437 children had moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).
and all mothers/caregivers of these children with MAM were counselled on optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and caring practices.

- An additional 73 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were screened for malnutrition. Fourteen (19 per cent) out of the 73 PLW screened were found to be malnourished, and referred to the nearest health facility for further assessment.
- 69 pregnant women, mothers and caregivers were also counselled on optimal infant young child feeding (IYCF) and caring practices by trained CHWs.
- 150 CHW, 30 psycho-social counsellors and 30 social mobilisers for all NGO partners working in the affected areas were trained in community based IYCF counselling, screening to identify SAM children using MUAC tapes, and monitoring donations of breastmilk substitutes in the flood affected camps. To this end, UNICEF distributed 44 packs of MUAC tapes, 1,000 leaflets on SAM screening techniques, 250 copies of key messages on infant and young child feeding and harmful effects of breast milk substitutes, 250 copies of tally sheet for SAM screening and list of OTP centers for (i) screening of children to identify the SAM cases, (ii) referral of the identified SAM cases to nearest OTPs, (iii) c-IYCF counselling at shelters, and (iv) monitoring donation(s) of breast milk substitutes.

**DHMT/DFN monitoring and data collection: CHW conducts household visits and screening (IYCF, SAM, and cholera) through Rapid Pro mobile platform**

- Results from RapidPro from CHWs working in emergency areas revealed that for the period 23 to 30 August, 1,736 children under-five years of age were screened and 11 had SAM and 72 had MAM. Out of these, 14 children were referred to OTPs.
- There was no reported case of breastmilk substitute donation in the flood affected areas.

**Social mobilization**

- On 26 August, UNICEF conducted an orientation for 18 partners involved in social mobilization and community engagement on key messaging priorities, across health, nutrition, WASH, child protection and education sectors. As per the updated mapping, over 300 social mobilizers are currently active in the affected areas in addition to the 150 CHWs that UNICEF is supporting. Based on the emerging epidemiological trends, emphasis was put on further intensifying cholera and malaria messages at the community level.
- CHWs are continuing to work in and around the displacement sites and affected communities to educate families and caregivers on key behaviours, especially on how to avoid cholera and malaria. Peer supervisors engaged for the emergency response reported the following figures for 23 - 29 August (daily reporting via RapidPro): 18,135 households visited, 11,599 males and 9,662 mothers of under-five sensitized, 1,588 community dialogues held, and 1,322 stakeholders engaged.
- Since 18 August, UNICEF has been carrying out a mass mobilization campaign through radio (over 3,500 minutes - Public Service Announcements and call-in discussion programmes) and television (over 600 minutes - call-in discussion programmes) with messages particularly on cholera prevention.

**Cash transfers**

- To support the affected households, the Government (National Commission for Social Action) and partners are working to develop a humanitarian cash transfer programme. The proposal should be approved in the next 24 hours. If approved, 1,893 affected households would receive US$120 as startup humanitarian cash transfer and US$30 per month for the next two months. According to the survey conducted, about 1,203 affected households will be moving to a shelter and those beneficiaries would receive an amount based on the results from the rent market analysis.
- UNICEF is also supporting the pillar with gathering data, such as conducting a rental subsidy market analysis and also facilitating discussions with the Government and partners to ensure integration of the humanitarian cash transfer in the wider social safety nets programme targeting the most vulnerable.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

Immediately following the landslide and floods, the Government of Sierra Leone initiated its emergency response mechanism, under the leadership of the Office of National Security. A command centre was established in the area of Regent, the epicenter of the landslide, to ensure coordination of efforts. At the technical level, pillars were activated to coordinate the response (child protection, health, logistics, security, social mobilization, food and nutrition, WASH, shelter).

At the level of the United Nations Country Team, the United Nations Resident Coordinator designated the Country Director and Representative of the World Food Programme as Incident Manager. To support the United Nations response, a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team was deployed to Sierra Leone. The team is assisting with coordination, information management and needs assessment activities. In terms of field coordination, meetings are held at the Office of National Security twice a day and the United Nations Country Team is also meeting daily to ensure coordination at the level of the United Nations.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

Following the initial operations to rescue survivors and recover the bodies, the response is being implemented on three levels: 1) support to communities affected by the landslide and floods as well as mitigation of resurgence and potential risks; 2) providing support to those in the temporary displacement centres; and 3) mitigating potential risks, such as cholera or any other outbreaks.

To support the response, UNICEF has established a field and mobile team composed of members from all sectors. The UNICEF strategy in focused on the immediate response, prevention (potential disease outbreaks and other emergencies) and recovery.
Human Resources
The Country Office is supporting staff that have been either directly or indirectly affected by the crisis. The Human Resources team, Staff Association, Peer Support Volunteers and counsellors (at the Regional Office and HQ) are on standby to provide assistance to staff. While there is no need for additional staff at the moment, the Regional Office is providing remote support as required. Human Resources has requested support from the Regional Office to fast-track the recruitment of the Emergency Officer position. In the meantime, an Emergency Coordinator will be deployed from the Regional Office to support UNICEF efforts on the ground.

Funding
The crisis has garnered a lot of media attention and further to the generous contribution from DFID (£2,136,260), other donors have expressed interest in pledging funds to support the response and recovery. Donors have also been flexible in terms of fund utilization to support the response and the Country Office is finalizing a response plan on potential gaps for donor support.

Next SitRep: 7 September 2017

Who to contact for further information:

Hamid El Bashir, Representative
UNICEF Sierra Leone
Tel: +44 2033579278/9 x1001
Mobile: +232 76 100 688
Email: helbashir@unicef.org

Sandra Lattouf, Deputy Representative
UNICEF Sierra Leone
Tel: +44 2033579278/9 x2001
Mobile: +232 76 291 023
Email: slattouf@unicef.org

John James, Communications Specialist
UNICEF Sierra Leone
Tel: +232 76 601 310
Mobile: +232 76 102 401
Email: jjames@unicef.org

UNICEF Sierra Leone Facebook - Twitter - YouTube - Instagram - Flickr