Salient Points

- Two weeks after torrential rain and river overflow in Honiara, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Isabel Provinces caused massive flooding, damages and displacement on 3 and 5 April 2014, flood waters are receding leaving behind acres of mud and debris.
- Destruction or serious damage has been widespread to families, residential and business communities, farmers and related livelihoods, and infrastructure, including water sources, and schools.
- 10,653 people are living in 21 evacuation centres in Honiara. Honiara City Council (19 April) reports around 4,000 of these evacuees are aged 0-16.
- Guadalcanal Province Health Department’s assessment results: 10% of communities with clean water; 28% with functional toilet; 4% with adequate food; 29% of births attended by skilled staff (WHO, 19 April).
- Some electricity and water systems restored; but large numbers of people remain dependent on emergency tank trucks, water purification tablets.
- Critical needs are well managed and resourced re-location or return, food, clean water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, health care (diarrhea, respiratory infections, leptospirosis, malaria, dengue, respiratory, eye and skin infections, malnutrition, mental health). Other needs identified include protection of vulnerable people, school restoration and resumption of classes.
- Government has identified a standard return package that includes a Family Kit and a Livelihood Kit. FOPA site and one other identified for re-location of people who cannot survive at their pre-disaster location.
- Sector in depth assessments mostly complete; Three month Humanitarian Action Plan is with National Disaster Council for approval, along with a proposal for a PDNA.
UNICEF and Partners Response to Date

Ongoing monitoring, following WASH assessments, of evacuation centres in Honiara, show that more than 10,653 people continue to need clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene supplies. UNICEF Solomon Islands is designated by the Government as their Supporting Agency for the coordination of WASH response, under the Welfare and IDP Cluster. Ministry of Health and Medical Services, for the coordination of the Health and Nutrition Cluster, under the Welfare and IDP Cluster including assessments, plans services and supply distribution; UNICEF is also a service provider.

Water.
At present, water to most evacuation centres are supplied through water trucking by WASH cluster partners (WASH needs assessment). As of 14 April 66,700 litres of water had been produced and distributed during 29 trips in Honiara. There are about 60 water tanks at evacuation sites in Honiara (OCHA Situation Report 19 April). UNICEF released its contingency supplies in Honiara, including water containers, purification tablets, soap and pamphlets with hygiene messages. Of these, 2,000 collapsible 10 litre water containers were distributed in Guadalcanal and 150 WASH kits were distributed at an evacuation centre. Water containers and kits have also been distributed by other WASH partners, including dignity kits by UNFPA, in other centres. In order to increase household coverage, the number per household will be reduced from four to two per household (HCC SitRep 16th April). UNICEF is shipping additional supplies from Vanuatu and other UNICEF depots.

Sanitation and Hygiene.
Soap and basic hygiene items have been distributed but more are needed at all sites, particularly for infants, adolescent girls and women. UNICEF will be working on the construction of pit latrines together with Red Cross and RWSS at four large evacuation centres. UNICEF has procured 50,000 bars of soap that are awaiting distribution. Cleaning of evacuation centres has improved thanks to Honiara City Council.

WHO is the primary support to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, for the coordination of the Health and Nutrition Cluster, under the Welfare and IDP Cluster. 125 communities have been assessed for health needs covering at least 50% of the affected population in Honiara and Guadalcanal (OCHA Situation Report 19 April). The National Referral Hospital is now open and all clinics around Honiara except for three (White River, Mataniko and Pikinini clinics) due to debris and damages (HCC Sit Rep 16th April). An assessment of vaccination and cold storage capacity is also underway. UNICEF and Government EPI managers have prepared a plan and budget for a special immunization campaign against measles and rubella that would also include deworming and Vitamin A; but funding is being sought.

Emergency disease surveillance and reporting indicate an increase in diarrhea, acute
respiratory infection, conjunctivitis. Malaria and dengue remain high risks, although Honiara City Council has been carrying out successful spraying and around 2000 mosquito nets have been distributed. WHO has deployed staff from Fiji and Manila, and bilateral and NGO medical surge staff are also deployed, including most recently from MSF. Two emergency health kits and oral rehydration salts from UNICEF were delivered. Both hospitals, all but three damaged clinics, and three mobile health teams are functional. However there are monitoring reports of lack of sufficient attention to sick children, post natal mothers and newborn babies, and lack of medicines (HCC Sit Rep 16th April and inter agency protection cluster assessment). There are 71 expectant mothers in the evacuation centers.

WHO and UNICEF shared an advisory to humanitarian partners against distribution of infant formula and encouraging the promotion of breastfeeding, as well as other health messages. National Medical Stores identified gaps in essential supplies including micronutrient powder (MNP), zinc, abendazole. Government of Fiji is sending MNP while F75, F100 and ReSoMal for treatment of severely malnourished children, have been ordered by UNICEF. The Government and partners have been doing food distribution, but resources are stretched. OCHA is seeking an emergency cash grant for food purchases and distribution through partners designated by Government.

UNICEF supports the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to coordinate the Education Cluster, under the Welfare and IDP Cluster. MEHRD aims to get school age children back in school by April 22 and is currently working with the NDMO and other partners to encourage the movement of displaced persons out of schools that are serving as evacuation centres, and the cleaning of those schools. School feeding (i.e. wet feeding/ hot meals in addition to the food distribution in remaining evacuation centres) has been proposed by MEHRD as both a nutritional intervention for children (33% children in the Solomon Islands are stunted – DHS 2007) and an incentive to return to schools, but this is not yet funded.

UNICEF supplied 2 x 80m2 an 1 x 24m2 tents and 20 tarpaulins to Honiara City Council and has now supplied another two 24m2 tents, two early childhood development kits, two school in a box kits, and recreation kits via the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD). Funding is being sought to help more schools and children.

The Welfare and IDP Cluster, led by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Culture and the Ministry of Provincial Government, includes Protection and the Child Protection area of responsibility. Assessments and monitoring indicate that evacuation site management has improved, including through government employees and locally organised volunteers. Food distribution, protection and sanitation remain concerns. Government has prioritized reducing the number of evacuation centres to fewer than 10. The Protection and Shelter Clusters are working together for a smooth process of voluntary return with a recovery package, or else relocation of IDPs (OCHA Situation Report 19 April). NDMO agreed on a standard package of both items for household survival (Family Kit) and tools for rebuilding and gardening (Livelihood Kit).

Australian, NZ and Pacific Police personnel are assisting the Solomon Islands authorities as part of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Island (RAMSI). UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision staff trained 40 people on psychosocial support and guidelines for child friendly spaces. Activities have been scheduled for roll out next week at evacuation centres. UNICEF tents have been erected and will be used for protective and learning spaces, promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices and counselling for protection from gender based violence.

Other Cluster news: The Government of Australia has deployed engineers to help with bridge reconstruction, WFP has two logisticians at work. SPC is sending environmental specialists. UNDP is planning early recovery assistance to the SIG, through the Australian Government-funded Pacific Risk Resilience Programme. A group of partners is discussing a post disaster needs assessment
with the Government. There are significant needs for shelter, food security and agriculture and other livelihood recovery. The New Zealand Government is supplying a temporary Bailey bridge in May to replace the old Mataniko Bridge, until Japanese assistance can reconstruct a new bridge next year. ILO is providing resources to support cash-for-work activities for household and community level immediate recovery. UNFPA has distributed 58 dignity kits during focus group discussions with pregnant and lactating women. Information management specialists from OCHA and SPC are working with the NECN to analyse data received from sectoral and joint assessments (OCHA Situation Report 19 April). A three person UN Disasters Assessment and Coordination team has arrived to assess, among other things, risks associated with damage to dams.

**Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs**

Two weeks after flash flooding on 3-5 April, flood waters have begun to recede, leaving behind acres of mud and debris. Logistics and mobility have improved, however it will take quite some time to repair many bridges and roads. A specialist environmental assessment of a flooded mine is planned. Honiara City and Guadalcanal Province have the largest recovery challenges, although damage to food gardens, plantations and water sources also occurred in Malaita and Isabel Island Provinces. Guadalcanal Province has a population of 93,613, of which the estimated number affected is 52,000, including in the capital city of Honiara (population: 64,609). The internally displaced number is now 10,653, with people in 21 evacuation centres (OCHA Situation Report 19 April). The most populated centre, Panatina Pavilion, shelters around 3,500 people, especially at night.

Critical needs remain site and distribution management; food or funds for food, clean water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, health care (esp. for surge in diarrhea, and for respiratory infections, leptospirosis, malaria, dengue, respiratory, eye skin infections, malnutrition, psychological stress). Other needs identified include protection of vulnerable people, management of re-location or returns; school restoration to minimize delay in resumption of classes.

Currently, a major effort by Government and partners has ensured food distribution to evacuation centres. However, resources are very stretched, and the food distributed does not fulfill nutritional needs particularly for complementary feeding of children aged 6-23 months, and for pregnant and lactating mothers (Inter agency protection cluster assessment).

UNICEF has estimated, based on pre-flood survey data, that there may be over 1200 moderately or severely malnourished children under age five in Honiara and Guadalcanal, and in the coming days and weeks, they need to be identified and treated, and prevention measures instituted. Nine severe cases were under treatment at the national hospital in the last week (WHO).

The displaced persons are mainly from the poorest parts of Honiara, areas that were deficient in clean water and sanitation even before the flooding. In Guadalcanal, all water sources assessed in Burns Creek, Mosquito, Tanakake Valley and Rice Farm are contaminated. Open defecation is common around evacuation centres and most toilets are inoperative. Key sanitation and hygiene needs remain are continued supply of clean water and soap, coordinated hygiene messaging and reduction of open defecation.

Major concerns are building and furnishings damage, school water and sanitation damages, and losses of teachers’ and students’ teaching and learning supplies. The Education Cluster assessment showed that a total of 78 schools (ECCE, primary and secondary) were affected in Honiara and Guadalcanal. In addition, ten are in need of cleaning and repairs after being used as evacuation centres (Education Cluster Assessment Matrix, 18 April).

The inter agency protection cluster undertook an assessment and found that needs include protective learning, recreational and psychosocial activities for children, young people and women. The inter agency protection assessment also found cases of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse (Interagency protection cluster assessment 15 April). There are some cases of children separated from families (Inter agency protection assessment 15 April & WHO/
A multi sector assessment will begin this week focusing on Health, WASH, land ownership, agriculture and other indicators (HCC Sit Rep April 16). The assessment is essential to determine whether IDPs can return home, without unmanageable risks to their health, survival and safety. Meanwhile, Family Kits and Livelihood Kits are being prepared for returnees.

A Humanitarian Action Plan has been drafted by national cluster members for a three month period and is with the National Disaster Council for endorsement. A Post Disaster Needs Assessment proposal is also with the National Disaster Council for consideration; sector humanitarian assessments are already indicating large scale agriculture and business, shelter, school, clinic, road, bridge and other infrastructure repairs are needed.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

The Solomon Islands National Disaster Council, with the National Emergency Operations Center and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), is leading and coordinating the response, including all Government designated leads and their humanitarian partners on sector or cluster areas. UN OCHA is assisting Government with Coordination, while bilateral and multilateral partners and many NGOs and FBOs are supporting with cash, supplies, staff and services.

**UNICEF Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF’s Humanitarian Strategy is guided by its Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian situations, by its position in the Pacific Humanitarian Team, and by the prioritization of needs and coordination by the Government, including through the Cluster structure. UNICEF’s Solomon Islands Office, located in Honiara, is responsible for both coordination support (lead support to Government in WASH and Education, membership in IDP and Social Welfare Cluster and Health and Nutrition Cluster); and for implementation. UNICEF’s multi-country office in Fiji provides technical oversight and guidance, surge staff, procurement and transaction processing. Our strategy is:

1) Coordinate all assessments, services, resources and information through NDMO, supported by UN OCHA and within agreed SIG disaster coordination and mechanisms. Fulfil commitments for lead technical advice to SIG on coordination of WASH and Education; provide supplementary support in Protection, Health and Nutrition clusters or working groups.
2) Prioritise needs for clean water, sanitation and hygiene in evacuation centres, schools that sustained damages and clinics serving affected people
3) Integration of interventions in WASH, education and protection in support to resumption of regular schooling
4) Supplement supplies and services of SIG and other health partners, with concentration on screening, referral and treatment of malnutrition; special post-disaster immunization plus campaign (measles, rubella, Vitamin A, de-worming); support to pregnant and lactating women, new mothers and newborns
5) Coordinate with the Solomon Islands National Emergency Operations Centre [NEOC], Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) and the Health Communications Working Group to ensure massive and repetitive promotion on national radio of key family practices for emergencies that keep family members healthy and safe.
6) Implement response through five mechanisms: (i) contingency supplies pre-positioned in Honiara and Port Villa to partner best able to distribute in coordinated, effective way; (ii) procurement, shipping and distribution of additional supplies; (iii) mixed modality of cash advances to government, NGOs and payments to contractors; (iv) technical assistance through staff on ground and deployed surge staff; (v) remote support from UNICEF Pacific in Fiji.
7) Financial accountability for all resources and performance accountability through on site monitoring for achievement of targets agreed with National Disaster Council in the Humanitarian Action Plan (approval pending.)
Human resources

Regular UNICEF staff members in Honiara, Solomon Islands include: A Chief of Field Office, WASH (3), child protection (2), education (1), immunization/logistics (1), maternal and child health (1), communication (1), administration (3). Surge staff currently deployed: emergency coordination (1), education (1). Nutrition (1) Health and nutrition surge staff delayed due to visa and flight problems. The Regional WASH in emergencies advisor is expected on mission, and a consultant will arrive in a week to participate in a water and sanitation needs assessment. The UNICEF office is also administratively supporting specialists deployed by WFP.

Funding

Based on the results of Cluster and cross cutting assessments, and the draft Humanitarian Action Plan, UNICEF Pacific needs USD$450,000 to respond in water, sanitation, hygiene, maternal and child health, protection and education areas. UNICEF Pacific and its sub-office in the Solomon Islands is very grateful to have received/or soon receive funds from: New Zealand government via UNICEF New Zealand; UNICEF Japan; UNICEF Australia, and the UPS Company. In addition, UNICEF New Zealand has been running a dynamic appeal which has been generously supported by people across the country. UNICEF Pacific still needs at least USD 200,000 more (subject to revision based on final approval of the HAP).

An OCHA-coordinated Consolidated Emergency Response Fund based on the HAP is being prepared. UNICEF’s proposal will focus on:

WASH: Water and sanitation facilities and hygiene behavior, focusing on schools and health centers
Education and Protection: Back to school campaign, including school cleaning, feeding, school supplies and psycho-social support for students and teachers
Health and Nutrition: Special immunization campaign, prevention and treatment of malnutrition and health care for pregnant and lactating women, women giving birth and neonates.

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