Salient Points

- Torrential rain in the capital city of Honiara, Guadalcanal, Makira and probably other provinces caused massive flooding, damages and displacement between 3-5 April 2014
- Entire communities were destroyed when the Matanika River overflowed
- Closed airport; destroyed or damaged bridges and flooding severely limiting mobility and access
- A 6.0 earthquake at a depth of 63km, hit the city of Kirakira in the Solomon Islands at 10.40 pm on Friday 4 April, there has been no damage assessment
- Limited distribution has begun of food, water, tents and other NFI in Honiara and of tents in Makira-Ulawa
- 12,000 people are reported to be in at least fourteen evacuation centres where registration continues; there are also numerous informal displacement sites being run by religious groups and others
- The maternity and children’s wards were among 500 patients relocated from the national hospital in Honiara to other non-medical facilities; the Good Samaritan Hospital is the new designated hospital for emergency treatment
- NDMO and partners including UNICEF have begun rapid assessments
- Government of Solomon Islands has declared a State of Emergency, activated Humanitarian Clusters and officially requested external assistance
- Main immediate needs identified as emergency shelter, food, water and sanitation, health (esp. diarrhea, mosquito-borne diseases), blankets, clothing, protection of vulnerable people.

Solomon Islands Flooding

49,000 People affected
Of which 23,000 Are children

1/5th of people in capital city Honiara displaced
(SI Emergency National Operations Center, 5 April 2014)

UNICEF Appeal*
US$ 400,000
*subject to revision after assessments complete
UNICEF and Partners Response to Date

It is likely that more than the 12,000 displaced people in the affected areas lacking access to sufficient clean water and sanitation. The displaced persons are mainly from the poorest areas of Honoria, areas that were deficient in clean water and sanitation even before the flooding. UNICEF Solomons is designated by the Government as their supporting Agency for the coordination of the WASH Cluster. Rapid assessments have begun to identify where to send which pre-positioned emergency supplies. UNICEF has a contingency agreement with World Vision. The RWSS and Honoria City Council are jointly responsible for water and sanitation and their staff have visited evacuation centres where water supplies in tanks are running low and poor sanitation is an increasing risk. An additional Pacific WASH in emergencies specialist is on standby in Fiji for deployment as soon as Honiara airport opens.

At least nine schools have been turned into evacuation centers; others are damaged. Most schools are in a holiday period but they will be challenged to resume classes unless displaced people can find somewhere else to go and clean up can be done. UNICEF Solomons and Save the Children are designated to support Government with coordination of the Education Cluster, and are organizing an assessment, including identifying sites for protective learning and community emergency services (PLACES with integrated learning and protective services). Pre-positioned supplies include school tents, tarpaulins, school in a box, and ECD kits. An additional Pacific Education in emergencies specialist is on standby in Fiji for deployment as soon as Honiara airport opens.

UNICEF is a cluster member under the Health and Nutrition Cluster headed by Government and supported by WHO. WHO and UNICEF are sharing an advisory to humanitarian partners against distribution of infant formula and encouragement to promote breastfeeding, as well as other health messages. WHO will deploy staff from Fiji and Manila as soon as the airport opens, for food and nutrition safety, communication and epidemiological reporting. UNICEF is on standby to send health kits and tents and will support a health and nutrition assessment. Oral rehydration salts are available in the National Medical Stores. The Government and some charity groups have started food distribution but Government advises that larger amounts of emergency food aid is a priority.

There is a Welfare and IDP rather than Protection Cluster per se in the SI. UNICEF Solomons, Oxfam, Save the Children, Red Cross and others are supporting the Government for care and support to people in evacuation centres, which are responsibility of the Honoria City Council (HCC). There is an interagency Protection Group as well. Government entities are carrying out search and rescue missions and Red Cross and other partners are carrying out registration at evacuation centres that were opened by HCC. It is not possible to do registration at all the informal displacement sites, and there is some mobility of families between sites. Honiara City Council has been working to try to keep evacuation centres clean and safe.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The Tropical Storm has moved away from the Solomon Islands, but three days of heavy rains on top of a long rainy season caused rivers to overflow, bridges to be destroyed or damaged and extensive flooding of residential and commercial areas, especially in Chinatown. Logistics remain a serious challenge, with limited mobility and access between sectors of Honoria and into and out of the city to other areas in Guadalcanal. The airport remains closed, with debris removal and repairs proceeding and hopes for an opening in the next
Reporting period: 5-6 April 2014

36 hours. The Port is open and functioning for ships and boats. Some shops are open and selling food, clothing and other goods, but depending on their location, some have no or limited possibilities to restock in the near future.

Guadalcanal, Honoria City, and Makira are the main parts of the country reporting heavy damages. In terms of population, the worst affected is Guadalcanal Province (population: 93,613, estimated affected: 37,000, including the capital city of Honiara (population: 64,609, estimated displaced: 12,000). Of the 49,000 people believed to be affected, around 12,000 are displaced from damaged or destroyed homes, and camping in 14 evacuation centres. Registration is ongoing in the official centres by the Red Cross and other partners. Where registration has been done, numbers vary from 50 to more than 3000, with the largest numbers of people in centres near the Mataniko River. No incidences of children separated from families have been reported thus far. Additional, unofficial displacement sites are being run by different religious groups and charities, where it is not possible to do registration. It is concerning that there is no on-site management of the evacuation centres, and Honoria City Council (HCC) is seeking to address this. HCC has deployed police and health /sanitation staff, to the centres. However the police are overstretched.

Solomon Islands and Australian Federal Police are deployed to prevent looting and other crimes.

Led by Government, rapid assessments have begun, with participation from UNICEF staff and other partners. Preliminary assessments and official reports list the following as priority needs:
- Shelter, food, water and sanitation, health/medical (especially diarrhea, mosquito-borne diseases, complications of pregnancy and delivery, interrupted treatments of chronic conditions), protection/security and other NFIs including blankets and clothing.
- Logistics, planning and coordination/IDP management support as a cross cutting need.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

The Solomon Islands National Emergency Operations Center is active 24/7 and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is leading the response, coordinating all Ministries and other Government entities designated as Cluster Leads. NDMO has activated all Solomon Islands Humanitarian Clusters and formally requested assistance from the Pacific Humanitarian Team and other external partners. The Pacific Humanitarian Team based in Suva, Fiji, is coordinating regional stand-by supplies and support, all pending deployment when the Honiara airport re-opens. Australian, New Zealand and American governments are supporting with financial, logistics, and on the ground support.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF has activated its cluster coordinators and contact persons in both the Solomon Islands and Suva, Fiji. UNICEF is the lead support to Solomon Islands Government led clusters for WASH and Protection and Co-Support for Education. UNICEF supports government and WHO for Health and Nutrition. We have provided lists of staff in Honiara and Fiji, and lists of contingency stock in Honiara and Fiji. We are providing emergency messages for transmission covering UNICEF’s core commitments to children in humanitarian situations. We are activating partnerships for delivery of supplies and services based on assessment findings and Cluster Coordination mechanisms (who does what where). Our priority is clean water and sanitation, protective learning and community emergency services (child protection integrated with learning), strong community communication, health and nutrition, followed by restoring education in schools as soon as possible.

**Human resources**

UNICEF staff members in Honiara, Solomon Islands include a Chief of Field Office, two child protection staff, an education staff, an immunization logistician, health staff and administrative staff. Additional staff in WASH, health, nutrition, child protection, education and communication are on stand-by to fly to Honiara from UNICEF Pacific’s base in Suva, Fiji. Surge staff are needed for coordination, planning, monitoring, reporting, operations and health.
Funding

At this stage Solomon Islands National Emergency Operations Center have requested SBD$ 1,000,000.00 funds to support immediate relief to people in evacuation centers in Guadalcanal and displaced persons in other provinces. Funding requirements are expected to increase after they receive the results of detailed needs assessments. UNICEF Pacific has estimated it will require USD 400,000 to respond in water, sanitation, hygiene, maternal and child health, protection and education areas. This figure may change after needs assessments are complete.

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