BACKGROUND

Post Flood Recovery & Measles Outbreak Response

It has been five months since the 4-6th April flooding that claimed 22 lives and affected 52,000 people in the capital city of Honiara, Guadalcanal and other provinces in the Solomon Islands. During this reporting period, the last two evacuation centres of Festival of the Pacific Arts (FOPA) compound and Rove Police Club have closed down. All remaining 153 families were either relocated to government allocated land for Internally Displaced People or have moved to family-origin provinces, with some support from the government – mainly roofing and home building tools.

Solomon Islands has been experiencing a measles outbreak that started in July 2014 and the total number of reported cases has now reached 953, with two deaths in children under three months of age. Cases are being reported from Honiara (767), Malaita (85) Guadalcanal (78), Renbel (17) and Makira (2) Provinces. Most of the cases are in the 15-20 year age group, with a smaller peak in infants under age one. After the flooding in April, a special immunization activity in Honiara and Guadalcanal reached children aged 1-5, and this age group now has very little incidence of measles. UNICEF continues to work with WHO and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services providing support with procurement and logistics (including the shipping of Measles and Rubella vaccines), as well as communication and social mobilization support.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Remaining flood displaced families have relocated to April Hill, a government land allocated for IDPs, or to family-origin provinces. Consequently, the last two remaining centres (at FOPA and Rove Police Club) are now closed.
- Water trucking to FOPA and Rove Police club stopped following the closure of both centres in this reporting period but work on sanitation and hygiene promotion in affected communities continues.
- Training on Community based management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (C-SAM) at Good Samaritan Hospital was carried out from 5th – 7th September for 15 health workers. The training was supported by UNICEF, with OCHA (CERF) funds.
- Two measles related deaths in children under three months of age were confirmed with 953 cases being reported following a measles outbreak that started in July 2014.
- A mass campaign targeting people aged 6 months to 30 years is ongoing, starting in Honiara, with further campaigns to be conducted in the provinces.
RESPONSE by UNICEF AND PARTNERS

WASH Cluster

UNICEF Solomon Islands is designated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) as their Supporting Agency for the Coordination of WASH response, under the Welfare and IDP cluster. The WASH cluster activities have now moved from the Emergency Response phase to Recovery Phase.

Activities agreed under the agreements signed 23 June with Save the Children, Solomon Islands Red Cross, World Vision and Live and Learn, continued as follows:

Water

- Water trucking to FOPA and Rove Police Club centres stopped following the closure of both centres in this reporting period.
- All Nomad pumping units set up for water purification in Guadalcanal were dismantled and returned to warehousing.
- The cleaning of 50 wells was carried out in 10 communities in Guadalcanal Province, reaching 5,197 beneficiaries.
- Work on improving water source supplying Tamboko community school will soon commence, while plans have been made to improve the damaged Tamboko dam.
- All planned hand pumps/bore holes are yet to be completed, however community consultation is continuing.
- Water storage: Nine tanks have been distributed to five communities in Honiara, Sun Valley (2), Lord Howe Settlement (2), Burns Creek (2), Ngalimera (1) and Tenaru (2).
- Clearing and repairing of water points, water tanking and storage have reached 11,900 beneficiaries.

Sanitation

- Based on community consultations for sanitation, communities only agreed to a single design block rather than four blocks.
- Construction of latrines still on-going in Eastern Guadalcanal, including several communities in Honiara and West Guadalcanal, targeting about 6,000 people. While the exact number of beneficiaries is yet to be determined the aim is to reduce the ratio number of toilets users to 50 people per toilet.

Hygiene

- Currently one hygiene promoter is available for 690 people.
- The WVSI hygiene promotion team is working in both Honiara and Guadalcanal plains.

Education Cluster

UNICEF Solomon Islands supports the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to coordinate the Education Cluster, under the Welfare and IDP cluster.

- Final reporting has been done on the closed school feeding project for 12 schools in Honiara and Guadalcanal. All schools reported improvements in attendance rates and also greater participation by parents and other community members.
- The remaining education supplies were distributed to affected schools and children:
  - Distribution of Four x 80m2 tents to Ngaliolu, Tumorora, Nagliolu and Tuvaruhu Primary School completed including delivery of nine x 24m2 tents to KGVI, Nagliolu, Ngalivera and Tuvaruhu.
  - Delivery of 15 school in a box kits completed with five delivered to Keyline Primary, four to Mercy and six to White River schools.
Distribution of school back packs completed with 261 to Ghaobata, 397 to Ngalibiu, 89 to Sali and 153 to Tumurora primary schools.

Health and Nutrition Cluster

WHO is the primary support to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) for the coordination of Health and Nutrition Cluster, under the SIG Welfare and IDP Cluster. UNICEF is a cluster member providing technical, financial and supply assistance in the areas of nutrition, immunization and other maternal and child health needs.

Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) for Honiara and Guadalcanal Province.

- Flood affected Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) was completed for Honiara and Guadalcanal Province.
- UNICEF provided 65,000 doses of Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccine, and is procuring an additional 200,000 MR doses on behalf of Government. UNICEF has also provided support to the micro-planning and the overall plan for the Supplementary Immunization Activities required to stop the outbreak.
- Around 10 satellite clinics are set up within Honiara to administer vaccines to six month old children up to 30 year old adults.
- A mass campaign targeting people aged 6 months to 30 years is now underway in Honiara. Further campaigns will be conducted in the provinces once vaccines arrive in country.
- Community mobilization is being conducted by Health Promotion UNIT, which is also supported by UNICEF.

Nutrition

- Training on Community based management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (C-SAM) at Good Samaritan Hospital was completed from September 5-7 with 15 health workers.
- The training will be followed by community mobilization activity with church leaders, women's groups and community volunteers around the pilot site giving them one day orientation on C-SAM programme.
- Training at three other sites in GP and HCC will be completed by the end of September.
- Supplies for Nutrition Division. Ministry of health have arrived in Honiara which includes anthropometric equipment (Weighing machine, height board, MUAC tapes, Supplementary supplies-Retinol (100,000IU), Albendazole and Micronutrient Powder (MNP)
- Radio Messaging for Infant and Young Children Feeding are now being broadcasted by the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Cooperation and PAOA FM. All 6 spots are scheduled to be aired once a day for a month.
- Baby books for health clinics within disaster affected areas in Honiara and Guadalcanal are being printed in Suva, Fiji. UNICEF will be responsible for the distribution of these baby books.

Welfare and IDP Cluster


- Cluster members visited 18 families who moved from an evacuation centre to Malaita province. Most families are living in overcrowded condition in a relative's house. Many are hoping to build their own houses, but report that they will need to save for a year to afford the costs associated with house construction.
• Families find it difficult to send their children to school because of distance and school fees. Some families have sent some of their members back to Honiara for the purpose of education, employment, etc.
• Monitoring training completed on September 5 for focus group discussions in affected communities Honiara and Guadalcanal.

KEY CONCERNS

Post Flood Recovery

• Families relocated to April Hill are sheltering under tents and temporary houses.
• Many children from these families have not yet returned back to school either because of change in family priorities from school to rebuilding houses, subsistence livelihood activities or simply children losing motivation.

Challenges in Response to Measles Outbreak

• There is a need to tailor key messages relevant to different age groups and caregivers of children (target group for vaccination ranges from 6 months – 30 years).
• The response is behind schedule due to normal long shipping times to Pacific Island Countries; UNICEF’s regional buffer stock was insufficient for the size of the outbreak.
• Lack of vaccines available at the satellite sites is a concern causing long queues mainly of mothers and children.
• Agreed opening hours do not match the actual opening hours causing inconveniences for many people who came for vaccination.

Humanitarian and Recovery Coordination

• The Solomon Islands National Disaster Council, with the National Emergency Operations Center and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), led and coordinated the emergency and early recovery response of all Government designated leads and their humanitarian partners on sector or cluster areas. UN OCHA assisted NDMO with coordination, but their surge staff left Honiara at the end of June, and remaining OCHA support is now remote from Fiji. However, WHO staff is convening monthly Cluster Coordination meetings for residual humanitarian work, including CERF funded activities.
• A review and revision of the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) was conducted by the government in June. The Revised HAP was developed with segregation of recovery activities from humanitarian actions. 24 activities are recovery activities and 14 activities are a mix of humanitarian and recovery.
• With support from UNDP the Recovery Coordination Committee (RCC) under the National Disaster Council (NDC) has developed the Recovery Action Plan (RAP). The RAP covers six sectors (shelter, transport and community infrastructure, livelihood and food security, education, health and nutrition, WASH) and three cross cutting areas (protection, environmental recovery, resilient recovery). It outlines areas of recovery priority and reconstruction needs, coordination among stakeholders, recovery cost and activities.
• Key clusters including health and nutrition, WASH and Inter-Cluster Working Group continue to have their regular meetings fortnightly. The Livelihood Cluster fully transitioned to a sector working group reporting to the Recovery Coordination Committee (RCC) chaired by the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC). The RCC meets weekly; sector working groups and an all stakeholder recovery group meet on alternate weeks, twice a month.
Human Resources

Regular UNICEF staff members in Honiara, Solomon Islands include: A Chief of Field Office, WASH (3), child protection (1), education (1), health and nutrition (1), communication (1), administration (3). Staff deployed from Suva or emergency contract during this period: nutrition (2), communication for development (1).

Funding

UNICEF is grateful to the following for financial support for the response to the Solomon Islands disaster: New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNICEF New Zealand National Committee; UNICEF Japan; United Parcel Service; UN OCHA.

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