Highlights

- As of 09:00hrs on Sunday, 22 May 2016, Disaster Management Center (DMC) reports that 348,476 people had been affected by floods, landslides and heavy rain in 22 districts out of total 25 districts in the country.
- Eighty-two people had been reported dead with 118 people still missing, particularly following landslides that occurred on 17 May 2016 in Aranayaka, Kegalle district.
- A total of 242,927 people are still living in safety centers since 15 May 2016 (7 days) and the majority of displacement is reported in Colombo and Gampaha districts. Attached map depicts the number of safety centers around the island (source: DMC).
- Massive influx of cooked food, non-food items and relief from the general public and private sector was noted in urban and rural areas affected by floods and landslides. This has resulted in difficulties of crowd controlling, effective relief distribution and limited coordination of relief donation.
- Department of Meteorology predicts more rain over the island in next few days as the normal Southwest monsoonal rains settle in.

UNICEF’s Response with partners

WASH

- UNICEF provided to the Ministry of Health supplies of 500,000 water purification tablets to ensure safe drinking water and 12.5 tons of chlorine to disinfect contaminated wells. The supplies are currently being distributed in the affected areas.
- UNICEF is working closely with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board to procure 80 water tanks (1,000 liters) and 20 water pumps, which will be distributed in the next few days based on the needs of the affected districts.

Child Protection and Education

- Based on the rapid needs assessments (currently ongoing), UNICEF will support the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and the Ministry of Education in ensuring adequate protection and safety of all children affected by floods, especially those living in the camps, and ensuring that they get back to school as soon as possible.
- UNICEF is partnering with the Australian Department for Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT) to focus on the needs of affected children in the camps, and their return to education. This includes some of the immediate needs – protection and psychosocial support for all children, in particular those separated from their families, unaccompanied and orphaned; education services; safe water, sanitation and hygiene; and health services for those living in the camps. The main partners for UNICEF are the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (through their National Child Protection Authority) and the Ministry of Education.
Technical support

- The UNICEF DRR consultant supports the Resident Coordinator’s Office on coordination, including with Government, national and international non-governmental organizations and development partners.
- A UNICEF staff member was deployed to Kegalle to coordinate Child Protection for children in centers in the worst affected area of the country.
- UNICEF programme staff from the WASH and Child Protection sectors provide technical inputs and coordination support to ensure quality and timely responses to the needs of those affected by the floods and landslides.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Weather Forecast issued at 12:00 noon on 22 May 2016 by the Department of Meteorology predicts that showers will occur at times in the Western, North-Western, Southern, Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces. Fairly heavy falls (above 75mm) are also likely in some places. Showers or thunder showers will occur at a few places in the Eastern province after 2.00 pm. Strong windy conditions over the country and in the sea areas around the island will continue further particularly over the Southern, Eastern and Northern sea areas.

Status of rivers flood water levels and reservoirs (Source: Department of Irrigation)

River status: Currently Kelani Ganga, Kalu Ganga and Attanagalu oya are at ‘minor flood alert’ levels.

Reservoir status: Currently, 22 major reservoirs out of total 72 in the country had reached over-spilling levels in Anuradhapura, Badulla, Batticaloa, Hambantota, Kurunegala, Mannar, Matale, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts. Spill gates of nine (9) of the above reservoirs had been opened for dam safety.

Needs Assessment

Currently there are two (2) different rapid needs assessments undertaken in the country:

1. A rapid needs assessment conducted at district level – Disaster Management Center (DMC) and Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) will carry on this rapid assessment based on their own template, looking at the first 24 hours.
2. NGO-group joint rapid needs assessment conducted at Grama Niladhari level – this is led by a group of national and international non-governmental organizations (including Child Fund, Save the Children, World Vision, Oxfam, etc.). The template used in this rapid assessment is more complex/detailed and looks at 72-hrs assessment. The data/report would be ready by 26 May 2016.

Shelter and non-food relief items

- According to DMC, 4,296 houses damaged from landslides and floods (503 fully & 3,793 partially). 237,240 persons in 376 safe locations in public buildings (mainly schools).
- Tarpaulins and other NFIs have been provided by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and various organizations. Most of the letters for support from GoSL entities (at central and local levels) request NFIs. OCHA is currently compiling these requests in order to have a better understanding of the overall situation and coordinate the response.
- Massive influx of NFIs had been distributed by the general public and the private sector to disaster affected people living in camps as well as those who are stranded in their homes due to floods. Private media companies are taking lead on this and with the multitude of different sources of donation and the huge number of relief assistance already delivered, the relevant officials are facing difficulties in regularizing relief assistance including inventorying the items received in the camps.
- In the landslide affected areas, the communities will not be able to settle in their places of origin, as they are either high-risk areas or destroyed by the landslides; therefore there will be needs for long-term alternative shelter solutions. Number to be confirmed.
- A sizeable segment of the flood affected population are squatters living on vulnerable areas prone to frequent flooding. Therefore transitional shelter arrangements maybe required until suitable land is identified for relocation.
- Identification of suitable locations for transitional shelter arrangements is challenging in the densely populated urban areas of Colombo and Gampaha.

WASH

- Access to water is a major issue in many of the affected areas.
- Where water is available, ensuring that it is potable water is of a major concern – for this relief distribution needs to include water purification tablets.
- Sanitation is an area which requires special attention, particularly mobile toilets – both in safety centers and homes. More information on sanitation is needed.
- Hygiene promotion, messaging, and the distribution of hygiene kits is essential to maintaining cleanliness within the safe centers – distribution of soap (both hand washing and laundry).
- Water quality test kits to check for microbiological contamination are needed and requested by the GoSL.
Health and nutrition

- Information on how many of the health/medical centers have been adversely affected is not available. There is need for essential medicines and WHO is working closely with GoSL to provide medical supplies.
- Early detection of dengue, measles, diarrhea, pneumonia symptoms is important.
- A special attention is paid to pregnant and lactating women and children under 5.

Child Protection

- Children are very much vulnerable due to current flooding and landslides. There have been growing concerns on missing, unaccompanied and separated children as currently no formal registration system exists; the number of children displaced and temporarily settled in camps is not known/confirmed yet. Protection of children should be given high priority considering camp setting without any partition arrangement and prevalence for abuse is much higher in the absence of proper camp arrangement.
- So far no children were reported as separated, unaccompanied or orphan children in flood affected areas.
- Parents should be extra vigilant on their children protection and children/parents should be properly educated on this.
- The overall impact on the psychosocial well-being of children affected is becoming evident, especially in Colombo and Gampaha Districts.
- There is also no information on abuse (including sexual abuse) – especially among adolescent girls.

Education

- Relevant provincial authorities are still in process of collecting information on the impact of floods and mudslides on schools. Information of accessibility and/or damage of schools in disaster-stricken areas is not available in the regular reporting system/updates; however, preliminary information on this are expected by the end of the month (30 May).
- Most of the 376 safe locations in all the 22 affected districts are schools where classrooms, WASH facilities and other buildings have been used by the displaced people. Before returning back to education, these schools and other affected schools need to be cleaned and repaired (classrooms, toilets, etc.).
- The current situation affected the teaching/learning practices of schools as it happened during the school term. Confirmation on the date of commencement of the school in severely affected areas is still awaiting. There is a growing concern that some schools might be returned to their education purpose too soon as affected communities are still using them as displacement camps.
- School packs (uniforms, supplies, etc.) will be needed for children returning to school. Similarly teaching/learning materials may be required.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

- The Disaster Management Center under Ministry of disaster Management is the main Government entity in charge of coordination of information and response.
- UNICEF takes part in the joint assessment covering 13 districts (see above). In this regard, UNICEF provided technical inputs into the assessment as well as staff and logistic support.
- UNICEF attends regular coordination meetings and provides back-up support to the National Child Protection Authority in organizing the coordination groups on child protection and education.

Security

No security issues to report at present.

Funding

- The Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) provided US$50,000 to support SLCO’s response to the ongoing emergency. This is used to cover urgent supply procurement, freight costs and technical support actions as per the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs).
- In addition, UNICEF is partnering with the Australian Department for Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT) to focus on the needs of affected children in the camps, and their return to education. This includes some of the immediate needs – protection and psychosocial support for all children, in particular those living in safe location and those separated from their families, unaccompanied and orphaned; education services; and safe water, sanitation and hygiene for those living in the camps. The main partners for UNICEF are the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (through their National Child Protection Authority) and the Ministry of Education. (Amount: AUD 500,000, approx. US$360,000)
- UNICEF is also part of the UN team assigned to develop the CERF proposal.
Next SitRep: 24 May 2016


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