Highlights

With the start of the Southwest monsoon on 25 May 2017, Sri Lanka received heavy rainfall in its southern and western regions, with some parts getting over 500mm rainfall. Flash floods and landslides affected over 674,553 people and displaced over 66,045 people as of 2 June 2017. So far 208 deaths have been reported and 92 people still remain missing due to the disasters. Galle, Kalutara, Matara and Ratnapura are the worst-affected districts.

- With access gradually being restored, and following the initial prioritization of search and rescue, and evacuation and management of safe locations, the Government has identified water and non-food items (NFIs) as priorities. Field teams from UN agencies, NGOs and the International Federation of the Red Cross confirmed that emergency shelter, NFIs, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and health services are key immediate needs in the worst-affected districts of Galle, Kalutara, Matara and Ratnapura. Disease surveillance and vector control is also a priority with the risk of communicable diseases.

- To complement the ongoing Government-led response, an Emergency Response Plan and additional funding needs to provide critical life-saving and protection needs from 1 June to 31 October are being determined by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

- UNICEF is partnering with Government and international/ local NGOs for the provision of child-friendly spaces, psychosocial support and education in the areas affected by floods and landslides.

(2 June 2017)

- over 202,000 Estimated # of children, out of
- 674,553 Total # of people in need of humanitarian assistance
- 66,045 people living in 368 safe locations/centres

(Source: Disaster Management as of 2 June 2017, 18hrs)
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

With the onset of the Southwest monsoon over Sri Lanka, torrential rains – the worst to hit the country since 2003 – inundated the western and southern regions of the country. Many incidents of deadly landslides had been reported along with flash floods causing 208 deaths and 92 people missing. The authorities expect the number of casualties to rise as the situation evolves. Currently, 66,045 people are reported as displaced in 368 evacuation centres in 15 districts (out of 25). However, this number does not include the people stranded in their homes without access to safe locations or those who are sheltering at host families. Therefore, the actual number of people displaced and affected could be significantly higher than reported.

Five major river basins (Kelani, Kalu, Gin, Nilawala and Attanagalu Oya) are flooded since 26 May 2017 and the flood water continues to rise in many locations. Flood resistant dams along many rivers are either overflowing or reaching saturation points with some already at risk of breach. The Department of Irrigation had issued warning to people living in downstream in Kalutara district to evacuate with immediate effect on 28 May 2017.

The Department of Meteorology warns of continued heavy rainfall (above 100 mm) throughout the same areas on 30 May 2017. Strong winds (about 80 kmph) and thundershowers are expected over the country.

On 29 May, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced that all schools in Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Ratnapura and Kegalle will remain closed until 2 June. Some of the schools (numbers to be confirmed by MOE) are used as temporary camps, particularly in the landslide-affected districts such as Ratnapura.

Based on available information, at least 16 hospitals were evacuated fully or partially as facilities were directly affected by the floods or exposed to landslides according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners. Affected hospitals are evacuating critical patients with the support of the Sri Lanka Armed Forces. Several hospitals in the affected areas are without electricity which has critically impeded their operability.

In the absence of a proper Government-led needs assessment, the initial humanitarian response was planned based on estimations derived from analysing/comparing the demographic data (Census, 2012) and historical flood/landslide statistics (especially May 2016).

On 29 and 30 May, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted field visits and initial assessments in the worst affected divisions (covering about 240,000 people) in Galle, Kalutara, Matara and Ratnapura. Emergency shelter, NFIs, and health services were identified as immediate needs. In assessed safe locations, overcrowding, lack of privacy, lack of NFIs and water and sanitation facilities are key issues.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

Sri Lanka’s disaster management framework and structure was established legally in 2005 after the Asian Tsunami. The National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) chaired by the President of Sri Lanka assumes all powers of humanitarian leadership and coordination at the national level during a state emergency. However, this single command structure which was used over the past decade had not been utilized since 2015. Instead, the President and the Prime Minister had called for separate ad-hoc coordination meetings. There is no report/information of a Presidential Task Force (PTF) being established for this emergency as it was the practice since 2016. The Ministry of Disaster Management (MDM) is mandated to reach out to the humanitarian community and to provide emergency response coordination services. The Disaster Management Center (DMC), an organization under the purview of the Ministry of Disaster Management, requested UNICEF support for overall coordination and information management since the onset of the disaster.

The UN Resident Coordinator leads the humanitarian community through the HCT with active secretariat support from UNICEF. UNICEF provides humanitarian monitoring and advice to the RC and the HCT. HCT meeting was called on 29 May 2017 and 30 May 2017 to discuss the collective emergency response from the humanitarian community. Following the meeting, the sector coordination groups, consisting of both UN and non-UN agencies,
were established to enhance accountability and partnership. UNICEF leads the protection coordination group and co-leads the WASH, education, and food security and nutrition coordination groups.

In addition, UNICEF Sri Lanka provides technical support to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) by coordinating the Child Protection sector response and liaising with other children agencies (World Vision, Save the Children, and ChildFund) to ensure that the most vulnerable communities are prioritized in this response. UNICEF also participates in the WASH and Health sector coordination meetings (led by the Government).

Humanitarian Strategy

The Government of Sri Lanka did not declare a national emergency. However, on 27 May 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officially requested the UN to mobilize international search and rescue support as well as relief assistance. UN Resident Coordinator, a.i. requested the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to keep the relevant teams on standby which later stood down on 28 May 2017 upon government request.

Government of Sri Lanka prioritized saving lives through search and rescue missions conducted by the Tri Forces and the military. However, many media reports indicated that the government teams could not access specific areas and hence the communities executed search and rescue for people buried under mud from earth slips. As a second step, the Government identified water and NFIs as priorities based on previous emergencies. With access gradually being restored, field teams from UN agencies, NGOs, and the International Federation of the Red Cross confirmed that emergency shelter, NFIs, water, sanitation and hygiene, and health services are key immediate needs in the worst-affected divisions of Galle, Kalutara, Matara and Ratnapura.

The National Disaster Relief Services Center (NDRSC) under the MDM is responsible for camp management and relief coordination. In Ratnapura, relief efforts are still hampered by blocked and flooded roads – isolated communities are difficult to reach.

The NDRSC through MDM and MOFA requested the humanitarian community to assist initially with non-food items (NFIs), mainly mats, bedsheets, tarpaulins, drinking water, tents, clothing, etc. District authorities are leading the emergency relief coordination at district levels. On 26 May 2017, DMC activated Sentinel Asia, a satellite-based system to support disaster management activities in the Asia-Pacific through WFB-GIS and space-based technology.

Disease surveillance and vector control is also a priority with the risk of communicable diseases. Over the past few months, health partners have recorded a significant increase in dengue cases (53,200 cases with over 125 deaths) compared to annual data from 2016. The Ministry of Health has deployed medical teams mainly in Kalutara, Ratnapura and Galle districts.

International Assistance

As of 1 June, 17 countries have provided in-kind donations, expert support and funding to the relief operations.

- Indian Search and Rescue teams from the first naval ship have been deployed and are currently assisting Sri Lanka Tri-Forces in affected areas.
- Australian Search and Rescue teams remain on standby.
- China, Japan and the Republic of Korea announced donations of emergency relief goods (including tents, blankets, plastic sheets, sleeping pads, tarpaulins, rain boots and life jackets) to help the disaster-affected people.
- On 31 May, a Pakistan naval ship arrived in Sri Lanka with dry rations, medicines, de-flooding pumps and other relief items. The ship also has the capability to provide search and rescue assets including helicopter, rescue boats, medical teams and expert divers.
- OCHA team arrived 28 May, to provide coordination and information management assistance from Monday, 29 May.
• On 30 May, the Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General through a statement expressed deep concern on the impact of the disaster on the people of Sri Lanka and reiterated the UN's readiness to scale up support to the Government-led response.

• Teams from the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) are en route to Sri Lanka to assess the situation in support of local partner organizations.

Humanitarian response

On 30 May, the HCT elaborated a response plan for the most immediate needs of the flood and landslide affected communities. To complement the ongoing Government-led response, the HCT is seeking additional funding to provide critical life-saving and protection needs of 374,000 people from 1 June to 31 October 2017, covering 7 sectors. The strategic objectives of the Emergency Response Plan include: 1) Alleviate human suffering by providing immediate life-saving and protection assistance to communities affected by the floods and landslides; 2) Facilitate early recovery of the most vulnerable households through emergency livelihood and provision of basic services; 3) Strengthen the resilience of affected communities to cope with and recover from the floods.

Timeline of Events

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<td>Heavy Rains and Flooding</td>
<td>MOFA request for International Assistance</td>
<td>Emergency UNCT meeting</td>
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<td>HCT Meeting</td>
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A sectoral approach to coordinate the international community’s immediate response was also endorsed. In the most-affected districts of Galle, Kalutara, Matara and Rathnapura, a total of 14 HCT partner agencies have been implementing food security, health, emergency shelter and NFIs and child protection activities.

Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRC), World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children Sri Lanka is providing NFI assistance and mobilized their staff in their operational areas to strengthen the government’s emergency response coordination. The Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD SL) is coordinating search and rescue teams and brought in the private sector volunteers to strengthen response coordination through advance mobile technologies and rescue equipment/assets.

WFP and UNDP are providing support to the DMC with information management, as of 27 May 2017 onwards. WFP linked up with its relief Hub in Malaysia to obtain an inventory of relief items available and to compile a stock list that can be referred to, if needed. WHO is providing support to the Ministry of Health in coordinating the medical team deployment to affected areas. The Ministry of Health has issued a bilateral request for 10,000 dignity kits and 2,000 maternity kits, UNFPA is working to meet this request.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Water, sanitation and hygiene:** UNICEF prioritized the provision of WASH supplies as immediate response (see section below for more details). UNICEF surge support for WASH will be arriving in the country over the weekend to support the emergency response.

**Health and nutrition:** Joint statement of Ministry of Health (MoH), WHO and UNICEF was released to appeal to all relevant parties to be mindful of the continued need for breastfeeding infants during the current flood and landslide emergency, and caution against unnecessary and potentially harmful donations and use of infant formula and powdered milk.

**Child protection:** In addition, UNICEF mobilized around 200 government officials attached to Divisional Secretary Offices, who were trained on child-friendly camp management, information management and basic First Aid in 2016, as surge capacity to severely flood/landslide affected areas. Currently UNICEF is partnering with international and local NGOs (including World Vision, Leads, Sarvodaya) to establish child-friendly spaces in camps and children’s clubs/networks in affected areas and provide psychosocial support.
services to children. UNICEF also works with Government and non-government partners to support provision of lost legal documentation (such as birth certificates, identity cards etc.) for affected children.

**Education:** UNICEF supports the MoE team with technical advice on database development for capturing the education emergency needs. UNICEF also engages with Sarvodaya (a local NGO) to assess the destroyed and damaged schools and pre-schools in the most affected districts as well as provide technical and financial assistance to repair/renovate and refurbish schools.

Sri Lanka Country Office plans to respond comprehensively in education, child protection, health and nutrition and WASH sectors once more information is received from the field and a better analysis of the situation is conducted. A joint needs assessment is planned by the HCT for next week and UNICEF is taking leadership in ensuring that children's issues are highlighted in all relevant sectors.

**Supply and Logistics**

As initial response, UNICEF provided the following supplies to the Ministry of Disaster Management (MDM) and Ministry of Health (MOH) for distribution to affected communities: 1,260 10L Jerry cans; 1,000 tarpaulins; and 100,000 water purification tablets.

In addition the following supplies are being procured: an additional 1,000,000 water purification tablets; 10 Submersible water pumps; 6 sludge water pumps; 6 6,000l water bowser; and 20,000 chlorine tablets.

**Media and External Communication**

On 31 May the Emergency Communications Group was activated to ensure coordinated inter-agency messaging on the response.

UNICEF Sri Lanka's Communications Specialist is liaising with the programme team as well as the Emergency Communication Team in developing key messages, producing communication materials and shaping a social media communication strategy.

**Funding**

UNICEF developed an emergency response plan and a funding concept note highlighting the needs of disaster-affected children which was shared with donors.

UNICEF Sri Lanka received earlier this year US$900,000 from the Emergency Fund (EPF) to respond to the prolonged drought situation which continues to affect over 1 million people in North central and Northern provinces. A portion of the EPF amount is being reprogrammed and the Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) has allocated another US$70,000 to support the scaling up of the response. The funds will cover urgent supply procurement and freight costs.

Australia, Canada and Norway have expressed interest in funding UNICEF’s response in the sectors of WASH, child protection and education.

Meanwhile, UNICEF is partnering with the Australian Department for Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT) to respond on WASH and child protection.

On 29 May UNICEF Sri Lanka launched its first ‘text-to-donate’ fundraising appeal, designed to enable individuals to directly support UNICEF’s flood emergency response. By texting ‘UNICEF 300’ to short code 77100, supporters are able to donate 300LKR (approximately US$ 1.96), and receive a confirmation message from UNICEF on completion. Currently the service is available to Dialog and Hutch users within Sri Lanka only.

Next SitRep: 5/06/2017

UNICEF Sri Lanka: [https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/](https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/)

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