Viet Nam Humanitarian Situation Report No.16

UNICEF's Response with Partners

15 April 2017

Highlights

- Three lessons learnt workshops with the National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (NCERWASS), National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) respectively were held in the second half of March to draw on the key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of emergency response interventions in 10 provinces.

- Building on the lessons learnt workshops above, the After Action Review (evaluation) has been initiated to systematically generate key learnings from the emergency response. Fieldwork in Hau Giang, Gia Lai and Ninh Thuan provinces has been completed and preliminary findings are being synthesized for technical consultation with the stakeholders on 21 April.

- A Review Conference on Emergency Response on Children and Women in 10 provinces in Viet Nam Affected by Drought and Salt Water Intrusion Crisis and Orientation on Disaster Risk Reduction in Viet Nam will be organized in the coming weeks. It is expected to be co-chaired by the inter-Ministerial Central Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)), senior representatives from the Embassy of Japan in Viet Nam and UNICEF. The conference will seek to consolidate the key lessons learnt from the emergency response and strengthen partnerships for child-centred disaster risk reduction and risk-informed programming in Viet Nam.

---

Situation overview and humanitarian needs

Since 2014, the acute and protracted El Niño-induced drought and saltwater intrusion have severely affected more than 18 provinces in South Central Viet Nam, the Central Highlands and Mekong Delta. These areas produce key agricultural outputs such as rice, coffee, pepper and seafood. During the peak of the drought (February-May 2016) the lives of people in 52 out of 64 provinces in Viet Nam were adversely affected. In the 18 most impacted provinces some two million people, including 520,000 children and one million women, were in need of humanitarian assistance. Of the two million people affected, 500,000 live in the drought-affected Central Highlands and South Central regions and 1.5 million in the Mekong Delta, where water shortages have been exacerbated by saltwater intrusion.

Reduced water use for washing, ablutions and handwashing has already resulted in increased incidences of diarrhoea, dysentery, hand, foot and mouth as well as skin diseases. Limited access to water has also had an impact on children’s health, exacerbating the prevalence of malnutrition.
Humanitarian leadership and coordination

UNICEF has been designated to chair the UN joint results group in Viet Nam on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience within the One UN Strategic Plan 2017-2021. The group is comprised of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Habitat, UN Women, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and World Health Organization (WHO). The group, which seeks to strengthen cooperation with the MARD-chaired Central Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, held its first meeting on 30 March and will hold a retreat in April to agree on a vision and key priorities within the global UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience and more broadly within the Sendai Framework.

Humanitarian Strategy - Humanitarian-development nexus

The UNICEF response strategy involves life-saving support to approximately 337,000 vulnerable people in 10 provinces with household water treatment and safe storage as well as hygiene promotion to prevent communicable diseases. Health centres serve as entry points for hygiene, sanitation and emergency nutrition interventions. School-based interventions also seek to sustain hygiene practices and establish a mechanism for disaster preparedness. These response activities seek to strengthen awareness and coping mechanisms among affected communities to address the current emergency and future ones.

In the lower middle-income country context of Viet Nam, the humanitarian-development continuum is critically important as natural hazards have super-imposing impacts on chronic and persistent vulnerabilities such as poverty, nutrition, water and sanitation. As a first step to understanding the superimposing impact of natural hazards on the coping capacities of families and children, UNICEF has conducted a nationwide child vulnerability mapping exercise with data from a range of official sources. The mapping exercise analyzes the coping capacities of children, households and communities and overlays the multi-hazard map that reflects the likelihood and intensity of natural hazards in Viet Nam.

In operationalizing the joint MARD-UNICEF Vision and Positioning note on Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction endorsed in December 2016, the two parties have developed a concept note for national a child-centred DRR and Resilience programme. Going forward, it will strengthen the capacity of MARD as Chair of the Central Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control to coordinate, strengthen legal and policy frameworks, generate evidence, facilitate knowledge and learning on child-centred DRR and Resilience as a way to implement the Sendai Framework and Sustainable Development Goals with a child lens. Within this programme, Ninh Thuan province is expected to serve as a learning platform for child-centred DRR, resilience and risk-informed programming within the overarching framework of child-focused Socio-Economic Development Plan and sectoral plans through the design of integrated service delivery of WASH, nutrition, education and school safety, child and social protection.
Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

A third party independent assessment of technical specifications and requirements for school water filter systems was conducted during 15-18 February 2017 in 14 selected schools in Ninh Thuan province, where initially the quality of input water was suspected as being below acceptable standard. However, by mid-March the final results of lab-based water quality testing by NCERWASS in 120 targeted schools in six provinces (Ben Tre, Binh Thuan, Gia Lai, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and Soc Trang), including 40 schools in Ninh Thuan province, confirmed that output water produced by the systems to end-users met Ministry of Health (MoH) quality standards. The field assessment conducted by the Institute for Water resources Economics and Management (IWEM) suggested strengthening operation and maintenance capacity of focal points in 120 schools to sustain effective use of the water filtration systems.

Following a recommendation by IWEM third party review team, three training courses on operation and maintenance (O&M) of school water filtration systems for 143 participants who are school focal points in the six provinces were held. Training materials for the one-day courses, organized by NCERWASS, Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (PCERWASS) and Tan A Dai Thanh Group, were developed and finalized by Tan A Dai Thanh technical team in consultation with the UNICEF emergency team, NCERWASS and IWEM consultants. Each of the participants from 120 schools received detailed technical presentations and operational guidelines for the water filtration systems and practiced O&M skills. During the trainings, NCERWASS handed over the final lab-based water quality testing results to 120 schools, completed during Jan-Feb 2017. Post training, the participating school focal points committed to maintain an O&M calendar in each school and work with school parent associations in sustaining the functions and effectiveness of installed water filtration systems. A subsequent IWEM team trip to eight schools in Ben Tre province confirmed the schools had maintained the filtration systems provided as part of the response.

An emergency WASH learning workshop was held in Ninh Thuan province on 21 March to review key outcomes, experiences, challenges and lessons learned from emergency WASH interventions and strengthen emergency WASH sectoral contingency planning, standards and fast-track procedures. The workshop marked an important step in the After Action Review, with a full scope evaluation of the emergency programme to inform the strategic direction for child-centred disaster risk reduction in Viet Nam.

A lessons learnt workshop was held in Gia Lai province on 27 March to review key outcomes of the VNRC-UNICEF Programme Cooperation Agreement for the Emergency Response Programme to contribute to the overall joint Government-UN Emergency Response Plan 2016-2017. This workshop also provided meaningful opportunities for participants to discuss achievements, innovative practices, challenges and gaps as well as the way forward for improvement of the VNRC-UNICEF long-term strategic partnership and cooperation.

NCERWASS is collaborating with the Ha Noi People's Committee, Women's Union, Farmer's Association and Youth Union to hold a public advocacy event launch the "National Week on Clean Water and Sanitation" with a focus on climate change, natural disasters and disaster risk education. This high-level public advocacy event, scheduled for 25 April, will

Nutrition

A final workshop on emergency nutrition interventions was held on 31 March in Ha Noi, co-chaired by the Vice Minister of Health and UNICEF’s Deputy Representative, with participation from MoH, NIN and its emergency nutrition taskforce, Central Nutrition in Emergency Working Group and provincial representatives from Ca Mau, Gia Lai, Hau Giang, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh provinces. The workshop highlighted key results and challenges encountered during implementation and highlighted key lessons learnt, including the need for better preparedness and coordination, data for rapid assessment and monitoring, and oversight and management of interventions at all levels. At the workshop, results of a qualitative study on coverage and compliance to assess the effectiveness and quality of emergency nutrition interventions undertaken in selected communes in Ca Mau and Kon Tum provinces were shared. The survey results confirmed high level coverage of multiple micro-nutrient supplementation for pregnant-lactating women and among children aged 6-23 months (70.5-96 per cent for targeted women and 67-82.1 per cent for targeted children), and factors contributing to programme results such as communication, roles of community collaborators and prior experience with integrated management of acute malnutrition.

To strengthen institutional mechanisms, highlights from the National Guidelines and a National Plan on Emergency Nutrition Preparedness and Response – developed based on experiences from emergency nutrition interventions in six provinces – were presented. The guidelines and plan are critical steps towards a risk-informed sectoral plan to prepare and mitigate impacts of natural disasters and will form part of the MoH’s Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. As the focal point for the central level emergency nutrition working group, the NIN will follow up and submit the National Guideline on Emergency Nutrition to the MoH for approval of this important document for nationwide implementation.

Communication for Development (C4D)

Five options and mock-ups of two educational board games for children on climate change and hygiene promotion were developed and presented to UNICEF for approval on 10 April 2017. Pre-testing of the games and mock-ups is scheduled for the third week of April 2017 in Gia Lai and Soc Trang provinces.

Ohio University, one of the world’s leading institutions on communication for behaviour change, will provide technical support in the development of the National Communication Strategy for DRR and resilience in Viet Nam. A workplan has been developed and a desk review is underway to help MARD prepare for the university’s mission to Viet Nam in early May 2017 when consultations with ministries and field trips will take place.

A field mission was conducted in Kon Tum to develop a human interest story (written story and video clip), focusing on the important bridge between the emergency response and development phase, requiring delivery of quality nutrition and WASH services for children and institutional capacity building to deliver these essential services. The human interest story will be available by the third week of April 2017.

The final emergency programme review video is under production and is expected to be available by the end of April 2017. It seeks to raise the visibility of the UNICEF-Government emergency response programme and its results, the
cooperation and partnership between UNICEF and Government partners, good practices, key lessons learned and the transformation from emergency response to disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The After Action Review (evaluation) of the UNICEF-supported emergency response programme has been initiated in collaboration with MARD and partners at national and sub-national levels. It seeks to systematically generate learnings from the emergency response to strengthen national disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. The review will take into account the learnings presented and discussed at three lessons learnt workshops with NCERWASS and Viet Nam Health Environmental Management Agency (VIHEMA), NIN and VNRC. Field visits to Hau Giang, Gia Lai and Ninh Thuan provinces have been completed, and preliminary findings and recommendations are being synthesized for technical consultation with stakeholders on 21 April 2017.

A Review Conference on Emergency Response on Children and Women in 10 provinces in Viet Nam Affected by Drought and Salt Water Intrusion Crisis and Orientation on Disaster Risk Reduction in Viet Nam will be organized in the coming weeks. It is expected to be co-chaired by the inter-Ministerial Central Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (chaired by MARD), Embassy of Japan and UNICEF. The conference will consolidate key lessons learnt from the emergency response, including preliminary findings from the After Action Review and strengthen partnerships for the future orientation of child-centred disaster risk reduction and risk-informed programming in Viet Nam within the Sendai Framework.

Funding

So far, UNICEF has received US$2.5 million from the Government of Japan and US$1.5 million from CERF (United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund) for the humanitarian response.

Final SitRep: 15 May 2017

Who to contact for further information:

Youssouf Abdel-Jelil
Representative
UNICEF Viet Nam
Telephone: +84 (0) 438500201
Mobile: +84 (0) 965023130
E-mail: yabdeljelil@unicef.or

Jesper Moller
Deputy Representative
UNICEF Viet Nam
Tel. +84 (0) 438500202
Mobile: +84 (0) 988737500
E-mail: jmoller@unicef.org

Louis Vigneault-Dubois
Chief of Communication
UNICEF Viet Nam
Tel: +84 (0) 438500100
Mobile: +84 96 6539673
Email: lvigneaultdubois@unicef.org

Mizuo Okimoto-Kawtathip
Head of Emergency Programme
UNICEF Viet Nam
Tel: +84 (0) 438500209
Mobile: +84 1262169844
Email: mokimotokaewtathip@unicef.org