Highlights

- Vietnam’s National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (NCHMF) reported that average water levels in the Mekong River will be 10-20 percent lower than previous years, but still higher than the 2015-2016 season, thereby reducing saline intrusion into the delta region. However, saline intrusion has been subsequently reported in many provinces in the Mekong Delta region. For example, saltwater has spread to 20 kilometres of the Tien River, with high salt content. Salinity will reach its peak in February and March, 2017. The impact is anticipated to be less severe than 2015, but more intense than normal years. The NCHMF is recommending southern localities actively prepare plans for saline intrusion, drought and water shortages during the upcoming dry season.

- UNICEF Viet Nam continues to work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), line ministries and partners such as Viet Nam Red Cross and Women’s Union to implement the ongoing emergency response programme for vulnerable children and women in affected areas. Lessons learnt will be drawn from the initial phase of implementation to inform the direction for child-centered disaster risk reduction and risk-informed programming in Viet Nam.

- Lack of safe drinking water and poor hygiene conditions pose high public health risks to vulnerable communities in affected provinces. As such the ongoing emergency response, including water purification, hygiene promotion and nutrition interventions, remain pertinent to the context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated coverage (UNICEF &amp; operational partners)</th>
<th>Planned Target</th>
<th>Cumulative Results</th>
<th>% of Target Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of targeted children aged 6-59 months assessed/treated with SAM</td>
<td>7,480</td>
<td>4,594</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of lactating/pregnant women receiving micronutrient supplementation</td>
<td>123,200</td>
<td>47,703</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children aged 6-23 months receiving micronutrient supplementation</td>
<td>83,335</td>
<td>47,482</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of emergency-affected households reached with access to safe water</td>
<td>78,000</td>
<td>8,873</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring database, based on data from monthly monitoring report from the National Institute of Nutrition and provincial distribution report from NCERWASS.
The *El Niño*-induced drought and saline intrusion emergency has adversely impacted the lives of people in 52 out of 64 provinces in Vietnam. In the most affected 18 provinces some two million people, including 520,000 children and one million women, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Of the two million people affected, some 500,000 live in the drought-affected South Central and Central Highlands regions and 1.5 million in the Mekong Delta, where water shortages have been exacerbated by saltwater intrusion.

Reduced water use for washing, ablution and hand-washing have already resulted in increased incidences of diarrhea, dysentery, hand, foot and mouth disease and skin diseases. Limited access to water has also had an impact on children’s health, exacerbating the prevalence of malnutrition.

The forecasted occurrence of *La Niña* is now 50-60 percent compared to the previous 75 percent. *La Niña*, which is characterized by cooler than normal water temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, usually results in greater than average rainfall, increasing the risk of large-scale flooding in Mekong Delta provinces, particularly in current drought-affected areas.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

On March 15, 2016 the Government of Vietnam requested assistance from international partners for its relief efforts, prioritizing support to ensure safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene practices and nutritional support in drought-affected areas and enhanced monitoring of potential disease outbreaks. Subsequently on April 26, 2016 the Government of Vietnam, United Nations and partners appealed to the international community to support a US$48.5 million joint Government-United Nations emergency response plan to address the *El Niño* drought, affecting as many as two million people in central and southern regions.

Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development in provinces, under Provincial People’s Committee leadership, are coordinating provincial-level responses. In severely affected provinces, the Vietnam Red Cross, Care International, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision are responding and reaching out to the most vulnerable populations, though on a limited scale.

**Humanitarian Strategy - Humanitarian-development nexus**

The UNICEF response strategy involves life-saving support to approximately 337,000 vulnerable people with household water treatment and safe storage, and 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, in preparation for future emergency situations.

In the lower middle-income country context of Vietnam, the humanitarian-development continuum is critically important as natural hazards have super-imposing effects 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 capacity of families and children, a child vulnerability mapping has been developed by UNICEF using data from a range of official sources. The mapping exercise analyzes the coping capacity of children, households and communities and overlays the multi-hazard map that reflects the likelihood and intensity of natural hazards in Vietnam.
The mapping exercise and analysis contribute to the risk-informed Government of Vietnam (GoV)-UNICEF Country Programme Document 2017-2021. Meanwhile, critical lessons learnt from the initial implementation phase of the emergency response programme are now being collected. The vulnerability mapping and lessons learnt form the basis for strengthening planning, preparedness and response mechanisms activated in the event of future disasters, given that Vietnam is the sixth most vulnerable country to climate change-related natural disasters.

UNICEF also engages the Government of Vietnam through the One UN mechanism for a common understanding on the need for a more holistic response that will span the humanitarian emergency-development continuum.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

A Programme Cooperation Agreement between Vietnam Red Cross and UNICEF Vietnam was signed on November 8, 2016. During the four months between November 2016 and February 2017, Vietnam Red Cross will lead school-based emergency response and disaster risk preparedness interventions to promote a safe environment for children. Key activities include risk assessments, establishment of a Disaster Risk Management Team and promotion of hygiene practices among teachers and students. Activities will be implemented in 24 schools in six target provinces of Ben Tre, Binh Thuan, Gia Lai, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and Soc Trang. In 13 of these 24 schools, activities will complement water filtration systems installed through Government of Japan support. In November, Vietnam Red Cross organized three planning workshops for provincial chapters, commune officials and school boards from the six targeted provinces. By the end of February 2017, Vietnam Red Cross and UNICEF will have improved hygiene practices for 30,000 vulnerable people, including 10,000 school children and 15,000 women in the six provinces.

UNICEF procured Aquatabs and PUR sachets for household water purification for approximately 338,000 people in 10 target provinces. As of November 15, 4 million Aquatabs tablets and 15.9 million PUR sachets have been distributed to 10 target provinces, along with communication materials.

Distribution of packages containing PUR, Aquatabs, filtering cloths, buckets and soap has been completed in the Central Highlands province of Gia Lai and initiated in Kon Tum. By November 15, packages of WASH supplies and communication materials have reached 2,920 households (approximately 13,655 beneficiaries, including 6,992 women and 3,766 children) in two out of four districts in Kon Tum province. Distribution of WASH supplies will be subsequently initiated in Binh Thuan, Dak Lak and Ninh Thuan provinces. Cumulatively, 8,873 households in Gia Lai and Kon Tum provinces have received WASH supplies.

In partnership with Vietnam Health and Environment Management Agency, Ho Chi Minh Central Youth Union, Ha Noi People's Committee, Unilever, a World Toilet Day event was held on November 19, 2016 in Ha Noi. The global theme for this year’s event was “Toilets and Jobs”, which emphasized that toilets play a crucial role in creating a strong economy as well as improving health and protecting people’s safety and dignity, particularly women’s and girls’.

Nutrition
• The training of health staff and village health collaborators were conducted with the support from National Institute of Nutrition on the measurement of middle and upper arm circumference (MUAC) to detect severely and moderately malnourished children (SAM and MAM).

• Emergency nutrition supplies including 5,000 MUAC tapes, 30 tonnes of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), 8.7 million multi-micronutrient tablets for pregnant and lactating women and 8.4 million micronutrient powder sachets for 6-23 month children have been procured and delivered to all six provinces (Ca Mau, Gia Lai, Hau Giang, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and Tra Vinh). All supplies have reached commune health centres and are being distributed to the beneficiary women and children in designated phases.

• Household visits by commune health workers and village health collaborators are underway alongside communication and awareness raising activities to sustain the use of supplies.

• Field monitoring missions to all six provinces have been jointly undertaken by National Institute of Nutrition and UNICEF. Key findings include:
  o With the exception of a few, children in targeted communities have consumed Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF). Positive progress, such as weight gain, was observed in many provinces. In particular, numerous children in Ninh Thuan province have graduated from the SAM condition.
  o Positive progress was also observed among children aged 6-23 months receiving Micronutrient Powder, including better appetites.
  o Mothers understood the importance and benefits of multi-micronutrient powder/tablets for them and their children.
  o Community collaborators were found to be enthusiastic, hardworking and effective in helping health workers to follow up the nutrition status of children and women in respective villages.
  o Despite the heavy workload, village health collaborators made substantive efforts to support commune health workers by following up on the nutrition status of children and women in villages.
  o Technical support was provided to provincial and commune health workers to strengthen knowledge on indicators, improve data collection and monthly reporting mechanisms and communication activities for the continuous use of emergency nutrition supplies.

**Communication for Development (C4D)**

With a view to create space for children to learn in a participatory environment, production of educational board games for students (6-11 years old) on climate change and hygiene promotion is underway. In addition to educational purposes, the board game aims to equip children with knowledge of appropriate behaviors to cope with climate change-related disasters. In the end of February 2017, the board game will be used in 120 primary schools from six provinces where water supply systems will be installed.

UNICEF seeks to provide technical support to MARD on the development of the National C4D Strategy as a component of the National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Humanitarian Performance Monitoring**

UNICEF has developed a Humanitarian Performance Monitoring system to facilitate timely and accurate data collection and aggregation. The system emphasizes the quality assurance of quantitative results reported by implementing partners to ensure current, reliable and consistent information on the status of the ongoing intervention is readily available to support field visits, reporting and inform management decision-making. This system is expandable to other programmes and interventions. By having the system in place, UNICEF Vietnam has been able to conduct quality assurance and as a result, reported data has been corrected in this report.

**Funding**

So far, the ERP (seeking US$48.5 million) is 54.4 percent funded thanks to contributions from Government of Japan along with Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), USAID, DFAT, the Government of Lao PDR, New Zealand and Thailand and
various other sources. UNICEF has received US$2.5 million from the Government of Japan and US$1.5 million from CERF for the humanitarian response.

Next SitRep: 15 December 2016

Who to contact for further information:

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

Nguyen Dinh Quang  
Nutrition Officer  
UNICEF Viet Nam  
Tel: +84 (0)4 3850-0244  
Mobile: +84 (0) 0915025686  
Email: ndquang@unicef.org

Nguyen Thi Thanh Huong  
Communication Specialist  
UNICEF Viet Nam  
Tel: +84 (0) 438500225  
Mobile: +84 904154678  
Email: ntthuong@unicef.org