Viet Nam
Humanitarian Situation Report
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Highlights

- The final review conference on the drought and salt water intrusion emergency response supported by UNICEF was held in Ha Noi on 18 May 2017, which also marked the National Day of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control. The conference was co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (as chair of the inter-ministerial Central Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control), Minister (Deputy Ambassador) of Japan and UNICEF Representative, with 238 participants from central and sub-national levels as well as the development community.

- The After Action Review (evaluation) confirmed the emergency response was effective and a positive step towards more integrated programming. Building on existing partnerships and enhancing new ones, the response was found to be well-aligned to national laws and policies and supported Viet Nam’s long-term development and DRR initiatives. Key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations were presented at the final review conference of the emergency response and will be covered in detail within a final report available in mid-June 2017.

- National WATSAN week, supported by UNICEF, was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in Ha Noi on 25 April 2017. It called for enhanced policies and plans as well as capacities of children and communities focused on child-centred disaster risk reduction (DRR), clean water, sanitation and hygiene as key priorities. This initiative also aimed to accelerate progress towards international commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sendai Framework.

UNICEF’s Response with Partners

- 520,000
  # of children affected out of
- 2,000,000
  # of people affected
- 600,000
  # hectares of damaged crops
- 1,750,000
  # people with lost incomes
- 52 (18 most affected)
  # provinces affected out of
- 63
  Government-One UN Joint Emergency Response Plan 2016
- US$48.5 million

UNICEF funds received:
US$4 million

Situation overview and humanitarian needs

Since 2014, the acute and protracted El Niño-induced drought and salt water intrusion have severely affected more than 18 provinces in the South Central, Central Highlands and Mekong Delta regions of Viet Nam. 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 salt water intrusion.
Reduced water use for washing, ablutions and handwashing resulted in increased incidences of diarrhoea, dysentery, hand, foot and mouth as well as skin diseases. Limited access to water 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, UNICEF, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and World Health Organization (WHO). The Joint Result Group held a retreat on 5 May to consolidate a joint vision and workplan 2017-2018 for coherent UN support on DRR in Viet Nam within the Sendai Framework and SDGs.

Humanitarian Strategy - Humanitarian-development nexus

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. In operationalizing the joint MARD-UNICEF Vision and Positioning note on Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction endorsed in December 2016, the two parties have finalized the concept note for a project investment proposal (PIP) on a national 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 SDGs 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 plans and sectoral plans through the design of integrated service delivery of WASH, nutrition, education and school safety, child and social protection. The PIP concept notes are now being reviewed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Conference

The final review conference on the emergency response supported by UNICEF was held in Ha Noi on 18 May 2017. It was co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (as chair of the inter-ministerial Central Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control), Minister (Deputy Ambassador) from the Embassy of Japan and UNICEF Representative, with the participation of the Ambassador of Belgium, line ministries, mass organizations, Viet Nam Red Cross, vice chairs of the Provincial People’s Committees of Ninh Thuan and Soc Trang provinces, provincial line departments, development partners, UN agencies (including UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and the media. The conference also marked the National Day of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (designated on 22 May, annually), and a letter from the President of Viet Nam was delivered, highlighting the growing threats and challenges faced by the country as a result of natural disasters and requested stakeholders to integrate DRR into plans for better preparedness and responses.
The conference reviewed key achievements, lessons learnt from the After Action Review, child-centred DRR experiences from East Asia and Pacific countries and the future orientation on child-centred DRR in Viet Nam. There was recognition that the overall response to the drought and salt water intrusion crisis was relevant and effective, and benefited from collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders at central and national levels. Particular appreciation was extended to UNICEF and the Government of Japan as well as donor governments of CERF for mobilizing valuable resources. In marking this national day, valuable lessons learnt were found to be timely and a strategic opportunity for Viet Nam to enrich its mechanisms and capacities on DRR as it seeks to strengthen long-term measures to implement the Sendai Framework and SDGs, in which children are at the heart of communities resilient to natural disasters. The Minister (Deputy Ambassador) from the Embassy of Japan reaffirmed a commitment to continue support to Viet Nam in DRR through on-going and forthcoming projects in South Central, Central Highlands and Mekong Delta regions and to explore the possibility of drawing on relevant experience on school- and community-based DRR. UNICEF underlined the importance of continued investment in DRR as a key to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus, with child-centred DRR to focus on long-term approaches to addressing vulnerabilities. It also pledged to further strengthen cooperation with the Government of Viet Nam and development community within the Government of Viet Nam-UNICEF Country Programme 2017-2021 and the One UN Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An After Action Review (evaluation) confirmed the UNICEF-supported emergency response was effective and a positive step towards more integrated programming. Building on existing partnerships and enhancing new ones, the response was found to be well-aligned to national laws and policies as well as supported
the Viet Nam’s long-term development and DRR initiatives. With a view to further improve Viet Nam’s emergency response and disaster risk mechanisms and capacities, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Strengthen legal and policy frameworks for Viet Nam’s risk-informed natural disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response planning to strengthen implementation of the Sendai Framework.
- Generate evidence on equity-focused and child-centred vulnerabilities to support Viet Nam’s risk-informed natural disaster preparedness, risk reduction and disaster response planning.
- Strengthen governance, accountability mechanisms, inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration for Viet Nam’s risk-informed natural disaster preparedness, risk reduction and emergency responses.
- Review and strengthen national capacity in DRR, disaster preparedness and multi-hazard contingency planning and responses.
- Strengthen communication strategies for DRR/disaster preparedness and response programming targeting ethnic/low-literacy/geographically isolated adults and children to strengthen engagement of vulnerable communities.
- Reinforce existing partnerships (particularly with Viet Nam Red Cross, mass organizations and INGOs) and develop new ones, including with the business sector.
- Strengthen next generations’ resilience to future shocks and stresses through promotion of innovative youth- and child-led DRR activities.

Key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations were presented at the final review conference of the emergency response. They will be further presented in detail within a final report to be available in mid-June 2017.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The National WATSAN week, supported by UNICEF, was co-chaired by MARD and Ha Noi People’s Committee at Dong Phuong Yen primary school, in Ha Noi on 25 April 2017. The public advocacy event was well attended by MARD, line ministries and featured active participation from more than 1,000 school children, teachers and media. The kick-off event highlighted the National Week on Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene that seeks to foster partnerships among MARD, line departments, civil society organizations and others with a shared vision of children’s comprehensive development in Viet Nam.

The event marked an important milestone to further strengthen policies and plans as well as capacities of children and communities for a child-centred approach to DRR, sustainable water and sanitation services as long-term approaches to building resilience for every child, family, school as well as society.

Communication for Development (C4D)

Educational board games: After successful pre-testing in Gia Lai and Soc Trang provinces during April 2017, two educational board games were finalized. The production of 331 sets of board games will be completed in the second week of June 2017 and distributed to 109 primary and secondary schools in six targeted provinces (Ben Tre, Binh Thuan, Gia Lai, Kon Tum, Ninh Thuan and Soc Trang). Through development of educational board games for primary and secondary school children, the project has delivered an innovative communication method for children on climate change and hygiene promotion that will encourage creative, participatory and self-learning approaches from pupils.
National Behaviour Change Communication Strategy for Disaster Preparedness: The Ohio University consultant team undertook its Viet Nam visit during 11-23 May 2017 and consulted with MARD, Central Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, other related ministries and ministerial-level organizations. The team also conducted field visits to Ben Tre and Kon Tum provinces for consultations with Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, provincial Steering Committees on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, related line departments, local authorities, communities, service providers, parents and children on DRR and climate change.

One of the key findings from consultations with national and sub-national counterparts was the government and communities focussed more on one-way information transfers and natural disaster warnings, than capacity for disaster preparedness. Communication must be foremost when facilitating a two-way process that necessitates dialogue and participation to help communities better prepare for natural disasters, rather than only responding to them.

A consultative workshop with related national and sub-national counterparts will be held in mid-July 2017 to present key findings of the Viet Nam visit and receive feedback to finalize the strategic outline and road map of National C4D Strategy plans to implement. The Ohio University team’s final product, a strategic outline and road map of the National C4D Strategy on DRR in Viet Nam, is expected by the end of July 2017.

Visibility: A video summarizing the emergency response was presented at the Conference on the celebration of the National Day of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control and Final Review of Emergency Response on Drought and Salt Water Intrusion supported by UNICEF. The video aimed to strengthen the visibility of the UNICEF-Government of Viet

School children in Soc Trang is playing The ‘Cool down the Earth’ board game. The game aims at engaging children to play together to save the planet and to raise their awareness of climate change and greenhouse gas impacts.

The ‘Eat – Poo – Wash’ game promotes handwashing with soap among children, with messages actively repeated by children in an interactive way.
Nam emergency response programme, support of donors, and its results, partnerships, good practices, key lessons learned and the transformation from emergency response to DRR and resilience building.

Funding

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. UNICEF wishes to convey its sincere appreciation for the generous contribution to support the most vulnerable children and women in Viet Nam.

Note: This will be the final SitRep from UNICEF Viet Nam Country Office.

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