Highlights

- The Tonga Government has declared a State of Emergency until 13 February 2022 in the light of the impact of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Haa’pai volcanic eruption and tsunami.
- Government reported that 85,000 people (84% of their population) are affected, including 36,500 children.
- UNICEF is appealing for USD 2.7 million to provide lifesaving support to children and their families in Tonga.
- Some 10 metric tons of UNICEF emergency supplies, including WASH kits, recreational kits, and medicines, are already on their way to Tonga.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The Tonga Government declared a State of Emergency until 13 February 2022 in the light of the impact of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Haa’pai volcanic eruption and tsunami. The Government estimates that 84 percent of its population (around 85,000) are affected by the disaster. Preliminary results of initial damage assessment conducted by government in Tongatapu, ‘Eua and Ha’apai island groups show that 33 houses were completely destroyed, and 238 other houses suffered severe to moderate damage. Three persons were confirmed killed and the number of injured are still being determined. About 150 residents of Mango and Fono islands which were nearest the volcano have been evacuated to Nomuka island. Safe water has been the most expressed need. The Tonga Water Board has tested the water supplies in the capital Nukualofa and declared it to be safe for drinking, but most people still rely on bottled water. Tests are still being done in other areas and water remains a main priority. Communications remain a challenge even as a cell phone service provider re-established international voice services in Tongatapu, as this network became congested rapidly. Initial relief supplies from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand have started to arrive in Tonga through "no-contact" deliveries. The borders of Tonga remain closed to foreigners and COVID-19 restrictions are still in place.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

Based on initial needs assessments as shared by the Government of Tonga and partners on the ground, UNICEF Pacific is appealing for USD 2.7 million to provide lifesaving support to children and their families in Tonga. This funding requirement is likely to increase once the Government of Tonga has completed the needs assessment.

UNICEF Pacific would like to express its sincere gratitude to the flexible funding provided by various humanitarian donors, through the Global Thematic Humanitarian Fund. A first allocation of USD 100,000 of unearmarked funding will cover a portion of the most pressing lifesaving needs.
However, a funding gap of USD 2.6 million remains, with WASH and Health programmes requiring most funding, followed by Social and Behavior Change, Education, and Child Protection.

Humanitarian Leadership & Coordination

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), which is co-led by the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and composed of UN agencies and international NGOs, is leading the coordination with the Government of Tonga and the diplomatic missions. The PHT is based in Suva, Fiji. Under the PHT are nine clusters wherein UNICEF is the lead in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), co-lead with Save the Children in Education, co-lead with World Health Organization (WHO) in Health & Nutrition and the lead for Child Protection in the Protection cluster. The Government of Tonga has adopted a localized cluster approach with ten clusters, including Safety and Protection; Health, Nutrition and Water, Sanitation; and Education. All the clusters are led by government ministries and coordinated by the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO). NEMO reports to the National Disaster Council of the Cabinet. The PHT clusters provide a supportive role to NEMO and the Tongan clusters. Initial damage assessments are still ongoing in some areas. The Tonga Government has formally made a request for assistance to the UN, the diplomatic missions and the humanitarian community and shared their initial list of supply needs for early recovery.

UNICEF Programme Response (Summary Analysis)

Approximately 10 metric tons of UNICEF emergency supplies, composed of WASH supplies and recreational kits have left Australia on board the HMAS Adelaide of the Royal Australian Navy on 21 January and are expected to arrive in Tonga within the next week. More supplies from WASH, Health and CP are on stand-by in Suva while awaiting delivery options being explored with the Logistics cluster and the Government of Fiji.

WASH

Available data suggests that around 50,000 people are affected by lack of access to sufficient safe drinking water which remains one of the highest priorities. The Tonga Water Board has undertaken water quality analysis and have issued advisory that the capital’s water supply is safe to drink. Authorities have advised residents against drinking rainwater until further information is available. Water quality testing is ongoing. UNICEF has mobilized supplies including WASH and Dignity Kits, portable water testing equipment, and collapsible water containers for Tonga with the first available shipment options. UNICEF as WASH Cluster lead, has convened regional cluster network, to facilitate a coordinated WASH response. Direct communication with partners on the ground remains a challenge. Gaps remain in the immediate response, including provision of supplies & equipment for water treatment, water quality testing, environmental cleaning; in the WASH assessment; coordination and information management at national level; in the public messaging around WASH and impact of ash and in the mobilization of additional technical resources and partnership in Tonga.

Health & Nutrition

At least two health facilities have been reported damaged: the Kolomotu’a Health Facility in Tongatapu and the other in Nomuka. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has been conducting outreach services to affected areas of the outer islands of ‘Eua. All vaccines are safely stored at the national store. The MOH has indicated the need for 4 vaccine fridges to reinvigorate their health services.

Child Protection

It is assumed that all adults and children in Tongatapu, ‘Eua and Ha’apai administrative divisions, numbering around 85,000 people, have been affected psychologically. A 15-member joint Health & Protection Cluster team is providing psychosocial support (PSS) while distributing dignity kits in Tongatapu. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) Church Leaders’ Desk (CLD) has trained 80 volunteers with technical supervision from MIA/CLD staff. The volunteers are ready to provide psychological first aid (PFA), identify and refer children requiring further assistance, and engage parents on awareness of child protection issues, positive parenting and helping children to cope during challenging times. No needs assessment is available yet and no information on deployment of CLD volunteers and supervisors. UNICEF is working with the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster, led by UNWomen, to coordinate and support the National Safety and Protection Cluster (chaired by MIA Tonga) in child protection and psychosocial support.

Education

Tonga has 280 schools (Early Childhood Education (ECE)-97, primary-129, secondary-54) with 32,372 students (ECE-2,340, primary-14,321, secondary-15,711). The main impact on schools appears to be the volcanic ash on school infrastructure, grounds and water supply. The Education cluster has called for some delay in the start of the school year which was originally planned for 31 January. UNICEF Education in Emergency (tents, kits, etc.) supplies are prepositioned
and available with Ministry of Education and training (MET) on the ground in Tonga. Communication with Tonga stakeholders is the key gap at this point in the response. UNICEF coordinates with Save the Children in Pacific regional education cluster planning and discussions. Tonga Education Cluster is government-led, though UNICEF has supported the cluster in the past (TC Gita) and may do so again as/when relevant.

**Social & Behavior Change**

Tongan Ministry of Heath continues to broadcast preventive behaviors messaging on national radio networks. The primary focus of the messages includes wearing of masks and protective gear when stepping out and boiling water for drinking. UNICEF has contextualized and adapted a set of IEC materials including a brochure and social media tiles to promote preventive behaviors and practices. These will be shared with NEMO and MoH for dissemination.

**Human Interest Stories & External Media**

UNICEF Pacific

- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483289919569403904](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483289919569403904)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483911302276071425](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483911302276071425)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1484454561410473984](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1484454561410473984)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483719353040531456](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483719353040531456)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483701060875472898](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483701060875472898)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483289919569403904](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1483289919569403904)
- [https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1482863293630984198](https://twitter.com/UNICEFPacific/status/1482863293630984198)
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**Media Clippings (selection)**

BBC Breakfast: [https://twitter.com/BBCBreakfast/status/1483328554851045378](https://twitter.com/BBCBreakfast/status/1483328554851045378)

Sky News UK: [https://twitter.com/SkyNews/status/1483895177240616975](https://twitter.com/SkyNews/status/1483895177240616975)

The New York Times: [https://twitter.com/nytimes/status/1483583759211536387](https://twitter.com/nytimes/status/1483583759211536387)


Japan Times: [https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/01/19/asia-pacific/tonga-tsunami-devastation/](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/01/19/asia-pacific/tonga-tsunami-devastation/)

*Further Situation Reports will be released as the situation evolves and / or needs are identified.*

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