



Floods in northeastern Bangladesh have displaced 650,000 people in & around Sylhet, forcing 158 schools to suspend classes, & the opening of 550 shelters. UNICEF is on the ground providing lifesaving supplies to those most affected & supporting the government's response to the crisis. © UNICEF/Bangladesh/2024/Mamun

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Situation Report on Floods in Sylhet Region No. 1

15th June 2024

Highlights

- **Approximately 739,000 people (266,000 children) have been affected by floods in Sylhet division. A total of 6,568 people fled their homes and took refuge in 571 shelters.**
- According to the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), **2,147 tube wells (TWs) were fully damaged and 3,794 were partially damaged. A total of 26,058 latrines were fully damaged, while 16,588 were reported partially damaged.**
- **With support from UNICEF, more than 47,789 flood-affected people were reached, and 171,500 water purifying tablets (WPT), 15 kg of bleaching powder, 1,805 jerry cans, and 170 hygiene kits were distributed in Sylhet district.** So far, 713 TWs were inspected, 51 TWs were raised, 91 were repaired, and 94 TWs were disinfected.
- The Civil Surgeons of Sunamganj and Maulavibazar requested **560,000 Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), lifesaving antibiotics, IV fluids, and anti-snake venoms** from the Line Director CDC. UNICEF is coordinating with the CDC and DGHS for the distribution of the requested supplies.
- Regular Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH), Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) management services are being disrupted with increased cases of flood-related sicknesses. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) Health Department reported a total of **1,185 patients, including 1,092 cases of diarrhoea, 8 cases of respiratory infections, and 85 other illnesses since the beginning of the floods.**
- **At present, a total of 29 government primary schools are affected by floods.** One school is still being used as a shelter in Golapganj, Sylhet.
- Exposure to child protection risks has increased for families who abandoned their homes, with an increased risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV).
- UNICEF Sylhet Field Office has a valid contingency partnership with BRAC, a local NGO, for immediate activation if the situation deteriorates.

Situation in Numbers



739,000

People affected by the floods.



266,000

Children (0-19) affected by the floods.



571

Shelters opened

Flood Situation

According to the Sylhet District administration and Bangladesh Water Development Board sources, floods have hit all 13 upazilas of Sylhet district, affecting about 750,000 people. However, since June 4, the situation has started to improve. The situation continues to improve further due to the absence of heavy rains and upstream flows. As of June 8, 2024, there were 440 people in the 571 shelters that were opened. Most of the people have gone back to their homes. It is noteworthy that as of June 4, more than 4,500 people had taken refuge in those shelters.

Key highlights from different Sectors

WASH

- With support from UNICEF, more than **47,789 flood-affected people** were reached through the distribution of life-saving WASH items, including **171,500 water purifying tablets (WPT)**, **15 kg of bleaching powder**, **1,805 jerry cans**, and **170 hygiene kits** in Sylhet district.
- So far, **713 tube wells (TWs)** were inspected, **51 TWs have been raised**, **91 were repaired**, and **94 TWs were disinfected**.
- As part of preparedness, **UNICEF** supported the pre-positioning of **4,393,500 water purifying tablets (WPT)**, **31,195 jerry cans**, and **5,786 hygiene kits** in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, and Hobiganj districts.
- **The WASH section deployed a WASH Officer in Sylhet** to support the flood response on a rotational basis.
- Together with DPHE, **four mobile water treatment (MWT) plants are kept ready for deployment** as needed in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts.
- A test run of **three mobile water treatment (MWT) plants was carried out in Sylhet and Sunamganj**, and they are ready for deployment as needed.



Families wade through floodwaters seeking shelter after a landslide upstream washed away their homes in the Ferighat area of Jaintapur Upazila in Sylhet on May 30, 2024. © UNICEF/Bangladesh/2024/Mamun

Health

- According to the Divisional Director of Health in Sylhet, 13 upazilas of Sylhet district and some upazilas of Sunamganj district have been affected. **355 medical teams were formed and are ready for deployment**.
- In the last 7 days, **1,088 acute watery diarrhoea cases** have been reported.
- **The Civil Surgeons of Sunamganj and Maulavibazar have requested 560,000 Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), lifesaving antibiotics, IV fluids, and anti-snake venoms from the Line Director CDC.** UNICEF is coordinating with the CDC and DGHS for the distribution of the requested supplies.
- The UNICEF Field Office continues to coordinate with the Divisional Director of Health and Civil Surgeons to identify gaps and needs for an effective and timely response.

Nutrition

- The government has distributed dry foods. **200 packets of dry food** have been distributed in different affected unions.
- The current supply status of therapeutic milk **F-75 and F-100** has been collected from **all Upazila health complexes and district hospitals**. There are **365 cans of F-75** and **201 cans of F-100** currently available in the SAM units.
- **168 cans of F-75 and 60 cans of F-100** are available in the district reserve store (divisional warehouse). The Sylhet Field Office is in touch with the section and national nutrition service. **If the nutritional status of children deteriorates because of the flooding, they are ready to supply the therapeutic milk and other nutrition supplies accordingly.**

Education

- After the onset of the flood on 27 May 2024, **211 government primary schools** were flooded, and **classes were suspended in 158 schools**. As many as **68 schools** were used as **flood shelters until last week**. As the situation gradually improved, the floodwater receded from most of the schools.
- As of 9th June, from the DPEO Office Sylhet, **29 government primary schools (GPS)** still have **water in the school compound**. Among the affected schools, **23 are located in Companiganj, 2 in Jaintiapur, 2 in Kanaighat, 1 in Balaganj, and 1 in Golapganj upazila**.
- According to information from the District Education Officer (DEO) - DSHE, **all secondary schools are functional, and no school is being used as a flood shelter**.
- The Government Education Department is monitoring the situation daily and is ready to act if any emergency situation arises.



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Child Protection

- In partnership with the Department of Social Services (DSS), **UNICEF has expanded its reach to the five flood-affected upazilas in Sylhet: Jaintiapur, Gowainghat, Companiganj, Kanaighat, and Zakiganj**.
- The response team **includes 2 social workers, 1 psychosocial counsellor, 11 union social workers, and 23 volunteers who are actively providing essential case management services and psychosocial support to affected children**.
- **Non-food items (NFIs), particularly family and dignity kits, are being prepared for distribution to the most vulnerable groups, especially adolescent girls, alongside basic food and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) support**.
- In partnership with The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), **13 frontline workers have been deployed, and 440 community facilitators and 442 peer leaders are on the ground**, assessing the situation, supporting children and families with drowning prevention sessions, avoiding family separation, and providing psychosocial support. The team on the ground is in close contact with government service providers and disseminating the information shared by the government.
- In collaboration with MoWCA, **from June 2nd to June 8th, 1,389 sessions were conducted in Sylhet division, reaching 23,693 children**, including adolescents and parents, on preventing drowning, avoiding family separation, and other crucial aspects of disaster preparedness.
- **Eighteen Child Protection Hubs (CPCH) have been severely impacted, with one completely destroyed and its materials ruined**. Additionally, four CPCHs have sustained partial damage. Ongoing assessments are being conducted to determine the full extent of the damage.

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)

- Key lifesaving information was disseminated to the flood-affected people through UNICEF partners.
- **UNICEF supported the government counterpart in disseminating early warning and response information to the affected people**.
- **UNICEF has been assessing the information needs to scale up the SBC response in the flood-affected areas**.

Humanitarian Cash Transfer

- In the Sylhet region, **UNICEF has identified 3,626 households (HHs) with pregnant women (PW), particularly in Sunamganj district**. In addition, planning and preparation are ongoing to register HHs with PW in Sylhet district by FIVDB. UNICEF has been partnering with NGOs to identify households with pregnant women in very high flood risk areas like Sirajganj, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Jamalpur, and Netrokona districts.
- **Three contingency PDs are ready to activate if required**.

Government and other Partners' Preparedness

WASH:

- **A sub-national level WASH Cluster meeting was held** at the Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHS, Sylhet for a coordinated WASH response to flood-affected people in Sylhet.
- UNICEF, together with its government partners, CSOs, and WASH Cluster partners, is closely observing the situation.
- **World Vision Bangladesh** distributed water purifying tablets (WPT) to **3,000 HHs in Gowainghat Upazila, Tahirpur, and Sadar Upazilas of Sunamganj District, covering 16,390 flood-affected people.**
- **Concern Worldwide**, together with FIVDB, provided multi-purpose cash assistance, including WASH support, to **328 HHs in Gowainghat Upazila of Sylhet district.**

Nutrition:

- The medical doctors and nurses of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) are treating SAM children at the SAM corners of hospitals, referred by government and NGO field staff.
- **The Asia Arsenic Network (AAN)** has more than **500 community leaders in Kanaighat, Balaganj, Kularua, and Dharmapasa Upazilas** who can be mobilized for emergency response at the local level based on need.
- **Caritas** has **540 task force** members who can extend support for any emergency response.
- **Shushilan** has kept their staff and volunteers ready for emergency response if required.

Child Protection (CP):

- **The Child Protection Cluster held a Child Protection in Emergency (CPiE) working group meeting** with local NGOs and other stakeholders to evaluate the current flood situation and partners' response.
- As part of its anticipatory action, **FIVDB, with Concern Worldwide**, has provided cash assistance to **328 individuals** in Gowainghat Upazila.
- **The Reliant Women Development Organization (RWDO)**, in collaboration with **Plan International**, will conduct a survey to assess the needs and difficulties arising from the flood.
- **FIVDB and Caritas have extended rescue assistance to affected families** and are actively monitoring and supporting operations at shelter centres.

Social and Behavior Change (SBC):

- The **District Information Office** provided lifesaving information, such as the importance of drinking purified water and staying safe from drowning and snake bites to people who took shelter.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination

The UNICEF Sylhet Field Office is coordinating with the Divisional Commissioner's office and has participated in the Divisional Disaster Management Committee meeting. To strengthen the government's disaster preparedness efforts, the Divisional Commissioner has requested UNICEF to provide logistical support, such as life jackets, gumboots, and torchlights. UNICEF has organized sub-national level WASH and CPiE cluster meetings to ensure better coordination among all concerned stakeholders. The UNICEF Sylhet field office is supporting the Divisional Commissioner's Office in Sylhet to foster coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders for a comprehensive approach to emergency preparedness and response.

Funding situation

UNICEF estimates **US\$ 3.3 million is needed** for emergency response in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Moulvibazar district.

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