



This report is produced by OCHA ROLAC in collaboration with the United Nations Emergency Technical Team in Trinidad and Tobago. It was issued on 24/10/2018. It covers the period from 19 – 24 October 2018. The next Flash Note will be issued if required.

Highlights

- Affected persons are receiving assistance of Government officials, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) is leading the response.
- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is activated and continues to coordinate response, relief distribution, damage assessments and clean-up operations in affected communities.
- The Trinidad and Tobago United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) is activated and standing-by to support national system.



150,000

Approximately affected people

Source: CDEMA Situation Report No.1

4,333

Households affected

Source: CDEMA Situation Report No.3

800

Persons evacuated

Source: Source: CDEMA Situation Report No.1

300

Persons sheltered

Source: Source: CDEMA Situation Report No. 2

Situation Overview

On 18 - 19 October 2018, Trinidad and Tobago experienced torrential rainfall across the country, according to Government officials, Trinidad alone received a full month's worth of rain during the two days. It was estimated 80 per cent of the country was affected by flooding. Floods and landslides, affected communities and public services and blocked main roads. Central and eastern regional corporations/corporations were the most affected, namely Chaguanas Borough, Couva-Tabaquite -Talparo, Mayaro-Rio Claro, Sangre Grande and Tunapuna.

Shelters were activated across the country and school services were temporarily disrupted. On 20 October the Government of Trinidad and Tobago activated its National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) at the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). The Government is taking the lead, through ODPM and no international/external support has been requested.

The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MORDLG) and the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) are conducting initial damage assessments of all persons affected by the adverse weather. Assessments began on Monday, 22 October.

As of 23 October, damage assessments are ongoing, assessments have been completed in the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation. ODPM has distributed relief items such as hygiene kits and large garbage bags to the affected population. The NEOC remains partially activated and is coordinating response, relief distribution, damage assessments and clean-up operations in affected communities. The Trinidad Defense Force is also supporting clean up, assessments and distribution. Currently conditions are improving, and the water is receding, however it will take some time for flooding to subside in areas that were adversely affected. ODPM is advising citizens to remain vigilant and monitor local conditions and watercourses.

ODPM is keeping the public avidly aware of the situation through their website and social media. Also, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is issuing situation reports.

The Trinidad and Tobago UNETT is activated and in contact with Government and local counterparts, monitoring the situation. Currently, UN agencies are collaborating with their line ministries providing technical advice, identifying areas needing immediate attention, and developing strategies for longer-term relief and recovery. These agencies are further prepared to scale-up their tangible support and practical assistance; to this end, they are liaising with non-governmental and other intergovernmental organizations to share expertise and identify areas for cooperation.

Sectoral Overview

Shelter Management

Impact:

- Schools and community centres are being used as shelters, there are five (5) shelters opened as of 24 October in the Tunapuna/Piarco regional corporation with 248 persons.

Actions:

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is in contact with the Office of the Prime Minister Gender and Child Affairs. Assessments of the situation in the shelters are being undertaken by the latter and both UNFPA and UN Women stand ready to support, particularly in strengthening the referral pathway for gender-based violence (GBV).
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) accompanied the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) to conduct initial assessments of two community residences and three shelters
- Under UNICEF- Caribbean Emergency Disaster Management Agency (CEDMA) memorandum of understanding, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) will receive education and recreational supplies from ODPM for distribution to community residences and shelters. The supplies currently include five (5) School-in-a-Box Kits, five (5) Recreation Kits, six (6) Early Childhood Development Kits (each kit covers approximately 40 children) with availability of more kits at ODPM, if needed.

Health

Impact:

- No casualties have been reported.
- No major 24-hour hospitals have been affected by the flooding. All major health facilities including District Health Facilities and Hospitals remained open to manage potential medical emergencies.
- There were reports of staff and patients unable to reach health centres due to flooding and impassible lanes.
- 18 October 2018 the Biche Outreach Centre, Tabquite Health Centre, Flanagin Town Health Centre, Todds Road Health Centre, Mathura Health Centre, Cumana Health, Toco Health Centre, San Souci Health Centre, Grand Riviere Health Centre, Matelot Health Centre were closed early as a precautionary measure.

- 19th October 2018 the Todds Road Health Centre, Flanagin Town Health Centre, Tabaquite Health Centre, St. Helena Health Centre, San Raphael Health Centre, Grand Riviere and Matelot Outreach Centre, Coryal Health Centre, San Souci Health Centre, Penal Rock Road Health Centre were closed early due as a precautionary measure.
- 20th October 2018 the Sangre Grande Enhanced Health Centre services were suspended. The Sangre Grande Hospital was functional, however its accessibility was challenged by flooded roadways.
 - Sections of the Uriah Butler Highway were blocked due to flooding which inhibited persons being transferred from the Chaguanas District Health facility to Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (the normal referral point). Persons had to be referred to alternate locations.
- 21 October 2018 the St. Helena Health Centre was closed, this facility normally does not provide service the community on weekends. During this day, there were reports of staff and patients unable to reach health centres due to flooding and impassible lanes.
- Foreigners in the country have been also affected. As an example, a Venezuelan community in Arima informed the UN, that over 50 people are in desperate need of basic essential supplies, including hygiene kits.

Actions:

- Two advanced medical posts were set up at La Horquetta and Arouca to provide coverage to those who had been evacuated.
- Primary care facilities were opened to service the medical needs of the public on 21 October. An Emergency Medical Post was set up in the St. Helena area to supplement services lost due to closure of the St. Helena Health Centre.
- The Ministry of Health had issued official releases for consumers, retailers, distributors and restaurateurs concerning food safety and safe food-handling practices. Also published were the opening and closing hours of facilities, information on post-flooding clean-up and the prevention of water-borne and vector diseases, and search capacity, to name a few areas.
- Emergency medical control and water sanitation and hygiene activities are underway in St. Helena.
- One successful medevac was performed. Those with existing conditions such as diabetes and asthma have been transferred to health centres.
- Active surveillance was taking place at shelters and health centers by public health inspectors, while Regional Corporations are coordinating the removal of waste from the shelters.
- The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) will develop a technical package to share with the Ministry of Health, even though there has been no official request for support. This package will include, guidance on food safety, the prevention of diseases, and the boiling/disinfecting water.
- The PAHO/WHO country representative was interviewed on a national radio station about key take-away messages after the flooding and preparedness for future flooding and other disasters.

Education

Impact:

- Most recent news indicates that 15 schools remain closed; eleven (11) primary schools, one (1) secondary school and three (3) early childhood education centers.
- Latest reports show that six (6) primary schools are currently being used as temporary shelters.

Actions:

- UNICEF has contacted the Ministry of Education to ascertain the needs of the sector and extend support for the education sector.

Early Recovery

Impact:

- Ministry of Agriculture is mobilized in the field with equipment to assist with debris removal and open access to sites. There are concerns about disease spread from live-stock and land contamination of farms. Support for post disaster also involve impact mitigation. Cleaning and repairing of irrigation, cash, and feed and veterinarian care.
- The Network of Rural Women Producers has reached out to UN Women for support as well to the women farmers in their network.
- The Ministry of Agriculture Land and Fisheries reported that 500 farmers were impacted and provided assistance with pumping water from impacted areas.

Actions:

- Emergency focal point is in Barbados on standby.
- UN Women will collaborate with key stakeholders to complete assessment and provide seeds, equipment and labour as needed.

Protection

Impact:

- There are reports that some refugees and asylum-seekers are stranded in some of the affected areas.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partner Living Water Community (LWC) have received requests of support of around 20 families of persons of concern. In the most affected area there would be at least 100 refugees and asylum-seekers, but the number is expected to grow as days pass.
- Reports of increase in GBV.

Actions:

- UNHCR is re-evaluating its cash assistance provided to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, to address immediate needs.
- LWC has made a first assessment mission to Kelly Village. Joint missions with UNHCR are being planned.
- UNFPA and UN Women will support the strengthening of the Referral System as required. UNFPA will have dignity kits available at the end of next week to support the implementation of the referral pathway for GBV
- UNICEF is supporting the Office of the Prime Minister to roll out the Return to Happiness (RtH) psychosocial support programme for children at community residences and shelters. The roll out of the RtH began on 23 October 2018 and has continued through 24 October 2018 in two (2) shelters with continued roll out planned for the coming weeks.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Impact:

- Based on information from the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), water treatment plants in Trinidad and Tobago were affected by the heavy rainfall due to turbid river conditions, clogged intake screens and power failures. As of 24 October 2018, all its plants in Tobago have been returned to full operation, while two facilities continue to be affected in Trinidad. Pipe borne water supply schedules from operational water production facilities are expected to return to normal over the next two (2) days. Communities and households affected by flooding continue their cleanup efforts. The flooding has also brought on increased risk of water and vector-borne diseases of which there are no current report cases. Messages have been released in the media to warn and advise the public on disease prevention.

Actions:

- Under UNICEF-CDEMA MoU, the Office of the Prime Minister will receive Family Dignity and Hygiene Kits from ODPM for distribution to community residences and shelters.
- UNICEF has released key WASH messaging on the media (radio) and social media.
- PAHO and UNICEF WASH experts are on stand-by for mobilization.

Coordination

Impact:

- The Trinidad and Tobago UNETT was activated on 20 October 2018 and is closely monitoring the situation with Government counterparts and local organizations.

Actions:

- The UNETT is coordinating with ODPM, all requests for support are being shared with ODPM to ensure an effective and efficient response, avoiding duplication.

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