

Solomon Islands Humanitarian and Recovery Response Update 3



Reporting period: 11 June-10 July 2014



BACKGROUND

It is three months since the 4th of April floods that claimed 22 lives and affected 52,000 people in the capital city, Honiara and Guadalcanal province, Solomon Islands. Transitional centers have now been reduced from six in the previous reporting period to three. UNICEF and its partners have been supporting the Government since the first day with humanitarian response and recovery efforts. More than 90 percent of the displaced people have returned to their homes, with family kits provided by the government, NGOs and partners, to rebuild their lives.

The remaining 10 percent (922 displaced people) are still occupying the three remaining evacuation centers - FOPA, Rove Police Club and Disability Centre. As of Tuesday June 24 the Government has announced that it can no longer maintain or support the centers due to financial constraints. The announcement also reflects the shift from humanitarian response to recovery, and to helping communities in five other provinces that were affected by the flooding associated with the April heavy rain.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNICEF Deputy Executive Director New York, Yoka Brandt and Regional Director for East Asia and Pacific Regional Office Daniel Toole visited Solomon Islands from 22 to 24 June; during part of their visit they went to an affected community and to an evacuation/transitional centre, and talked with residents there.
- Government announced that it will no longer operate the remaining transitional centres due to financial constraints. Government announced on the June 28 that it will no longer provide weekly food supply nor any other form of assistance. Nevertheless, 922 displaced people continue to live in the remaining three centres.
- WASH cluster activities have now moved from the Emergency Response phase to Recovery Phase. UNICEF continues to support Government with WASH cluster coordination, including information management and is directly funding (through a Central Emergency Fund Grant from UN OCHA), and overseeing some of the ongoing response work by several cluster partners
- UNICEF signed programme agreements with key partners (Save the Children, Solomon Islands Red Cross, World Vision and Live and Learn) in Solomon Islands with a total value of SBD 14.5 million (USD 2 million) to provide safe water and adequate sanitation and hygiene to 10 communities and 15 schools

- All 12 schools have completed the school feeding program funded by an Emergency Cash Grant from OCHA and reported improvements in attendance rates.
- Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) for Children between 1 and 4 years 11 months: Honiara City Council completed the SIA in Honiara surpassing the target of 9,387 children with an additional 328 children. The activity also includes distribution of Vitamin A, and deworming tablets and screening for malnutrition. Completion of the SIA in Guadalcanal was delayed and now needs to be reorganized to complete the campaign. Funds have been received from UNICEF, and the EPI department of Guadalcanal Province has started organising with relevant partners including the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), UNICEF and WHO to fill in the gap.
- The rotavirus infection outbreak that resulted in 16 deaths in June is now under control.
- A review and revision of the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) was conducted by the government in June. The Revised HAP will continue until end of July and remaining recovery activities will be included in a longer term Recovery Plan. The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) is currently developing the long term Recovery Plan, which will include budgets for line ministries to be part of the government fiscal/development plan for 2015.

RESPONSE by UNICEF AND PARTNERS



WASH Cluster

UNICEF Solomon Islands is designated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) as their Supporting Agency for the Coordination of WASH response, under the welfare and IDP cluster. During this reporting period, the WASH cluster activities have now moved from the Emergency Response phase to Recovery Phase.

June 23, 2014 – UNICEF signed programme agreements with key partners (Save the Children, Solomon Islands Red Cross, World Vision and Live and Learn) in Solomon Islands that amounts to SBD 14.5 million (USD 2 million) to provide safe water and adequate sanitation and hygiene to 10 communities and 15 schools which will benefit those that were affected by the floods.

Water supply

- Water trucking: Solomon Islands Red Cross (SIRC) and World Vision (WV) distributed 294,900 litres to 11,498 people in this reporting period. UNICEF supports water trucking through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) from UN OCHA.
- Save the Children and Solomon Islands Red Cross continue to clean unprotected wells, construct additional communal rain water harvesting systems and clean or rehabilitate catchment network of the existing GSF. UNICEF supports these activities with provision of funds from UN OCHA.
- The Indian Mark II has officially been approved by Environmental Health Department as the hand pump solution of choice for Solomon Islands (In addition to the SolMk and Rope and Washer pumps).

Sanitation

- Squat hole covers are ready for delivery to the FOPA transition/evacuation centre, with separation of male and female toilets to be done by Honiara City Council, (HCC.)
- ADRA has built 20 of 30 total VIP latrines at NZ camp with more requests coming in but the Government RWASH policy prohibits subsidized sanitation projects, except for emergency work or sanitation at institutions allowed.

Hygiene

- International Federation of Red Cross (IFSC) carried out training on hygiene promotion refresher and water treatment. Thirty three people attended the training, including staff from Red Cross, World Vision, Save the Children, Caritas, and the Health Promotion Department, Ministry of Health and Medical Services.
- Distribution of UNICEF printed materials on key life-saving messages in the form of pocket guides and colourful hand shaped paper continues, with HCC responsible for distribution in Honiara and Guadalcanal Province responsible for distribution in affected communities and schools in Guadalcanal.
- Solomon Islands Red Cross also printed hygiene posters on diarrhoea and hand washing. UNICEF supported the printing and delivery to flood affected communities and other parts of the country that experienced outbreaks of rotavirus infection. MHMS and WHO has confirmed that the outbreak is now over.
- UNICEF-funded radio spots on key lifesaving messages were broadcast on PAOA FM and Solomon Islands Broadcasting Cooperation (SIBC).
- A live weekly youth radio talk show to promote WASH and key family practices commenced on 15 June. Hand-washing, boiling of drinking water and keeping food safe are some of the topics that were covered.
- Save the Children and SIRC started work on hygiene promotion as part of emergency response and recovery following the programme agreement signed with UNICEF on June 23.

Distributions

- UNICEF delivered another 5,000 bars of soap to HPU to be distributed with hygiene messages.
- Following the announcement by NDMO for remaining displaced people to return home UNICEF has offered to include WASH kits in the return package.

Education Cluster

UNICEF Solomon Islands supports the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) to coordinate the Education Cluster, under the Welfare and IDP cluster.

- All 12 schools completed the school feeding program funded by an Emergency Cash Grant from OCHA. All schools reported improvements in attendance rates and also greater participation by parents and community members in supporting their children to return back to normalcy.
- Honiara City Council has been informed by UNICEF to allocate 3 tents at the FOPA evacuation/transition centre to selected affected schools in Honiara city as soon as all evacuees using the tents leave FOPA.
- Shipment of additional education recovery supplies (school in a boxes, tents and school back packs) expected to arrive in July. These will be supplied to affected schools in both Honiara and Guadalcanal that are already agreed with MEHRD.

Health and Nutrition Cluster

WHO is the primary support to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) for the coordination of Health and Nutrition Cluster, under the SIG Welfare and IDP Cluster. UNICEF is a cluster member providing technical, financial and supply assistance in the areas of nutrition, immunization and other maternal and child health needs.

Supplementary Immunization Activity

- Supplementary Immunization Activity (SIA) for Children between 1 and 4 years old: Honiara City Council completed the SIA in Honiara surpassing the target of 9,387 children with an additional 328 children. The activity also includes distribution of Vitamin A, and

deworming tablets and screening for malnutrition. Expanded Program Immunization (EPI) for HCC were informed to work on the report of the activity.

- Completion of the SIA in Guadalcanal was delayed and now needs to be reorganized to complete the campaign. Funds have been received from UNICEF, and the EPI department of Guadalcanal Province has started organising with relevant partners including the MHMS, UNICEF and WHO to fill in the gap.

Nutrition

- Data collection with Nutrition Cluster Assessments for Honiara City Council and Guadalcanal was completed on 27 June, followed by a meeting for all survey team members at MHMS on 20 June to summarize and document key issues from the survey.
- The UNICEF technical specialist arrived and began work with MHMS and the National Referral Hospital to get the Stabilisation Centre up and running.
- Training of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) has been re-scheduled to 28 July 28 – 4 August 4, following the National Health Conference. The training will be led by two specialists on loan from the Government of India and sourced by UNICEF. The specialist will support MHMS through 20 September 2014.
- Coordination meetings on Health and Nutrition emergency recovery activities, led by WHO, continued on a fortnightly basis.

Welfare and IDP Cluster

The Welfare and IDP Cluster, led by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Culture and the Ministry of Provincial Government, includes Protection and the area of responsibility of Child Protection. Under the Protection Monitoring Team of the Welfare IDP Cluster, UNICEF, World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children Australia (SCA) are coordinating with Solomon Islands Government (SIG) partners on protection assessments in affected areas of return.

- Inter-agency protection monitoring in the flood affected areas in Honiara and Guadalcanal province is still ongoing.
- Save the Children is operating child friendly spaces in Guadalcanal communities; Koli, Komuporo, Mamasa and Good Sheppard, while World Vision is operating child friendly spaces in Lelei, Veraboli, Vura, Tenaru, Popolio 1, Metapona, Malathoa, Biun, Suaghi and Turaranan. These Child Friendly Spaces will run until 25 August.

KEY CONCERNS

- With the announcement from government that it will no longer operate the remaining three evacuation/transitional centres, people still living in three centres will no longer receive any form of assistance from the government, including weekly food supplies.
- There has been talk about forcing people out from the centres and security concerns have been raised, but thus far restraint has been exercised.
- Supplementary Immunization Activities for flood affected children along the Guadalcanal plains needs to be completed as the set target has not been met.
- Flood damage in other Provinces/Islands, while minor compared to the damage in Honiara and Guadalcanal, has received little or no attention, and Government has consequently requested partners to see what might be possible from them.

Humanitarian and Recovery Coordination

- The Solomon Islands National Disaster Council, with the National Emergency Operations Center and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), led and coordinated the emergency and early recovery response of all Government designated leads and their humanitarian partners on

sector or cluster areas. UN OCHA assisted NDMO with coordination, but their surge staff left Honiara at the end of June, and remaining OCHA support is now remote from Fiji. However, WHO staff is convening monthly Cluster Coordination meetings for residual humanitarian work, including CERF funded activities.

- A review and revision of the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) was conducted by the government in June. Revised HAP was developed with segregation of recovery activities from humanitarian actions. 24 activities are recovery activities and 14 activities are a mix of humanitarian and recovery. Revised HAP will continue until end of July.
- Key clusters including health and nutrition, WASH and Inter-Cluster Working Group continue to have their regular meetings fortnightly. The Livelihood Cluster fully transitioned to a sector working group reporting to the Recovery Coordination Committee (RCC) chaired by the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC). The RCC meets weekly; sector working groups and an all stakeholder recovery group meet on alternate weeks, twice a month.
- The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) is currently developing a long term Recovery Plan, supported by UNDP, with budgets for line ministries to be part of the government fiscal/development plan for 2015.

Human resources

Regular UNICEF staff members in Honiara, Solomon Islands include:

A Chief of Field Office, WASH (2), child protection (1), education (1), immunization/logistics (1), maternal and child health (1), communication (1), administration (4).

Staff deployed during this period: nutrition (2); communications (1); senior management (1); education (1); ICT (1); Standby partner for WASH information management (1).

UNICEF Deputy Executive Director and the Regional Director visited the Solomon Islands from 22-24 June.

Funding

UNICEF is grateful to the following for financial support for the response to the Solomon Islands disaster: New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNICEF New Zealand National Committee; UNICEF Japan; United Parcel Service; UN OCHA.

Next UNICEF Humanitarian Response & Recovery Update: 10 August 2014

UNICEF spokespersons in the Solomon Islands

English and Korean: Kang Yun Jong (Chief)
Email: yjkang@unicef.org OR yjkang.unicef@gmail.com
Mobile: +677 749 6172

For more information, please contact:

Karen B. Allen	Isabelle Austin	Donna Hoerder
Representative	Deputy Representative	Communications
UNICEF Pacific	UNICEF Pacific	UNICEF Pacific
Tel: +679 992 5427	Tel: +679 992 5613	Tel +679 926 5518
kallen@unicef.org	iaustin@unicef.org	dhoerder@unicef.org