Background

An earthquake measuring M7.5 occurred on 26 Feb 2018 at 0344hrs (PNG) / 25 Feb 1744hrs (UTC) in Southern Highlands.

Located in the vicinity of the quake affected area is the Hides Gas Conditioning Plant in located in Hela Province with the pipeline running across the impacted area in Southern Highlands Province. Ok Tedi Mine, an open cast gold and copper mine is also located west of the quake-affected area in Western Province.

Current Situation

According to unconfirmed media reports, the quakes have resulted in homes being buried. Properties are suspected to have also been destroyed while several roads have also experienced damage including the road connecting Kiunga to Ok Tedi Mine in Tabubil.

To date, ground reports indicate that Porgera (Enga Province) has experienced power disruption while telecommunication in Tari (provincial capital of Hela) and Mendi (provincial capital of Southern Highlands) affected.

Reports also indicate that several small airports and airstrips have also experienced some damage including Komo airport. Schools in Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces are reported to have been suspended indefinitely.

Media reports and ground reports have indicated that the PNG LNG facility at Hides has also been shut down. Workers from the facility have been evacuated as a safety precaution. The company is also monitoring the impact on people in the local communities.

It has been reported that up to 10 deaths have occurred in Hela Province with more unconfirmed deaths in Southern Highlands Province due to landslides.

There have also been a series of at least 20 aftershocks since the earthquake.

Response to Date

The Hela Provincial Administration is consulting with the Ministry of Inter-Government Relations. The National Disaster Centre is planning to undertake an initial damage assessment on Tuesday 27 February 2018.

The PNG Disaster Management Team continues to support the National Disaster Centre with coordination of assessments and information management.
Indicative Map of Key Locations in Relation to Earthquake Epicenter