

# HAITI

## UPDATE ON INITIAL UNICEF RESPONSE

January - March 2010

14 January 2010

### 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

On January 12, 2010 an earthquake of magnitude 7.3 - the most powerful to hit Haiti in a century - struck shortly before 5 p.m. and was centered about (15 kilometers) southwest of Port-au-Prince. The epicenter was in Carrefour and the affected area is the Ouest Province. The quake was quickly followed by several strong aftershocks from 5.0 to 5.9 magnitude. At this time the most affected population seems to be in the areas of Port Au Prince, Carrefour and Jacmel.

An earlier tsunami warning -which concerned an immediate (approx. 100km) radius – issued short after the earthquake has now been lifted. Many buildings have collapsed and the scope of damage and casualties is yet unknown, but is expected to be considerable. At the time of the earthquake, many people were at work and therefore more vulnerable to collapsing office buildings. At this stage there is very limited access and limited communications with and within the country. The situation is further exacerbated due to the heavy rains of the past days. Damage and casualties in the capital appear to be widespread and considerable. Casualty numbers are increasing at medical facilities and many victims have been left in the open or are still trapped in the rubble. Traffic congestion and debris in streets are impeding general movement and rescue efforts. There is concern that panic will persist and public order will be threatened. Many Haitian institutional sites and Government buildings have suffered heavy damages or have been destroyed, including the national palace and police headquarters, in addition to buildings associated with the international community. A three level hospital has collapsed and the remaining hospitals are no longer admitting patients due to lack of capacity. Authorities and UNICEF also warned of looting and other crimes, in parallel to media reports that convicted criminals have escaped from a prison which also collapsed.

Many UN and international organizations buildings have been affected including UNICEF. MINUSTAH HQ building has collapsed and UNDP's building (hosting UNFPA, WFP, UNEP and UNIFEM) has suffered severe damage. The MINUSTAH Logistic Base (at the airport) is secure and has ample food and water. In the capital, the Haitian National Red Cross Society headquarters, which also hosts the IFRC offices, has also been damaged. As nearly all communication systems are down in the country, UN information gathering capacity is so far limited. Communications so far have been held via iridium- satellite phones.

<b><i>Urgent needs: Overall identified urgent needs so far include water and sanitation, nutrition, logistics and telecommunications, health, child protection and education.</i></b>
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### 2. UNICEF'S PLANNED EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) - US\$7,000,000**

#### **Issues**

Earthquakes often devastate water and sanitation facilities, cutting off access to safe water supplies and preventing proper hygiene practices. Faced with water shortages, people often resort to unsafe sources, placing their health at great risk. The lack of sanitation facilities means that hazardous waste is left out in the open where it can transmit disease. Water and sanitation-related diseases pose a particularly grave risk to children.

### **Urgent Actions**

- Provision of urgent technical assistance in Port au Prince and other affected locations.
- Coordination of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster to ensure that gaps are filled and duplications minimised.
- Coordination of WASH needs assessments across the affected areas, inter-sectoral analysis and prioritization of needs, WASH disease-related disease surveillance with the health sector.
- Assist the Government of Haiti and the International community to develop a strategy and priorities plan for the WASH response including a capacity development plan for local level operation and maintenance of water services.
- Distribution of water purification tablets and jerry cans.
- Provision of hygiene materials, including soap, buckets and educational materials containing hygiene messages.
- The establishment of a system for the delivery of hygiene promotion with an initial emphasis on the continuation of breastfeeding and effective hand washing.
- Establishment of communal latrines.
- Re-establishment of water and sanitation systems.
- Establishment of temporary water distribution systems as necessary.
- Establishment of an emergency water quality surveillance system to ensure that water provided is potable

In collaboration with partners and the authorities, UNICEF will assess the damage to water and sanitation infrastructure to determine what medium- and longer-term actions may be necessary. UNICEF will work to strengthen local partners and Government authorities' capacities to restore water and sanitation services. UNICEF will focus its response on the rural areas as well as densely populated and heavily affected urban and peri-urban areas as necessary. As cluster lead agency for WASH, UNICEF will be working with all WASH response organizations to identify needs, prioritize response locations to ensure that resources available are used to fulfil the biggest priorities improving coordination to reduce duplication of efforts.

### **Nutrition - US\$3,200,000**

#### **Issues**

Urgent nutrition coordination and supplies are needed to avert further loss of life and ensure children's right to receive adequate nutrition. In addition, it will be crucial to pay special attention to the needs of women and adolescent girls. UNICEF and its partners will work to strengthen local capacities to restore health and nutrition service delivery.

#### **Urgent Actions**

- Nutrition assessment and coordination of nutrition sector;
- Provision of high-protein biscuits;
- Provision of Multiple micronutrient powders and Vitamin A capsules;
- Provision of ready- to -Use therapeutic foods
- Support to therapeutic feeding centers
- Technical support for therapeutic interventions
- Nutrition Cluster coordination and support
- Initiate a gap analysis of local and national capacities and ensure integration of capacity strengthening in longer term plans and strategies.

### **Child Protection - US\$1,400,000**

#### **Issues**

Natural disasters exact a terrible toll on children's psychological health. Confused, they turn to parents who are themselves suffering from severe emotional distress. Faced with frightening memories and continuing aftershocks children exhibit signs of stress such as the fear of returning indoors or the inability to sleep. Psychosocial support for these children will be crucial to their long-term well-being.

Amid the chaos of natural disasters, children can become separated from their families. If this happens, they are at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse, especially where entire communities have been devastated. Although it is too early to say whether the earthquake has resulted in children becoming separated from their families, if this proves to be the case such children will need to be protected and cared for, and their families traced.

### **Urgent Actions**

- Establishment of 'child-friendly' spaces where children can feel safe, play, and receive psychosocial support;
- Engage with local capacities and partners to support child protection structures and mechanisms, and support service providers, law enforcement actors, women's rights groups and communities to prevent any violence, exploitation and abuse.
- Distribution of recreation kits including toys and games;
- Prevention of family separation and, if necessary, identification and support of unaccompanied and separated children, including family tracing mechanisms;
- Sensitisation of communities to the increased risk of exploitation and abuse.

## **Health US\$1,000,000**

### **Issues**

In the aftermath of the earthquake, many children will be at increased risk to various health threats including to communicable diseases. This is due to a lack of essential needs such as shelter, water and adequate nutrition and the relocation of the affected population into makeshift and overcrowded shelters increasing susceptibility to acute respiratory infections, water-borne diseases and the spread of deadly childhood diseases like measles. Given the extensive loss of infrastructure including the collapse of hospitals and health centres, the affected population do not currently have access to services for common illnesses and injuries sustained due to the earthquake. Moreover, as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has a sub-optimal health care infrastructure which has been further compromised by this major earthquake. As a consequence an urgent public health response is priority in order to avert further deaths among women and children.

### **Urgent Actions**

- Initial rapid assessment of health needs in partnership with the Health Cluster
- Distribution of life-saving and critical relief supplies such as blankets, plastic sheeting, cooking sets;
- Distribution of interagency emergency health kits;
- Measles immunisation and vitamin A supplementation of all children aged 6 months to 15 years.
- Support for the establishment of temporary health facilities, including outreach medical teams to address priority public health threats such as measles, diarrheal disease, respiratory infections and malaria.
- Monitoring of the coverage of key interventions among the beneficiary population.
- Behavior change communication messages targeted to avert outbreaks of communicable diseases and alert the population to priority preventative measures.

UNICEF and WHO have already provided technical and operational support for Government-fielded health teams dispatched to the affected areas, and will support the establishment of temporary health facilities. Working closely with the Ministry of Health and WHO, UNICEF will help assess the damage to health facilities to determine what longer-term actions may be necessary.

## **Education and Early Childhood Development US\$ 1,700,000**

### **Issues**

UNICEF's long experience in disasters has demonstrated that returning children to school as quickly as possible is one of the most valuable emergency interventions that can take place. Education is key to children's long-term opportunities, and must not be interrupted. In addition, schools provide children with a sense of normalcy, which is crucial to their psychological well-being.

Young children are particularly vulnerable in situations of crisis, instability and violence. They are vulnerable to their separation from primary caregivers, sexual and gender-based violence, physical harm and long-term negative emotional and psychological effects; factors that impede the overall development of children in such circumstances. The formative years from birth to age 6 (particularly in the 0-2 years age group) play a vital role in the formation of intelligence, personality and social behavior. In their early years, children encounter some of life's most significant learning experiences and they develop competencies that are the underpinning of all later learning. Good health and nutrition support the psychological and social development of the young child. Likewise, social interaction satisfies the child's need to grow socially, emotionally and cognitively has a measurable impact on its health, nutrition and later learning capacity. In line with their rights, all young children in emergencies must have access to a minimum level of quality services that promote and enable their continued overall development.

### **Urgent Actions**

- Education cluster coordination (joint with Save the Children) for immediate response
- Rapid needs assessment of the most affected areas including education capacities ensuring that education interventions are based on a robust assessment and analysis of disaster risk reduction.
- Initiate a gap analysis of local and national capacities on Education and ensure integration of capacity strengthening in longer term plans and strategies
- Procurement of schools-in-a-box/carton and ECD materials, including materials like chalk, workbooks, pencils, knapsacks;
- Provision of tents for temporary schools to ensure minimum interruption to children's classes
- Provision of tents for pre-schools next to the school tents
- Procurement of ECD kits

### **Supplies (non-food items) US\$700,000**

UNICEF will work with partners to plan distributions of Non-Food Items (NFIs), including essential household utensils and items, emergency shelter materials, blanket and clothes

### **Coordination, Logistics, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **Issues**

In any disaster, coordination and logistics form a critical component of the overall response. UNICEF has assumed sector leadership in water and sanitation, nutrition, and education, and is providing key support in health and child protection. Sector coordination groups, led by an agency acting as cluster leader, map out needs and identify the most appropriate response; ensuring efforts are complementary and preventing overlap or gaps in the overall response.

#### **Urgent Actions**

- Coordination, monitoring and support of nutrition, water and sanitation and education clusters;
- Facilitation of assessments in these sectors;
- Establishment of transit warehouses;
- Procurement and distribution of telecommunications and other operational equipment; and

UNICEF will continue collaborating closely with the UNDAC mission and the UNCT to keep abreast of needs and plan sector response.

**UNICEF Dominican Republic Country Office will initially be used as the emergency response hub. The United Nations Country team (UNCT) in Santo Domingo is already coordinating the initial response as the Humanitarian Country Team in Haiti is re-established.**

**The OCHA regional office** in Panamá organized an emergency meeting at 18:30 on 12 January attended by several agencies. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams are prepared to for deployment as well as OCHA Panama team of humanitarian officers that will help UN agencies in the coordination of the humanitarian response and in the production of

documents in support of funding mechanisms (CERF, Flash Appeals etc). UNICEF Panama has readily available for shipment to Haiti basic Emergency material such as Water Purification Tablets 10 Lt Water collapsible containers Trauma kits and refills, Tents, Education Kits, Recreation Kits, ECD Kits, BGAN kit, VSAT System. Two flights from the Red Cross and WFP will be dispatch from Panama to Dominican Republic with UNICEF supplies.

**Please note that costs associated with coordination and logistics are included in each sector.**

### **3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2010**

**In preparation for an inter-agency Flash Appeal to be launched on 15 January, UNICEF has identified initial needs for immediate action in support of children and women throughout the affected areas. These needs will be reflected in the Appeal and further refined as information becomes available.**

**Table 1: Estimated funding requirements from January to March 2010\***

<b>Sector</b>	<b>US\$</b>
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	7,000,000
Nutrition	3,200,000
Child Protection	1,400,000
Health	1,000,000
Education and Early Childhood Development	1,700,000
Supplies (Non – Food Items)	700,000
<b>Total**</b>	<b>15,000,000</b>

\* Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

\*\* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.