SITUATION OVERVIEW

- As of 15 April, there have been 52,000 people affected and more than 10,600 displaced by the flash floods in Honiara City and Guadalcanal Province. The floods have receded in almost all the affected areas and the humanitarian services are being delivered by both the Government and the development partners.

- The displacement of people resulting from the flash floods in Honiara City and the rest of Guadalcanal Province in Solomon Islands has posed significant challenge to the delivery of health and nutrition services.

- In Honiara City Council (HCC), there are 10,300 people in evacuation centres and 80% of them are expected to return home. This leaves about 20% (2,000 people) requiring longer term emergency shelter for at least two months due to destroyed homes and communities.

- The current priorities of the HCC are on reduction of the number of the evacuation centres and providing relief assistance at home. A survey for internally-displaced people and an assessment of the impact to infrastructure and economy were conducted to identify the needs and a package for voluntary repatriation is being made available.

- In Guadalcanal Province, there is an estimated 40,000 people affected to varying degrees. In addition to immediate food aid, the affected communities will require varying levels of assistance due to damaged gardens, destroyed and damaged homes, and the loss of household items and personal effects. The Government is planning an assistance package to most affected communities, including food and non-food items.

- Water quality is an ongoing issue as several water sources in Honiara and Guadalcanal have been contaminated or destroyed. Addressing this issue is an urgent need.
The people affected by the floods are at increased risk of acute malnutrition if there is lack of access to appropriate and adequate food, and reduced access to health and nutrition services.

The need for mental health and psycho-social support (MHSSS), including emergency mental health services at the evacuation centres and the flood affected communities, is increasingly becoming an issue.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (HEALTH)**

(Source: Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Solomon Islands)

- The Ministry of Health Emergency Operations Centre (MHEOC) continues to operate on a 24/7 basis. To further manage the emergency at a local level, a Health Command and Control Centre was also established at the Henderson Police Post to support the Guadalcanal Province operations and has assigned a senior health official to coordinate the Honiara City Council operations.

- In partnership with WHO, MMHS has also activated the health cluster and led the development of the health and nutrition component of the Solomon Islands Flash Flood Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP).

- The government is also strengthening the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) in Honiara and Guadalcanal for early detection of possible outbreak of diseases.

- An Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) tool for Health was finalized and teams were trained in using the tool. Assessments have been conducted and the data analysis is ongoing.

- A rapid nutritional survey done in two evacuation centres in east Honiara showed undernourished children. Micronutrient supplements, deworming and Vitamin A are given to children in the evacuation centers and a food basket recommendation is being put forward. Mothers are being trained how to administer micronutrient sprinklers.

- Health promotion activities are currently underway, especially on developing materials related to water and sanitation, personal hygiene and prevention of disease outbreaks.

- The mobile clinics are currently providing services to the evacuation centres in HCC while the normal services have resumed in non-affected health care facilities. There is also an increased focus on enhanced services and assessment in maternal and child health, surveillance and general outpatient services.

- As of 14 April 2014, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has encouraged those in evacuation centers to return to their homes, and concentrate on rebuilding their homes and livelihood.

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Mr Alby Lovi, Director of the Health Promotion Services of the Ministry of Health of Solomon Islands, leads the Health Communication Task Force for the flood response. His team works with development partners such as WHO, UNICEF, Red Cross and World Vision. Photo: WHO/S.Chapman
The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to work with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) in coordinating the delivery of health and nutrition services in response to this emergency.

As the health cluster lead of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), WHO also works with partners and stakeholders in identifying the immediate and long-term health needs and in ensuring that gaps are addressed.

WHO collaborates with MHMS in representing the health and nutrition sub-cluster of the National Disaster Operation Committee (NDOC)’s Welfare Cluster. It supported MHMS in the development of the Humanitarian Action Plan for Health and Nutrition.

WHO technical specialists have been working closely with the officials in various departments/divisions of the MHMS in responding to health sector needs including preventive, and curative services, public health, vector control, food safety and nutrition, water and sanitation, strengthening surveillance system, conducting risk assessments, and risk communication. It also supported the MHMS in developing the health facility assessments tools and in conducting the health facility assessments.

In response to the request of the MHMS, additional specialists have been deployed to Solomon Islands to provide support in the following areas:
- rapid post-disaster epidemic risk assessment
- health cluster disaster coordination
- water and sanitation
- strengthening early warning disease surveillance
- food safety and nutrition assessment and action
- emergency communications assessment and support

Some of the current priorities of WHO are on food safety and nutrition and in strengthening the surveillance system to effectively detect post-disaster risk and potential impact of an epidemic of a number of diseases. This is being done in close collaboration with MHMS.

WHO supports the Health Promotion Department of MHMS in coordinating the health communication working group.

WHO collaborates closely with development partners and the donor community in supporting the MHMS in both the initial response as well as health system recovery stages.

Dr Eric Nilles, WHO epidemiologist, explains to health workers the case definitions of various infectious diseases.
HEALTH PRIORITIES

(This section was not changed from the Situation Report on 16 April. The assessment result of health priorities described below remains valid to date.)

The floods in Solomon Islands disrupted the delivery of health services in clinics severely damaged in Honiara and Guadalcanal Province. Although the basic life-saving services have been dispensed, the health concerns are huge and complicated.

Based on the initial results of the health assessment, the principal health issues are:

- lack of food, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and related food and water-borne illnesses,
- problems associated with food availability and food safety,
- malnutrition, especially of infants and young children, leading to increased and more severe disease;
- respiratory infections associated with overcrowding, especially acute respiratory infections in children;
- mental health and psychosocial conditions;
- leptospirosis from exposure to rodent excreta or contaminated water;
- vector-borne diseases, especially malaria and dengue

Given the health issues, the immediate priorities are:

- the provision of safe and nutritious food, safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation, shelter, and other essential non-food items including fuel for cooking;
- provision of medicines and medical supplies;
- strengthening surveillance system for infectious diseases;
- prevention of vector-borne diseases;
- risk communication to the public.

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