

# Fiji Floods – January 2009

## WASH Cluster Response

Overview of disasters and Response:  
(2) Medium level involvement of international actors

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## Outline

- *Background*
- *Main cluster partners*
- *Early response*
- *Coordination*
- *Outcomes*
- *Lessons Learned*
- *Conclusion*

## Background

- *Extraordinary rainfall in 3 of Fiji's 4 Divisions (Northern, Western, Central)*
- *Records were set for rainfall intensity: (e.g. mm/10 min, mm/hr, mm/day)*
- *No cyclone, little wind or coastal damage*
- *Typical disaster for Fiji: January cyclones / floods occurred in Jan 07 & 08*

## Main 'WASH' Cluster Partners

- *UNICEF cluster 'lead agency'*
- *WHO*
- *EU*
- *Fiji Red Cross*
- *Private: (e.g. Fiji Water)*
- *MOH (Environmental Health & Health Promotion)*
- *Others Donors (AusAID and NZAID)*

## Early response:

*~First two weeks:*

- **Water containers** (5, 10 and 20 litre capacities)
- **Water purification tablets** (5 & 25 litre doses)
- **Water carting:** trucks / bladders (1500 litres)
- **Technical support to utilities and donors**

## Medium term response:

*Medium: (2 to 8 weeks)*

- ***Water purification tablets with illustrated instructions (Unicef, WHO, MoH, NDMO)***
- ***Temporary water tanks distribution / installation (Fiji Water, PWD)***
- ***Water testing***
  - *“H2S” bottles (presence / absence test for bacteria)*
  - *Community (hygiene & awareness) “Toolkits”*
- ***Monitoring of response (UNICEF)***

## Longer term response:

*Longer term: (2-8 months)*

- **Comprehensive rural water system construction & improvements**  
*(Unicef-EU DIPECHO; Euro ~250,000)*
- **MoH water quality laboratory supplies & equipment** *(WHO – NZAID; USD 10,000)*

## Coordination:

- **UN PHT meetings (updates on WASH)**
- **MOH meetings (portions on WASH)**
  - *Daily for 1<sup>st</sup> week (13-16 January 2009)*
  - *Mon, Wed & Fri during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week*
  - *Mon & Fri the 3<sup>rd</sup> week;*
  - *~weekly for following 3 weeks*
- **Telephone & email**
  - *among all partners*
  - *E-mail lists developed & evolved according to topic*

## Outcomes

- **Distribution of:**
  - *water containers*
  - *Bottled water (Fiji Water, other local mfrs)*
  - *Emergency holding tanks, bladders (few)*
  - *Water purification tablets (limited reach?)*
  - *Water testing (“H2S”) bottles, and*
  - *Community (hygiene & awareness) “Toolkits”*  
(by MoH: 80+ kits)

## Fiji Floods – January 2009 Health Cluster Response

Overview of disasters and Response:  
(2) Medium level involvement of international actors



## Background

- *MoH Fiji “PHEMAP” courses held in 2004, 2006, 2008*
- *MOH has good National Health Emergencies & Disaster Management Plan (HEADMaP) 2007-2011;*
- *Divisional Medical Officers (DMO’s) involved in planning & training*
- *Health facilities damage was severe in some places, but generally limited*

## Background (cont)

- *MOH National DISMAC activated 13 January:*
  - *Chaired by Deputy Secretary for Public Health*
  - *24 hrs operation initially*
  - *Situation reports & previous minutes received for each meeting*
- *Divisional MoH-DISMACs:*
  - *Northern, Central & Western*
  - *provided situation reports each morning for National DISMAC*

## Main 'WASH' Cluster Partners

### MOH-DISMAC

*(Overall coordinator of health response including; Divisional Medical Officers, Nursing, National Center for Health Promotion, Communicable Disease Surveillance, Environmental Health including vector control & food safety, Nutrition, etc)*

- **Served as the PHT 'Health Cluster' meeting**
  - WHO -cluster 'lead agency'
  - UNICEF – cluster lead for nutrition
  - AusAID – including FHSIP sector support project staff & resources
  - Fiji Red Cross – first responder
  - Others -

## Coordination:

- **UN PHT meetings** *(health reported at each PHT meeting)*
- **MOH DISMAC meetings** *(CWM Hospital)*
  - Daily for 1<sup>st</sup> week (13-16 January 2009)
  - Mon, Wed & Fri during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week
  - Mon & Fri the 3<sup>rd</sup> week;
  - ~weekly for following 3 weeks
- **Telephone & email**
  - among all partners
  - E-mail lists developed & evolved

## Early response:

*~First two weeks:*

DMO (Western) 12 January request to DISMAC  
(Western) included:

- Water storage containers
- Water purification tablets
- Oral rehydration salts
- Broad-spectrum antibiotics
- Most were available from Unicef stocks in Nadi

## Medium term response:

*Medium: (2 to 8 weeks)*

- **WHO provided test kits and disease surveillance forms & support including:**
  - Typhoid (S-Typhi), Leptospirosis, Dengue
  - Translation of information flyers (Fijian, Hindi)
  - Water testing kits, sanitation tool kits
  - UNICEF, Fiji Water - Tanks,

## Longer term response:

*Longer term: (2-8 months)*

- **WHO provided:**
  - *Test kits for Typhoid, Leptospirosis, Dengue*
  - *Water lab reagents*
  - *Epidemiologists and environmental health support*
- **UNICEF provided:**
  - *soap and longer terms items*
  - *Health IEC messages, nutrition*
  - *Technical support on health and nutrition*
- *Numerous other partners at field level*

## Outcomes

- *Distribution of medicines, ORS, kits; etc*
- *Nutrition support for ration packs(Unicef & MoH)*
- *Public health and awareness messages*
- *Useful field & community monitoring of response by Unicef*

## Outcomes

- *Distribution of advance quantities from in-country stock (e.g. Provision of typhoid, leptospirosis and dengue test kits)*
- *Logistical / transport issues with all distributions*
- *Nutrition support for ration packs (Unicef & MoH)*
- *Lack of disease statistics reporting*
- *Unclear distribution of stocks when routed through NDMO DISMAC (e.g. water purification tablets & flyers)*
- *Field & community monitoring of response by UNICEF*

## Lessons Learned:

- *Value of in-country stocks:*
  - *Fiji Red Cross – pre-positioned stocks & procedures*
  - *UNICEF - stockpiles in shipping containers; Nadi & Suva*
  - *WHO “PacELF” (Pacific Filariasis Elimination Program) - stocks of sprayers and vector control chemicals*

## Lessons Learned:

- *Difficult for MOH-DISMAC / Health Cluster to monitor NDMO-DISMAC distributions*  
*(e.g. water purification tablets, instruction flyers, ORS, etc which are health related)*
- *UNICEF-led survey revealed flood relief distributions coverage (often less than imagined)*

## Conclusions:

### WASH & Health Clusters:

- *PHT meetings + MOH DISMAC meetings were adequate for the **'Health Cluster'***
- *Were also adequate for the **'WASH Cluster'** technically supported through the Pacific 'WASH Coalition' (SOPAC or WHO facilitated)*
- *Further coordination via e-mail:*
  - *saved time, were effective: (e.g. WASH Cluster circulars: reached ~30 addressees in ~10 offices incl. PHT & Govt)*
  - *easily targeted to key players, cc'd to others for info;*
  - *linked to MOH & NDMO; and*
  - *process & actions were well documented;*

## Conclusions:

### WASH & Health Clusters:

- *Response monitoring (eg UNICEF survey) valuable*
- *Prepositioning or 'loans' of supplies essential for early support*
- *Early field visits by cluster are important*
- *PHT plus MoH DISMAC meetings were mostly adequate to coordinate WASH & Health clusters*

Thank you!