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OXFAM RESPONDS TO EMERGENCIES IN SAMOA AND EAST ASIA

Oxfam New Zealand is appealing to the New Zealand public to generously support Oxfam's emergency response work following the earthquake and tsunami in Samoa and the flooding from Typhoon Ketsana in East Asia.

Oxfam New Zealand is expecting to send emergency staff to Apia, Western Samoa, within 24 hours to assess the situation on the ground, and identify the most urgent needs for people displaced following the 8.3 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that hit Samoa at 6.48am (NZT).

"Once the urgent needs are assessed we are expecting to help coordinate the supply of clean water and sanitation for those affected by the disaster," says Oxfam's Executive Director Barry Coates.

"We have emergency supplies on hand for up to 10,000 people once the needs of the affected population are assessed. These include: buckets, tarpaulins, hygiene kits and mosquito nets.

Oxfam is with the Red Cross and UN agencies, and liaising with its Samoan partner organisation, Women in Business Development, in Apia, to prepare for an appropriate and co-ordinated response.

Coates adds: "This disaster is in our neighbourhood. Reports are still filtering in, but it is clear that a number of villages have been devastated. This is a crucial time to support our Samoan family."

EAST ASIA FLOODING

In the Philippines, flooding caused by Typhoon Ketsana has forced thousands of people from their homes in the capital Manila. Oxfam is on the ground aiming to provide clean water and sanitation to 10,000 of the worst affected families.

Two teams are conducting assessments outside Manila in Rizal and Bulacan whilst another team is seeing what Oxfam can do in Pasig City in Metro Manila.

"Right now, we're focusing on where needs are the greatest. My biggest worry is public health. If it's not addressed quickly, it could lead to another disaster," said Arif Jabbar Khan, Oxfam's Humanitarian Coordinator.

Typhoon Ketsana has strengthened and moved into central Vietnam, causing mudslides and further casualties and is now heading towards Cambodia and Laos. More extreme weather is expected to hit the Philippines again in the 2-3 days. Oxfam expects to expand its response to meet the escalating needs.

Oxfam is accepting donations for our rapid response emergency fund online at www.oxfam.org.nz, by phone 0800 400 666, or to make an automatic \$20 donation, please call 0900 600 20.

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