

**UNICEF (UN Children's Fund)
Media Release**

UNICEF supports water tankering for displaced Samoan families

Apia, 1 November 2009. – Almost 3,000 people, many of them children, are still relying on roadside delivery of water a month after a tsunami hit Samoa.

The UN Children's Fund is supporting the Samoan Water Authority (SWA) with two water tankers to provide essential supplies for families who don't have any other water source in the tsunami-devastated south and southeast of Samoa. The SWA is operating up to eight water tankers, supported by UNICEF and partner organisations, that run between 8am and midnight on a daily basis.

UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist, Madhav Pahari, says that after the tsunami on 29 September, many people who originally lived in coastal areas moved inland, often setting up temporary shelters on plantation lands that are on higher ground.

"The tsunami destroyed and damaged many people's houses by the coast, forcing them to relocate. A lot of families also feel that it's not safe to live beside the sea any more," says Mr Pahari.

"Although running water has since been restored to the tsunami-devastated areas, a lot of people have relocated to agricultural areas where there is no existing water source.

"Trucking in water for these displaced families is essential to meet their immediate humanitarian needs for drinking water, as well as water for cleaning, washing and sanitation.

"Delivery is along secondary dirt and gravel roads, near to where people are sheltering. Families, including young children, bring containers to the roadside where they are filled directly from the water tanker.

"Although this situation is far from ideal, families do appear to be receiving adequate quantities of water for their needs."

Mr Pahari says providing water using tankers is only ever a temporary measure until a more permanent source of water can be developed.

"UNICEF is working with the SWA to bring in a water engineer within the next week whose job will be to identify safe water sources for the displaced population and to provide options for a more sustainable water supply. We will then need to identify funding options with the Government and partner organisations. The area has a number of rivers and lakes, so it may be that tapping these sources using a gravity-fed piping system is a practical and cost effective option."

In the aftermath of the tsunami, UNICEF has provided 3,500 collapsible 10-litre water containers; 5,000 bars of soap; 2,000 oral rehydration salts (to treat the dehydration resulting from diarrhoea); and close to 10,000 of copies of key hygiene messages

including the importance of hand-washing before eating and after using the toilet, food safety and rubbish removal. In addition, supplies of 5,000 water purification tablets are available for deployment as required.

CocaCola NZ and Air NZ have partnered with UNICEF to fly in 2,000 bottles of drinking water for distribution to children at tsunami-affected schools.

More Details

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