

Lao PDR: Floods

Humanitarian Country Team Information Bulletin No.1

(as of 7 September 2018)



This bulletin covers the entire country, with significant focus on Attapeu province. It is produced by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Lao PDR in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

Summary

- Two tropical storms and sustained heavy rainfalls during July, August and September 2018 have affected 16 out of 17 provinces as well as the capital, including an estimated 90 districts, 1,800 villages and 107,000 households to date. Around 18,000 people have been evacuated from their villages, and 1,658 houses have collapsed. The most affected provinces are Attapeu, Khammouane, Savannakhet and Champasak.
- Agriculture and thus livelihoods have been severely affected. Over 101,000 hectares of paddy field have been damaged, 7,400 ha of crop area are flooded, and a large number of livestock has been lost, including 21,000 large animals and 54,000 poultry. Irrigation systems have been heavily damaged.
- An Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting took place on 31 August in Vientiane, highlighting the need to better coordinate between the Government and its humanitarian partners, between central and local level, and between sectors/clusters. As discussed at the Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting, the Government has requested for United Nations, World Bank and European Union to support a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment across Lao PDR, which is being consulted between the Government and key partners. The coordination of ongoing rapid assessments remains critical. While there is increasing information on Attapeu province, the Government is lacking information on the priority needs in other provinces.
- The Humanitarian Country Team has launched a Disaster Response Plan requesting US\$ 5.6 million to provide life-saving assistance and recovery services to the 13,100 affected people in Sanamxay District. The requirements are expected to increase as the plan is expanded to cover the entire country. To date, US\$ 2.2 million have been pledged towards the plan. An application to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is expected to be made should the Government request support to the emergency response across the country. A Cash Transfer Working Group has been activated and is now looking at the standardization of cash for work programmes and cash transfer activities.



49 reported deaths



97 people missing



4,067 evacuated households



268,400 people affected

Situation Overview

Across the country, seasonal rains continue and are affecting the living conditions of people. More than 10,000 km of roads, including 14 provincial highways and 15 bridges, have been damaged. In addition, 107 schools have been damaged, and 14 are currently being used as emergency shelters. Ministry of Education and Sports is working closely with international partners to ensure education continuity for all the children living in the flood-affected areas. 13 health centers have been damaged.

In Attapeu, rain continues to pose challenges to relief and recovery operations, as well as transportation infrastructure and access. Some of the camps are currently overcrowded, with privacy limitations. People have therefore started setting up tents around the camps and along roads, exposing them to additional mud and rain, hindering heavy vehicles from passing through and obstructing the construction of key infrastructure. According to the Government, as of 4 September, 200 tents are required in addition to the 850 tents already set up. Proper site planning and camp management, including of the four temporary shelters currently being constructed or in planning, thus continues to be a high priority.

Disease outbreaks continue to pose a real risk and measures are being taken in this regard, including provision of clean water and sanitation, cholera vaccinations and awareness raising on handwashing with soap. Two ad-hoc working groups on cholera and diarrhea are being coordinated by Ministry of Health.

Three emergency shelters in Attapeu – Pindong, Tamayod and Ban Bok – are still hard to reach due to the conditions of the roads, however it is reported that all three camps are currently accessible by 4x4 vehicle. If the rain resumes it is expected the villages will again be cut off. The situation in the remote camps remains particularly challenging. Access to water, sanitation services and electricity for instance is limited.

The international community, including the United Nations, the Red Cross, INGOs and Non-Profit Association partners continue to support the Government's ongoing relief efforts. Relief items provided to date include tents, mosquito nets, light bulbs, kitchen utensils, water filters, water pumps, water purification tablets, buckets, boats, family hygiene kits, blankets, female hygiene kits, tool kits, rice and other dried foods, canned fish, noodles, drinking water, safe delivery kits as well as screening for malnutrition and emergency first aid and other health services. There are currently four child friendly spaces operating, which are being considered as locations for interim schooling.

Current response priorities continue to be the provision of food and cooking utensils; clean drinking water; housing kits, family kits and hygiene kits; health support; shelter; and the rehabilitation of infrastructure, including roads and bridges. The needs are particularly high in Attapeu, especially in the camps outside Sanamxay City. Storekeeping and distribution remain challenges. There are concerns that the host communities will require support in addition to those displaced, as many families who still live in their own houses have however lost their livelihoods and would be in equal need of assistance. There are no pressing food security concerns for now, but it remains important to constantly monitor the situation of the affected population.

Humanitarian Response



Food Security & Nutrition

Across Lao PDR

- Across Lao PDR, more than 101,000 hectares of paddy field and 7,400 hectares of crop area are flooded.
- The total number of affected animals includes 21,000 large animals (buffalo, cow, goat, pig) and over 54,000 poultry.
- The nutrition situation in other provinces affected by flooding beyond Attapeu is unknown.

Priorities for nutrition response

- Support local health authorities to monitor the nutrition situation.
- Provide support for integrated health outreach services.

In Attapeu

- Since the disaster, the Government has made available some 300 MT of rice (including from donations) for distribution among the affected population. Detailed distribution data is only available with camp leaders, not at central level. The quantity is enough to cover the needs of the affected people – including displaced and not displaced - for approximately two months. Observations in the accessible camps indicate sufficient food for now. Due to access issues, this cannot yet be fully confirmed for the more remote camps and the affected not-displaced population.
- Preparations are being made to provide meals in some of the Child-Friendly Spaces in lieu of the school feeding meals the students used to receive.
- Nutributter is made available through the district health office and has been distributed for children aged 6 to 59 months.
- As of 5 September, a total of 1,124 children have been screened using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) in Attapeu Province and from this, 35 cases of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and 12 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) have been detected. A wider MUAC survey is planned.

- Ready to use therapeutic food is being used to treat children with severe acute malnutrition without medical complications.
- Support is being provided to District and Provincial Health authorities and health care workers to promote breastfeeding of infants and young children 0-23 months.
- Information, education and communication materials of Infant and Young Child Feeding have been provided to the Sanamxay district Hospital.
- Draft statement on not accepting donations of milk substitutes is awaiting final approval from Ministry of Health before being disseminated.

Priorities for nutrition response specific to Attapeu

- Regular follow-up by health care staff of children previously identified with Moderate Acute Malnutrition or Severe Acute Malnutrition.
- Ongoing Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screening every two weeks in all camps.
- Training on in-patient management of severe acute malnutrition for hospital staff in all five districts of Attapeu.



Health

In Attapeu

- Cholera vaccination campaign has been completed for the first round of doses (12,350 doses) to the affected population. Planning for the second round is underway and will begin mid-September. WASH and health promotion activities have been integrated into this campaign to increase awareness of diarrheal diseases and the importance of hand hygiene.
- Rapid response teams investigated clusters of influenza-like illness (51 cases reported as of 5 September) in the affected population. Samples were collected and some were positive for influenza (H1N1). Influenza vaccine is being administered to prevent an outbreak.
- Malnutrition screening is ongoing in Attapeu province where the provincial Health Department is reporting 1,440 patients screened, with 53 cases of Moderate Acute Malnutrition and 9 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition. Nutributter has been distributed for children aged 6 months to 59 months. Capacity development for medical treatment of severe acute malnutrition with complications is ongoing.
- Potential sources of typhoid vaccine are being investigated through development partners.
- Maternal and child health services are being provided in eight camps including, antenatal and postnatal care, delivery (through referral) and family planning. Dignity kits have been distributed to all women aged 15-49 years and distribution of Clean Delivery Kits is ongoing.
- Vector control spraying is ongoing in all camps. A total of 2,000 bed nets have been distributed with additional supplies of 3,500 bed nets to be distributed to fill remaining gaps.
- Detailed mapping of pregnant women and deliveries has been completed. District Health Office in Sanamxay continues to monitor the pregnant women at affected areas, including identifying pregnant women at the last stage of pregnancy to ensure that the services are available. From 20 August to 5 September 2018, 6 safe deliveries reported by District Health Office and 4 of them assisted by the doctors in hospital.
- A Training on the Minimum Initial Service Package for reproductive health in emergency the health providers including midwives is foreseen as part of capacity building to support the ongoing emergency response and to prepare for better response to future disasters.
- The Ministry of Health will finalize the joint flood response plan this week. This will then be shared with all partners to identify where gaps exist, and potential sources of funding and capacity can be mobilized.



Logistics

Across Lao PDR

Needs

- Continued information on access is important so that updates can be shared with partners. Organizations are encouraged to share information with the cluster, so they can update members.

Response

- Additional storage support will be provided to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Vientiane. This will include reorganizing relief cargo donated to the Government and stored at its Vientiane warehouse, as well as to putting in place basic warehouse stock keeping records.

Gaps

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has notified the cluster that they are facing difficulties in organizing and storing the large quantities of relief items which have been donated around the country, but especially in Attapeu. While assistance has been provided, the need has exceeded the current capacity of the Cluster to respond. Thus, a plan is under development for helping put in place a warehouse management system in addition to assisting in organizing cargo that has already arrived and stored in different parts of the country.
- Road access to certain areas of the country has been affected due to flooding. For example, the road connecting Luang Prabang and Oudomxay has been temporarily cut due to high water levels. Other temporary road closures around the country have been experienced during the last few weeks and are expected to continue into the near future.



Shelter including Camp Management

In Attapeu

Needs

- The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and partners have covered the shelter distributions in most of the evacuation centers, except limited information regarding Xaidonkhong. The majority are now residing either in the solid buildings or the tents around the camps/by the roadside; however, the residents on the roadside suffer from the rain water coming into their tents due to the continued heavy rain.
- Kitchen utensils and sleeping sets are major needs in camps according to the head of primary school and kindergarten in Mitsamphanh.
- Tamayod and Pindong camps are in need of clean water to use and drink, food and other non-food items (sleeping set, clothes, dignity kits, kitchen utensils)

Response

- As informed by the Sanamxay District Governor, authorities are speeding up efforts to relocate flood victims from tents into transitional shelters in Hadyao village. To this end, 14 communal houses (with steel structures) are being built, with rooms of 12 square meters each.
- Department of Housing and Urban Planning is working in the preparation of a second task force, led by the Public Works and Transport Research Institute, to undertake the shelter assessment.
- Camp management and hygiene condition of the evacuation centers in Sanamxay continued to improve by the District Committee and the Camp Coordinators, though the quality of the camp registration remains uneven.
- The third round of Displacement Tracking Matrix is being planned in mid-September in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

Gaps

- Distribution of shelter related supplies and non-food items remains a challenge.
- The Government is working on a Master Plan to ensure the smooth and safe relocation of affected people. There is no clarity about the time its development will take or the way it will be implemented.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In Attapeu

Needs

- Additional 128 latrines are needed to meet Sphere standard (20 users/toilet).
- Additional 5 water points are needed.
- Waste (Liquid and Solid) management needs to be improved.
- Mobilization of Hygiene Volunteers, Health Workers and communities in remote camps is required for hygiene promotion and health care.

Response

- 155 toilets have been set up in the camps.
- Installation of 6 Pour Flush toilets as per Provincial Nam Saat request completed, another 6 toilets construction ongoing expected to be completed by 10 September.
- 5 Boreholes drilled in Tamayod and 4 boreholes in Pingdong camps.
- 8 latrines and 4 bath cubicles constructed in Pingdong.
- 5 new mobile latrines installed. Installation of 15 mobile latrines are planned.
- 6 more latrines installed in Ban Bok Camp as 46 families (194 people from Oudomxay /Sanamxay camps) moved in to this camp.
- 200,000 Chlorine tablets provided (one tab equivalent to disinfect 5 lit of clear water).
- The Nam Saat at provincial and central level has been collecting water samples and testing essential 5-6 parameters in accordance to the WHO water quality guideline in emergency. Water samples for testing and validating arsenic concentration were collected from all boreholes in all camps. While waiting the lab results, rapid test for arsenic by "arsenator" is being used in the field.
- Low level arsenic was detected in two boreholes and recommendations were given to the contractors to drill a borehole for further consideration.
- Samples for e-coli have been regularly collected from all water sources, tanks, treated/filtered water at point of uses. E-coli result (59 per 100mg) for one borehole in Tamayod camp did not comply with the national and international standard, and it was recommended to follow SOP for cleaning and disinfecting the borehole.
- Other parameters such as residual chlorine, turbidity and pH for operational monitoring were compliant with the drinking water quality standard in all water sources, storage, delivery and users points. However, the rapid test for those operational monitoring indicators will continue as results can change.
- All health posts have been provided with on-site training on medical waste management. Basic supply (black and yellow bins, plastic bags, personal protective equipment for waste handlers) for general and infectious waste separation, storage and disposal procured and provided to all health posts. Sharp waste management equipment (safety box and needle cutters) was provided to all health posts.
- Support provided for the construction of an incinerator for medical waste disposal at the health facility for temporary.

Gaps

- Access by road to Pindong and Tamayod camps remains challenging.
- Water quality monitoring and surveillance. E-coli test should be done again after disinfecting the borehole that was not compliant with the standard. Arsenic should be tested during the construction of boreholes, as advised.
- Hygiene Promotion, specifically hand hygiene (hand-washing with soap and clean water).



Education

In Attapeu

Needs

- A total of 29 schools including 57 buildings and 172 classrooms affected with about 4,500 students (more than 3,300 in 24 primary schools and about 1,200 in 5 secondary schools). 7 of these schools are seriously damaged, including 2 schools totally destroyed. Many schools remain being used as emergency shelters. About 26,900 textbooks and teacher guides, and 1,300 sets of desks and chairs in those schools damaged.
- Government has announced “Back to School” as a top priority as the new school year starts in September, aiming to ensure all children, including disaster-affected children and those in host communities, will get registered and attend school by end of September.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has initial plans for “Back to School”, including some cases needing setting up temporary learning spaces. More concrete plans to be defined as the planned detailed needs assessment and consultations by MoES with development partners’ support take place in the coming week.
- In other provinces, specific needs are yet to be identified.

Response

- Further detailed assessment is under preparation, and MoES-development partners joint team is being deployed in the coming week to support “Back to School”.
- In linkage with the child protection response for Child Friendly Space (CFS), and in coordination with the Government, support for Early Childhood Development / Early Childhood Education is currently being provided in 4 accessible camps, alongside psychosocial support. Teams deployed on the ground continue to use interventions in CFS as a platform to ensure that children get prepared for getting back to school.
- Discussions are continuing with MoES and local authorities for “Back to School”.
- A Situation and needs assessment is under preparation for Savannakhet, Khammoun, Sayaboury, Luang Prabang, Bokeo and Oudumxay provinces, and MoES-development partners joint team is being deployed in the coming week to support “Back to School”.

Gaps

- Detailed assessment covering all the affected schools and children, including those in inaccessible camps.
- Concrete action plans, including specific needs for development partners’ support identified, for the full school registration of affected children and their continuous school attendance, and the operationalization of schools as soon as possible.
- In other provinces: Situation and needs assessment covering all the affected schools and children is needed in order to plan for concrete actions for the full school registration of affected children and their continuous school attendance, and the operationalization of schools as soon as possible.



Protection

- Supported the Ministry of Education and Sports in leading the operation of Child Friendly Spaces in four accessible camps in Attapeu in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Lao Women’s Union. During the period of 18-31 August, Child Friendly Spaces reached the total number of 628 children (291 girls) in 5 camps. Out of this number, 236 children (including 90 girls) are aged 3-5; 208 children (including 121 girls) are aged 6-11 and 184 children (including 80 girls) are aged 12 up. As of 4 September, two Child Friendly Spaces have temporarily stopped services due to relocation of displaced people in the camp. They may resume services in new locations depending on the needs.
- High level visits to Child Friendly Spaces conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sport at Mitsamphanh primary school in Attapeu on 3 September.

- Two Women Friendly Spaces will be established in the temporary shelters in collaboration with Lao Women's Union, and a joint visit to Sanamxay district will be conducted on 13-15 September to identify the sites for Women Friendly Spaces and for working with the partners in affected areas.
- The protection cluster has continued providing technical support to conduct a needs assessment in the affected areas which will start on 10 September and take 2 weeks.
- Training on Gender-Based Violence prevention and response in emergency is planned for the protection cluster members and for partners as part for the capacity building in responding to disaster and for better response to future disaster.

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