

Nepal Floods: Humanitarian & Recovery Update

Office of the Resident Coordinator, update #3

Update produced: 20th December 2017



This update is produced by Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRCO). The aim of the update is to provide the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and development partners with a qualitative overview of the humanitarian and recovery context in provinces 2 and 5. This update draws on information gathered by the UNRCO's Field Liaison Officers based in Banke, Rautahat, Mahottari, Saptari and Morang.

Situation Overview

- Overall, flood relief and recovery activities, including supply distribution and the NPR 70 rupees package, were affected by the recent election period. This was largely because government officials were not able to provide time to conduct these activities and organizations slowed down or put distribution on hold during the period.
- Household level assessment data remains unverified in Dhanusa, some four months post-flood. As a result, the NPR 70 rupees package has not been distributed in this district to date.
- In Morang, a sample of children in Jahada Rural Municipality revealed that 13% of children had severe acute malnutrition and 18% of the children suffer from moderate acute malnutrition.
- In Rautahat, UNRCO staff report that 20,000 children, predominantly from Muslim and Dalit communities, lack footwear and proper clothing, and are obliged to attend school without shoes.

1. Banke and Bardiya

Humanitarian and recovery update:

The Government's post-flood support package of NPR 70 rupees per day for 30 days continues to be allocated across both districts. For example, in Narainapur Rural Municipality (ward numbers 2,3,4,5 and 6) cash distributions are ongoing (distributions have been completed in ward number 1). In other locations, Barbadiya Municipality for example, the authorities have not yet finalized plans for commencing the allocation of its assistance package. Delays in the provision of support may lead to the uptake of negative and destructive coping mechanisms (sale of assets, reduction of food intake etc.) amongst flood affected households.

Winterization support, particularly in the temporary settlement in Tikalapur, Rapti Sonali Gaupalika (across the Rapti river), continues to be a major concern. Some NGOs will only be distributing supplies during emergency situations/periods, while other NGOs will begin distribution in flood affected areas beginning 21 December. At the Shelter Cluster meeting held on 28 November, participants determined how they would manage clothes and blankets distribution in the flood affected areas, and requested assistance with coordination and cold wave preparedness from the local government. The Shelter Cluster, local government and Health Cluster have all decided to conduct awareness programmes on FM radio for cold wave preparedness. At the Health Cluster's 10 December meeting, they also decided to conduct free health camps and coordinate warm clothes for pregnant women and children.

There are pockets of displacement across both districts – partly related to the monsoon floods in 2017 and also as a consequence of flooding in previous years. Needs amongst displaced, landless persons are concerning. For example, 650 landless households in Gaulariya Municipality (2 Sangam Basti) are currently residing in a community forest and lack access to safe drinking water and health facilities. Elsewhere in the same municipality more than 400 households, including some families whose houses were totally destroyed by the 2017 floods, are facing pressing humanitarian conditions including limited water and sanitation services. Concerns were raised regarding the need to shift schools in Bardiya away from the Karnali river banks that are likely to flood next monsoon.

Generally speaking, the election code of conduct did not majorly impinge on the ability of NGOs to provide recovery support in both districts. However, preparations for the recent elections meant Government officials were not able to commit time to engage on flood-related activities.

2. Rautahat

Humanitarian and recovery update:

In Rautahat, throughout November the stringent implementation of the election code of conduct caused delays in the implementation of flood relief and recovery activities. For example, NGOs were limited to only undertaking assessments to identify sites where projects could be implemented. NGOs were not able to commence works to repair and rehabilitate roads, buildings, fish ponds and irrigation networks. Such blockages are having a deleterious impact on recovery. Some limited distributions of food supplies targeting pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were carried out at Katakariya health post and in Dewahi Gonahi Municipality.

Some actors are working to minimize their presence during the election period and are using banks to distribute cash to programme beneficiaries. Generally speaking, even humanitarian-type activities were impeded throughout November.

UNRCO staff based in Rautahat have discerned particular operating constraints in the south of the district notably in Auriya, Rajpur, Paroha, Badharwa, Rajdevi, Sabgadha and Jethariya. In these communities, flood response activities managed by NGOs have slowed majorly and in some instances, have been put on hold until after December 7th.

UNRCO staff in the district report a commitment on behalf of new administrative structures and newly appointed Government officials to support flood response activities. However, Government officials are said to be stretched due to the recent election and owing to teething problems as newly appointed officials become accustomed to their roles. Reportedly, funding distribution has been put on hold because of high demand and the elections.

Winterization remains a concern. Reportedly, 20,000 children predominantly from Muslim and Dalit communities Katakariya, Yamunamai, Gujara, Rajpur, Paroha, Dewahi Gonahi, Durgabhadrawati, Ishnathpalika lack footwear and proper clothes, and are compelled to go to school without shoes.

On 18th November, an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated and injured eight people in Chapur Municipality. The security forces successfully deactivated two IEDs in Gujara and Chapur municipalities on 20th and 27th November respectively.

3. Dhanusa

Humanitarian and recovery update:

Nearly four months after the onset of the floods in the Terai, district authorities in Dhanusa have not yet verified household level assessment data meaning flood affected households have not received the Government's NPR70 rupees per day package. As with other districts, delays in the provision of support may lead to the uptake of negative and destructive coping mechanisms amongst flood affected households.

Recovery activities slowed in November due to the implementation of the election code of conduct and as Government officials prioritized engagement on election planning. Psychosocial and water, sanitation and hygiene activities were notably impacted. Looking ahead, district officials have committed to upping their engagement on recovery activities following the December election.

In January, distribution of recovery supplies will begin. This will include corrugated iron sheets, blankets, cooking utensils, mosquito nets, and buckets, among other items. In addition, now that the election is over wheat seed distribution will begin.

In support of winter preparedness, a Protection Cluster meeting took place on 1st December. A collective decision was made to gather relief and support materials at the District Women and Children Development Office (WCDO). These supplies will include a limited stock of blankets, hygiene kits, dignity kits and other items and will be provided to vulnerable persons. The WCDO requested that other humanitarian and development actors procure additional supplies to prepare for winterization in case larger supplies are required. The Protection Cluster requested the UNRCO's support for coordination in acquiring, storing and ensuring the availability of winterization support materials.

Two IED explosions occurred on 25th and 27th November in Barhabiga with no reports of casualties.

4. Saptari

Humanitarian and recovery update:

Throughout November, in the run up to the recent election, restrictions on recovery activities were imposed by local Government officials. Despite such impediments, which were put in place due to concerns over the election code of conduct, *some* activities were undertaken by relief organizations albeit at a slower pace than might be normally expected. For example, vegetable seed distributions, blanket supplementary feeding and infrastructure repair works continued throughout November but were stopped at the beginning of December. The recovery programmes have begun to pick up now that the election has finished.

Immediately after the election, organizations are focusing on the relief operation. For example, some organizations have started quick response card distribution as part of the emergency cash support programme and the blanket supplementary feeding from 9th December. 2168 households out of 6328 households have received the card as of 13 December. Similarly, the *cash-for-work* interventions under CERF funding are accelerated through the mobilization of community user committees where about 1300 flood affected individuals are benefitted from the local employment generation through the cash-for-work interventions as of 14th December.

In Sakarpura, Launiya, Rampura, Malhaniya, Trikol, Gobargadha, Madhwapur and Tikuliya 3,000 flood affected households benefitted from the supply of vegetable seeds. Distributions were facilitated by local officials who recognized that delays could have serious implications for medium-term household food security.

15 irrigation schemes out of 93, including the pump canal, distribution canal and Chandra Nahar, are in need of immediate construction. If these are not rehabilitated, it will adversely affect the paddy production in Saptari next year. While 6 irrigation schemes were completed in the immediate flood aftermath to irrigate the paddy and will be used for the wheat production this year, it is not reliable for next year's production as paddy production needs more water than the wheat.

The election code of conduct did not affect the Open Defecation Fee (ODF) campaign to support the national target of achieving the ODF status by December 2017.

The District Food Security Network meeting on 30th November classified two rural municipalities and one municipality as highly food insecure (IPC phase 3). These include Tirhut Rural Municipality (Trikol, Mainakaderi, Lohjara, Diman, and Goithi), Tilathi Koiladi Rural Municipality (Tilathi, Launiya, Sakapurna, Koiladi, Ko-Barsain, and Ko-Madhepura), and Hanumannagar Kankalini Municipality (Portaha, Madhwapur, ward number 5, and Rampurna Malhaniya).

5. Morang

Humanitarian and recovery update:

A sample of 400 children under the age of 5 from Jahada Rural Municipality was completed which revealed that 13% of those surveyed had severe acute malnutrition – ten times higher than the national average and indicative of major humanitarian stress. The same study found that another 18% of the children suffered from moderate acute malnutrition. More recently on 27th November, a total of 321 moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 78 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases were determined during an assessment of 354 children. Floods in August have contributed to the alarming nutrition context but pre-crisis poverty is also a driver of undernutrition in Morang as it elsewhere.

No spikes in diseases were identified during November in Morang, UNRCO staff report. An integrated health campaign, with both a preventative and curative approach, was carried out targeting flood affected communities.

All schools, including partially and fully damaged, were opened after Chhath festival. The District Education Office has decided to provide scholarships to flood affected Dalit students. Some 11,500 textbooks will be distributed in Morang, while the repair of school toilets and buildings are also being planned.

Orientations on gender based violence (GBV) and child protection are being conducted in five districts (Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha and Jhapa). Interactive meetings on child protection issues are being held with the

relevant organizations, new rural municipalities, police authorities, local stakeholders and beneficiaries. The district's five 'child friendly spaces' will close by the end of December as originally planned given the demand for such services has reduced markedly.

60 children from affected communities in Biratnagar Metropolis, Katakari, Dhanpalthan and Jahada rural municipality have benefitted from monetary relief, with each child receiving NRP 5,000 in mid-December.

Most Government staff, during November, were involved in preparations for the 7th December election. This impacted on work to validate data and information about flood damage. The UNRCO assesses that this adversely affected the pace of recovery over the last months. Cluster Specific Detailed Assessments have recently been initiated in Morang nearly 4 months after MoHA formally triggered the process.

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