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SITUATION

Solomon Islands: NDMO Sitrep no. 17 - 19 Apr 2007

1. An earthquake measuring 8.1 struck 345km northwest of the Solomon Islands' capital Honiara at 0740 local time on 2 April 2007. (2040 GMT 1 April). The earthquake created a tsunami causing significant damage in the Solomon Islands.
2. The NDC reports that the affected area includes Gizo, Simbo, Ranogga, Shortlands, Munda, Noro, Vella la Vella, Kolombangarra and parts of the southern coast of Choiseul. Aerial surveillance shows that the worst-affected areas are the southern coast of Gizo, Simbo Island and the central southern coast of Choiseul between Moli and Posarae and Sasamungga.
3. 52 people have been confirmed dead in the April 2nd tsunami.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

4. Monday 23rd has been declared a National Mourning Day. A combined service will be held at the United Church starting at 0800am. The government has also declared the day a Public Holiday.
5. The Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands Tim George has praised Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare for visiting the earthquake and tsunami-stricken areas. Mr George is accompanying the government and made the praise when they stopped-over in Taro and Sasamunga, Choiseul Province yesterday. The Members of Parliament for Simbo/Ranongga, North Vella la Vella, and the Shortland Islands, Francis Billy Hilly, Milner Tozaka and Augustine Taneko also praised the Prime Minister's visit to the disaster-hit areas. They were present in villages in their respective constituencies visited by the Prime Minister and his delegation.
6. An NDMO officer is continuing to operate the airport reception centre to receive, register and guide incoming relief teams.
7. The Church Of Melanesia's Disaster committee has met is putting together a report to send to their donor partners. More information on the report will be in a future sitrep.
8. A tribal group of north Malaita has formed an Association to organize a fundraising drive to help affected communities in Western and Choiseul Provinces. They are called Manafiu Tribal Association and their fundraising will be held in Honiara and north Malaita as soon as they are well organized.

REGIONAL RESPONSE:

9. The Ministry of Health says asbestos clearing at the Gizo hospital and staff houses there is almost complete. The Ministry has raised concern that people are removing stuff (asbestos walling) from the site which is hazardous to their lungs. Part of the measles campaign team traveled to Munda today. The rest will travel tomorrow and the campaign will start soon. Reports of measles outbreak at Choiseul are incorrect. There is no evidence of any out break at this stage. The public must not mistake measles campaign from measles outbreak..
10. Director Health Services Western Province, Dr. Gregory Jilini has said that Gizo Hospital had suffered considerable damages but with the restoration of its water supply, sewerage system and general clean up of its compound, they were able to reopen just one ward.

11. The National Disaster Council (NDC) has, as of Friday last week, taken over full control of the distribution and monitoring of food relief supplies to affected areas in Western and Choiseul provinces. Initially the Red Cross had shouldered this enormous task. Since NDC took over more than 2,000 bags of 20kg rice have been dispatched to the stricken areas and over 1,000 bags to the camps sprawled along the ridges behind Gizo town.

12. The establishment of the Emergency Operations Centre in Gizo and the consolidation of its available manpower that is largely made up of public officers deployed from Honiara supplies have covered over two thirds of the devastated areas.

IN-COUNTRY ASSISTANCE

13. Vehicles supplied by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services for Malaria control program and Primary Health Care programs arrived at Gizo early this week. Helena Goldie Hospital will also receive a hilux for Primary Health Care outreaches.

14. A Health Environment officer left for Shortlands today while a water engineer will be deployed to Taro this week..

15. The next lot of doctors from the National Referral Hospital: 1 anaesthetist and 1 surgeon left for Helena Goldie Hospital today to relieve 2 other doctors who have been there for 2 weeks.

16. A Rhema (Honiara) church team will deliver knives and kerosene lamps (quantity not indicated) on Sunday 22nd April. The team also has 4 people among whom are some counselors.

17. A Nukumaiki Development Association of Renbel has donated \$200 cash towards relief.

18. UNICEF: tents expected to arrive soon. Their arrival time will be confirmed later. Larger tents can be sourced upon request. Tarpaulins had already arrived by boat and distributed through Save the Children Australia and Provincial Education office for schools.

19. Oxfam: More tarpaulins are expected to arrive soon. 300 tents are on order.

20. Oxfam is working with the Ministry of Health to build transitional shelters. Long term shelter ideas will require the participation and inputs from communities. Issues: land – where people will relocate to; how to build back earthquake resistant houses.

21. Red Cross: family tents will arrive in Gizo within the next couple of days. 500 NFI kits are on their way – expected to arrive on 27th April.

22. Red Cross is continuing to distribute tarps NIF packages to 1,5000 families. It has already distributed 1000 of these in Gizo as from the 18th April. Their target areas are Vella La Vella, Kolombangara and South Choiseul. It is focusing on health, water and sanitation as well as shelter.

Gizo Operations Centre

23. Logistic support has strengthened and delivery of food relief and non food items is going well. Medical and other stakeholder personnel have also arrived. Two vehicles for NDC and PDC have also arrived along with two printers and photocopying machines.

24. MV Baruku has completed its work and is returning to Honiara.

25. Isabel II has made a trip to Simbo with bulky relief stuff dispatched from Honiara.

IN-COUNTRY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

22. The IFRC is going to set up office again in Honiara.

23. The Kiribati government has donated SBD314,020.35 for the relief immediate relief phase to affected communities. This money has already come in earlier but the information has just reached the NDC data base.

24. The Republic of China (Taiwan) is donating further relief supplies of rice and cartons of food (quantity not

indicated) to the Solomon Islands Red Cross for further distribution to affected communities. The assistance is coming on a ROC Taiwan Navy Squadron's goodwill visit to Solomon Islands from 20-23rd April.

25. The USS Stockholm Task Group 710.10 support activities in affected areas has used its helo detachment to air lift for ANZAC, Australia and NZL security, engineers, geologists and NGOs. The helo detachment transferred 2000lbs of food and water, 300lbs of support equipment and Mosquito nets. The medical detachment has continued to distribute more than 400 mosquito nets in various locations in the hills of Ghizo.

26. Scan Eagle, an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, also conducted coastal surveys around Simbo and Ronongga Islands. The imagery it has collected will be made available to the National Disaster Council and the Provincial Disaster Council. The LNO remains ashore to continue to coordinate the Task Group 710.10 efforts. The USS Stockholm has arrived in the country last week and is based at Munda to support in transporting relief supplies by two helicopters.

27. A C130 Royal Australian Air Force Hercules is expected in Munda today from Townsville with more relief supplies. There is no indication of what supplies they are.

28. Two members of the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) will leave Honiara tomorrow to for Sasamunga via Munda and set up the clinic in Sasamungga. They will continue the service provided by the Royal Australian Air Force in the area previously and would also like to work with the community in every possible way to help in other services than just medical. The AMDA doctors will be working in collaboration with the local nurses already deployed in the area. The two doctors would be based in Sasamungga as from tomorrow until early May.

29. The US Military has indicated three of its officers will arrive in the country tomorrow to go to affected areas to assess the situation after which a full team may be deployed later this year to further assist, depending on the outcome of the assessments by the three officers.

30. Murray Frew of Feed the Hungry has returned from Gizo on 18th April after delivering locally purchased goods (mainly food, cooking and kitchen utensils and kerosene lamps worth \$25,000) to Gizo (flown to Munda then by boat to Gizo). The Goods have been delivered to the Gizo Operations Centre to transport to the Titiana villagers today.

31. The UNDAC team deployed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) has left the country today. OCHA's Suva-based officer Adriana Kavalho-Friedheim is already helping NDC in the transition period to the second phase. Her colleague Charles Bornimolin will arrive tomorrow to assist her .

NEXT NDMO SITUATION REPORT: Friday 21st April 2007

Agencies and stakeholders should send their updates to: ndc@solomon.com.sb

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