

*This report was issued by OCHA New York, with inputs from OCHA Fiji and OCHA ROAP. It covers the period from 03/10/09 to 04/10/09. The next report will be issued on or around 05/10/09.*

## **I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES**

- **Death toll in Samoa has risen to 135, 8 still missing. 20 villages completely destroyed.**
- **An estimated 3,500 people are displaced in Samoa.**
- **Food, water, shelter, clothing and sanitation are key relief priorities.**
- **The Government of Samoa has indicated transition from relief to early recovery planning.**
- **The Government of Samoa estimates the total damage at US\$ 147.25 million**

## **II. Situation Overview**

In the morning of 29 September, a powerful earthquake struck south of the main Samoan Island chain with its epicentre 190 km south of the Samoan capital of Apia. Few minutes later, as warned by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre, a series of quake-triggered tsunami waves hit American Samoa, Samoa, and the small northern island of Niuatoputapu in Tonga. The tsunami waves, some of which are said to have been as high as six metres, caused fatalities, casualties and serious damage to the affected Pacific Island countries.

### **Samoa**

The death toll in Samoa continues to rise while bodies are recovered and now stands at 135, with the majority of victims being female, young or the elderly. Relief efforts are now mainly focussed on the southern coast of Upolu, which is the worst hit area. The Samoan Red Cross (SRC) assessments indicate that 40 villages have been affected along the south-eastern coast, with 20 villages completely destroyed by the tsunami waves. Despite the damage sustained, the affected areas are well accessible by road. The Government of Samoa, SRC, Caritas, and other national organisations continue to distribute relief items, including food, water, clothing and tarpaulins.

Food, water, shelter, clothing and sanitation continue relief priorities. A number of international organisations are supporting humanitarian relief and early recovery activities.

### **Tonga**

The efforts of the Government of Tonga and the Red Cross are focused on the island of Niuatoputapu, with support from Australia, New Zealand and France. Food, shelter, non-food items and emergency medical supplies have been distributed, or are lined up for delivery. The Government of Tonga and the Red Cross indicate that current relief efforts are within the capacity of existing partners and that the situation is under control. It is likely that additional support will be sought to manage early recovery efforts.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator will travel to Tonga on Monday 5 October (Fiji time) to begin supporting early recovery initiatives. Considerations for early recovery efforts are likely to include: health, water and sanitation infrastructure, psychosocial support, agriculture and fishing.

## **III. Humanitarian Needs and Response**

### **Initial Assessments**

#### **Samoa**

- A recent Disaster Advisory Council meeting requested assistance from the United Nations for a multi-cluster needs assessment. The Humanitarian Clusters have planned a multi-sector assessment, in conjunction with the Government. The mission will commence on Monday 5 October (Samoa Time).
- Two New Zealand engineers arrived in Samoa on 4 October to assist with assessments of infrastructure damages.

- World Vision will send a 3-person technical assessment team with health and nutrition and logistics expertise.
- Responding to the Samoan Government's request, a joint rapid assessment on environmental impact study has commenced on 3 October with the participation of UNESCO, UNEP, and Conservation International. Government agencies will join in the assessment.

### **Tonga**

- The Government of Tonga and the Red Cross teams are currently conducting a rapid assessment at the household level. They plan to fly in 5 additional staff to accelerate the completion of the task.

### **Logistics**

#### **Samoa**

- Despite significant damages to the southern coast of Upolu, most roads are still passable and access to most areas is good.
- The SRC is establishing a warehouse in Apia and volunteers are sorting and collecting donations.
- World Food Program is mobilizing a logistics specialist to provide logistics coordination support.
- All new relief supplies are required by law to be delivered to the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), which will coordinate the distribution. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team supports a relief tracking system.

#### **Tonga**

- France's REVI ship is currently docked in Nuku'alofa and due to leave on Saturday 3 October (Tongan Time) for Niuaotupapu.

### **Emergency Shelter**

#### **Samoa**

- A total of 12 evacuation centres have been established – 9 in the district of Aileipata, 2 in Falealili and 1 in Siumu. The SRC has been conducting registrations. Many people choose to take shelter in private homes. Others have set up temporary camp sites with extended families on farmland away from the coast. An estimated 3,500 people are displaced.
- The United Nations agencies and international humanitarian partners decided that there is no need for a shelter and/or camp management cluster to be established.

#### **Tonga**

- The displaced population in Niuaotupapu is being housed in a local high school and provided with tents and tarpaulins. The Tongan Red Cross reports that the existing resources should be sufficient to cater for the displaced people's immediate needs.

### **Education**

#### **Samoa**

- The schools, which are not located on the southern coast of Upolu or Savaii, are unaffected by tsunami waves. In total, three schools are reported to have been damaged.
- The Government plans to restart schools in the affected areas as quickly as possible.
- UNICEF is mobilizing an emergency education coordination expert.

### **Emergency Telecoms**

#### **Samoa**

- Phone and email access between Apia and the wider Samoa now functions normally.

## **Food and Nutrition**

### **Samoa**

- Based on advice from the Pulenu'u including village mayors, food distribution is being coordinated by the NDMO. There has been no report of food shortage so far, although a lack of cooking utensils is reported.

## **Health**

### **Samoa**

- More than 300 people have been hospitalised since tsunami waves struck. Of the number, about 50 remain in Apia hospital.
- Teams from Australia and New Zealand continue to provide emergency medical services. New Zealand AID reports that whilst people still report to hospital with injuries, the most critical cases have already been addressed.
- NZ Aid reports that search for bodies continues to be a major priority for the Government and that appropriate storage of bodies remains an issue.
- Psycho-social support remains a priority.
- Potential health risks in the coming days/weeks include typhoid, cholera and diarrhoea due to contamination of water sources. Dengue is also a potential risk, as mosquitoes are much more prevalent in the bush/hills than on the coast, and people are sleeping in the open. However, the dengue "season" normally starts in December.
- With a large number of people living in high density situations with limited sanitation facilities, there is a clear need to transition from an emergency medical focus to a public health focus encompassing sanitation, vector and disease control.

## **Protection**

### **Samoa**

- Some displaced people have set-up their own shelter (tarpaulins and tents) on their property while some are being housed by host families. There are reports that host families who have taken in large numbers of people are in need of assistance. NGOs that have visited displaced communities report that the majority of displaced communities do not want to return to their original places of residence on low lying land.
- The protection cluster has received information that the system of aid distribution is not based on need.
- NGOs are bringing children separated from their families to Apia to provide them with shelter and protection.

## **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene**

### **Samoa**

- The Samoa Water Authority has been working hard to restore water systems and provide people with water. The joint UN-Government multi-sectoral assessment, which will commence on 5 October, will provide a clear picture of the water situation. In general, it appears that there is water available.
- The Government is distributing water in trucks and bottles to the worst affected areas. Government ministries have also been working to reconnect water. There is now reticulated piped water in many communities, although this water is not usually running directly to the home. The key task is moving and storing water as many water storage facilities have been destroyed.
- There is an urgent need to address the sanitation issue. The joint multi-sectoral assessment is expected to provide more detail. A European Union funded Water and Sanitation Project can redirect resources and latrines to be used for the response. With many families accommodating tsunami-affected people, the situation is likely to stress household sanitation facilities.

## Early Recovery

The Government of Samoa is already moving from emergency response to early recovery phase, and the need for relief items is diminishing. Recovery efforts are likely to focus on reconstruction of housing and communities, provision of temporary accommodation, reconstruction of destroyed schools and clinics, resealing and reconstruction of important roads, reef assessment, tourism rehabilitation, and restoration of other essential livelihoods.

## IV. Coordination

### Samoa

- In order to demonstrate appropriate religious sensitivity, there will be no operational activity on Sunday.
- Cluster arrangements are defined as follows:
  - WASH led by UNICEF/Oxfam
  - Health and Nutrition led by WHO/UNICEF (with support from FAO)
  - Education led by UNICEF/Save the Children/UNESCO
  - Protection led by OHCHR/UNICEF/UNHCR
  - Early Recovery led by UNDP
  - A WFP logistics coordinator is arriving on Monday 5 October.
  - Information Management is coordinated by UNOCHA, with support from SOPAC and SPREP staff.
- An official from New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management arrived on 4 October to support the Samoan NDMO.
- There will be a daily inter-agency coordination meeting at 08.30 hours (Samoa Time) at the UNDP office.

### Tonga

- The Tongan Government has not yet requested for international assistance. Relief efforts are currently being coordinated by the Tongan Defence Force on a bilateral basis.

## V. Funding

### Samoa and Tonga

- The Asian Development Bank has established a US\$ 1 million emergency fund for Samoa.
- The European Union has made € 150,000 of fast track humanitarian funding available for Samoa and Tonga.
- The UNICEF Education Pooled Fund has mobilized US\$ 200,000 for response for Tonga and Samoa.
- UNDP has made available US\$ 100,000 for early recovery activities.
- New Zealand is providing an initial NZD 1 million donation for immediate disaster relief efforts in Samoa and Tonga. Distribution of the NZD 1 million emergency relief funding is being managed by NZAID. An Amount of NZD 150,000 has been provided directly to the New Zealand Red Cross to support the work of their sister agencies in Samoa and Tonga. A further NZD 600,000 for disaster relief projects in Samoa is being managed through a fast-track contestable process for New Zealand NGOs with in-country partners.
- UNESCO is working with the Government to facilitate the direct access of US\$ 50,000. An additional US\$ 50,000 may become available once concrete needs have been identified.
- The United Nations agencies have communicated to the Tongan Government the readiness to provide support. The UN has mobilised US\$ 50,000 to establish early recovery frameworks in Niuatoputapu.

*All humanitarian aid is tracked through OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and is reliant on information provided by donors and recipient agencies. Please inform FTS of all contributions (cash and in-kind) by sending an email to: [fts@reliefweb.int](mailto:fts@reliefweb.int)*

*The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.*

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