Following the onset of the south-west monsoon, 600 718 people were affected by floods and landslides and 213 deaths were recorded - according to the 6 June 2017 situation report by the District Management Centre, Sri Lanka.

As of 26 August 2017, as many as 971 people remain displaced in 17 safe locations across 3 districts (Kalutara, Hambantota, and Ratnapura).

A landslide early warning was issued by the National Building Research Organization on 19 August in Ratnapura and Matara districts.

As the current monsoon period will continue until September, the situation may deteriorate following heavy intermittent rainfall.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacity of the 8 worst-affected districts¹ by revising districts’ disaster health preparedness and response plans; enhancing district health staff capacity on disease surveillance and risk communication and supporting their emergency medical response capacity.

### Situation Overview

- Majority of the affected people have returned home.
- The health system in affected areas is now functional.
- The sectoral post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) carried out by the Ministry of Health, with WHO technical assistance, revealed the extent of damage to the health sector. Across the four worst-hit districts of Ratnapura, Galle, Matara and Kalutara, 92 health institutes and 32 out of 341 Medical Officer of Health (MOH) areas were affected.² The total value of health sector losses and damages is estimated to be LKR 670.55 million (USD 4 386 986).
- Enhancing disease surveillance in the affected areas is an ongoing priority.

¹ Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Hambantota, Kalutara, Kegalle, Matara and Ratnapura were among the worst-affected districts.

² MOH areas correspond to divisional secretariat areas and offer community based health services.
WHO action

- WHO is supporting the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division, Ministry of Health to review and revise the district disaster health preparedness and response plans. Workshops were conducted in Gampaha, Kalutara and Galle with staff from the Provincial and Regional Directorates of Health Services to assess risks and revise disaster preparedness plans to mitigate the impact of future disasters. Following technical sessions, each district team conducted a risk assessment taking into account the hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities of the district to revise and improve district plans accordingly. This exercise will be extended to the Southern and Sabaragamuwa provinces which were among the worst-affected regions.

- District level training programmes to strengthen their capacity on disease surveillance and the International Health Regulations in emergency situations will be conducted by WHO in collaboration with Epidemiology unit and Quarantine unit of the MoH. The training will focus on enhancing inter-sector collaboration to ensure well-coordinated and efficient efforts to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats in emergencies. The first training programme is scheduled for 3rd October 2017.

- WHO in collaboration with Health Education Bureau, MoH will conduct training programmes on risk communication targeting the 8 worst-affected districts. The programmes, starting on 7 September 2017, will cover information management, effective media handling and risk communication in emergency situations. It will be followed by an advocacy programme to promote risk communication targeting senior stakeholders in the central and provincial ministries of health.

- WHO is supporting the MoH to strengthen hospitals across all levels by providing critical life-saving medical equipment and supplies. This will enable healthcare service provision to continue in disaster situations and strengthen the health sector’s emergency medical response capacity.

Funding partners

- WHO’s response to the flood relief efforts has received support from the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF), the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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