



People affected

13 100 people affected in
Sanamxay district, Attapeu Province
6 000 people evacuated to
emergency shelters
13 100 people are in need of health
services

Health impact

Two health facilities have
been damaged by the flash floods. One
of these has been completely
destroyed.

Funding needs

US\$ 680 000 is required for the
Health Cluster response
US\$ 250 000 is required by WHO

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A joint Ministry of Health/WHO team provides psychological first aid to the affected community. Credit: WHO/T. Vixaysouk

At a glance

- On Monday 23 July, heavy rains overwhelmed an auxiliary dam of a hydroelectric project, causing catastrophic flash flooding in villages downstream.
- More than a hundred people remain missing and thousands are taking shelter in temporary camps.
- WHO is working with the Ministry of Health and partners to prevent, detect and control disease outbreaks and ensure affected communities can access life-saving health services.

Current situation

On Monday 23 July 2018, heavy rains overwhelmed an auxiliary dam of a hydroelectric project in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Catastrophic flash flooding inundated villages, health facilities, houses, schools, roads and other basic infrastructure in Attapeu Province.

More than a hundred people remain missing and thousands are taking shelter in temporary camps.

As a result of continued rains, a further 10 provinces across the country have also been flooded, making this the largest flood the country has seen in the past ten years. The Government of Lao PDR has declared Samanxay District of Attapeu Province a National Emergency Disaster Zone.



Health needs

WHO analysis has found that the most pressing health risks include potential outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases and dengue. Potential outbreaks of measles, respiratory infections (e.g. influenza), malaria and food-borne diseases are also a concern.

Two health facilities in Attapeu Province have been damaged. One of these has been completely destroyed. Other health facilities may be inaccessible due to floodwaters and damaged roads.

This disruption in the provision of regular health services puts the lives and health of women and children at particular risk as they are unable to access essential maternal, child and newborn health care.

WHO's response

Despite tremendous access challenges, WHO staff arrived in Attapeu within 72 hours of the flash flood, working alongside the Ministry of Health and partners to conduct a rapid assessment of health needs. WHO's response to date has included the following:

- Coordination of the national Health Cluster
- Response coordination at the Provincial level
- Psychological first aid to more than 700 people
- Provision of translated guidance on psychological first aid, dead body management and maternal and child health
- Establishment of enhanced surveillance and response in temporary shelters and affected villages
- 128 000 water purification tablets, sufficient to treat more than 1 million litres of drinking water
- Disinfection sachets to treat 72 000 litres of water
- 400 cholera rapid diagnostic tests
- 12 sprayers for mosquito control
- Information, education and communication materials on handwashing, food safety, mental health self-care and the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases

Funding needs

The cost for the initial Health Cluster response has been estimated at US\$ 680 000. Of this, US \$250 000 is for WHO.

However, these figures only cover the cost of the response in Attapeu province. As needs in the other provinces become clearer, the response may be expanded and the budget revised.



The Contingency Fund for Emergencies facilitates a prompt response

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Top and above: WHO staff coordinate health teams on the ground.

Credit: WHO/R. Tsuyuok and S. Phimmasine