



## JOINT NEWS RELEASE

# GOVERNMENT OF TIMOR-LESTE AND PARTNERS APPEAL FOR US\$32 MILLION TO ASSIST FLOOD VICTIMS AND EARLY RECOVERY

*Following the devastation caused by the floods in April that affected many families in the country, today the Government and humanitarian partners, including the United Nations, are launching a joint Appeal for US \$32m to respond to residual humanitarian needs and assist with early the recovery process to December 2021.*

**Dili, TIMOR-LESTE, 01 JUNE 2021:** The Government, together with humanitarian partners, officially launched a Joint Appeal to address the residual humanitarian needs for the most vulnerable affected people and assist with early-recovery efforts in Timor-Leste. The appeal requests US\$32.7 million (US \$8.8m for immediate needs and US\$23.9 for short-term requirements) that will directly assist 65,000 people and indirectly benefit all flood-affected population. A multi-sectoral response, the appeal identifies priority activities to address critical gaps across 9 sectors: Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Emergency Shelter; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); Gender and Protection; Food Security; Nutrition; Health; Education; Early Recovery and Livelihoods; and, Emergency Logistics.

The Government has allocated US\$65.2 million through the Contingency Fund while the humanitarian partners including the United Nations, have so far committed US\$10.7 million to support the response efforts. However, following the rapid assessments that have been completed, critical funding gaps still remain to meet the priority needs of the flood-affected communities and to kick-start the recovery process.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, H.E. Ms. Adaljiza Magno in her opening remarks stated that despite the significant efforts from the Government side to deliver the emergency needs to flood affected populations as well as increasing the contingency fund to implement short and long term programs to recover from the calamity, there are still considerable funding gap need to be filled. Therefore, H.E. Minister, on behalf of the government, calling upon for a voluntary contribution in order to help Timor-Leste to scale-up measures to recover from the catastrophic disaster.

The 2021 Timor-Leste Floods Response Plan will facilitate a coordinated by the Government and the humanitarian partners focusing on the next 7 months from end-

May to end-December 2021 with the aim of supporting a sustainable recovery and helping lay the foundations for 'Building Back Better'.

The plan was jointly developed by the Government of Timor-Leste with support from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and all humanitarian partners. A copy of the detailed Joint Appeal is available at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IBoh1Cr10dTiMiG2Sh5W4OXqoDmyzEpy/view?usp=sharing>. Under the Government leadership, more than 86 organisations – 9 UN agencies, 63 humanitarian partners, and 14 Ministries/Departments – will participate in the 7-month Joint Response Plan ending in December 2021.

The latest official figures, show that 33,835 households have been affected by the floods across all 13 municipalities, with 44 reported fatalities.

Extensive damages have been reported to houses, buildings (including health facilities and COVID-19 quarantine and isolation centres), public infrastructure and agricultural land. A total of 2,163 hectares of agricultural land have been affected, negatively impacting food security in the coming days.

This disaster comes when the country has seen a surge in COVID-19 cases in recent months. The temporary displacement of people poses an increased threat to the further spread of COVID-19 and outbreak of other diseases.

United Nations Resident Coordinator Roy Trivedy emphasised that "it is imperative to speed up the delivery of assistance to Timor-Leste at this critical stage to prevent further loss of lives, additional damage to essential public services and infrastructure, and to stop the spread of diseases." He also highlighted the fact that "this tragedy has hit at a time when the country is already struggling with the dangerous situation caused by COVID19."

This Response Plan aims to directly target the humanitarian and early recovery needs of approximately 65,000 flood-affected people living with existing vulnerabilities. All flood-affected populations are expected to benefit directly and indirectly from the response, including rehabilitation of critical public infrastructure and restoration of essential services. In line with the Secretariat of State for Civil Protection's Flood Response Strategy, the plan will prioritise support to those who remain in the evacuation centres, support the safe return and early recovery of those who were temporarily displaced and since returned to their communities.

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**BACKGROUND NOTE FOR EDITOR**



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On 23 April, the National Parliament approved the amendment to the 2021 General State Budget to respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the flooding, which the President subsequently promulgated on 4 May. The allocation to the COVID-19 Fund increased from USD 31 million to USD 287.6 million, while the Contingency Fund allocation increased from USD 23.8 million to USD 65.2 million.

Many humanitarian partners and donors have supported the flood response through humanitarian funding and/or repurposing existing resources. In solidarity with the affected people of Timor-Leste, more donors, including the private sector, have been mobilising resources in support of the flood-affected people. Over USD 10.73 million of additional humanitarian funding has been mobilised by donors, UN agencies, humanitarian partners and the private sector.

The second phase of the humanitarian response, namely support to livelihoods and early recovery has started, including emergency cash-for-work initiatives, inputs schemes, and infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction. At the request of the Government, partners are preparing to support the Government with longer-term recovery planning through a Household and Building Damage Assessment (HBDA), a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PNDA), and a Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM). These assessments aim to provide more comprehensive country-wide information to inform longer-term recovery and reconstruction of flood-affected households, communities, and agricultural lands.

During the Emergency Development Partners' Meeting called by the Government on 13 April, the Government and the humanitarian partners agreed on the need for a strongly coordinated floods response, under the leadership of the Government. The 2021 Timor-Leste Flood Response Plan, therefore, is positioned as a tool to facilitate a coordinated floods response by the Government and the humanitarian partners (incl. donors), focusing on the initial 9 months to address the immediate humanitarian and early recovery needs of the most vulnerable affected people. Once the findings of a more comprehensive assessment of damages and losses become available, the Government and partners may consider developing a medium-term recovery plan in line with the Government's commitment to Build Back Better.

**FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES**

Licínio Miranda Branco, National Director for Social Communication and Promotion,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Email: [branzola@gmail.com](mailto:branzola@gmail.com)

Elvis Guterres, Communications Officer, Ministry of Finance.

Email: [etbguterres@mof.gov.tl](mailto:etbguterres@mof.gov.tl)

Ahmed Saleem, Communications Officer, UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

Email: [mohammed.saleem@un.org](mailto:mohammed.saleem@un.org)