



Newsletter April-August 2020



Photo credit: Medical vector created by freepik - www.freepik.com

Greetings from the CBi Secretariat

As COVID-19 continues to impact the world, with new waves of transmission in some regions, we continue to be faced with natural hazards and manmade disasters. From a cyclone season that promises to be intense to the recent explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, it is more important than ever for all sectors of society to work together to prevent, manage, and rebuild.

With the Connecting Business initiative (CBi) focused on disaster management, our Member Networks have been active around the world to address COVID-19 related challenges and more.

Latest Emergencies & New Resources



BUSINESS GUIDE
BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSIONS
LEBANON RESPONSE
AUGUST 2020

CRISIS OVERVIEW

On August 4th at approximately 18h00 local time, a warehouse at the Beirut Port containing large quantities of ammonium nitrate exploded. After an initial explosion, a subsequent blast caused widespread destruction, with reports of damage more than 20 kilometers from the port area. The explosions and ensuing fires reportedly released toxic materials in the environment. At least 178 people were killed, and an estimated 6,000 people were injured, while some 30 people remain missing.

While the full extent of the impact is still being assessed, early reports indicate significant damage to infrastructure (including health, water and sanitation, and schools) and critical infrastructure essential for food supply and livelihoods. More than 47,000 apartments sustain some level of damage, affecting more than 170,000 residents. At least 20 primary health care centers have been severely damaged and at least six hospitals have been rendered partially or fully inoperable. An additional 120 schools, used by 55,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children, sustained various levels of damage. The food stored in warehouses at the Beirut Port was also destroyed by the explosions, including 95 per cent of the country's cereal reserves, and it is estimated that, at regular consumption rates, the remaining grain supply in country is sufficient for 4-6 weeks. The trauma suffered extends beyond the physical reconstruction and mental health needs will remain manifest, especially for already vulnerable populations.

The explosions come as Lebanon faces a multi-faceted crisis. In recent months, economic contraction, increasing poverty and rising prices have compounded needs among Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, including the large refugee population in Lebanon. An increase in COVID-19 transmissions is straining the country's health systems. Social tensions and civil unrest continue to grow in many parts of the country and led to the Government's resignation on August 10th.

CONNECTING BUSINESS
United Nations
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News - AJ Impact AJ Go - Documentaries - Shows - Investigations

Coronavirus lockdown hobbles Vanuatu cyclone recovery effort

Thousands of families remain homeless after Cyclone Harold destroyed properties worth as much as \$100m.

by Ted Regencia 13 May 2020



The Category 5 Cyclone Harold destroyed thousands of homes and displaced about half of the country's 300,000 population, according to estimates by the government [Courtesy of Dr Christopher Bartlett]

It has been more than a month since Cyclone Harold tore through several countries in the South Pacific, with Vanuatu bearing the brunt of the Category 5 winds. The cyclone destroyed thousands of homes, displaced about half the country's 300,000 people and uprooted crops.

Since a state of emergency was declared in early April, the country in the middle of the Pacific Ocean has continued to struggle. With a shortage of

MORE ON WEATHER

Twin Caribbean storms kill seven as they head towards US coast today

California seeks help as wildfires threaten communities yesterday

Tropical storm Genevieve kills two people in western Mexico

Lebanon Explosions

The two recent explosions that took place on 4 August in a warehouse in the Port of Beirut have left many homeless or wounded, if not both. The United Nations is mobilizing assistance to support the ongoing government-led emergency response and has set up a crisis relief donation page for the Lebanon emergency. CBI worked with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Global Compact to produce a UN Business Guide. [Read more on the CBI Emergency Page.](#)

Preparing for various natural and manmade hazards during COVID-19

With stark predictions for what this year's cyclone season might look like and COVID-19 adding complexity to an already challenging issue, OCHA has put together an article about preparing for and responding to climate-related disasters such as cyclones. Read more [here](#).

The role of the private sector was prominently featured through the actions of the Vanuatu CBI network showcased in [an article in Al Jazeera](#) (and an OCHA article) for being the first country in the world to respond to a natural hazard (Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold) whilst under border closure due to COVID-19. Additional information can be found on [the VBRC hurricane response and appeal](#) and you can view the "Preparing and responding to multi-hazard scenarios" webinar recording [here](#).

COVID-19 continued

on Member Networks activities are available [here](#). With our support, many of the networks, in collaboration with the governments and the UN, are conducting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) impact assessments and support programs, focusing on recovery and rebuilding better among many other things. Read more in [the brochure on the CBI response to COVID-19](#) or on [the CBI COVID-19 Emergency Page](#), which is regularly updated with new tools and resources.

CBI has also created a new webpage "[Tools for SME Resilience](#)", to help SMEs build capabilities that they need in the "next normal".

E-Learning Academy

CBI recently launched an E-Learning Academy to further build the capacity of the private sector in disaster management. To read more and browse through the list of courses, please visit [the CBI E-Learning Academy page](#).

Visit the CBI website for more information

Member Networks Spotlights



The Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) CBI Member Network worked on the distribution of support in the form of goods and services to those most vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold.

The Côte d'Ivoire Private Sector Humanitarian Platform has continued to gather private sector contributions to support those affected by the flooding that took place in June. They have created a taskforce of big companies and SMEs to develop business continuity plans adapted for various company sizes. The network has also finalized a partnership with UNDP and the National Institute of Statistics to gather economic and humanitarian data on the impact of COVID-19.

Read more about the work of Côte d'Ivoire's Member Network [here](#).

Fiji

The Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC), a CBI Member Network and one of the nine councils under the umbrella of the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF), played a critical role as the business representatives at the National Disaster Management Office and Advisory Service, with support through its various focal points from the business sectors and the non-government organisations. Their efforts included coordinating private sector engagement with government and partners on resilience building, response and recovery activities, collaborating on business continuity plans, mapping out service providers for recovery, and supporting communities in partnership with the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Read more about the FBDRC efforts [here](#).

Kenya & East Africa

The Humanitarian Private Sector Partnership Platform (HPPP) has formed an advisory group, whose role is to advise and guide the strategic direction of HPPP. The network is participating in various initiatives around private sector engagement, and became an official member of the UNDRR ARISE (Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies) as it supports the establishment of an ARISE Africa platform. Some HPPP members have also taken action to implement a COVID-19 response in urban high-density population areas and to support education initiatives, among other things.

Read more about activities in Kenya and East Africa [here](#).

Haiti

During the past three months, the Alliance pour la Gestion des Risques et la Continuité des Activités (AGERCA), together with its partners, has carried out a series of activities in the context of the fight against the coronavirus both in the field and on digital platforms. AGERCA launched the Response Platform of Civil Society Organizations (PROC19), an initiative that brings together several civil society organizations with the aim of converging efforts to carry out responses to this health crisis. The network also carried out an impact survey of the effect of COVID-19 on small- and medium-sized Haitian enterprises, distributed hygiene kits, and carried out training around health and safety measures.

More recently, during Tropical Storm Laura, AGERCA sent more than two million text messages and provided phone credit to the National Emergency Center to facilitate

Read more about the ACERGA activities [here](#).



At the launch of PROC19. Photo Credit AGERCA.

Madagascar

The Private Sector Humanitarian Platform (PSHP) distributed 200 solar radios and educational kits in rural areas, for families to be able to tune in to COVID-19 related news and for children to follow courses offered for example by the Ministry of Education. The network continued to distribute the illustrated children's book CORONABOKY for awareness raising; maintained food distribution at the prison of Antanimora; took specific health-supporting actions to enhance hospital capacity among other things; and supported the Akany Iarivo Mivoy Homeless Shelter & care in improving their infrastructure and services.

Read more about PSHP's work [here](#).

Mexico

The

Centro Nacional de Apoyo para Contingencias Epidemiológicas y Desastres (CENACED) launched a platform to coordinate COVID-19-related activities on 20 July. Done in partnership with OCHA and UNDP, its objective is to strengthen the response in a coordinated manner and thus channel aid, especially in terms of food assistance, medical supplies and mitigating the poverty brought on by the COVID-19 crisis.

Read more about CENACED's work [here](#).

Philippines

With the support of CBI, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with UNDP and OCHA Philippines, launched the SIKAP Platform in May to help micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) prepare for COVID-19 recovery and reopen.

accommodation and transport, and organizing training of trainers and other online events.

Read more about PDRF's activities [here](#).



Project Ugnayan distribution through Diocese of Novaliches. Photo Credit PDRF.

Sri Lanka

In support of the Government's efforts in controlling the situation, A-PAD Sri Lanka joined hands with HSBC Bank and other private sector partners to provide healthcare essentials and ration support to frontline workers, communities and the health sector. A-PAD Japan joined Sri Lanka's COVID-19 resistance efforts by offering solid support to the country in partnership with A-PAD Sri Lanka, providing an array of healthcare essentials to the Disaster Management Center (DMC).

Read more about A-PAD's activities [here](#).

Turkey

Building on the survey carried out in March, Business for Goals (B4G) conducted a second survey to assess the impact and need of businesses, and how the situation had evolved alongside the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the survey results were featured in a [UNDP article](#). Various webinars were organized on topics ranging from labor laws to peer-to-peer learnings for businesses and women in business. Some B4G members have also taken action to support SME digitalization journeys and launched a tool to help businesses consider and manage the human rights impacts of their operations.

Read more about B4G's activities [here](#).

Vanuatu



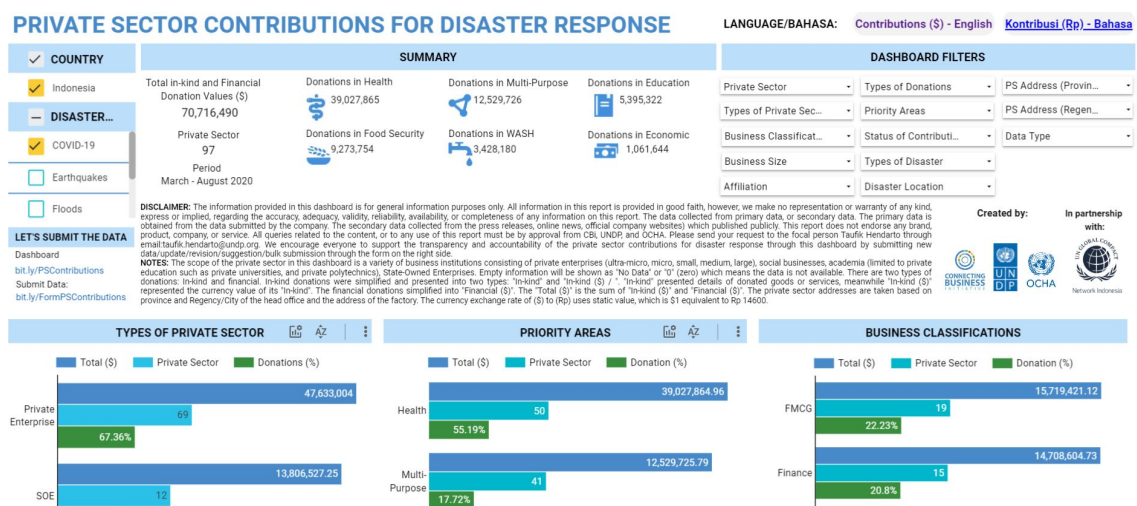
Photo Credit: Oxfam Australia

The Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) has [partnered with Oxfam around an Unblocked Cash Release initiative](#), an innovative approach focused on the distribution of support in the form of goods and services to those most vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold. VBRC also has business resilience workshops going on in the main provinces of Vanuatu, focusing on tourism and agricultural SME businesses. In addition, VBRC will increase the activities of their business support centre with CBI funding, with an increased range of service offerings including life and business coaching, one-on-one mentoring, financial literacy and bookkeeping training, and moving businesses from the informal to formal sector.

Read more about VBRC's activities [here](#).

Read more about how CBI networks are responding to COVID-19

Prospective Networks



Partial screenshot of the Dashboard

As part of CBI's initiative to support the prospective network activities in Indonesia, a dashboard to monitor and report Private Sector Contributions for COVID-19 Response has been created. [View the dashboard here.](#)

Upcoming Webinars & Events

Upcoming Webinars

- “Community Engagement and Accountability for Private Sector Networks” (open to all), details to follow
- The next Member Network webinar on Tuesday 15 September (for CBI Member Networks only)

For more information, visit [the CBI Event page](#).

Upcoming Online Training

Online training on “**Making Cities Resilient: Developing and implementing local disaster risk reduction strategy to respond to COVID-19 and to better prepare for the future**”, will be jointly delivered by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Global Education and Training Institute (GETI), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). It will take place September 8 through to October 6, on Tuesdays, at 7.30am New York time. Register for the course [here](#).

The United Nations General Assembly 2020

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) will take place virtually this year, from September 15-30. CBI will work with partners to showcase the role of the private sector in disaster management, including the COVID-19 response. Stay tuned for more information on the CBI website and social media channels (Twitter & Facebook)!

For more information about upcoming events, visit [the CBI website Events page](#), or follow us on social media ([Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#)).

Recent Webinars and Events



CBi supported World Humanitarian Day 2020 and showcased some of its #RealLifeHeroes from the private sector

World Humanitarian Day

August 19 is [World Humanitarian Day](#) (WHD). On this day, the UN commemorates humanitarian workers killed and injured in the course of their work and honours all aid workers who provide life-saving support and protection to those most in need, despite the odds. This year the theme of the campaign was "Real Life Heroes", highlighting those who go above and beyond their duty to help others in times of need, COVID-19 in particular. CBi took part in the campaign and highlighted CBi #RealLifeHeroes.

Visit our social media platforms ([Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#)), or use the hashtags #RealLifeHeroes and #WorldHumanitarianDay to see the CBi voices & stories we shared.

CBi Webinars

- Webinar series on [Strategic Communications during a crisis](#), open to Member Networks only.
- Response planning (2 June, for CBi Member Networks only).
- Preparing and responding to multi hazard scenarios (26 May). Access the recording [here](#).
- SME Impact Assessments (19 May). Access the recording [here](#).
- COVID-19 and the private sector: For unprecedented times, extraordinary measures (15 April).

UN Global Compact 20th Anniversary Leaders' Summit (15-16 June)

CBi hosted a pavilion at the UN Global Compact Virtual Leaders' Summit "Recover Better, Recover Stronger, Recover Together". The summit narrative addressed learnings from COVID-19 and how strong multilateralism must be the foundation for a strong, sustainable and stable future.

CBi organized two thematic sessions:

- COVID-19 recovery: Examples of business contributions, with Pelin Kihitir, Platform Director, Business4Goals (CBi Member Network in Turkey); David Young, Managing Director & Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group; Jaki Mebur, Market Engagement Manager, GSMA Kenya; and Jeffrey N. Beckles, CEO, Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers' Confederation. It was moderated

You can [view the session recording here](#).

- A multi-stakeholder response to natural disasters during COVID-19, with Veronica Gabaldon Executive Director, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation; Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad, of the OCD Administrator's Office; Jaime Augusto Zobel, CEO, Ayala Corporation. It was moderated by Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Chief of the Emergency Response Section, OCHA.

You can [view the recording here](#).

CBi Member Networks, including Madagascar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Turkey, organized sessions on "The collective business response to crises". You can view a full list of sessions (and available recordings) [here](#).

CBi Secretariat News

We are happy to announce that the CBi Secretariat welcomed a few new members to the team:

1. **Florian Rhiza Nery** joined in July as the Local Network Coordination Specialist.
2. **Shahnaz Radjy** joined in August as a Communications Specialist.
3. **Maria Kontro** also joined in August as a Gender Research Consultant.

CBi is starting a partnership with the SDG Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab to explore opportunities for disaster management through AI and other novel technologies. For more information and future updates, go to [the CBi page on innovation](#).



The success of the Connecting Business initiative to date would not be possible without the support of Global Resource and Programme Partners—namely in alphabetical order: Boston Consulting Group, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, European Union (EU) Enhanced Response Capacity, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, United Nations Global Compact, USAID's Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance and The UPS Foundation—which provide financial and in-kind contributions, expertise and guidance, as well as strategic leadership to the initiative.