

Situation Report – Tajikistan

22 January 2009

I. SITUATION ANALYSES

The 2008-09 winter has been mild in Tajikistan, but supply of electricity remains problematic. Supply from Turkmenistan has been stalled since 1 January 2009 due to unresolved transit issues with Uzbekistan. Tajikistan has been sending delegations to Tashkent to resolve the issue.

Negotiations with Uzbekistan on gas supply for 2009 were concluded 31 December 2008. Tajikistan now pays USD 240 per 1,000 cubic meters (compared to USD 145 paid in 2008), and increase that will negatively affect already strained household budgets.

Water volume in Nurek reservoir during December 2008 remained lower than the 2007 levels. This is despite electricity restrictions introduced, and additional electricity supplied from Turkmenistan. If the transit issue through Uzbekistan is not solved, and if temperatures drop below zero (- 15 to -25 as in February 2008) and stay below zero for over 6 days constraining water in-flow into Nurek, another energy crisis could occur. Official statements already warn about the possible need to limit water passage to neighboring countries through the reservoirs (Nurek and Kayrakkum).

During its annual meeting 15 January 2009, Government of Tajikistan (specifically Ministry of Industry and Energy) was tasked with the construction of 50 additional small hydro-power plants by end 2009. Mr. Samiev, Head of “Barki Tojik” (state electrical monopoly company) and his six deputies were dismissed by the President this January 2009, due to mismanagement and reportedly great losses in 2008.

New electricity tariffs (increase of 25 %) were introduced 1 January 2009. The population will now pay 0.6 Somonies (0.21 USD cents) compared to 0.48 Somonies (0.14 USD cents)

Food prices have been decreasing, but remain high throughout the country. The food security monitoring conducted by WFP in October and November identified almost 650,000 people as severely food insecure and 1.5 million as food insecure. Some 225,000 people were found at risk of severe food insecurity. Food Security Appeal remains underfunded.

Remittances for 2008 totalled USD 2,668,800,000 billion. This is an increase of 50% over 2007. Despite this increase, most of the labor migrants returned back to Tajikistan empty handed at the end of 2008, as the Russian economy felt the global economic crisis. Banks in Tajikistan are facing major liquidity problems, as creditor banks (mostly from Russia) have recalled their credits back. The exchange rate between USD and local currency (Somony) has increased from 3.45 Somoni/1USD (in December) to 3.68/1USD (22 January 2009). IMF estimates GNP growth will drop from 7 to 5%.

For more details refer to **Annex 1** *“Detailed overview of Energy sector, Food & food price index and Migration & Economy”*.

Due to the mild weather and lack of life-threatening circumstances, no emergency appeal for non-food assistance was launched to cover the winter months. Most of the projects presented for non-food sectors were development oriented, and do not meet “life-saving” criteria for Consolidated Appeals and CERF funding. The existing draft appeal for non-food sectors is being transformed into a “contingency plan”, which can be quickly activated in the event of changing weather conditions.

II. FOLLOW UP TO “CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT”

REACT Secretariat (UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme) has been monitoring five main indicators linked to water, energy and food security. These are: precipitation, remittances, food prices in major markets all over the country, water volume in Nurek reservoir and electricity generation. Support is provided by Bratislava Regional Center (Mr. Ben Slay) on improving these early warning indicators. Reports are produced on a monthly basis. Examples of these reports are attached as **Annex 2** and **Annex 3** (Early Warning Indicators for December 2008 and January 2009).

In order to improve the coordination of humanitarian activities, early warning and early recovery in the country, a concept note has been drafted by UNDP Tajikistan and submitted to DFID for funding. This concept note is attached as **Annex 4** (Concept Note). Once funded, a Humanitarian Affairs Office will be employed to support the Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team in order to improve coordination within the REACT sectors as well as between government and the international community.

The early warning system, as suggested in the concept note, is expected to be established within the Strategic Research Centre under the President.

Following the recommendations of CA RRA, UNDP is expected to start an Early Recovery Initiative, linking short term humanitarian response to longer term development programming in the country. This will be included in the ToR of the BCPR team expected to visit Tajikistan early March 2009.

Key findings and recommendations of CA RRA will be presented to the government, donors, UN Country Team and NGOs next Friday, 30 January 2009. The presentation will be made by Mr. Ben Slay.

OCHA is organizing a “Humanitarian Action Training Programme in Central Asia”, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 10-12 March 2009. Heads of REACT sectors as well as some INGO representatives will be attending from Tajikistan.

INSTEDD (Innovative Technologies for for Emergencies, Diseases and Disasters) and Google have expressed keen interest in starting up an early warning project in

Tajikistan, bringing in latest technology connected to satellite mapping. The start up phase of this initiative is tentatively planned for mid 2009.

Humanitarian Futures Project, piloted in Tajikistan with the initiative of King's College (in London) OCHA and BCPR, was designed to enhance the capacities of the UN system to develop strategies to plan for longer-term humanitarian threats. Particular attention was given to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development efforts. Assessment of current planning and strategic thinking was made, and recommendations for improvement were developed and submitted to UNCT. This exercise was quite successful, and HFP is preparing phase II of its support package to the UN System and Government.

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Disaster Risk Management Programme

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