



Committee of Emergency Situations & Civil Defense, ECHO and UNDP Tajikistan
Project "Strengthened Disaster Risk Management in Tajikistan"

Minutes of the REACT Meeting
10 February 2010, UN Conference Hall

Chair: Mr. Sultonnazar Kholiqnazarov, Deputy Chief of Staff, Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES)

Participants: REACT partners (Annex II - attached)

1. Introduction

Mr. Kholiqnazarov, opened the meeting and welcomed all the participants. He reminded the participants about the ECHO's Call for Proposal for DIPECHO VI program in Central Asia, which is due by February 15, 2010. He mentioned that in accordance to previous agreement reached with ECHO office in Dushanbe, all proposals targeting territory of Tajikistan should be agreed with CoES before submission to ECHO. However, only few proposals from following agencies: FOCUS, ACTED, Caritas Switzerland, UNICEF have been received by CoES so far. He emphasized the importance of this exercise and highlighted that CoES is ready to review any proposals as soon as they are provided.

2. Update of situation in Vanj district:

Mr. Mukhtor Hasanov from UNDP DRMP briefed the participants on current situation in Vanj district, affected by earthquake on January 2, 2010.

- 158 families are currently living in winterized tents. People were moved from schools to tents. Schools are open and functioning. Some damaged blocks in 5 schools are closed and the classes are held in shifts. UNICEF provided 22 school tents to substitute for the damaged blocks;
- Heavy snowfall on 6 February caused significant damages to the tents: In total 31 winterized tents in 5 villages collapsed due to the snow;
- The Iranian Red Crescent Society has provided food and non-food items to the Government for the benefit of the earthquake victims;
- A Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment of 264 most affected households, was conducted by a team of 16 members representing CoES, UNDP, FOCUS, MSDSP, RCST and independent specialists;
- The district authorities decided to relocate the families living within 250 meters from the bottom of the mountain in Gishkhun village. This part of the village is considered to be a disaster-prone area by seismologists;
- The owners of 264 damaged houses will be provided with 0,1 hectares of land for construction of new houses;
- The affected households were provided with coal for heating the tents. However, due to less amount of coal given, they are lack of heating recourses.
- A recovery planning meeting is scheduled for 17 February.

Mr. Mutrib Bahridinov from UNICEF informed the participants about the joint assessment of Education Cluster. According to Local Authorities reports overall 15 schools have been damaged and out of those 6 were reported to be significantly damaged. All 6 significantly damaged houses were visited by assessing team. Results of the visit, indicated that 5 out of total 6 schools visited, have been built 30-40 years ago and currently have significant cracks. Therefore, it is not safe to place children in those schools. To ensure the uninterrupted schooling process, UNICEF has provided 22 winterized tents to be used as school premises and currently there is an outstanding need for another 6 tents. Moreover, the rough estimation of construction materials required for school reconstruction was prepared by the assessment team. The full report was provided to REACT Secretariat and shared among all REACT partners.

Mr. Sharifov pointed the fact of tent's collapse. He highlighted that provided tents are considered to be winterized tents, however they have collapsed, due to snowing. Moreover, all tents have heaters, but temperature in tents still remains low. Currently representatives of Tajik Red Crescent Society in the field

are investigating the cause of tents collapse. Meanwhile, Mr. Sharifov proposed that this case should be considered as lesson learned and next time, it should be ensured that tents to be provided in winter time, should be properly insulated and have strong frames. Shelter cluster is currently working on developing specifications of such tents.

Mr. Kamolov from CoES informed the participants that design of the houses proposed by Caritas Switzerland and piloted in Khuroson district was endorsed by Government of Tajikistan.

Mr. Kholiqnazarov from CoES added, that the total cost of the houses previously proposed by Agency on Architecture and Construction was very high and didn't considered the local construction materials. Taking into account that in Vanj area, houses are mostly constructed using stone, authorities have already undertook 4 explosions at local quarry, to ensure the availability of stones for construction. He informed the participants, that up to date 10 families have already confirmed their willingness in witting, to be relocated to new allocated area and start the construction of new houses individually.

Mr. Urs from Caritas Switzerland inquired whether any proper risk assessment of newly allocated area has been conducted.

Mr. Kamolov from CoES replied, that specialists from Main State Geological Department have conducted engineering-geological assessment of 30 ha allocated land. Results of the assessment indicate that currently some river bank reinforcement works are required in new location. At this stage Focus Humanitarian Assistance is ready to support required riverbank reinforcement works. The full copy of the report has been provided to REACT Secretariat.

Mr. Sharifov from UNDP DRMP added that report is currently being translated into English and will be shared with all interested agencies soon. Meanwhile, he reminded that vulnerability and capacity assessment of affected households, in accordance to the list of affected households provided by CoES has been conducted. It is expected that results of the assessment will be finalized next week.

3. Update on weather forecasts in Tajikistan for February 2010:

Ms. Jamila Baydulloeva from Tajik Hydromet briefed participants about the weather temperatures of past months as well as forecasts for February 2010. During December 2009, the whole territory of Tajikistan had increased amount of precipitation. The precipitation totals in majority of the districts were higher than average norms. The weather temperature was 1-2 degrees higher than average norm as well. In valley districts the precipitation were mostly in form of rain and sleet. While in mountainous districts precipitations were mostly in form of sleet and snow. It mostly snowed on the southern slopes of Hissar mountain ridge (Husheri, Mayhura, Anzob) where it caused generation of snow cover (the height of the snow reached around 1 meter).

Weather temperature in January 2010 was rather warm. The monthly average weather temperature throughout the country was up to 3-5 degrees higher than perennial average norm for this month. Warm weather temperatures were accompanied with very little precipitation. As a result, snow cover was absent on the heights lower than 2500 meters. By end of January 2010, the average warm weather temperatures was considered as indication of future drought forecasts. However, due to upper Amudarya cyclone activation and affects of Siberian anticyclone during February of 2010, the weather temperature was very low and precipitation amounts increased. During the period of 6-9 February 2010, increased amount of precipitation was registered in the country in form of rain transitioning into snow and heavy snowing in mountainous regions. The most significant amount of precipitation was registered in central district of the country, in southern part of Khatlon province, western parts of GBAO and in districts of Rasht zone. The height of snow cover in valley district was from 15 cm up to 30 cm, in mountainous districts from 70 cm up to 110 cm, on southern slopes of Hissar mountain ridge up to 2 meters.

In accordance to our preliminary forecasts for March 2010, the weather temperature will be warm, but heavy precipitations, which will raise the risk of avalanches in mountainous districts and risks of flash floods in piedmont districts. Therefore, efforts should be taken in preparedness to spring flooding.

4. Mid-year review of REACT Early Recovery Appeal, Floods and Mudflows in Tajikistan:

Ms. Nancy Snauwaert, UN Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator, briefed the participants about the funding status of REACT Early Recovery Appeal launched to assist the victims of series of floods and mudflows in Tajikistan during April-May of 2009 (Annex I). She pointed that report does not cover the relief assistance and focused only on recovery assistance. She highlighted that currently in terms of total funding half of the appealed amount is covered at this stage. Currently, WASH sector requirements are overfunded,

requirements of Shelter and Health sector are half funded, while requirements of Education Sectors remain uncovered. Detailed information on funding can be found at: www.untj.org. Up to date, overall 5 UN projects and 5 NGO projects have been funded, which proves that Appeal process, is beneficial for all interested stakeholders, rather than only UN agencies. She specifically pointed the shelter and non-food assistance provided by OFDA outside of the Appeal and targeting Qumsangir and Pyanj districts was provided on timely manner, since the needs of the affected population in abovementioned districts was not fully considered in the Appeal. As an updated priorities requirements of Education cluster was considered as a highest priority, considering the fact that currently 3000 children are placed at difficult conditions and continue to remain at risk.

Taking the chance once again emphasized all the response provided by REACT partners and thanked all the involved partners.

Ms. Marydean Purves from Mission East highlighted that presentation mentioned that requirements of WASH sector was overfunded, however she recalled that during her recent field trip to Khuroson district, she found out that there was no water supply system in Oftobak settlement.

Ms. Snauwaert replied, that funding to this particular project was received very recently and details on status of the implementation of the project can be sought from implementing agency, which UNICEF for this case.

Mr. Michael Jones, UN Resident Coordinator, advised that all participating agencies should be actively engaged in fundraising efforts. In particular he mentioned, that participating agencies can approach their Headquarters for additional funding, should put efforts in community mobilizations. He emphasized that in kind assistance would greatly benefit the population as well. He also requested to elaborate about the situation in Education sector and specifically on the situation, which is faced by schoolchildren in affected communities.

Mr. Rustam Ubayduloev from UNICEF informed that due to limited space in the damaged schools, schoolchildren are forced to study at three shifts instead of regular two shifts, some schoolchildren are forced to walk long distances to get to schools. For example, he mentioned about a secondary school in Qumasangir district, where children are studying in tents for over 2 years.

5. Post disaster recovery support to communities affected by spring disasters of 2009

Ms. Rano Mansurova from ACTED recalled the presentation of Ms. Snauwaert and provided more detailed briefing about the funding provided by USAID office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for flood affected population of Qumsangir and Pyanj districts. The total amount of funding is 577 358 USD and project duration is 1 year. Project is directly implemented by ACTED. The main goal of the project is to reduce the vulnerability of communities affected by the spring floods and mudflows through restoring access to basic social services and rehabilitating and reconstruction of social infrastructure.

Project consists of three main components:

- Provision of basic non-food items (NFIs) to households affected by the spring floods and mudflows helping them to overcome the winter.

The NFIs mostly consisted of bed linens, carpets, heaters, coal and etc. ACTED cooperated with GAA to ensure that heaters provided are energy efficient;

- Provision of assistance to households affected by the spring floods and mudflows by providing them with Emergency/Transitional shelters.

Results of the rapid assessment conducted in Pyanj and Qumsangir districts, indicated that affected population has started the construction of new houses by their own means. However, due to limited resources houses are built without any consideration of building norms and in most of the cases construction has not completed. Therefore, affected population were provided with some complimentary materials, such as window frames, roofing materials and others, which will allow having premises to be used as transitional shelter during the winter period.

- Reduction of the risk of the onset of water-borne diseases in disaster-affected communities through provision of access to safe water and hygiene promotion

The same rapid assessment indicated that affected population doesn't have access to clean water, since there is no functioning water supply system and no water source at nearby locations. In frames of the current project, one water supply system will rehabilitated and awareness raising campaign on water borne diseases among 84 000 affected population.

Mr. Mansurova, informed the participants that throughout the project implementation cooperation with local authorities of Pyanj district was very fruitful and authorities were very supportive to the project activities. However local authorities of Qumsangir district were not supportive to the project activities, but rather reluctant. She mentioned that new safe lands were not allocated to population up to now and affected population is forced to construct new houses in the same locations. Therefore, Ms. Mansurova said that she would like to request REACT partners, as well as REACT forum as a whole to assist in lobbying this issue to agenda of Qumsangir district authorities.

Mr. Alisho Shomahmadov from CoES, replied that in order to undertake any actions from CoES side they need more detailed information on this case, therefore he requested ACTED to prepare a brief overview of the situation.

6. Establishment of REACT Steering Committee – Next Steps

Ms. Shahlo Rahimova from REACT Secretariat (UNDP DRMP) reminded to participants that during December 09-January 10 voting on establishment of REACT Steering Committee was held. Overall 25 organizations participated at the voting procedure and 21 out of voting organizations voted on having one steering committee dealing both with emergency and non-emergency issues. Composition of the proposed steering committee as follows:

- CoES (Chair)
- An UNRC Representative (Alternate Chair)
- The WASH Sector Lead Organization (UNICEF)
- The Food Security Lead Organization (WFP or FAO)
- The Health Sector Lead Organization (WHO)
- The Shelter/NFI Sector Lead Organization (IFRC or UNHCR)
- The Education Sector Lead Organization (UNICEF or SCF)
- A donor representative
- An NGO representative
- An NGO representative
- REACT Secretariat (DRMP)

At this stage the outstanding issue with functioning of the REACT Steering Committee remains the nomination of representatives of clusters, donors and NGOs to be the member of REACT Steering Committee. Currently it is required to conduct selections between:

- Clusters:
 - o Food Sec: WFP or FAO;
 - o Shelter NFI: IFRC or UNHCR;
 - o Education: UNICEF or Save the Children;
- Donors: GTZ, SDC and ECHO;
- NGOs: ACT CA, ACTED, Mission East, FOCUS , Global Partners, FSD, Caritas Int, Save the Children, Habitat, CAMP Kuhiston, Caritas Switzerland, Counterpart Int, GAA, MTI, OXFAM, Help Age Int, CESVI Int, Mercy Corps and VSO.

Ms. Rahimova added that REACT Secretariat in Dushanbe is ready to provide any assistance needed to abovementioned groups in arrangements of the selections.

Ms. Marydean Purves from Mission East commented that considering the large number of NGO-REACT members, maybe the number of representatives in REACT Steering Committee should be increased.

Ms. Shahlo Rahimova, replied that in accordance to Terms of Reference of REACT Steering Committee, this committee can suggest changes to the its composition. Therefore, this issue can be addressed to the committee once it starts operating.

Mr. Michael Jones, UN Resident Coordinator added, that at this point looks like that majority of the Steering Committee representatives are UN agencies, considering that UN agencies are leading the clusters, so efforts should be taken to enlarge the representation of NGOs not only in REACT Steering Committee, but in leading the clusters as well.

Ms. Marydean Purves suggested that she can take lead on arrangements of selection, on behalf of NGO community and mentioned that she will be sending out an invitation message to NGO community for a meeting.

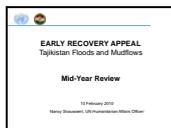
7. News from Partners

Mr. Kholiqnazarov, the chair of the meeting introduced to the participants the new Head of ECHO representation in Central Asia, Mr. Dominique Feron and welcomed him. He mentioned that ECHO representation in Central Asia, previously represented by Mr. Adam Yao was one of the active REACT partners and he hopes that tradition will be continued.

8. Any other business

No other issues were discussed.

Annex I: Power Point Presentation on mid-year review of REACT ER Appeal (UN HAO):



Annex II: List of participants, REACT Meeting, 10 February 2010

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