

Minutes

REACT Meeting

26 June 2018, 14.00 – 16.00 UN Conference Hall

Co-Chairs:

Mr. Rustam Nazarzoda, Chairman, Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES)

Ms. Pratibha Mehta, Resident Coordinator, United Nations in Tajikistan (UNRC)

Summary of discussion:

Welcome remarks:

The co-chairs opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and proceeded with introduction of agency and participants.

Recent emergencies in Tajikistan – Mr. Ummatullo Sunnatulloev, Head of Main Department on Operations Management, CoES

- For the period of January – June 2018, at least 200 natural disasters of different scale occurred, resulting in 17 fatalities and economic damage at around 28 million Tajik Somoni. Khatlon province hit by 13 mudflows, bared the most significant damage at around 19 million Tajik somoni.
- Government, with limited support of REACT partners undertook immediate relief and recovery operations in a timely manner.
- Rapid organization and implementation of necessary measures to localize the outburst of flood and/or mudflow prevents major damages and losses, however requires availability of necessary resources and means, such as machinery, fuel, human capacities and others.

Development Programme of Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of Tajikistan for 2018 – 2022 – Mr. Jamshed Kamolov, Head of Main Department on Protection of Population and Territories, CoES

- Development Programme of CoES for 2018 – 2022 (Programme), endorsed by the Government of Tajikistan in late May 2018, identifies goals, principles, priorities and measures for restructuring and development of state bodies responsible for management of emergency situations and contributes to long-term sustainable development;
- Programme foresees professional and technical capacity building of CoES, as well as improvement of coordination among emergency prevention and response structures. Particularly, Programme foresees:
 - o Improvement of regulatory and legal framework;
 - o Restructuring of CoES, including establishment of new units and services (K-9, phycological assistance, blasting works, water rescue);
 - o Strengthening technical capacities of CoES units (SAR, IMAC, regional sub-divisions) and professional knowledge and skills of staff.
- Around 25 million USD have been committed from different sources (Government ~30% and foreign investments ~70%) for implementation of the Programme.
- Call for partners to support Government and CoES in implementation of the Programme and consideration of its priority areas, while developing new initiatives.

Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise in case of refugees influx into Tajikistan: Lessons Learned – Mr. Vito Trani
UNHCR Representative in Tajikistan

- First ever Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise in case of refugees' influx to Tajikistan (SIMEX) was held during April 10 – 12, 2018 under the leadership of CoES and UNHCR with involvement of over 180 officials from the Tajikistan Government/departments and around 70 staff members from UN and NGOs. SIMEX was organized at three levels: 1) Jaloliddini Balkhi, Khatlon province (camp site); 2) Kurgan-Tube, Khatlon province – Regional Level Coordination; 3) Dushanbe – Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Capital Level Coordination.
- SIMEX was executed successfully and identified several areas, which require further improvements, such as:
 - o Alignment and harmonization of modus operandi between Government and Humanitarian agencies;
 - o Registration and interview technics of newly arrived refugees by MIA;
 - o Assessment of communal buildings to be possibly used for shelter in addition to camp setting;
 - o Promotion and advocacy of "Refugee Protection" principles, as well as concepts of "refugee" and "access to the territory".
- There is a need for regular update of the IACP on mass refugees' influx, regular organization of Table – Top and field exercises, constant awareness raising and capacity building of Government officials on humanitarian principles and concepts of refugees.

REACT emergency response preparedness measures – discussion led by Co-Chairs

- REACT Secretariat proposed draft Earthquake Scenario for development of next REACT IACP (REACT decision as of December 2017), which assumed a major earthquake during night- time, in mid-winter with the epicenter in Rudaki district of Tajikistan – 7,3 M (IX MMI);
- Proposed draft scenario should be revised in a consultative manner (inter-agency) taking into account following considerations:
 - o Epicenter of the EQ should be selected in a location, which will have impact both on urban and rural areas (as impact and accordingly response measures will be different);
 - o Intensity and impact assumptions should not greatly exceed in-country capacities, to ensure most realistic response strategies;
 - o Planning assumptions should be based on realistic data (population and infrastructure).
- Exercising existing REACT Inter-Agency Contingency plan will determine plan's effectiveness and inter REACT's readiness to respond to disasters in a timely manner. Taking into account example of recent SIMEX on refugees' influx, it is advised to undertake joint Inter-Agency Simulation Exercises (table top and/or field).

SOPs on humanitarian response coordination between REACT and Government - discussion led by Co-Chairs

- Many REACT partners possess emergency stocks and mechanisms for rapid response to disasters. However, type and volume of assistance, as well as triggers for release of assistance are regulated by mandate and internal rules of the Agencies. In some cases, requests of the Government cannot be addressed, due to limitations set by mandate and internal rules of the Agencies (for example: often Agencies can not address Government's request to provide diesel fuel required for response activities).
- To ensure effective and predictable response by REACT partners, there is a need to develop and agree on generic "operational guide or standard operating procedures" to be followed by all partners. SoPs should be developed with the consideration of existing approaches, rules and capacities of partner organizations.
- Despite established communication among CoES, individual REACT partners and REACT Secretariat, sometimes information exchange is not ensured in timely manner at on-set of disaster. Therefore, an approach for timely exchange of information on disasters should be agreed and followed;

Upon discussion of the meeting agenda points, following key decisions has been taken:

1. Provide REACT partners with Implementation Plan of Development Programme of CoES, including estimated budget and responsible party for planned initiatives.
2. Ensure regular organization of Table-Top Simulation Exercises on refugees' influx on annual basis and organization of Field Exercises once in three years.
3. Establish a Working Group among interested REACT partners to elaborate and agree Scenario of Earthquake (by end of August 2018) to be provided to REACT Sectors for development of Sector Response Plans.
4. Further elaborate within the same Working Group "operational guide/standard operating procedures" and provide the draft for on-line review of REACT partners.

Closing remarks

- The co-chairs adjourned the meeting by thanking the participants.

Signatures:

REACT Co-Chair

Rustam Nazarzoda

Chairman of Committee of Emergency Situations
under the Government of Tajikistan

REACT Co-Chair

Pratibha Mehta

UN Resident Coordinator in Tajikistan