Global CAP Launch

Mr. John Holmes, launched the annual Consolidated Appeal 2010 in Geneva on 30 November 2009, Photo/UNOCHA.

The Humanitarian Update is a monthly publication from UN OCHA's Regional Office in Cairo, reporting on the main humanitarian events in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. For more information on Iraq or OPT, please visit www.ochairaqq.org and www.ochaopt.org

Global CAP Launch

> United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes, launched the annual Consolidated Appeal 2010 in Geneva on 30 November 2009. The 2010 Appeals' combined requirement of US$7.1 billion aim at delivering vital aid to 48 million persons across 25 countries around the world in twelve major humanitarian crises. Conflict is a common factor in many of these crises, but it is not their only driver; most crises are exacerbated by the accumulated stresses of adverse weather, protracted refugee situations, extreme chronic poverty and economic recession. The 2010 Appeals present strategic, concerted action plans for each crisis, bringing hundreds of aid organizations together to deliver humanitarian relief effectively and efficiently.

> Humanitarian needs have not increased greatly, but neither have they declined. Moreover, while 2009 has been a relatively mild year for natural disasters, 2010 may not be the same. “We now ask donors to work together and collectively ensure that these joint efforts receive the urgent funding needed to save lives, prevent irrecoverable harm, and restore dignity”, John Holmes said during the opening ceremony. In our region, the humanitarian funding requirements for 2010 for Afghanistan, oPt and Yemen combined amount to a little over US$1.7 billion.

> The country team for Iraq is preparing a modified humanitarian appeal for 2010 reflecting the increase in government capacity and resources, but still proposing certain actions that international humanitarian organizations are best placed to do. In addition, there will be a separate appeal for Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries. Pakistan, among others, is a country with major continuing needs, which is not included in the 2010 Appeals. The 2010 Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP), which the humanitarian community in the process of finalising will be issued during December 2009. For more information on the 2010 Appeals and previous years’ Appeals please visit http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1894 on Protection of Civilians

> The United Nations Security Council adopted its Resolution 1894 on protection of civilians in armed conflicts during its open debate on 11 November 2009. The Resolution 1894 provides an important basis for taking forward several of the recommendations contained in the joint OCHA-DPKO study on the implementation of protection mandates by peacekeeping missions issued early November 2009. These include requesting the development of operational guidance on implementing protection mandates; the development of mission-wide protection strategies, in consultation with humanitarian and human rights actors; improved and more candid reporting by missions to the Security Council on protection concerns; the need for appropriate pre-deployment training for peacekeeping personnel; and increased consultation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop and police contributing countries.

> During the debate, Member States underlined the need for compliance by parties to conflict with their obligations to protect civilians, as recognized in the resolution, and the significance, in this respect, of ensuring accountability for those that violate the law. In this connection, a number

(1) A number of countries were consolidated in one CAP.
Regional workshop on urban risk reduction

The Regional Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

The Regional Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation organized by the UNISDR Regional Office for Arab States, jointly with the League of Arab States' division of Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, and the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery organized the first Arab Regional Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction on 21 - 23 November 2009 in Cairo. About ninety participants from seventeen countries representing key regional and international organizations, United Nations, academic and technical institutions, relevant experts in the region and civil society including community based organizations explored the possibilities of regional cooperation for addressing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The Conference proceedings reiterated that the Arab region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, such as drought, flood, sea level rise, seismic risk, landslides and sandstorms causing a huge stress on the social and economic infrastructure. Additionally, the intensity of some of the disaster impacts pose a serious challenge to the development investments and economic stability in countries of the region. However, countries in the region tend to be predominantly reactive to disasters instead of adopting proactive measures; not enough countries pay attention to disaster prevention strategies, and thus, allocate very little or no resources to mitigate disasters. Many countries also lack adequate disaster legislation and implementation mechanisms, others have put in place mechanisms, yet poor coordination amongst various national disaster management institutions reduces the efficiency of their interventions. Increasing climate risk trends will only make the current scenario more unpredictable for the humanitarian community and as conclusions from this recent Conference outline, it will be essential to take these factors into account while planning for risk reduction measures within the context of a changing climate.

Regional workshop on urban risk reduction

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery of the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme in Syria and the Syrian Ministry for Local Administration convened a regional workshop on Urban Risk Reduction in Damascus on 4 - 5 November 2009. More than forty participants representing local authorities, researchers, academic experts, international and regional organizations have gathered to discuss regional priorities and challenges with respect to urban risk reduction as well as key actions to be undertaken regionally, nationally and locally to build safer cities and increase resilience to disasters. Several experiences and initiatives on urban risk reduction were discussed with progress, challenges and gaps in undertaking risk assessment. Tools for risk assessment were presented and participants shared experiences on disaster risk reduction and building cities’ resilience in the context of a changing climate, rapidly growing population and absence of integrated urban risk reduction approaches at regional, national and local levels. Several issues emerged as key priorities for consideration in future actions and the participants agreed on a set of recommendations including establishing a regional task force for urban risk reduction and undertaking an inventory on existing initiatives to reduce urban risk.

The biannual World Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction 2010 - 2011 "Building Resilient Cities, Addressing Urban Risk" was presented in the workshop aiming at engaging local governments and technical experts from the region in the global campaign and highlighting good practices and models from the region in enhancing cities resilience. Safety and resilience of critical infrastructure, particularly health facilities and schools was also discussed during the workshop. For more information on the conference, the workshop and UNISDR please visit http://www.unisdr.org/arabstates/
IRAQ

Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan 2010

» The United Nations is preparing a new humanitarian strategy for Iraq in 2010, which builds upon the developments in the country in 2008-2009. Decreased levels of violence and eased movement restrictions has allowed the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations to reach almost all of Iraq’s 116 districts, where new needs have been identified, particularly in terms of water and sanitation, shelter and education. The security situation has visibly improved: yet new challenges may appear with the February 2010 elections and unresolved status of Kirkuk and other areas claimed by both Iraq’s Kurdish and Arab population.

» Internal displacement in 2009 has decreased considerably compared to 2006-2007\(^2\); the 2009 displacement caused mainly by the drought which affected the north-western parts of Iraq. Yet as of mid-2009, there were some 2.5 million IDPs in Iraq\(^3\) and well over one million refugees abroad, mainly in Syria and Jordan. IDP and refugee returns are taking place, although at a slower pace than what was initially expected. There is a concern that the consequences of the internal strife between Iraq’s Shia’a and Sunni communities in 2006-2007 may have a long-lasting impact: since according to IOM surveys, some 45% of IDPs prefer to settle where they are or move elsewhere, but not to their home areas\(^4\). Surveys among the refugees in Syria indicate that some 80% continue to be hesitant about their return prospects.

» Improved security situation and limited new internal displacement have allowed the United Nations to look beyond the immediate humanitarian fallout of the 2003 war and ensuing conflict. Millions of Iraqis remain extremely vulnerable due to the combined effect of pre-2003 state policies and international sanctions, as well as the recent conflict and related displacement, collapse of public services and neglect. While there have been visible improvements in some areas where returns of IDPs have occurred, many areas remain vulnerable. These include areas in northern and north-western Iraq, large swathes of southern Iraq, and districts in central Iraq that were affected by violence in previous years. Despite these concerns, the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations’ bulk of activities in 2010 focus on 26 priority districts, where subject to available funding - a comprehensive package of assistance will be provided to address the needs ranging through protection, through health and education to provision of water and food for the poorest families.

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\(^2\) Some 1.6 million Iraqis were displaced after 22 February 2006 Samarra bombings, compared to some 200 families in 2009.
\(^3\) Source: UNHCR Iraq October 2009 Monthly Statistical Update on Return.
\(^4\) Source: IOM Governorate profiles.

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YEMEN
What’s next for the Yemeni crisis?

» The sixth round of fighting between the Government of Yemen and the Houthi group continued for the fourth consecutive month with no indication that it will stop any time soon. The violence forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes; too, it has forced many displaced by the previous rounds of fighting, to a second or third displacement leaving them with no subsistence and in a very precarious situation. Access to the majority of displaced persons residing outside the camps - estimated to be over 100,000 persons - remain a serious concern. Access to camps or areas where displaced population are known to be residing, is also sporadic since it is dictated by insecurity, particularly difficult operating environment and poor infrastructure. Despite this particularly difficult operational environment, humanitarian actors continue providing life saving assistance. In the South, tension remain high, with five persons killed during the last clashes between the security forces and the separatist protesters during a rally organized by the latter on 25 November 09. The shaky economic situation, extreme poverty and environmental degradation are further exacerbating the fragility of Yemen. For more information on the situation in Yemen, please refer to OCHA Situation Reports on [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

SYRIA
Syria Drought Response Plan

» WFP received one million Australian dollars (estimated US$ 920,000) a contribution from the Australian Government to fund its projects under the Syria Drought Response Plan. Spain has provided around US$ 700,000 and the CERF over US$ 3.2 million to kick start projects presented by WFP, FAO, UNICEF and UNDP. WFP has concluded its emergency operation “Assistance to Victims of Drought” on 30 November 2009 with assistance provided to 38,917 families out of the 40,000 targeted (97% of target). A successive new emergency operation “Emergency Response to the Drought in the Northeast Syria”, designed under the Syria Drought Response Plan has started on 1 December 2009. The new project aims to tackle nutritional deficiency among the most vulnerable drought-affected population with particular attention to women and children under five.

The United Nations is still concerned that just a few weeks before the planting season is over, the Syria Drought Response Plan has received a little over US$4 million (as of end November 09) from the total required US$ 53 million. In the course of the month of November 2009, Syria United Nations Country Team organized a field mission for a number of European Union mission representatives to get a first hand information from the ground. The northeast and the Badia region of Syria were hit by the worst drought in 40 years as rain failed for three consecutive years. The drought caused devastating losses for about 1.3 million people, of whom more than 800,000 were severely affected.

IRAN
Iran assesses its disaster preparedness

» Over the past month, Iran has experienced over 60 earthquakes that thrilled various parts of the country with the strongest recorded of 4.9 magnitude on Richter scale in Badarabbas on 4 November 2009. Mild injuries and damages were reported to date, but no death. The Disaster Management Organization (DMO) conducted several earthquake drills to assess the preparedness of its institutions and raise awareness of the communities.
especially among school students. Conducting Mock Drills has become ordinary function of the national disaster authorities in the disaster prone provinces. On 29 November 2009 the Ministry of Interior, with the Ministry of Education, the Iranian Red Crescent Society, selected Municipalities and other disaster management organs implemented the Eleventh Earthquake and Safety manoeuvre to raise the community preparedness and awareness when facing an earthquake.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Flash floods hit Jeddah after a heavy downpour

Floods that tore through the port city of Jeddah after a heavy downpour killed at least 103 persons, destroyed homes, properties and government infrastructure; the total unofficial estimates of the damages are in hundreds of millions of dollars. The authorities of the Saudi Arabia provided food, temporary housing for those made homeless, other relief items and has ordered compensation to families of the victims. The Saudi authorities have also ordered an investigation to look into the circumstances surrounding the incidents and to determine responsibilities’ of its various institutions. Thus far, international assistance was not requested.

Upcoming events:
» 7-8 December 2009, United Nations contingency plan in Rabat, Morocco.
» 7-18 December 2009, United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.
» 10-12 January 2010, Sphere training in Arabic in Abu Dhabi, UAE organized by the United Arab Emirates Foreign Aid Coordination Office (FACO).

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