Pakistan: Humanitarians seek $460 Million to respond to immense Flood Disaster

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners in Pakistan will require nearly US$460 million over the coming weeks to meet the urgent needs of millions of people, according to the Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan for Pakistan launched by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes on the 11 August.

The Government of Pakistan estimates that more than 14 million people have been affected by the floods which have devastated large parts of the country from north to south. Shelter is an urgent priority and $105 million is required to provide tents or plastic sheeting, as well as basic household goods, for an initial target of over two million people. More than 65,000 tents have already been delivered, covering at least 450,000 people.

With a high risk of a food crisis, food assistance will be necessary for up to six million people across the country, requiring $150.5 million. So far, the World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners have delivered more than 4,350 metric tons of food to at least 370,000 people, including in the remote Swat Valley.

Clean water is due to be provided to approximately six million people who may otherwise face an increasing risk of waterborne diseases, requiring $110.5 million. More than one million people have already received clean water thanks to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and its partners.

Funds are also required for emergency health care, nutrition for children and for pregnant or lactating women - some of the most vulnerable. Different types of medication have been distributed for prevention and treatment of diseases.

“The response of the international community has so far been encouraging. It is essential that this continues”, said Mr. Holmes. As of 11 August, donors had committed or contributed nearly $50 million to the response of the UN and its partners, and nearly $100 million had been pledged.

Kyrgyzstan Civil Unrest leaves a Trail of humanitarian Needs

More than one million people in Kyrgyzstan were immediately affected in the aftermath of the widespread civil unrest, violence and displacement that gripped the southern parts of the country in mid-June. The unrest was concentrated in and around the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad.

The humanitarian community estimates that 400,000 people, including internally displaced persons (iDP), returnees, and host families remain directly affected by the violence and still require humanitarian assistance. The protection and well-being of these people is the top priority for the humanitarian partners. The affected population includes 375,000 people who have experienced displacement internally or across the border. Although many have returned home, some 75,000 people are still displaced, half of them because their houses have been destroyed or badly damaged, while others are reluctant to return due to fear and insecurity.
The Humanitarian Country Team in Kyrgyzstan is now concerned that the revised humanitarian Flash Appeal issued for the country and requesting US$96.4 million remains underfunded at 30 percent. Critical sectors of the response such as Education, Community Restoration/Early Recovery and Agriculture are affected. Other underfunded sectors are Logistics (17 percent funded), Shelter (18 percent), Water & Sanitation and Hygiene (18 percent), Health (20 percent) and Protection (29 percent).

Education has for example received no money at all despite the fact that the most effective way of having children return to normalcy will be a successful start to the school year in September. Also without funding are transitional and early recovery programmes which are needed for medium- and long-term reconstruction as well as reconciliation and peace-building.

Of time-critical importance is to find durable shelter solutions before the onset of winter expected in mid-October for those whose houses have been destroyed. Unless funds are provided in the coming weeks, the lack of shelter in the south will result in continued displacement of communities, warns the Humanitarian Country Team in Kyrgyzstan.

Launch of UAE Foreign Aid Report 2009

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) contributed US$2.43 billion in foreign aid to countries around the world in 2009. Of this amount, almost $112 million (4.6 percent) went to humanitarian aid, according to the UAE Foreign Aid 2009 report which was launched on 30 June in Abu Dhabi by his Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

The report is a first of its kind and was prepared by the UAE’s Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid (OCFA). Development and humanitarian aid benefited 92 countries in the world last year with Yemen as the largest recipient ($775 million). Fifty-two percent of all foreign aid was allocated to the Middle East region.

The objective of the UAE Foreign Aid 2009 report is to produce a comprehensive empirical analysis of foreign aid from the UAE and to track the aid to countries all over the world. Another core goal of the report is to encourage other donor governments and organizations in the region to produce similar reports.

Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid (OCFA)
http://ocfa.gov.ae/

Programme for stranded migrants receives new backing in Libya

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF) on the 5 July signed an agreement to fund IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return Centre in the Janzour district of the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The centre provides temporary accommodation, medical assistance, support and counselling for up to 40 migrants. It is also a training ground for Libyan counterparts to strengthen their expertise on assisted voluntary returns. The 63,000 EUR (US$83,000) donation will cover the costs of running the centre until the end of the year.
The centre is part of a broader EU-funded initiative to provide rapid humanitarian responses to stranded migrants and give information about the dangers of irregular migration and the option of voluntary return and reintegration in their country of origin. Since its opening in 2008, the centre has facilitated comprehensive voluntary return and return assistance to more than 3,000 stranded migrants. 

Find IOM Libya on [http://www.iom.int/](http://www.iom.int/)

**Jordan: Dialogue on Pandemic Preparedness in national Disaster Preparedness**

In Jordan, 45 civil society organizations and officials from the Jordanian Civil Defense and the Ministry of Health agreed to strengthen the dialogue to find common strategies to disaster preparedness that includes, as an integrated element, preparedness for pandemics. They also agreed to establish mechanisms to develop partnerships between the Government and civil society organizations.

These were the main outcomes of a workshop in Amman 25-26 July organized by the Pandemic Influenza Contingency Unit of OCHA. The workshop dealt with the impact of a possible pandemic outbreak on all levels of society, also in sectors not focusing on public health. The workshop participants acknowledged the need to build capacity through training of staff and to increase the number of volunteers in the different governorates in Jordan.

Meanwhile, the WHO announced that the pandemic influenza H1N1 is now over but that the virus is expected to continue to circulate as a seasonal virus for some years to come.

**Joint UN-OIC Humanitarian Strategy in the making**

At the General Meeting between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Istanbul from 29 June to 1 July, OCHA and the humanitarian branch of the OIC agreed to work together with other major humanitarian partners to develop a joint UN-OIC Humanitarian Strategy. With focal points to follow up, a series of action points were drawn up to move the agreement forward, focusing on areas of common interest.

The UN and OIC will also work together towards increasing humanitarian space, raising awareness of humanitarian issues and formulate a joint strategy encouraging non-traditional donors to increase their assistance to humanitarian operations through multilateral mechanisms such as consolidated humanitarian appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), trust funds, pool funds, etc.

Jointly, the UN and OIC aim to enhance the participation of NGOs from OIC Member States in the appeal processes and include them more consistently in coordination structures in the field such as Humanitarian Country Teams, the cluster system and in inter-agency assessments. 

See [www.oic-oci.org](http://www.oic-oci.org)

**Earthquakes in Iran kill one, injure 200**

Earthquakes killed one and injured some 200 people in Iran in July. A total of 252 earthquakes were registered in the country and four of them measured over 5 on the Richter scale (magnitude 5.8 and 5.2 on the 20 July, magnitude 5.7 on the 30 July and magnitude 5.8 on the 31 July). The earthquakes also severely damaged dozens of villages which had to be evacuated.

**Humanitarian Inter-agency Network looks at Climate Change Adaptation**

The Inter-Agency Coordination Network on Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Middle East and North Africa, also known as MENA Group, serves as the main platform facilitating information-sharing and coordination between IASC partners’ regional offices. The inter-agency network held its eighth biannual meeting in Cairo on 28 - 29 June 2010 with representatives from nine UN and three international organizations and one NGO regional office.

Participants discussed inter-agency support to priority countries in the region, the operating environment for humanitarian agencies and emerging thematic priorities such as climate change and pandemic preparedness. It was agreed, among other things, to identify a path forward with regards to strengthening disaster preparedness in the context of climate change. Terms of reference for a consultancy on mapping climate risk information and disaster risk reduction interventions in context of climate change adaptation will be prepared. It was also noted that countries, such as Syria which has been affected by inadequate rainfall for the past four years, represents an opportunity for partners to coordinate their interventions in support of climate change adaptation programming.
The meeting was informed of an initiative of the Arab League’s Council of Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) to develop an Arab Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy. Participants agreed to provide support to this initiative.

**West Bank: One in Four Refugees cannot meet basic Food Needs**

According to a food security assessment in the West Bank carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 24.4 percent of Palestinian refugees here are food insecure and cannot meet their basic food needs.

These people include 2,500 Bedouin and herding families (16,200 refugees) and 18,000 other refugee families (130,726 refugees) living in towns and villages across the West Bank. UNRWA’s Da’am Project, which was launched in 2009 to identify the poorest families, has determined that 85,290 refugee families are eligible for humanitarian assistance. Refugees living in Area C and families depending on a herding livelihood have the highest rates of food insecurity reaching 79 percent. Camp populations and rural villages have the second highest levels of food vulnerability at almost 50 percent.

According to UNRWA, the main cause of food insecurity is lack of access to markets due to the Israeli closures and restrictions on movement.

UNRWA’s 2010 Emergency Appeal targets a total of 263,776 food vulnerable refugees with cash-for-work and/or emergency food assistance. The agency currently seeks funding to provide half of the daily caloric requirements of the food vulnerable refugee families and also to create 80,000 short-term job opportunities. During the first quarter of 2010, UNRWA provided short-term job opportunities for 21,300 families and as a result, 7,900 food insecure refugee families were able to earn enough money to cover their basic food needs during that period.

**Growing Food with little Water: More Crop per Drop**

Countries in the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere, with vast dry tracts and threatened by increasingly frequent droughts as the climate becomes more capricious, will have to rethink food production. Agricultural policies need to shift from a focus on ‘land productivity’ to ‘water productivity’, says Theib Oweis of the Syria-based International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in a compilation of abstracts of new research presented in book form earlier this year.

Growing food will be about “more crop per drop”, rather than getting the most out of every bit of land, he says.

Dry lands cover more than 40 percent of the global land area, and are home to nearly a third of the world’s population, 90 percent of whom live in developing countries. The book provides a valuable snapshot of research that is probing the impact of climate change in countries like Qatar (a country of 95 percent desert), Jordan, Sudan and Syria, and trying to develop coping strategies along the way.

(From IRIN report)

Abstracts from Food Security and Climate Change in Dry Areas see
Syria: Restoring 2,000 Years old Wells to provide fresh Water

By cleaning, widening and deepening ancient Roman and Arab wells, history is today contributing to solving the problem of access to safe drinking water in drought-stricken northeastern Syria.

In partnership with the Government of Syria and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, UNDP and project partners in 2009 began the rehabilitation of the wells that were originally dug some 2,000 years ago in the countryside of northeastern Syria. Ninety-five wells have been surveyed and to date, 35 of them have been or are being rehabilitated to provide clean drinking water for an estimated 18,000 people and their livestock.

Water scarcity in northeastern Syria, the country’s poorest region, has been exacerbated by several years of drought which has severely affected the country’s rural poor and has prompted substantial migration and displacement. According to UNDP, the wells contribute to local development and will reduce the pressure on rural residents to migrate to urban centres which has been the preferred coping mechanism for the drought-affected population.

The rehabilitation process is concluded by handing the wells over to the local authorities and communities. Photo: UNDP Syria

The benefits for the local population have encouraged the private sector to contribute to this initiative: The French oil company TOTAL will contribute $30,000 to rehabilitate three wells and the DZ Chamber of Commerce and Industry will contribute $48,880 to rehabilitate six wells.

The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation has already contributed $129,366, and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has provided $200,000 to the project.

Upcoming Events:

The UN General Assembly in December 2008 decided that World Humanitarian Day should be marked on 19 August every year to “contribute to increasing public awareness about humanitarian work and the importance of international cooperation, and to commemorate all humanitarian and UN and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the course of duty”. There will be World Humanitarian Day events and public outreach in countries across the MENACA region on and around the 19 August.

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