

Afghanistan

Executive Summary 2006

The situation of Afghanistan can be summarized as a partially in conflict with frequent natural disasters affecting a vulnerable population, coupled with a very weak infrastructural make-up.

The continued drought in 2006 affected a population of approximately 2.5 million in 13 provinces of Afghanistan of which five, namely, Samangan, Sari-Pul, Balkh, Faryab and Ghor were the most affected and continue to suffer from its long-term effects. About 80 percent of farming households in the above provinces are dependent on rain-fed agricultural production. Rainfall stopped at flowering stage of wheat resulted in drastic yield reduction. The effects of the drought in the affected provinces triggered widespread household food shortage. Under-five child malnutrition and subsequent morbidity and mortality in drought-affected areas above the existing national malnutrition rate of 54 percent for chronic malnutrition and 7 percent for acute malnutrition in the country were worsening. Nutrition supplies and strengthening therapeutic feeding units (TFUs) were key to treating malnourished children detected through surveillance and referral to hospitals. CERF funds were requested for this purpose.



In the North, Government of Afghanistan (GoA) assessment reports indicated that over 100,000 families were located in pockets with a major shortage of drinking water. The affected areas in the north generally face a drought situation every year. Lack of rain has further affected the depletion of the under-ground shallow water table. Water catchments and water collection ground tanks have run dry because of the lack of rain. In addition, shallow ground water is saline in nature and hence it is not suitable for drinking water. CERF funds were requested for the provision of water for these severely affected areas, in particular through the establishment of strategic water points.

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Table 1: Agencies that received funds in 2006

Total amount of humanitarian funding required (per reporting year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$ 119,769,805 (\$ 76,391,754 in the July 2006 Appeal and \$ 43,378,051 in the October 2006 Appeal) Committed or contributed (2006): \$ 40,748,692 (CERF contributions included)
Total amount of CERF funding received by under-funded window	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$ 32,304,627
Total amount of CERF funding for direct UN/IOM implementation and total amount forwarded to implementing partners	

<p>Total number of beneficiaries targeted and reached with CERF funding (disaggregated by sex/age)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approximately 2 million people, living in rain fed agro-ecological zones
<p>Geographic areas of implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 22 provinces affected by drought (Badakhshan, Badghis, Baghlan, Balkh, Daykundi, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Hirat, Jawzjan, Khost, Kunarha, Kunduz, Paktika, Parwan, Samagan, Sari Pul, Takhar, Uruzgan and Zabul)

Decision-making

The UN Country Team (UNCT) under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator together with the Government assessed the situation and decided to make a joint appeal for support from the CERF in the areas of food security, health, and nutrition, and WASH. The needs of the population affected by the drought were assessed and an appropriate response was prepared through coordination meetings with grassroots organizations, implementing partners and relevant Government agencies, mainly the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. Sectoral needs and priorities were decided based on the recommendation of the each agency, as each had its own partners and means of information gathering and identification and prioritization of projects.

Due to the fragile security situation, inaccessibility to security-compromised areas remains the major challenge. Some agencies also raised their concern about the limited participation of UN staff in the assessment mission.

Implementation

For the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and their implementing partners were the key partners of this operation. Coordination in information gathering and needs assessment was important for the success of the initiative. Implementation went as smoothly as possible given the challenges of Afghanistan. However, support from the CERF was made available for a three-month implementation period only. Follow-up and monitoring therefore needed to be funded through other channels in order to ensure sustainability of the activities.

WFP's drought response was implemented using the agreed modalities and institutional arrangements with the Government of Afghanistan, under PRRO 10427.0 "Protracted Relief and Reconstruction in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan – 2006 - 2008." Two types of food aid interventions were implemented by WFP under the drought response:

- (1) Provision of general emergency food rations to save lives, and
- (2) A Food for Work (FFW)/assets ration.

For the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), CERF funds were utilized in the direct procurement of supplies by the individual agencies, provision of supplies to Government for their services or delivery to families, and provision of supplies to families through NGOs. Also included were contracting services, in particular the establishment of water-points either through the Government or directly through private contractors where Government capacity is lacking.

For the World Health Organization (WHO) from the very beginning, the project proposal was closely coordinated with other partners like the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), UN agencies especially UNICEF, and implementing stakeholders of the health programme. Their close coordination and partnership with these organizations allowed them to avoid duplication and support each other in their respective objectives.

The provision of humanitarian assistance in a complex and insecure environment like Afghanistan required close inter-agency collaboration, provided under the leadership of UNAMA, in relation to programme delivery, access to areas and affected populations, coordination and monitoring of the emergency relief interventions. Partnerships between the Government (particularly the National Emergency Response Commission and Department of Disaster Preparedness), donors, UNAMA and other UN agencies, as well as with NGO, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and the International Stabilisation Force for Afghanistan (ISAF), and on-going dialogue among all stakeholders, were important. There were discussions on a number of levels, such as forming common strategies to overcome resource and operational constraints, and conducting joint advocacy on behalf of persons affected by the drought.

Most of the cooperating/implementing partners were local organizations, which have limited capacity in project management and monitoring. Under this emergency programme and previous relief and development activities, continuous investment has been made by agencies to build their capacity and ability to achieve the purpose of agreed partnerships. Particular priority has been given to fostering and strengthening local NGOs' organisational capacity in aid programme management.

CERF projects were implemented by the UN agencies and their Government counterparts in the provinces. There are different levels of coordination and partnership in Afghanistan:

National level

Emergency efforts are coordinated by the National Emergency Response Commission chaired by the Vice President. Ministries, UN agencies, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) and key international NGOs are members. The Commission endorsed the joint Government-UN appeal. The UNCT was the forum for coordinating an effective emergency response by the UN system, and it decided to request CERF assistance to support the immediate response to the drought.

Provincial Level

The Provincial Disaster Management Committee is the lead in emergency preparedness and response, and it is chaired by the Provincial Governor. Government agencies, UN agencies, NGOs and Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) are members. NGOs work closely with the Committee and the individual UN agencies in providing assistance and often are the only organisations able to access affected families and implement the projects in conflict-affected areas where there are security restrictions.

Grass-root level

Key government departments work closely with communities. These communities played a crucial role in providing temporary shelters to the deported families and in the identification of sites for water points. They also committed to maintain them in the future.

The main Government counterparts were:

- Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)
- Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)
- Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)
- Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR)
- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Ministry of Refugees and Returnees (MoRR), and
- Communities-based organizations/community Shuras

For UNICEF and WHO, the main Government counterparts were the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), and the regional health and water bureaux. CERF funds were utilized for the direct procurement of supplies by individual agencies, including the UN, Government, and NGOs, and for the contracting of services, in particular the provision of water points, which were created by the government and private contractors.

For WFP, the CERF grants were used exclusively to purchase and distribute food commodities and to cover other costs related to food-based interventions implemented under the drought response. No WFP implementing partners (neither Government counterparts nor local NGOs) benefited from the CERF funding.

Results

Food Sector

- Procurement of assorted food commodities, mainly in Pakistan
- Planning of interventions with Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and implementing partners, at provincial/district levels and agreement over modalities, in terms of targeting criteria, food basket, logistics, food distribution locations, procedures, etc.
- Registration of beneficiaries and preparation of detailed beneficiary lists
- Preparation of food distribution plans and joint agreements with partners
- Creation of food management committees
- Delivery of over 24,000 metric tons by the end of the year, under the drought response, through the provision of general food rations and food incentives under asset creations projects, following the FFW scheme
- Close monitoring and supervision of projects to ensure that emergency food was distributed to the most vulnerable people and that the assets created were owned by and actually benefit the communities

Agriculture Sector

- 20,000 vulnerable farming families targeted – 24,460 reached

- 1,000 tons of certified wheat seed planned – 1.213 metric tons actually procured and distributed
- 1,000 metric tons of di-ammonium phosphate and 1,000 tons of urea planned – 1,365 tones of fertilizer actually distributed
- 0.35 hectares (ha) planted in irrigated land and 0.55 ha in rain-fed land per beneficiary was planned – the actual figures were 0.6 ha in rain-fed fields and 0.4 ha in irrigated fields
- 10,565 ha (estimated total) was planted and cultivated by all beneficiaries
- Wheat yields per beneficiary were 1.0-1.5 metric tons /ha for rain-fed fields and 3.0-4.0 metric tons /ha for irrigated fields
- Total wheat yield was estimated at 21,587-29,625 metric tons
- Surplus wheat was available for sale, giving families income from sales (a family budget analysis will be conducted at the evaluation stage)
- The reimbursement, type and amount and the number and type of agricultural grassroots projects initiated can only be ascertained after the 2007 harvest

Health Sector

- Thirty-four health workers in the drought-affected provinces were trained on screening, prevention, and control of moderate and acute malnutrition.
- Six therapeutic feeding units were established in drought-affected provinces of Ghor, Sari-pul, Zabul, Nemroz and Uruzgan to provide nutrition support to severely malnourished children.
- 7,723 kg F-75, 32,860 kg F-100, 1,5200 kg Re-So-Mal, 37,128 kg Plumpy nut, 614 kg Therapeutic CMV, 1,452 kg BP-5, 270,000 sachets of oral re-hydration salts, and 50 emergency health kits were procured and dispatched
- Therapeutic feeding units' admission reporting in the six newly established and 22 existing therapeutic feeding units in drought-affected areas were strengthened through integration with Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Health Management Information System (HMIS), which ensured timely and complete reporting. So far, 4,405 malnourished children have been treated in the therapeutic feeding units
- Essential life-saving emergency health supplies were provided
- Safe transportation means was provided for the health programme (originally, there were no MOSS compliant vehicles – now they have six armoured cars).
- Health staff orientation on emergency response (baseline 20 percent, now 60 percent)
- Strengthened the disease surveillance and early warning system (baseline 50 percent – now 60 percent)
- Education campaign for Community Awareness on Communicable Disease and Malnutrition Prevention
- Develop emergency medical guidelines/IEESC (baseline zero – after the project 1,000 copies)
- Health staff/response teams incentive (baseline US\$ 40/month from Government – during the project US\$ 300/month from the CERF project)

The immediate response was very helpful and enabled a prompt procurement process. It has also helped to expedite food delivery, particularly in remote mountainous locations prior to the onset of snowfall. It was furthermore very effective in enabling WFP to implement an early humanitarian response using its own available Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) resources in order to address the most urgent needs of drought-affected people at a moment (mid-year) when WFP was facing serious funding shortfalls. The grant facility is an excellent flexible tool to improve the response. As there are no specific restrictions linked to the

fund, it enabled WFP to use the resources wherever assistance was most needed, in an effective manner.

In terms of the agriculture response, this was achieved before the sowing time. It enabled communities to avoid the very real and damaging threat of food insecurity, as the situation with the depletion of stocks from last year would have been severe for them.

The value of the CERF to the health sector was in the speed with which it could meet the new set of needs created by the drought, rather than being used to fund core elements of an existing emergency response that was underfunded.

Each agency monitored and evaluated its own projects, using its own staff and those of its implementing partners, whether national or international NGOs, and usually also their key Government counterpart.

WFP's results-based management approach has the objective of providing regular information on the implementation of projects and detecting possible malfunctions in order to allow for corrective measures and provide feedback on the project's effects and the degree to which its immediate objectives are reached. During the regular monitoring undertaken by WFP, the focus is on collecting:

- (i) Core information, mostly related to project implementation and the production of outputs and
- (ii) Complementary information, such as indicators of project effects and other qualitative information. This information is collected through beneficiary contact, focus groups discussions, and post-distribution monitoring.

The agricultural project was monitored by the FAO Afghanistan Monitoring and Evaluation Unit as well as by the extension workers of the Department of Agriculture.

In areas open for UN missions monitoring was done by UNICEF staff on the ground accompanied by relevant Government counterparts. Project monitoring and evaluation was carried out by WHO and Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), with the WHO Regional Office also involved. Communities also provide regular feedback on progress and monitor project implementation. The UNICEF project was monitored in line with the baseline output and outcome indicators.

CERF funding had positive impacts on local response mechanisms. Local response teams were exhausted from bearing the main responsibility with almost no resources at hand. Fund allocation from the CERF reactivated and motivated these local response mechanisms and this surge in the emergency response and the reactivation of the national response operation attracted the attention of the media.

Overall, the impact of CERF funding was extremely positive for the most vulnerable people affected by the severe drought as it improved UN agencies' humanitarian response. It also encouraged other donors to provide the additional resources required to cover the shortfalls.

Lessons Learned

Although ostensibly a funding mechanism designed for sudden onset emergencies, the CERF has proved a crucial tool for responding effectively to a protracted emergency/slow-onset emergencies such as drought, crop failure and population displacement.

The main lesson learned is the value of the CERF to implement a quick and effective response, which saved lives and mitigated the impact of the drought. Its three-month implementation period meant that procurement had to be done rapidly in order to comply with the requirements of the rapid response fund. Nevertheless, lengthy assessment and slow bidding processes, together with cumbersome Government financial regulations and insufficient capacity to evaluate implementing partners, meant that a number of projects, such as the strategic water-point project, started very late. Consequently, some work had to be carried over from 2006 into 2007.

The creation of strategic water-points was found to be not a suitable technology for delivering safe drinking water to an emergency affected population in Afghanistan at this time, due mainly to a lack of hydro-geological data in the country. Due to the high cost of installing strategic water-points, a programme can only be implemented if there is a high degree of certainty of water availability at deep levels. Strategic water-points also require high maintenance, generators, submersible pumps and other components, which make them complex and costly for communities to maintain in the end.

Access to the affected population and assessment of disaster-affected areas remains an issue. In the South, even Government employees and NGO staff cannot access some areas. Security concerns in many districts prevented the nutrition assessment from taking place there, and transportation of humanitarian assistance was a challenge. UN convoys continue to be potential soft targets, although the use of Government escorts and public transportation assets in certain areas proved to be quite effective.

However, it was perhaps surprising that agricultural activities were sometimes not considered as a priority despite that fact that 85 percent of Afghans depend upon agriculture.

CERF in Action

Provision of food relief to save lives, enhance food security and reduce malnutrition

The food project targeted more vulnerable farming families (24,460) than originally planned (20,000), saving lives and mitigating the impact of the drought on food availability, accessibility, consumption, and livelihoods. It averted food insecurity in the targeted districts through timely provision of food commodities in areas with limited access to markets, where cash interventions were either not practical or were constrained by insecurity. This has prevented rapid deterioration of food security and widespread malnutrition during the lean season, and it has reduced the risk of mortality for the most vulnerable segments of the population and others at risk.

Farming community asset creation to boost self-sufficiency through FFW projects

The provision of food assistance to vulnerable populations, most of whom were farmers, meant that they did not put pressure on more wealthy communities and averted the displacement of some populations, which could not access agricultural inputs, avoiding destabilization of these regions. FFW projects contributed to the welfare of the rural communities; improving their access to markets, health facilities, and irrigation systems, which in turn enhanced crop and food production. Furthermore, the diffusion of good quality agricultural inputs along with technical assistance boosted production.

Increased yields in 2007 through higher quality agricultural inputs and pest control

The Agriculture Prospects Report (APR) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) issued in May 2007 noted that: “Farmers in Afghanistan are looking forward to having a good cereals harvest in 2007. Both irrigated and rain-fed crops are generally in very good condition. Main factors that contributed to good cereal production prospects in 2007 are

- (i) adequate and well distributed rainfall,
- (ii) production and distribution of 13,383 MT of high-yielding Quality Declared Seed (QDS),
- (iii) increased use of chemical fertilizers and
- (iv) timely monitoring and control of pests and diseases.”

Provision of water prevented possible population movement

In the summer 2006, the Northern Provinces of Saripul, Faryab and Samangan were suffering from a serious lack of drinking water in certain areas, leading to concerns over population movements, as families had to travel miles to fetch water as reservoirs dried up and water was no longer available at low levels. The creation of strategic water-points not only ensured safe drinking water for over 50,000 people but also brought communities together and prevented the possible population movements in the search of water.

A stronger surveillance system for nutrition

Some 54 percent of children under five in Afghanistan suffer from moderate or severe stunting. The CERF funding was used to strengthen therapeutic feeding units’ admission reporting. This was possible by integrating with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Health Management Information System (HMIS), which ensured timely and complete reporting. Increased hospital admission trends between 2005 (2,030 cases) and 2006 (4,405 cases) reflected the more critical household food insecurity situation in the later year, but was also partly a product of strengthened case reporting.

Map of Afghanistan (Provinces affected by 2006 drought)

