



MONTHLY HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

June 2008

Summary

The key highlights of the month were the visit of the ERC, the preparation of the “Joint Emergency Appeal: High Food Price and Drought Crisis” for the humanitarian consequences of drought and high food prices, fine-tuning the cluster roll-out, and gaining acceptance of the Afghanistan Civil-Military Guidelines.

1. Security and Access

There is increased evidence of insurgents attacking development projects and agencies and also targeting education facilities, but generally the level of insecurity is as anticipated by UNDSS, with a continuation of asymmetric attacks rather than the ‘spring military offensive’ some predicted.

Quantifying access to population in need of humanitarian assistance is very difficult, but



approximately half the country is inaccessible due to insecurity and/or challenging physical conditions.

Humanitarian space continues to be challenged by the ongoing activities implemented by private contractors and military forces, in particular the PRTs.

2. Cluster Update

Food security and agriculture cluster

As a part of the January appeal, approximately 30,000 Mt of food has already been distributed to nearly 1.4 million beneficiaries. The remaining 63,000 Mt is in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, or enroute to Afghanistan. Expectations remain that all distribution will be completed by end of August 2008.

WFP is in the process of assisting 3,000 drought affected families in Nimroz province; however, it will not cover the entire needs of the affected population. UN Agencies i.e. WFP and UNHCR are assisting battle-displaced families with food and non-food items in Arghandab District of Kandahar Province. Recent fighting in Arghandab

resulted with the displacement of approximately 6,973 families. Reportedly, most of them are now have returned to their places of origin.

WASH Cluster

Current drought conditions are affecting the lives of humans and animals in many communities throughout the country. About 1,150,000 inhabitants in 22 provinces are facing shortage of safe drinking water. These areas are mainly geographically problematic as the ground water is either too low or not safe for drinking.



Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC)

The Emergency Shelter Cluster has agreed and adopted the TOR with UNHCR as the cluster lead and CARE acting as the deputy cluster lead. The overall purpose of the ESC is to improve the coordination of humanitarian responses in the shelter sector in order to address the consequences of rapid onset emergencies whether natural or man made. If emergency related displacement should occur the ESC should develop an appropriate emergency response. The focus is currently on potential drought related displacements and the development of a contingency plan.

Protection Cluster

Possible large displacement as a result of the drought and high food prices is a concern among the cluster as well as the ongoing displacement in the south due to military operations.



Insecurity, landlessness, property disputes, lack of job opportunities or livelihood prospects have been identified as the main reasons preventing the return to areas of origin of many Afghan refugees from Pakistan.

A Human Rights/Humanitarian Affairs strategy was developed to feed into the Protection Cluster with assistance from OCHA Geneva, which outlines the key conflict-related threats to the civilian population in Afghanistan, and sets out actions to address these. These threats had been identified in the Protection of Civilians (POC) Workshop which took place in August 2007 and preceding regional consultations.

Recurrent conflict between Hazara and Kochis resulted in the displacement of 300 IDPs in Giro and Mizhazar villages of Kayab area, Bishud District of Wardak Province. Relief assistance will be provided after the return of the IDP families to their villages.

Health Cluster

Emergency health supplies have been distributed to the eastern and northern region of the country to assist 1,700 IDPs families in Mazar-e-Sharif and returnees from Pakistan in the East. Ministry of Public Health with the support of UNICEF and WHO conducted an oral immunization campaign for Polio Eradication in all Southern Provinces except Nimroz covering 2.3 million children under age of five during the month of June. WHO raised the issue of polio infections with the ERC as 10 polio cases have been reported this year.

Nutrition Cluster

The MoPH completed anthropometric data collection in 11 provinces, providing the following results: Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) of 19.7%, Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) of 13%, Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) of 6.7% in 6-59 months old children, Body Mass Index (BMI) of <18 in 24% of the lactating women, poor nutrition status by mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) in 19% of the sampled pregnant women. However, several cluster members expressed their concern that the figures seem unrealistic, compared to previous surveys: the rate of

severe acute malnutrition is 5 times higher than in surveys carried out in 2000, when the humanitarian situation was extremely precarious (4 years of drought, absence of health services, population displacement due to drought, etc.). They therefore advise caution in using these figures.

3. Protection of Civilians

The number of civilians killed in fighting between insurgents and security forces in Afghanistan has soared by two-thirds in the first half of this year¹.

Overall trends during the reporting month: increase of civilian death inflicted by pro-government forces while decrease on in civilian casualties inflicted by AGEs compared to previous month. There is also an increasing number of attacks (5) on schools in the Northern Region by AGEs.



4. Coordination Update

Clusters have been providing substantive support to the development of the "Joint Emergency Appeal: High Food Price and Drought Crisis".

5. Pending Issues

One of the major pending issues faced by the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster is the absence of the MAIL's 2008 pre-harvest assessment report, which is not yet released, as the MAIL has started an additional verification survey.

6. Upcoming Events

Launch of the Afghanistan Joint Emergency Appeal by the second week of July.

¹ By STEPHEN GRAHAM, Associated Press Writer