

Highlights and Recent Developments

Country highlights

Kazakhstan

- The OCHA office in Almaty has been supporting the development of the 2010-2015 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Kazakhstan. From 8 to 10 July 2008 OCHA participated in the UNDAF design workshop, actively formulating the strategic priorities for the 'environment and natural disasters' outcome of the UNDAF.
- The OCHA Office in Almaty has supported the UN Country Team in Kazakhstan in the preparations of a multi-hazard preparedness plan. It is expected that the plan will be ready for testing in a simulation exercise before the end of the year.
- The Government of Kazakhstan has approached the UN Resident Coordinator to assist with the development of a multi-stakeholder preparedness plan. OCHA has been requested to support this initiative.

Kyrgyzstan

- On Friday, August 15th 2008, OCHA attended at a Donor Council Meeting in Kyrgyzstan, with the participation of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. During his presentation, the Minister officially requested donors for assistance in addressing the energy crisis in the country.

Water, energy, and food security concerns are increasingly making themselves felt in Kyrgyzstan and it is feared that this may get worse over the winter period. All donors and broader international community feel committed to assist the Government in this situation and the United Nations was requested by donors to continue to act as the coordinator of donor assistance. OCHA was requested to assist the international community with the preparations of a Contingency Plan addressing the potential humanitarian aspects of the food, energy and water crisis. The contingency document is expected to be ready by 30 September.

Tajikistan

- On July, 24-25th 2008 OCHA facilitated a humanitarian planning workshop in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, with over 60 participants from more than 18 organizations. It was agreed that a concise appeal for funding would be made to the international donor community aimed at addressing the gaps in identified urgent humanitarian needs and winter contingencies. It is expected that the appeal will be launched the second week of September 2008. It was further agreed that risk and vulnerability reduction programmes should be integrated into the next UNDAF and donor Joint Country Support Strategy (JCSS) cycles.

- An International Water Conference was held on June, 27-29th 2008 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Representatives from the United Nations, Governments, regional organizations, NGOs, academic institutions and civil society organizations participated. The President of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon delivered a key note speech at the inauguration of the Conference. Issues related to climate change and its impact on water-related disasters, disaster risk reduction and preparedness at national and international levels, capacity building of national institutions and technological innovations in disaster management, early warning and monitoring systems were discussed during the plenary sessions.

Uzbekistan

- In November 2007, in follow-up to the Almaty II meeting, UNDP-BCPR and OCHA undertook a joint mission to Uzbekistan. As a result of this mission it was agreed that OCHA would, in the course of 2008, assist the UNCT to review and simplify the existing Contingency Plan, focusing on earthquakes as the main risk of a widespread emergency. OCHA would further help operationalise the plan with agreements on management arrangements and a list of first response actions. These tasks have now been completed. OCHA has subsequently facilitated the role out of a UNICEF-led inter-agency simulation exercise to test the plan, scheduled for October 2008.



The Tien Shan mountains



Beautiful landscape of Central Asia

Turkmenistan

- On July, 17-18th 2008 OCHA Almaty participated in the UNDAF 2009-14 design workshop in Turkmenistan. As a result of the discussion, the UN Country Team and the government of Turkmenistan agreed for the first time, to include disaster preparedness and response as one of the priority areas for the next UNDAF period. Turkmenistan has also agreed to participate in the UNDAC/INSARAG familiarization workshop in Moscow which will be an opportunity to further discuss avenues for cooperation with the government in the area of disaster management.

Regional Events

- On July, 21-22 2008, UN Resident Coordinators from all Central Asian countries, donors, and other development partners met in Almaty to discuss the impact of the global food price crises, the challenging economic environment and water and energy issues on vulnerable communities in Central Asia. It was agreed that an assessment will be carried out by the UN system on behalf of the international community to further evaluate the impact and guide a possible response.

- As a direct result of a meeting held in November 2007 by Ministers of Emergency (MoE) of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (represented at Director's level), followed by a subsequent meeting held in February 2008, at which Uzbekistan was not present, representatives from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed to establish a Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordination Centre on the territory of Kazakhstan. The functions of the centre would be strongly focused on regional preparedness and response to emergencies, including early warning and information management, Training, Contingency planning, management of regional equipment and goods and cooperation with external partners. It was further agreed that several warehouses in the region would need to be affiliated to the regional centre.

Whilst significant progress was made at the meetings, there were a number of issues that require further investigation supported by additional information before a final decision could be made. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) agreed to organize a mission of experts to Central Asia with specific objectives to develop position papers on the outstanding issues, the subsequent report would serve as the back ground for the second and last meeting of the working group.



Mission to Central Asia, July 2008

Between 30 June and 13 July the mission visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The mission recommended that the process be broken down into phases so that the more difficult issues, such as the legal processes, do not stand in the way of the overall goals of improved regional cooperation. In this respect there are matters that can be achieved by the individual countries before the legal issues are concluded i.e. building databases for transfer into a central file, detailed inventories of humanitarian resources, identifying potential staff for the coordination center and training staff in the above areas etc.

- OCHA with support from EMERCOM of Russia organized from August, 4-8 2008 in Moscow, Russian Federation, a regional familiarization workshop on the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and their role in coordination of international humanitarian response to sudden-onset disasters. CIS government officials from line ministries participated in the workshop, including all five Central Asian



Mission to Central Asia, July 2008

Upcoming Events 2008

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- September 2nd - multi-stakeholder meeting organized the UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan to agree on: a) winter/ spring scenarios; b) overarching strategic priorities of the humanitarian contingency plan; c) sector leads and teams that will prepare the humanitarian project proposals; and d) agree on the deadline of when the humanitarian contingency plan will be finalized (proposed date is 30 September).
- September 1-4 - UN Regional Centre for Preventative Diplomacy in Ashgabat regional consultative meeting on "Conflict Prevention: Analysis for Action"
- September 11th - Launch of Tajikistan appeal document
- September 17-18, Tashkent, UNCRD Central Asian Regional Workshop on "Reducing Vulnerability of School Children to Earthquakes"
- October, 60th anniversary of Ashgabat earthquake

Tools and Resources

"Central Asia. Emergency tools and services for Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators and UN Country Teams". OCHA's service booklet provides a basic understanding of OCHA's emergency tools and services in Central Asia.

Available in English and Russian

"International Emergency Response Agreements signed by Central Asian countries"

The Booklet compiled by OCHA RDRACA consists the most relevant international agreements signed by Central Asian countries to facilitate international cooperation with regard to disaster response in the region.

Available in English and Russian

"Snapshot of the United Nations Disaster Response System"

The flyer consists the most relevant information on the United Nations Disaster Response System.

Available in English and Russian

