

Highlights and Recent Developments

Kyrgyzstan: Flash Appeal seeks \$20 Million to face Water, Energy and Food Insecurity

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is concerned about 800,000 vulnerable people in Kyrgyzstan facing food and energy shortages in the upcoming winter. Last year's harsh winter followed by low precipitation during spring and summer has led to historically low water levels in the Toktogul reservoir, which feeds the main electricity artery of the country. Despite intensive efforts to ensure availability of electricity during the upcoming winter months there will be shortages. Soaring food and fuel prices, adverse weather conditions and declining remittances further limited the purchasing power of the most vulnerable and contributed to a precarious food security situation for some. A recently conducted World Food Programme assessment revealed that one in five households in Kyrgyzstan, or 1 million people, is severely food insecure and at high nutritional and health risk because of poor food consumption. Of these, 580,000 require immediate humanitarian support.

The Government of Kyrgyzstan has appealed for international assistance during the upcoming winter months. With support from the OCHA office in Almaty, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners launched a Humanitarian Flash Appeal for US\$ 20 Million on 1 December 2008, to guarantee back-up power supplies in Kyrgyzstan for crucial facilities such as medical centres and to help 800,000 vulnerable citizens meet their basic needs. If fully funded, the appeal will support 580,000 food insecure people in their nutritional needs; 210,000 people - of which 10,000 are children - in their basic shelter needs; provide backup power systems to 336 priority health care institutions to ensure continuation of life saving services and; ensure that 2 million residents of the three largest cities have uninterrupted water supply over the winter.



FLASH APPEAL

Humanitarian Needs Beyond the Development Interventions
Defined in the Country Development Strategy

2008



World Bank Supports Energy Sector of Kyrgyzstan

The World Bank's Board of Directors approved IDA credit and grant in the total amount of US \$11 million for the Energy Emergency Assistance Project. The Project aims to respond to the urgent request made by the Government of the Kyrgyzstan to support implementation of the Government's Energy Emergency Mitigation Action Plan (EEMAP) and improve energy security in the country. The objectives of the EEMAP include: sustaining thermal and heat energy supply in the shortest possible timeframe; initiating preparatory actions for the next two winters when the energy situation is likely to remain in deficit; and identifying actions to be implemented over the medium- and long-term to improve the energy security of the country.

For more information, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org.kg>



Photos by OCHA Almaty

Launching of the Kyrgyzstan Disaster Response Coordination Unit Portal

In collaboration with the Kyrgyzstan Disaster Response Coordination Unit (DRCU), the OCHA Office in Almaty is developing a user-friendly web portal to facilitate the exchange of information between the humanitarian actors involved in mitigating the adverse effects of electricity and food shortages during winter in Kyrgyzstan. The portal provides with following services:

- A forum - to give the feedback and to discuss all issues related to Energy, Water and Food insecurity in Kyrgyzstan.
- A file exchange section where files are organized by thematic sector of humanitarian help (Food, Health, Shelter,...). Here you are welcome to upload or download power point presentations, word/pdf files, spreadsheets or maps.
- A calendar section where you can enter and consult venues of events and meetings related to disaster preparedness and response in Kyrgyzstan.

- An organization / contact section of all relevant actors where you can check and update your own data.
- A project section comprising all projects related to Kyrgyzstan Energy/Water/Food insecurity and the Humanitarian Flash Appeal launched by the United Nations. In this section you can update your project data.
- A humanitarian items tracking section that provides the details of all humanitarian items requested in all the locations, such as children institutions, hospitals, etc. This section provides also the list of requests already fulfilled by the organization's projects.

Please visit the DRCU portal at the www.undp.kz/kgdrcu

Uzbekistan: Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Exercise

On 12-13 November an Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The exercise was facilitated by an inter-agency team comprised of UNICEF, OCHA, WFP and focused on an earthquake scenario in Tashkent. Representatives from UN Agencies, NGO response partners, Red Crescent and government counterparts participated in the exercise. The objectives of the Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Exercise in Uzbekistan were the following:

- Reinforce partnership among humanitarian agencies and strengthen their capacity to respond to emergencies;
- Familiarize participants with roles and responsibilities of participating agencies, as well as the immediate actions that should be taken by those agencies in the initial hours of an emergency;
- Enable participants to apply the inter-agency guidance and tools available to manage an emergency response (e.g. cluster approach, CERF, Flash Appeal, sector working groups, etc.);
- Test the efficacy of the preparedness measures of the various participating humanitarian agencies (such as inter-agency contingency planning)
- Enable participants to understand the importance of leadership (decision-making) and of good management (coordination, delegation, time management, flexibility, and task prioritization) in emergency response;
- Enable participants to identify headquarters, regional office and global cluster mechanisms and resources available to support an emergency response (human and financial resources, logistics, communications and information, advocacy, etc.)
- Identify in a participatory way inter-agency sectoral strengths and weaknesses in order to enhance the status of preparedness.

At its closing, some of recommendations included the need of further collaboration and more engagement with the Government of Uzbekistan - not limited to the Ministry of Emergencies - and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government to outline key roles and responsibilities. The need to formulate the necessary arrangements for the quick establishment of a UN-based Crisis Coordination Centre was also emphasized among the key follow up actions.



Photo by OCHA Almaty

Water unites: Improving Water Management in Central Asia

The water situation in Central Asia has always been complex: the Aral Sea is still shrinking, upstream and downstream countries have competing water distribution needs, water ecosystems are deteriorating further and climate change may irreversibly decrease water availability. After a very cold winter in Central Asia in 2007/2008, the situation is even more acute. A multifaceted regional approach is needed that addresses energy, agriculture and demographic aspects of water use.

On 17-18 November, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Government of Germany, EC-IFAS and UNDP held a special international conference on “Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Water Management in Central Asia”. The Conference was hosted by the Kazakh Executive Board of IFAS and the Government of Kazakhstan.

The conference was a follow-up to the first “Water Unites” conference (Berlin, 1 April 2008), which saw the launch of the “Berlin Water Process” by the German Federal Foreign Minister. The Almaty conference’s main objective was to assess the short- and long-term challenges in cooperative water management in Central Asia and to generate more coherent, efficient and better targeted actions to meet these challenges. High-level representatives of Central Asian countries, the United Nations, the European Union, regional organizations and other members of the international development community participated at the conference. A conference programme included the presentation of specific projects, as well as international frameworks for cooperation. A special session was devoted to the discussion of the overall need to modernize the legal and institutional frameworks of water management in Central Asia.

More details are available on the conference website:
http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/Almaty_conference.htm

Asia-Pacific Governments Can Save Lives and Money By Investing in Disaster Preparedness

The Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction brought Asia-Pacific government officials together over three days (2-4 December) to develop partnerships and regional cooperation for disaster preparedness and early warning systems. Hosted by the Government of Malaysia, with support from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction amongst others the ministerial conference aimed to reduce social and financial impact of disasters in region and to enhance collaboration between the Governments of participating countries. Investing in disaster risk reduction - preventive measures that reduce the damage disasters cause - was one of the key messages of the high-level conference in Kuala Lumpur.

The Conference adopted a declaration that included recommendations to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and resource sharing arrangements between countries in Asia and the Pacific, to increase knowledge of human and economic disaster impacts to guide and promote greater investments, and to earmark a percentage of humanitarian funding for disaster risk reduction. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) can include measures like early warning systems, earthquake-proofing buildings, and ensuring schools and hospitals are built outside of high-risk disaster zones. By investing in DRR before a disaster strikes, governments will be better able to respond and recover afterwards, saving not only lives but reducing the long term economic effects of disasters.

A protocol on further cooperation in prevention and liquidation of disasters between Central Asian countries was one of the key practical outcomes of the conference in Malaysia.

Useful links

www.undp.kz/kgdrcu
www.unece.org
www.worldbank.org.kg

UNOCHA
RDRACA
67, Tole bi Street
Almaty, 050000
Kazakhstan
Phone:
+7 727 258 2643
Fax: +7 727 244 7148
<http://ochaonline.un.org>

December 2008 Events

- ✓ International Migrants Day - 18 December
- ✓ International Mountain Day - 11 December
- ✓ Human Rights Day - 10 December
- ✓ International Civil Aviation Day - 7 December
- ✓ International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development - 5 December
- ✓ International Disabled Persons - 3 December
- ✓ International Day for the Abolition of Slavery - 2 December
- ✓ World AIDS Day - 1 December