



NEWSLETTER

2-3, February-March 2009

OCHA Humanitarian Action Training Programme held in Almaty

The OCHA Humanitarian Action Training Programme took place from 10 to 12 March 2009 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The OCHA training aimed to strengthen the capacity of UN, NGOs and Red Cross societies to support governments in a coordinated, principled and effective international humanitarian response to emergencies. Humanitarian and development workers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the training.

Hosting of this OCHA Training was about building the skills of humanitarians - especially Humanitarian Country Team members and cluster leads - in leading and coordinating principled and effective humanitarian action, encouraging learning through the sharing of country level experiences. Participants gained a broader understanding of key concepts and principles underpinning effective humanitarian action, guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Country Team and Cluster Lead Agencies, the importance of building and strengthening partnerships, and ways to identify and access appropriate tools and resources to support humanitarian response. Central Asia has been chosen as the first location to implement this training and building capacity in this area. The workshop placed an emphasis on the specific experience of this region, tailored to the needs taking into account vulnerability of the region to natural disaster such as earthquakes and floods, as well as identified challenges faced in humanitarian coordination and cross-sectoral emergency response, in addition to exposure (or lack thereof) to humanitarian coordination concepts and implementation.

The workshop primary focused to broaden the level of understanding of humanitarian action concepts and of humanitarian coordination in practice, utilising best practices and lessons learned from field level. The emphasize was placed on clearly defining the responsibilities of cluster lead agencies and country team members to provide support to coordination architecture, process, and systems, while also identifying the resources and services available at global and regional levels to support them in this function. In addition, the workshop aimed to build the capacity of the target audience to work together as effective teams, to lead and guide



Source: OCHA

strategic response and contingency planning processes.

Hosting this workshop also allowed OCHA to deepen its partnership with other aid organisations in the Central Asian region. The training participants will continue to collaborate closely throughout 2009 in order to develop a regional disaster preparedness and response plan and build the basis for a regional response team. It is further envisaged that the training participants will act as a catalyst for reform within their respective country teams, disseminating key messages and strengthening coordination mechanisms. This pooling of human resources and knowledge will help the international community to better support the host governments in case of a disaster or humanitarian emergency.



Source: OCHA

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Promotion of seismic reinforcement of existing buildings in Central Asia

Seismic reinforcement, or retrofitting, of the types of buildings found in Central Asia is feasible through targeted protection of vulnerable elements inside the buildings. Although some damage is probably unavoidable during strong earthquakes, retrofitting should aim for the protection of human life and could therefore be limited to simple and affordable interventions in living rooms and bed rooms.

The safest way to ensure seismic-resistance is to newly construct buildings according to internationally established building codes, incorporating comprehensive protection from earthquakes and other natural hazards such as floods and mudflows. International organizations have calculated that applying earthquake-proof building codes adds just 4% to the total cost.

In the last couple of years, and in spite of serious budgetary constraints, the Kyrgyz Institute of Seismic Construction has ensured that many public buildings in Kyrgyzstan, including the school in Nura village which was one of the few buildings that remained relatively undamaged after a strong earthquake in October destroyed large parts of the village, were built according to their own designs, following the strict procedures controlled by the government agency responsible for enforcing building codes.

Together with many other organizations in Central Asia, and funded by the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission (ECHO), the Netherlands Red Cross and the 5 Red Crescent Societies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have been promoting earthquake safety for the past years. The information materials used are regionally standardized, under the umbrella of the Central Asia Earthquake Safety Initiative (CARES). Education on earthquake prevention is done through schools and Local Disaster Management Committees, which promote the construction of earthquake-proof adobe houses in rural areas. No information material is yet available on the retrofitting of existing buildings.

The collaboration between the Kyrgyz Institute of Seismic Construction and the Netherlands Red Cross will consist of the elaboration of educational materials on how people themselves can reinforce their dwellings using local materials. The booklets and posters will be in Kyrgyz and written in simple language, to ensure the contents are well understood. The materials will be disseminated during lectures at the community level, where practical examples will be provided. Furthermore, a pilot project will be carried out in South Kyrgyzstan, where one vulnerable school will be selected, to be reinforced according to the existing procedures (assessment / design / proposal / approval by building codes commission / implementation). The process will be filmed and the video used for advocacy purposes. The aim is to replicate this initiative in the other 4 countries in the region.

World Bank launches Central Asia Development Marketplace 2009

On 16 February 2009 the Central Asia Department of the World Bank and its partners announced launch of the Central Asia Development Marketplace 2009 and invites farmers' associations, NGOs, businesses, academia, local governments, foundations, and other interested groups from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to submit proposals for innovative projects under the theme of "Efficient Water Use in Agriculture".

The theme of the Central Asia Development Marketplace 2009 is Efficient Water Use in Agriculture. The issue of water availability and use has been historically very sensitive and controversial in Central Asia. The Central Asia Development Marketplace 2009 through a competitive and transparent process will help identify and fund innovative initiatives and projects that would have positive impact on water use and management by farmers.

For further information please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/cadm2009>.

Energy transmission operators of Central Asia and Afghanistan held seminar in Almaty

Energy transmission operators from Afghanistan and Central Asia's states gathered in Almaty, Kazakhstan for a three-day workshop that was launched on February 18.

The workshop was organized by the USAID in cooperation with the United States Energy Association's (USEA) and focused on Special Protection Systems for Transmission System Operations and Emergencies automatic systems to detect abnormal, emergency or predetermined system conditions and take corrective actions to maintain system stability, acceptable voltage or power flows.

The workshop brought together specialists from Kazakhstan's KEGOC, Kyrgyzstan's NESK, Tajikistan's Barqi Tojik, Uzbekenergo, the regional Central Dispatch Coordinator from Tashkent, and DABM Afghanistan. Participants have discussed how to improve reliability of Central Asia regional transmission grid and facilitate increased power exchanges with the Afghanistan electricity system as it completes its North-East Power System 220kv transmission system. Once fully operational, the NEPS transmission system will allow electricity from Central Asia to be exported to Afghanistan. This will ensure more reliable supply and coverage to north-eastern Afghanistan and expand market opportunities for Central Asian electricity generators.

Participants learned about the methods, equipment, and procedures used by the United States and South Africa to protect the integrity of the transmission system and to lessen their overall impact on the transmission system in emergency situations. Specialists have also discussed load shedding, the isolation of fault conditions, and other steps that are not usually designed as an integral part of the Special Protection Systems.

Search and Rescue Equipment Delivery to the Committee for Emergency Situations (CoES) of Tajikistan

Rapid Rescue Groups of the Committee for Emergency Situations (CoES) of Tajikistan are now equipped to better respond to disaster incidences. These brigades constitute the main rescue force for Kulyab and Vose districts to address seasonal flooding along the Yokhsu river, which yearly devastates farms, fields and homes.

With funding from Humanitarian Aid Organization of the European Commission (ECHO) under the

program known as DIPECHO 05, Mission East sponsored training and equipped three CoES Centers in Dushanbe, Kurgan Teppe and Kulyab. General Major H. Latipov, chairman of CoES accepted the handover of Search and Rescue (SAR) quality items, including winter gear, diving equipment, one inflatable boat, and alpinism equipment – all matching quality standards required for SAR operations.

The handover ceremony was an opportunity for GM Latipov, and Mr. Christophe Belperron, coordinator of the Disaster Risk Reduction Program for Mission East in Tajikistan, to inspect the material, and renew expressions of close collaboration and mutual support. As the flood season approaches in Kulyab District, Mission East and CoES will closely monitor the situation, knowing that trained rescue volunteers are ready to assist in the local population of the area.

Comprehensive actions by Mission East over the years include the installation with the Hydromet Institute of a monitoring system for snow levels and water flow upstream of the Yakhsu River, deployment of a radio Early Warning System linking local authorities, CoES and villages, as well as preparedness and evacuation public drills. 10 schools in designated areas have been upgraded to become safe havens during temporary relocation of displaced families, and various mitigation sites (river gabion, drainage channel cleaning) have been reinforced to reduce the impact of the flood.



Source: Mission East

EU willing to sponsor promising energy projects in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Financial institutions of the European Union have will to sponsor promising energy projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel said at the narrow format meeting with Kyrgyz journalists that took place in Hyatt hotel in Bishkek.

The expert believes that the hydropower aspect should be viewed in combination with issues of water usage, oil and gas markets and price policies. The EU Special Representative said he raised this topic at the meeting with the Kyrgyz Prime Minister Igor Chudinov, stressing interest and importance of 42 small and medium hydro power plants construction.

International transport corridors in North-East and Central Asia discussed in March

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's Transport Division, in collaboration with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investment and Trade, held a policy-level Expert Group Meeting on the Operationalization of International Intermodal Transport Corridors in North-East and Central Asia, from 4 to 5 March, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting reviewed the current status of identified intermodal transport corridors linking North-East and Central Asia, including routes of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks. The meeting also aimed to agree on and recommend two to three priority corridors for in-depth study.

Upcoming Events in April 2009

- ✓ UNHCR Emergency and Disaster Management Workshop for Central Asia, Astana, **06-10 April 2009**
- ✓ USAID/OFDA Mission Disaster Preparedness Consultation in Almaty, **1-2 April 2009**
- ✓ Kyrgyz REACT Field Coordination and Rapid Response Training, Osh and Bishkek **20-24 April 2009**
- ✓ 2nd meeting of the Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Centre Working Group, **15-16 April 2009**
- ✓ EADRCC Main planning exercise **21-23 April**

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

Useful Links

www.miseast.org/
<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/>
www.icrc.org/
www.worldbank.org