



Committee of Emergency Situations & Civil Defense, ECHO and UNDP Tajikistan
Project "Strengthened Disaster Risk Management in Tajikistan"

Minutes of the REACT Meeting
16 July 2009, UNDP Conference Hall

Chair: Mr. Alisho Shomahmadov, Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES)

Participants: REACT partners ([Annex 1 - attached](#))

1. Introduction

Mr. Alisho Shomahmadov (CoES) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

2. Disaster updates

Mr. Jamshed Kamolov (CoES) gave a brief overview of emergency situations that occurred in Tajikistan in the first half year of 2009. This year, Tajikistan experienced particularly strong precipitation, leading to a series of emergencies. In total, from January to end of June 2009, 151 emergency situations occurred and 39 people were killed. During the winter, the above-average amounts of snow led to avalanches claiming 12 human lives. In the spring, strong rain affected over 40 districts of the country. Between April and May 2009, 26 persons were killed, 15 of which in floods. According to preliminary estimates of the CoES, the total damage amounts to 92,450,700 TJS, approximately 20 million USD.

Mr. Kamolov provided numbers on various types of disasters: the most frequent were floods and mudflows (37) as well as avalanches (38). Geographically, from the total number of 39 human deaths, 17 occurred in Hissor region. In terms of damage, Khatlon province was the most affected. Nationally, 2471 houses were damaged, 496 of which were destroyed completely. Educational, health and community facilities were also affected, as were nearly 900 km of roads. Data was also provided on damage per province and district, as well as detailed figures on financial, reconstruction and food support provided by governmental entities. In the area of assistance, it was mentioned that 136 houses are to be built under Government responsibility in Khuroson province, 72 of which were already delivered in the villages of Shohroh and Oftobak. If needed, more details from the presentation can be obtained from the REACT Secretariat.

Upon a question by Ms. Shahlo Rahimova (UNDP DRMP), Mr. Kamolov clarified that the previously not known information on damage in Qubodiyon district (Khatlon province) is currently being confirmed by an on-site assessment, and the data will be confirmed in more detail. Concerning the support provided in terms of construction materials, this includes only those materials which went through the governmental reserves of the Tajik Republic, including materials provided by the neighboring countries of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Ms. Lilia Tverdun (Caritas Switzerland) asked for more precise information on the houses being built in order to plan work with the NGO consortium which will engage in this issue, and raised the concern that few houses seemed to be in construction in the village of Oftobak. Mr. Kamolov explained that 136 houses are being built under responsibility of the Government, with others being built locally and with support from NGOs, and offered to provide more precise information on request. Ms. Rahimova added that a previous REACT report had more precise information on which organization was responsible for the construction of what houses.

3. REACT Early Recovery Appeal for the Spring 2009 disaster series in Tajikistan, Ms. Shahlo Rahimova, UNDP DRMP

REACT appeals were developed to support the Government of Tajikistan in responding to the series of disasters that occurred this spring. A first appeal for immediate assistance was launched on June 3; in a second phase, an Early Recovery was sent out to sector leads for review, and will be launched soon.

The goal of this appeal is to support the Government in its recovery efforts, focusing on initial recovery needs. The appeal amounts to 6,256,452 USD, with 20 projects proposed in the sectors of education, health, WASH, permanent shelter and risk assessment. The highest requirements are noted in the

education sector, following an assessment. Needs in permanent shelter, on the other hand, are lower than expected. The appeal mostly focuses on Khuroson, Panj and Qumsangir, with other regions targeted mostly in only one sector.

Ms. Rahimova gave details on the Sectoral Recovery Plans for the various sectors. In the education sector, the main goal is to allow uninterrupted and proper access to education for children in affected areas, as most damaged or destroyed school buildings won't be rebuilt by the start of the next school year. In the health sector, the main aim is to restore local capacities, as facilities were damaged and equipments lost. Concerning WASH, central objective are essential water supplies and sanitation facilities, as well as awareness campaigns on sanitation and hygiene. In this sector in particular, there is an effort to link emergency with recovery. Another concern is sanitation and hygiene, as the construction of houses committed by the Government doesn't include sanitation facilities. Concerning permanent shelter, the main proposal comes from the NGO consortium led by Caritas. The focus here is to support the population with additional construction materials, in complement to those provided by the Government, as well as technical advice focusing on energy efficient houses. The Appeal also includes the sector of risk assessment; the main aim here is to assess the entire territory of Khuroson area for remaining hazards and to raise awareness among the population.

Concerning coordination, BCPR allocated 100,000 USD to UNDP to support Early Recovery interventions, including those mentioned in the Appeal. A Consultant and a Local Officer for Early Recovery will be hired and will be responsible for all coordination issues. An Early Recovery framework will also be developed specifically for floods and mudflows.

Ms. Tverdun (Caritas Switzerland) provided information on the NGO consortium for reconstruction in Khuroson, which was joined by Caritas Germany. A concept paper and proposals are available, but the only funding commitment to date has come from SDC for the shelter component. As the idea of a consortium was proposed at REACT, the NGO consortium would hope from partner support for resource mobilization. Mr. Khusrav Sharifov (UNDP DRMP) emphasized the importance of mobilizing resources bilaterally, which often has better results than appeals. He further mentioned that in addition to the funds allocated for Early Recovery this year, Tajikistan is also 1 of 6 priority countries worldwide for a general Early Recovery framework, and was allocated 3 million USD for this purpose. This will be implemented over the following year, and can include work in Khuroson. The details of this initiative are currently being developed.

Ms. Rahimova concluded on a positive note, reporting that the Indian Embassy has allocated 200,000 USD to the Tajik Government based on the previous REACT Emergency Appeal. Concerning next steps, feedback on the Early Recovery Appeal was expected from sectors on 16 July; the Appeal should be finalized and launched between 20 and 25 July. Unfortunately, there has been no fixed donor commitment so far.

4. ADB Pyanj River Basin Flood Management Project

Mr. Peter Ko from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Pyanj Project gave a presentation of the work ongoing and planned. The project, funded by Asian Development Bank, is currently being restarted. It should be implemented on a regional level, including Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Due to diverging definitions of the size of the Pyanj River Basin, the project area has continually grown. The project started in September 2008 and should include 2 project offices in Dushanbe and Kabul. It includes 3 phases: inception, knowledge base, and flood management master plan, the first of which was just completed in Tajikistan. The knowledge base will take the form of a database accessible through a network or internet. It will include hydro-meteorological data, giving information on the size and speed of potential floods, inundated areas, time for evacuation, number to evacuate etc. The Tajik Hydromet agency has a considerable amount of data available from the Soviet period, but mostly in paper form and needing to be digitalized. Another point of the knowledge base is river morphology and erosion.

Mr. Ko then showed a simulation of the digital system which should result from this work. The final result should be a flood management master plan, allowing the establishment of flood forecasting and warning systems for communities. A joint Tajik-Afghan forecasting center should be set up, as well as a standing committee directing operations between both countries.

Following this presentation, Mr. Michael Jones (UN/UNDP) emphasized that the Tajik-Afghan border is affected by various problems. The military build-up and marginalization of areas on both sides of the border exacerbates the risks and threats faced, such as the growth of extremism. Investing in the people who live in these border regions could be more efficient than standard and expensive border surveillance approaches. New tools can be applied, such as land reform, investing in people and giving them things which are worth protecting. But such work would need to be done on both sides of the border to avoid marginalizing one group. Flood management needs to be complemented with a package deal covering other needs of the population. This will be discussed at Principals' level, as the border issue could become a man-made threat if it is not addressed on time. Mr. Jones took the occasion to introduce Ms. Nancy Snauwaert, recently arrived as UN Humanitarian Affairs Officer in order improve coordination within the international community in Tajikistan, including NGOs, in various areas such as humanitarian relief and disaster risk management.

Upon a question from Mr. Cédric Charpentier (WFP), Mr. Ko explained that data collection on numbers of population at risk of floods has not started yet. The general aim of the project and of measures which could arise from it is to minimize the consequences of potential floods. Concerning the timeframe of the Project, it was planned to finish by February 2011, and this deadline will be worked towards. Nevertheless, smaller-scale projects can be implemented more quickly without waiting for the overall structure, on local and regional levels. Mr. Ko proposed to give suggestions in this area upon request.

Mr. Sharifov added that the REACT Secretariat had met with the previous Project leader and discussed various issues, and will continue discussions with the ADB. A draft management plan was presented, and very good work was done too date. The problem of such work is often the handover to Government, with a lack of follow-up. Furthermore, it would be good to share information with partners who have done water engineering work in Tajikistan. Concerning the further work of the Project, Mr. Ko explained that it could potentially go on even without the Afghan component, using estimates to concentrate on Tajikistan.

5. Overview of the Regional Conference on Seismic Risk Reduction in Central Asia dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the Khoyeet Earthquake, Goulsara Pulatova, UN ISDR

Ms. Goulsara Pulatova (UN ISDR) gave a short presentation on the conference held from 9 to 11 July in Dushanbe. This conference was originally planned only for Central Asian countries, but also received participants from the Caucasus, Iran, Germany, Switzerland, Russia and international organizations. It was funded mostly by DIPECHO V, as well as GTZ, the Netherlands Red Cross and the SDC. The Khoyeet earthquake took place on 10 July 1949, reaching a magnitude of 7.3-7.5 and causing over 30,000 deaths.

The main aim of the commemorative conference was to discuss seismic risk reduction in Central Asia and bring partners together. A lot of good work is being done in the region, but with insufficient contacts and links. The goal was to create a forum for joint initiatives, a common road map and stronger donor interest. The conference consisted of general and scientific sessions, including what has been achieved in the region, existing problems and gaps, joint approaches and regional cooperation between governmental agencies and other stakeholders. Recommendations were drafted in advance, and participants provided 40 additional ones. A final draft of an outcome document is being worked on and will be disseminated soon. Concluding the conference, a special session was held upon demand of GTZ on regional cooperation, focusing on the Ferghana Valley where natural hazards could trigger social unrest. For more information, partners are asked to contact the ISDR office. Ms. Pulatova added that a draft of the final document will hopefully be shared within a week

6. News from Partners

Mr. Ole Ramsing, recently arrived as Disaster Reduction Coordinator for Mission East, introduced himself to REACT partners.

M Cédric Charpentier from WFP announced that the WFP, together with the WHO and NGOs, will conduct a 4th round of food security monitoring (FSMS) at the end of July, including a nutrition analysis. Results should be available by early September.

Mr. Farshed Karimov from the Tajik Institute for Seismology mentioned that it would be good to hold a presentation in a REACT meeting on the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Geneva in June, where many interesting questions were raised. He was requested to mention this to the REACT Secretariat.

Annex 1: List of participants, REACT Meeting July 16, 2009

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