



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

Minutes of the REACT Meeting

2nd of April 2008, UNDP Conference Hall

Chair: Mr. Latipov, Chairman of CoES

Participants: REACT partners (Annex 1 - attached)

1. Introduction

Mr. Latipov, Chairman of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, welcomed meeting participants and on behalf of the Government of Tajikistan thanked the international community and REACT partners for the assistance rendered to the affected population of Tajikistan.

As the Chairman of REACT Group, he presented the agenda of the meeting, which was approved anonymously.

2. Disaster information and updates.

Locust outbreak

Mr. Kimsan Mustafokulov, representative from Ministry of Agriculture informed the participants that the outbreak of locusts has started in Tajikistan. The unusually dry March month has caused the locust to start moving to agricultural lands as grass is drying in lowlands. The most dangerous are three kinds and they move from the neighboring countries, in particular from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Currently it is necessary to take proper measurements in order to cover the territory of 250 000 ha. Before the 1st of April the assessment has been conducted and it was discovered that 170 000 ha were affected by the locusts. In the country there are no sufficient capacities to fight against the locusts in order to ensure the protection of agricultural plants. European Commission provided the assistance for procurement of insecticides for locusts' eggs destruction at the area of 16 000 ha.

It was mentioned that locust can travel 50 km per day, and can cover a large territory within short period of time.

Currently, military and civil defence forces of Ministry of Defence and Committee of Emergency Situations are dispatched to assist with spraying pesticides, which are available in limited quantities.

Mr. Mustafokulov, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, requested the international community to assist the Government of Tajikistan with relevant equipment and pesticides to tackle this issue in order to avoid further damage to the agricultural sector.

Compound crisis update

Mr. Charles Kelly, UNDP DRMP made a presentation on the current situation and forecast for the upcoming months. He noted that April month is expected to be a challenging month with the expected locust and disasters related to spring thaw. Great number of winter-crops was damaged due to winter freeze. Major damage has also been report in other social and economic sectors. Mr. Kelly gave an overview of where we stand now and what we should be prepared for:

- Damage from cold weather (water, infrastructure)
- Spring thaw increases likelihood of floods & landslides
- Emerging Issues: Locusts
- Food and agriculture continue to be of specific concern
- Immediate and long term impacts in multiple sectors (social, economic, etc)
- Locust invasion- immediate action needed; CoES request
- Shelter/NFI Cluster report on spring thaw scenario
- UNERT: Strengthen and Expand to Regional levels

- Early Warning System project – UNDP/Hydromet/CoES
- Regional REACT meetings in Kulyab & Rasht
- OCHA visits to Kulyab (w/WFP) and Rasht (w/DRMP)

Speaking on the Appeal funding status: Mr. Kelly noted that only 37% of the appeal has been funded so far, which is very low.

He also noted that the funding outside of the appeal has been bigger than funding received through the appeal. Table below summarize information on bilateral assistance provided:

Donor	Assistance provided
Saudi Arabia	Food:1,500 boxes; Tents: 200 units; Heaters: 4,000 units
Russia	Generators:16 units; Heating device:168 units
Iran	Vegetable oil, wheat flour, sugar: 36 MT
Turkey	Blankets: 988 units
Kazakhstan	Food: 60 MT; Warm clothes: 30 MT
India	Medicine, warm clothes, generators and other equipment - \$ 2 million
Spain	Warm blankets, generators: 2.5 MT
Japan	Blankets: 2,200 unit

3. Introduction of OCHA support team – Mr. Michael Stone, Emergency Programme Coordinator and Ms. Kashka Huyton, Humanitarian Affairs Officer. “Way forward on the situation” by Mr. Stone

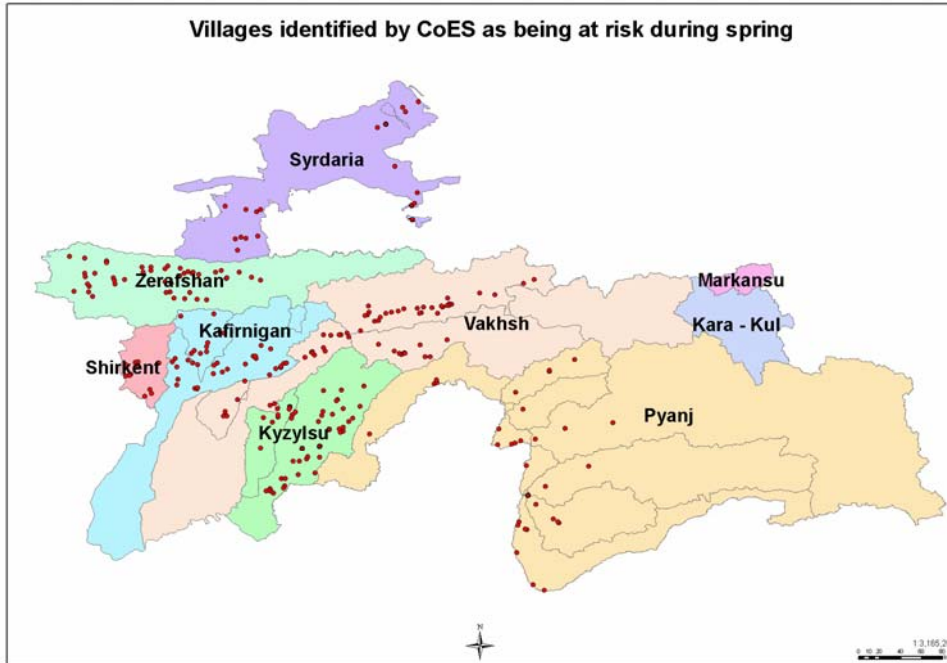
Ms. Kashka welcomed everyone and performed the information on the current activities being implemented in Tajikistan. Ms. Kashka informed that they try to use such technologies as web pages and other types of information sharing tools. Ms. Kashka asked all the colleagues in Tajikistan to participate in information exchange which will give the opportunity to ensure further assistance to the country.

Mr. Stone informed that the main issue of technical task is that he is going to be responsible for execution of emergency programs and it will be necessary to work with the collective response in definition of provision of required assistance necessary for population, which has mainly been affected by the crisis. In fact, at present time, the crisis is rather complex. Mr. Stone gave an explanation on what compounding effect means and how it relates to the current situation in the country. He expressed sincere appreciation for the efforts made by the partners, and hoped that these efforts will continue in order to reduce suffering of the affected population.

4. Spring thaw disaster scenarios.

This presentation was prepared by the cluster on shelter/NFI and non food items. Cluster had not executed the regional assessment, but used methodology of analysis of the existing data. The

information was also used by such organizations as UN, Care and other organizations. The current situation is that there were a lot of disasters in Tajikistan during the latest period and more than 300 thousand people were affected. As it has already been mentioned landslides and mudslides, as well as strong winds are expected to occur during the spring time. It was impossible to define the level of snow at the great heights. Perhaps it will be possible in future, but having this information it will almost be impossible to compose a definite forecast. There are several communities, where disaster response teams are being created. The surveys, conducted in the country helped to define the most vulnerable regions, which shown at the map. These are the most dangerous areas.

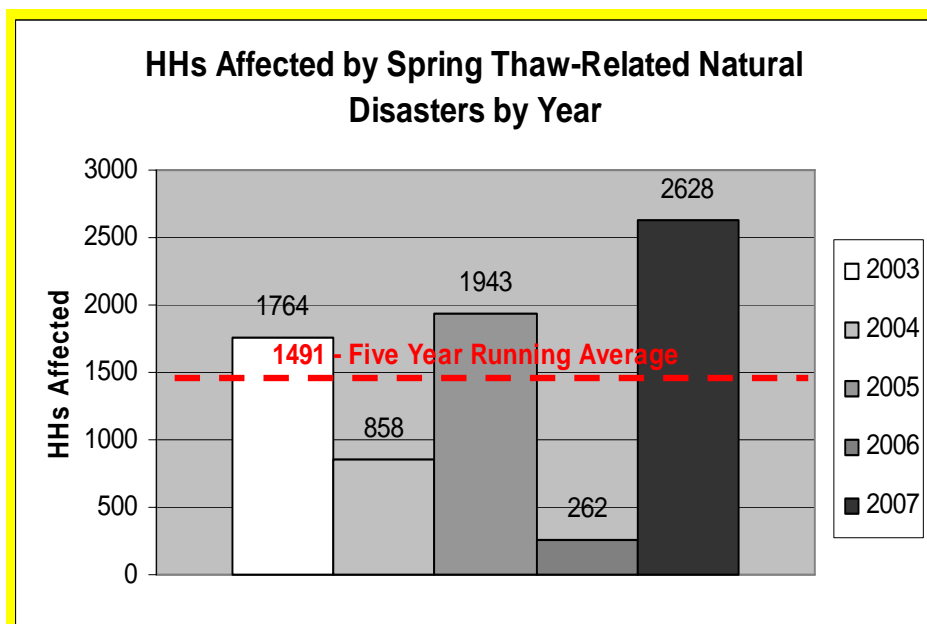


The number of households affected each year by different kinds of disasters was also defined.

In 2006 was the greatest number of affected people, it includes 2 600 households.

The assessment of the most dangerous period of the year, when the greatest number of disasters occurred was executed and it was discovered that the most dangerous period is April.

Every year, about 1500 households suffer from floods, landslides, mud flows and rainfalls.



The flowchart showing the difference with the previous years was included into the presentation. The flowchart shows that the level of snow during the current year is 6% higher than in the previous year, consequently, the possibility of floods, affecting the greater number of the population, than in the previous year.

As to the preparedness to these disasters, it has already been mentioned that the work is already being conducted in the framework of application of assistance to the world community. The effort to define disasters preparedness. It was also mentioned that there are less than 200 kits in the country, but it is not enough for provision of proper assistance.

Taking the existing data into consideration, it was recommended to extend the resources, as the level of snow is 6% higher than in the last year and the possibility of floods is also higher. Regarding it the number of the affected population this year is possible to be greater.

It was recommended to attract the leaders of the regions to the work and extend the quantity of goods for EC at the storage houses.

Last week the meeting with IFRC and GAA was conducted in Rasht, where the representatives of regional administration of Rasht valley were invited. In the course of the meeting the issues on the possibility of landslides in Rasht valley were discussed, and the same meeting has been conducted in Hissar on the same issues of Hissar valley. The population was informed on the danger of the landslides. The flight of Rasht valley by helicopter has been planned before in order to define the climatic situation, however, Hydro-meteo bureau was refused to receive the helicopter and CoES, at present time, intend to solve this issue with the border services.

5. DIPECHO V announcement for 2008 – 2009.

Mr. Zafar Teshaev gave a short announcement on the decision of European Commission which was taken on the 7th of March. He reported that more than 7 mln. EURO was allocated for the program of disaster risk reduction in Central Asia. He mentioned that projects can have a duration of maximum 15 months, and can start from 1st of July 2008.

It is necessary to receive proposals not later than 30th of April in order to send these proposals to Brussels. Texts for these proposals are possible to find at ECHO web-sites. If you have no opportunity to find these web-sites, all the people concerned can appeal to ECHO office in Tajikistan, where you can receive all the references by e-mail.

Mr Latipov noted that the Committee on Emergency Situations is the state body, tasked to ensure coordination of disaster risk management initiatives in the country, and kindly requested all partners to provide a brief information (concept notes) about planned activities to the Committee of Emergency Situations in order to avoid duplication.

6. New REACT Charter (UNDP DRMP).

Mr. Charles Kelly made a presentation on the issue of a new REACT Charter, which has been discussed by several organizations. During the presentation the general information on REACT, established in 2001 after OCHA Office closure, was performed. REACT includes the representatives of CoES, NGOs (national and international), IO and Donors.

Terms of Reference was composed but the formal Charter or frameworks; however there are the defined tasks including information sharing, coordination and cooperation in response, as well as functional structure with the extension of obligations.

The reasons of REACT creation were also performed:

- Unclear obligations vis a vis reporting, information sharing and coordination
- Strengthening in-country humanitarian response capacities
- Formalizing REACT Rapid Response Teams
- Strengthening Regional REACT groups
- REACT - international assistance link weak in the case of a major disaster.

It is also necessary to define the structure of a Charter:

- Based on principals and standards
- Formalizes obligations and responsibilities
- Formalizes structure:
 - Members: Organizations agreeing to Charter
 - Chair: CoES
 - Secretariat: DRMP
 - Sectors: WASH, Education, Health, Food Security, Shelter/NFI. Others as needed.
 - Core Group: CoES, Sector Leads, NGO and Donors representatives
 - Regional units
 - Working Groups (as needed)

The main group will work in the framework of REACT activity and it will be necessary to conduct meetings more frequently.

Expected results:

- Agreed statement of structure, roles and responsibilities
- Regular and structured information exchange
- Strengthened basis for collaboration
- Improved capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters.
- Better integration of external assistance into in-country humanitarian structure

Review and approval process:

- Draft in circulation
- Comment period: 30 days (2 May 2008)
- Review of comments and discussion of revisions at special REACT meeting o/a 14 May 2008
- Final draft available for signature by 21 May 2008

The focal point between REACT and the Government of RT is CoES.

There is no need to invite all the representatives of all the ministries to all the REACT meetings. It was proposed to invite only the representatives involved into the solution of the issue, which is intended to be discussed during the meeting that will help to strengthen the structure.

The representative of DFID asked a question related to REACT structure: If the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is going to participate in REACT meetings.

As it has been mentioned before, in particular on energetic crisis, the agreements on situation improvement were concluded. In this case it is necessary to provide the REACT Charter to the Government for information.

REACT should be the organization, functioning in all the organizations. It should be the definite structures.

CoES is a coordination organization. On the basis of all the Ministries the civil defense services have been created and execute the activity under the supervision of their ministries and provide assistance to CoES and REACT.

7. Update from GTZ DRM program (GTZ).

Mr. Peter Thiminski, GTZ DRM Project Manager reported that the project funded by the Government of Germany is 3 mln. EURO, with the main focus being Zerafshan Valley. In order to ensure proper

coordination with state structures, MOU was signed with CoES. Currently, it is planned to conduct workshops at national and regional levels in order to identify clear outcomes of the project. The workshop in Dushanbe is planned for 22nd of April 2008.

8. Cluster updates (Situation assessment and response plans):

- Health:

As Mr. Azret Kalmykov, WHO representative informed, currently the assistance from 5 NGO was received. The assistance covers 65% of all the hospitals in the country. International organizations (7 – in GBAO and 18 – in Khatlon region) also provided the assistance, including generators and medical kits.

In total 1/3 of all the healthcare facilities in the country was covered. Provision of transformers was included into the previous assistance, provided by UNFRA, as well as medicines and medical commodities were distributed through UNICEF, Caritas, GTZ and etc. The needs assessment was also conducted in healthcare facilities and it was discovered that the provided assistance is not sufficient. It is also necessary to provide assistance to gynecological departments and to distribute kits to healthcare facilities.

As to medicines provisions to Khatlon, the situation is very important; it was proposed to pay great attention to first aid provision.

- Water and Sanitation and Education:

In the course of a meeting the report from OGHA was provided. It included the whole necessary information. Currently works are in process and completed for 50%. It is expected that the works in Khojent will be completed in May.

In Kulyab the power supply was installed in order to check the system of water supply. It was also informed that some systems are very difficult to repair.

As to the healthcare facilities, this issue has not been considered due to insufficient financing. Education is being financed for 40%.

Currently it is necessary to pay great attention to two pending problems:

1. Floods preparedness;
2. Preparation to winter period.

- Non food items and Shelter

For the present time the distribution related to winter period is completed. As it is known, thaw analysis has already been completed and it was discovered that risk of landslides is very high.

The question on the difficulties during distributions of goods, provided for stock was raised, as all the supplies should be supplied in time.

IFRC representative, Shamsidin Muhidinov responded that currently the work on the composition of list of goods, which have already been distributed and intended to be distributed.

- Food security and Logistics.

It was mentioned that 19 organizations work in the sphere of food security. For all the projects 22% of intended financing has already been received. This financing is enough for minimal response, but for the required response this is not sufficient.

WFP representative Mr. Zlaton Milisic informed that drought, especially in Khatlon region, caused losses in agriculture. In 10 days it is intended to start execution of rapid situational assessment and the results will help in composition of long-term planning. The special attention should be paid to rural areas. Financing situation causes concern and it is intended to execute assessment on monthly basis. It is necessary to collect information through the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and possibly the CoES is able to provide assistance in receiving of required information.

The team on assessment has been working in Tajikistan and currently this team completed its work and funds for continuation of its work have not been allocated yet. Perhaps some local representatives can help in coordination of this activity.

As to the stores in the country – WFP has no opportunity to do it.

Hereon Mr. Zlaton completed his speech. The Chairman of the meeting thanked Mr. Zlaton for provided information.

9. News from REACT partners.

There was a question related to the situation in Khatlon and the reasons of problems in agriculture.

FAO representative: As it was mentioned it is necessary to perform a report on the situation in Khatlon oblast. Due to dry weather the problems started. Winter crops were damaged by heavy frosts.

Due to the severe winter in Khatlon 2000 ha of early vegetables were damaged. Total losses in the republic include 800 mln. Somoni, especially in Sogd and Khatlon.

In the course of one month there was no precipitation that may cause early crops losses.

In addition to the mentioned above, the government of RT gave the instructions to use irrigated areas as effective as possible as the number of useful areas in the country is small.

Every year Agriculture receives assistance from the international organizations. FAO provided potato and corn seeds.

However the farmers have seeds and fertilizers, but there is no rain and in this situation it is impossible to help.

At the end of January the temperature in the republic was too low and currently the temperature is too high for this period of the year. All the organizations are aware on the current situation in the republic that is why it is necessary to work together and cooperate.

Annex 1: List of participants, REACT meeting dated 02nd of April 2008.

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