

1: Update on nutritional situation in Ethiopia
(by Eric Laroche, UNICEF)

Mr. Eric Laroche, Deputy Director of UNICEF EMOPS in Geneva, briefed on the nutritional situation in Ethiopia, after having undertaken a mission to Ethiopia recently.

In the beginning of May an updated joint humanitarian appeal for Ethiopia was launched, increasing food aid beneficiaries by approximately 600 000. The number of people depending on food assistance might be higher, but was kept at this level by the Government of Ethiopia in the wake of the elections.

Like the entire Horn of Africa region, Ethiopia suffers from droughts, and famine and malnutrition have caused a huge increase in mortality rates. Rainfalls in most of the country are 2-3 weeks late, which will delay the planting for the coming harvest and puts the household food security at risk.

In 2003, a new "Coalition for Food Security" was launched in order to try to end the circle of food insecurity. The programme, bringing together the government, agencies, donors and NGOs, consists of three segments: production of food, access to food and food utilization. However, the third segment dealing with the utilization of food, focusing on clean water supplies, health etc. is too weak. Whereas funding for food-items is relatively well covered, funding for non-food items is critically low and lacks attention, as a large proportion of the mortality rates is linked to the shortcomings in this area. Although the importance of non-food items was also stressed in the evaluation after the drought of 2003, the response from donors has not improved significantly.

The national food security programme consequently launched by the government addresses a number of non-food issues, but one of the major problems is that this often only reaches the middle class of the population.

An estimate of 500.000 children suffers from acute malnutrition, out of which only 10% have received assistance. To enhance the outreach especially to rural areas, UNICEF and WFP have created a system whereby the whole country will be surveyed twice a year. This will imply a screening of needs and provision of basic services and supplementary feeding. The system is targeting, for the first time, the poorest and least accessible, including 7 million children, of which half have already been covered in the first screening.

Given this severe humanitarian situation, there is a great need for further funding and advocacy. A major concern is the division of the budgets in relief and development, challenging the funding of the transition phase.

Following the briefing there was further discussion on the problem of transition from relief to development. Also, Mr. Laroche was encouraged to share his findings and recommendations with the donor community.

Action Point:

- The agencies and the IASC Secretariat were encouraged to have Ethiopia on the agenda of the IASC Weekly Meeting again in order to review the situation.

2: Briefing on mission to Georgia
(by Fabrizio Gentiloni, OCHA)

Mr. Fabrizio Gentiloni, Assistant Director of OCHA's Coordination and Response Division, gave a briefing on a recent mission to Georgia.

The objectives of the mission, which was undertaken upon the request of the Resident Coordinator, were to deal with the consequences of the floods, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the Georgian authorities to deal with natural disasters.

The floods, resulting from heavy rainfalls and melting snow in end April, had severe effects on the agriculture and the infrastructure. Although floods are a quite well known phenomenon in Georgia, they struck some areas very heavily this time. Also some extremely poor and vulnerable regions in the South of Caucasus, the Lower and Upper Svaneti, were affected. Generally, risk awareness and knowledge about disaster preparedness is very low in these areas.

With its impact on agriculture, the floods aggravated the food security of the affected communities. As the planting season is coming soon, assistance needs to be provided soon; otherwise the affected populations will depend on food aid.

Following the floods, a number of assessments were conducted, e.g. by IFRC and UNICEF. A good Disaster Management Team is in place in Georgia, with active participation of UN agencies, ICRC, IFRC and NGOs. Some donors have already responded to the disaster. While there was not a consolidated appeal needed, the DMT has prepared an overview of needs and assistance actions, which can be accessed on Reliefweb.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/LSGZ-6CBHT4?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=FL-2005-000065-GEO>).

A major concern is the limited capacity of the government to deal with natural hazards. There was a coordination centre set up, but there is hardly any equipment, in particular technical equipment, available for the disaster response. As the government is very aware of this, the mission was regarded as a first step in the effort to further build capacity, and will be followed up.

Following the briefing, Mr. Robert Mister from the IFRC made some additional comments and highlighted the need to improve the water supply system and the water quality.

3: Update on the recent developments in Uzbekistan
(by Fabrizio Gentiloni, OCHA and Frank Remus, UNHCR)

Mr. Fabrizio Gentiloni, Assistant Director of OCHA's Coordination and Response Division and Mr. Frank Remus, UNHCR Senior Desk Officer for Central Asia, provided information on the recent developments in Uzbekistan.

On Saturday, 14 May, an UNHCR Team reached the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border and met with asylum seekers coming from Andijan over the Kyrgyz-Uzbek borders on Sunday evening. Close to the border, the Kyrgyz authorities have set up a camp and provided tents, food and water etc. for the refugees. Nonetheless, all agencies should be prepared for an influx of further refugees. UNHCR has two teams situated in Kyrgyzstan, which will fly to Osh and Andijan. They also have stocks in the region, one in Tajikistan and one in Kyrgyzstan, which can be mobilized for the affected areas.

Regarding the overall assessment, the situation in the Ferghana Valley can be described as tense. The Kyrgyz government, which is an interim government, is hesitating to guarantee asylum for Uzbek refugees in order not to conflict with the Uzbek authorities. UNHCR is currently negotiating with the government on how to deal with the refugees.

An inter-agency mission, consisting of OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO was in Uzbekistan at the time the security incident occurred. This mission, which was intended to look at contingency planning, also went to Andijan and planned to continue to Kara-suu as well as to other border-crossing sites.

After the security situation had stabilized, the Country Team sent a small team consisting of UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO representatives and programme officers to find facts and assess needs at first hand. The team was expected to report back on Thursday, 19 May, to the Country Team in Tashkent.

Following the briefing, it was highlighted that the situation in the Ferghana Valley should stay on the agenda in any case.

4: IASC Standard Briefing
(by Marilena Viviani, IASC Secretariat)

- The IASC Reference Group on the Humanitarian Response Review will meet on Thursday, 19 May from 10h00 to 12h00 in Room A-R of the Palais des Nations. The HRR Team will give a mid-term status report of the HRR process.

- The next meeting of the IASC Task Force on Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 19 May at 15h00. The Task Force will finalize the Human Rights Guidelines for Humanitarian Coordinators and will continue to work on the mapping of protection activities.
- On Thursday, 19 May, the 58th World Health Assembly Technical Briefing on Health Action in Crises will take place from 18h00 to 19h30 in Room VII of the Palais des Nations.
- Next Monday, 23 May, an HLWG Meeting on the Humanitarian Response Review will be held at 10h00 in Room V of the Palais des Nations.

**IASC Weekly Meeting
18 May 2005
List of Participants**



Name	Organisation	E-mail
Eric Laroche	UNICEF	elaroche@unicef.org
Fabrizio Gentiloni	OCHA	gentiloni@un.org
Frank Remus	UNHCR	remus@unhcr.ch
Laurent Raguin	UNCHR	roquin@unhcr.ch
Marilena Viviani	IASC Secretariat	viviani@un.org
Tina Divecha	UNHCR	divecha@unhcr.ch
Robert Mister	IFRC	Robert.mister@ifrc.org
Eva Vognild	OCHA Reliefweb	vognild@un.org
Lorly Zimmermann	CARE International	zimmermann@careinternational.org
Sina Zintzmeyer	IOM	szintzmeyer@iom.int
Talayen Voosoghi	IOM	tvoosoghi@iom.int
Florie Huck	WFP	Geneva.guest2@wfp.org
Amanda Bok	ICRC	abok@icrc.org
Maximilien Zimmermann	HAP International	mzimmermann@hapinternational.org
Chisha Kawandami	WHO	kawandamil@who.int
Luzito Simao	WHO	simao@who.int
Jacob Korreborg	IASC Secretariat	korreborg@un.org
Yukiko Yoshida	IASC Secretariat	yoshiday@un.org
Ellen Funch	IASC Secretariat	funch@un.org
Carlos Monteiro-Pereira	OCHA	Monteiro-pereira@un.org