

Minutes of IASC Task Force Meeting, South Asia EQ
Monday, 5th December 2005

1) End of mission impressions from Humanitarian Area Coordinator, Rashid Khalikov (RK)

- **Situation:** The situation in Bagh is a relatively stable and assistance operations are running well (also as far as logistics are concerned). The challenges are not as large as in other areas. Colleagues in Mansehra and Batagram are facing a different situation in terms of the unpredictability of the situation. 85,000 to 90,000 people are living in camps and approx 30,000 may come down in the coming weeks, but this remains unclear. Further, the disaster has revealed very deep social and economic problems (i.e. a population of 30,000 people in Kashmir had no female doctor) that prevail in these parts of Pakistan and which must be addressed in addition to current concerns.
- **A concern was expressed about the increased visibility of the agencies.** After the many advocacy and funding efforts that were made over the last weeks, agencies are now very visible on the ground and this therefore gives the false impression that we, the international community, can deliver anything. Also, the lack of implementing partners is a real problem in some areas.
- **Handover of operations from military side of the Government to the civilian side:** The handover has certainly not yet happened and will in any case be very difficult to be implemented since the civilian authorities are very weak in many parts. The military, however, shows a strong determination to hand over the operations. There are signs also of the military being tired and some of the military helicopters are being kept grounded. It is as of yet unclear how the potential handover of operations will affect the work of the humanitarian community.
- **Frustration of the population:** the population seems to become more and more frustrated with the Government. So far, UN agencies and other humanitarian organisations are very visible. However, as the situation continues to be very difficult, there is fear that the frustration and anger will need to be channelled towards the international humanitarian community. The message remains that there can be no complacency. We need to be ready for the worst.
- **Factors influencing the populations' willingness and ability to move or to stay in the remote areas:** The factors are very different in each place. In one place, 180,000 people are living on land that belongs to 2 landlords. In other places, the issue of property is very important and the poorest of the poor are scared to move away for fear of losing their property. Also, the decision-making procedure in a clan can take very long before they decide to move away (up to 2 weeks).

2) Briefing on Security in Pakistan – DSS

- The general security situation remains stable. There are just a few reports of looting, but these few incidents are inevitable. There is little or no adverse reaction to UN presence in the area by the local population. Extremist groups are not known to be located in the earthquake-affected areas, yet, some conservative, religious groups are present. DSS is monitoring the situation.
- Landslides remain a constant threat. As for the helicopter movement, the efforts are underway to enhance the landing capacity. Negotiations are also being held to organize a drivers training. DSS presence is now 12 security officers and 4 field security officers from DPKO.
- DSS plans to undertake a security risk assessment to further refine mitigating measures. They are currently negotiating with donors for further protection of the hubs.

3) The 90-day Winter Plan – OCHA Geneva

- The full 40-page document is currently with the FRC and is expected to be issued in one week. It is meant to be a “living” document and should be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Follow-up Action point: Agencies are requested to review the document and highlight any concerns on the capacity to achieve the objectives mentioned in the Winter Plan at the next IASC TF meeting.

4) Managing expectations: Streamlining Media Messages – OCHA

- Weekly messages will be sent out as there is a need for the UN system to be more coherent in advance of the harsh winter.

Follow-up Action point: Agencies are requested to collect information they have on the situation in Pakistan one year ago and send them to richards2@un.org by COB Wednesday, 7 December 2005. The purpose of this is to have baseline data in order to keep the current and upcoming situation in perspective. Information received will be distributed amongst PI officers for their use.

5) AOB

- Figures of population to be assisted: A concern was expressed by Worldvision on the figures used in the summary document of the Winter Plan on the population to be assisted. It says in the “December Overall Priorities” that the focus will be on continued assistance to about 350,000-380,000 people who will remain in the remote locations and of about 250,000 people in camps. What is the situation for the rest of the affected population? The desk advised that this gap is being addressed by the Government of Pakistan who are delivering the bulk of the assistance, although exact figures are not available at present. A clear message explaining the breakdown of these figures must be drafted and delivered.
- Short briefing by the recovery cluster: Several sub-clusters have been formed (including on the environment, on shelter, on education, on livelihoods). The cluster has been tasked to support the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA). SOPs with the ERRA will need to be worked on. Work is also underway on the National Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Plan.

Follow-up Action point: It was requested that the Recovery Cluster brief the IASC on a regular basis.

- Exit strategy: It was highlighted by UNHCR that when we think about an exit strategy, the *only* viable solution is the Government. In this regard *capacity building* is extremely important. The Government must be made aware of the need for close cooperation and involvement with the UN operation, with a view to taking on greater responsibility.

SUGGESTED NEXT AGENDA items:

- Discussion on implementing partners and current related problems.

NEXT IASC TF MEETING: Monday, 12th December 2005, 15:30 GVA time