

Minutes of IASC Task Force Meeting, South Asia EQ
Thursday, 20th October 2005

Update from cluster/ sector leads

Emergency shelter cluster (IOM)

- The cluster now has 15 members. Rough update on tents: 455,000 tents are still needed; 62,000 were delivered and 195 are in the pipeline.

Food (WFP)

- The regular food supply line for the longer term is starting to be sorted out, so for the longer term the food situation seems to be ok. The concern remains with the immediate needs, i.e. to get enough biscuits in.
- WFP together with UNICEF and Oxfam are planning a food security assessment, the ToRs of which will be shared on Reliefweb as of tonight or tomorrow.
- Logistics: All expected helicopters are on the ground now. One is on stand-by, however, because there is not enough parking space for helicopters. Base camps: One base camp from SRSA is under construction and one is arriving from Denmark tomorrow with another one coming from Norway on Sunday or Monday.
- In the latest OCHA SitRep, food wasn't mentioned as a priority need. This needs to be corrected.

Camp management (UNHCR)

- The flights by NATO from Turkey with supplies (100,000 blankets and 10,000 tents) are completed. UNHCR teams are present in Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Mansehra, Batagram and Balakot. 2 camps are being constructed near Balakot, 3 near Batagram and 3 further locations are confirmed around Muzaffarabad. UNHCR is working with partners on camp security, access, water supplies, etc.
- Reports have been received on coordination problems/ lack of information sharing between some clusters. 15,000 tents will be delivered in the coming days. Serious concerns were expressed about the likelihood to mobilize the 450,000 tents that are still required according to the shelter cluster as it took 20 to 30 plane loads for the 15,000 tents. There is a drastic lack of tents; UNHCR has emptied all its stocks. China was said to be the only real market where winterized tents can be purchased in large quantities.
- UNHCR will have used all its funds available for this operation by the end of this week (USD 5.5 to 6 million).

Health (WHO)

- A matrix of all field hospitals and medical teams is now available on the WHO website. A database is established of all the destroyed health facilities. Evacuations are still ongoing and needed but in addition to injuries, the first cases of communicable diseases have been reported. The statistics of injured people are cause for great concern; the figure of 67,000 is a minimum estimate.
- For the time being, there are enough medical supplies but more are needed for re-stocking.
- The first sector wide SitRep was published yesterday. The next one will be available next week.

Protection (UNICEF)

- Together with Government authorities, ICRC and Save the Children, a system is put in place where all children admitted into hospitals without accompanying family members are registered and photographed to facilitate identification and trace family links.

- It was stressed that children and women with disabilities are very much in need of assistance not only for the immediate period but also very much for the medium and longer term.

WatSan (UNICEF)

- Coordination hubs are set up in all the locations.
- Sanitation is a key concern.

Education (UNICEF)

- The cluster is co-chaired by the MoE and UNICEF. A strategy was discussed in order to fill the gaps in terms of number of teachers for the affected areas. Work is ongoing with other clusters in order to link educational work to recreational activities.

Early recovery (UNDP)

- The current efforts concentrate on the joint UN needs assessment exercise, which will be conducted as of Sunday. Results will be shared by 5th November. It will be a basis for designing an early recovery program the next 6 to 12 months.
- The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) also prepare a damage and loss assessment mission with a focus on the larger term reconstruction. It will start on Monday and will eventually provide a basis for longer-term bilateral aid. Both assessments are done in a complementary manner.
- Decentralized early recovery hubs are being established in various regions. UNDP is providing 17 mobile offices for these hubs. UNDP, UNEP and ILO as well as other organizations and agencies such as UNFPA, FAO, UN Habitat, WFP and ICRC have each fielded expert teams. ILO has already published an assessment report on the loss of employment, accessible on the ILO website. 1,1 million jobs have been destroyed which means 50% of the jobs in the region.

Coordination (OCHA)

- SitReps are being issued every other day as of now. The coordination mechanisms in place on the field are far from sufficient yet, but efforts with local authorities are ongoing. Especially the logistical bottlenecks are being addressed.

DSS

- DSS is monitoring and tracking the security situation of UN and partner staff. No serious incidents are reported so far. Escorts are recommended. It was reminded that snow equipment will be very much needed. FSCO teams are in all operational hubs. DFID has also provided 4 MOSS compliant vehicles.

ICRC

- The efforts are concentrating on the Neelum and Jehlum valleys. The number of injured people is still extremely high. There is as yet no evidence of people walking out of the valleys or out of the mountains. The aim of the ICRC is to provide assistance to 10.000 families by November.

General information/ Issues of concern

Information sharing

- Agencies were asked to say where they currently stand in terms of presence on the ground, i.e. location, number of staff.

Appeal

- Agencies in the field have been reporting to HQs that they were ready to finalize the revision of the Appeal. Confusion still seems to be ongoing. It was clarified that no revision should take place without the clear strategy for the longer term.

Relocation

- Issue of relocations needs clarification. This would be a completely different operation and would require different UN planning. The Government of Pakistan is allegedly speaking of forced relocations. WHO expressed the concern that there is no time for more planning or assessments: relocation must happen now or people will die. The UN needs to reflect leadership in this regard. It was also mentioned that there is no space for larger camps near the bigger towns and camps will be spread in a mosaic manner. OCHA-IDD wanted to clarify which cluster is responsible for the protection of vulnerable people in the event of relocations.

Tents

- Health cluster received reports from the field that “cluster business is totally nonsense” if it cannot ensure the prioritization of tents for hospitals. Reports say that patients have to be refused due to lack of tents near hospitals. → JLC was asked to prioritize tents near hospitals.
- IFRC reported that 150 tents of 25 sqm, 30 tents of 30 sqm and 25 tents of 90 sqm are being sent today and tomorrow and are meant to be put up for hospitals.

Videoconference with NATO

- An operations plan is being submitted and approved hopefully by Friday. USG Jan Egeland is going to Brussels tomorrow to brief the NATO council. NATO was very positive on cooperation. A clarification on a misquote done by the press: JE never said that he wanted NATO to coordinate the relief efforts.

Ministerial meeting next Wednesday, 26/10/05

- The invitation is on its way. They will also be sent to non-IASC agencies and NGOs. 2 persons per organizations are allowed and would need to be confirmed by COB Friday, 21/10/05.
- USG Jan Egeland is going to speak on behalf of all IASC agencies. Inputs of 3 bullets on priority needs and key actions undertaken are requested from all the cluster heads by COB Friday, 21/10/05 and should be sent to gelsdorf@un.org and jauer@un.org . Pictures and maps are also requested.

AOB

- ICVA stressed that this forum should rather be discussing strategic and policy issues rather than operational issues, which are better reported elsewhere.

NEXT IASC TF MEETING: Monday, 24 October 2005, 16:30 GVA Time

Meetings will be twice a week: Mondays and Thursdays, 16:30 GVA time