

Minutes of IASC Task Force Meeting, South Asia EQ
Thursday, 24th October 2005

Update from cluster/ sector leads

Shelter (IOM)

- A cluster meeting will be held tomorrow. There are discrepancies between the Government figures and IOM's figures on tent distribution. The issue of relocation has been addressed but there appears to be resistance from local communities to move away from their homes.
- The prioritisation of tents near hospitals is also being addressed.

Camp management (UNHCR)

- There are three approaches: 1) to reach those people who are far up in the mountains (ICRC is doing this); 2) to try to help communities who have set up makeshift camps; it is estimated that there are currently thousands of these camps; 3) to set up reception camps in properly chosen areas (two more camps are now in Punjab adding to the previous figure of 8 camps in Batagram, Balakot, and Muzaffarabad). This is being done in close collaboration with the army. The main concern is the lack of shelter material other than tents (sheets, sleeping bags, etc.). UNHCR will need NATO assistance to airlift a large amount of stocks that are still in Jordan (Amman).
- Correction from the minutes of last meeting: the supplies from Turkey flown in by NATO are still being transported and should be finalized this week.

Food (WFP)

- The food security assessment mission (WFP, UNICEF and Oxfam) now have preliminary observations. Many food stocks that were kept in households for the winter are destroyed. People who are traumatised by the events are not harvesting their crop. However, the markets seem to be functioning, yet, the prices are starting to increase. The assessment teams will begin compiling information as of tonight. A paper (one-pager) will be available on the 26th October.
- An estimated 475,000 people have been reached with food (UNICEF gave a revised figure of 690,000 people that have been reached with aid). NGOs provided relatively good feedback but we are still far from reaching all the potential caseload.
- Concern: WFP is still not well resourced and NGOs are very cautious to work with WFP for fear of discontinued funding once a project has started. Donor interest is a priority.
- Nutrition: the assessment mission had limited expertise in nutrition. The idea of these rapid assessments is to lay the groundwork for a more detailed follow-up mission, which would also focus more on nutritional aspects, as there is definitely a need to get more data and statistics on the nutritional status of the vulnerable people.

JLC (WFP)

- An inter-agency transport and logistics operations plan was received today and will soon be released. It is a substantial document giving indications on the way in which transport will be organized and undertaken. The priority will then be to have the plan implemented.

- All agencies are present now in Muzaffarabad, Balakot, Bagh, Shangla and Mansehra. In Mansehra, there is no need to for a base camp since there are enough places that can be rented. The two Norwegian base camps are expected for Bagh and Shangla respectively and the Danish camp is expected for Batagram. All these camps should be operational by the end of this week.

Health (WHO)

- The health situation in the main urban areas is under control. The survey of health facilities showed that 30% of the facilities are still or again operational. This means that in the coming 2 to 3 months a main concern will be to support the functioning of these facilities.
- The number of people that were evacuated from Muzaffarabad now amounts to 14,000 but, according to reports from the field, this only represents 10% of all people in need. As communicable diseases have now become a main concern, the water and sanitation situation needs to be seriously addressed.

Water and Sanitations (UNICEF)

- The needs are not being met yet. There are still large challenges ahead. Sanitation is a big priority. The cluster is currently also trying to identify alternative solutions for the sanitation.
- UNICEF is in the process of identifying additional implementing partners (NGOs).

Protection (UNICEF)

- The main concern is that coordination not yet working well on the level of the field locations even though it is working well in Islamabad. In terms of the figures used for the update of the Flash Appeal, 2 million people are reported to be in need of psychosocial assistance.
- A system for identification and registration of unaccompanied minors is put in place. Further, the cluster is strengthening human rights response to the disaster.

Recovery (UNDP)

- It was acknowledged that the principal efforts are still focussed on relief but also that it is time to look at recovery. The joint UN needs assessment exercise is ongoing with the aim of producing an early recovery framework. In terms of shelter, the assessment is looking at solutions, which go beyond the temporary solution of tents.
- In terms of livelihoods, the people in the affected areas are completely dependent on external remittances.
- The damage and loss assessment mission led by the IFIs is also ongoing and is meant to be complementary to the joint UN needs assessment.
- FAO also highlighted that recovery planning should start now for the agricultural domain.

Education (UNICEF)

- The cluster is co-chaired with the Ministry of Education. A big challenge is to get tents for schools. The planning figure used for the revision of the Flash Appeal is 600,000 children in school age that need protected, safe and winterised learning space.

DSS

- The total number of staff (national and international) deployed in the disaster area (not including Islamabad) is 406. 7 DSS security officers are now on the ground with 3 additional security officers from agencies. 3 additional security officers are arriving in the next days. No security incidents have been reported.

General information/ Issues of concern

Flash Appeal

- The name used for the FA is now “the most current version of the Flash Appeal”. A series of project proposals contain more than one agency in the project box. In order to be included in the Appeal, there needs to be a breakdown of requirements on “who needs how much”. Further, as FTS still has the “sector approach”, it will be done likewise for the Flash Appeal (i.e. not in the cluster approach).
- It was mentioned that a large part of the increase of the requirements for the Appeal is due to the costs for helicopters. It was questioned whether these in-kind contributions really need to be reflected in the Appeal. It was decided that this would depend on the respective Government, and whether they would wish to see the helicopters reflected in the contributions to the Appeal.

Ministerial meeting on Wednesday, 26th October 2006

- Jan Egeland’s presentation will be shared with IASC members on Tuesday for review. No comments are sought, only if there are glaring mistakes. WFP requested that it be made clear that it did not increase its requirements for food.

AOB

- A concern was expressed regarding the many assessment and VIP missions that are sent to the field. Such missions absorb transport means that are better used for actual relief work. Agencies were encouraged to be very cautious in sending more missions.
- Due to security reasons, agencies were encouraged to work as much as possible with national officers.
- NATO teleconference: The teleconference was very useful and NATO showed a lot of good commitment.