

TIL UM : 5.3, 5.6, 5.15.3 (5.15.4)
 PRA AMB. I ISLAMABAD
 UDEN SKR. DEN 20/8/98

AFGHANISTAN



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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 277

19 August 1998

Kabul Talks

UN and NGO representatives started a series of meetings with Taliban authorities on 17 August, to discuss issues that are preventing international NGOs from returning to Kabul. These include the instruction to NGOs to relocate to the Kabul Polytechnic and other points relating to overall working conditions, such as the issuing of ID cards to female health-workers and the current restrictions to women's access to health facilities.

From the Frontline

International aid workers have been relocated from Bamiyan and Faizabad, following the Taliban takeovers of Taloqan, Pul-I-Khumri, Hairaton, and Nahrin. Aerial bombing has occurred over Bamiyan, and the Taliban are reportedly advancing towards Faizabad. Meanwhile, large troop redeployments have been reported to the Tagab valley and the Jalrez front. Contact with locally recruited staff in Mazar-I-Sharif is currently extremely difficult, following looting of the UN's last remaining communications equipment.

Between 300 and 400 people are reported to have arrived in Jalalabad from the north. Male family members are reportedly being detained for questioning, before being sent back to join their families who are housed in a school in Sharshai camp. They are subsequently being released and

allowed to travel anywhere they wish to within Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Update

Central Region

Under the UNHCR planned group repatriation scheme, another 118 families returned from Pakistan to their place of origin in Kabul through Kandahar. UNHCR Kabul field staff have been conducting regular monitoring of the on-going projects in Azra on a rotation basis.

WFP Kabul released 1,352,000 tonnes of wheat to feed vulnerable people through the bakery programme.

WHO, UNICEF and the MoPH have been dealing with a large number of diarrhoea cases. Medical supplies for to help deal with the over 10,000 reported diarrhoeal cases were distributed to major hospitals in the city.

UNCHS's community schools resumed activities after a ten-day summer holiday.

Eastern Region

DACAAR, with assistance from UNHCR, continues to provide shelter to improve livelihood security of the villagers, and encourage the return of refugees.

Southern Region

FAO Livestock confirmed an outbreak of PPR (Pests du Petit Ruminants) in Naizi village of Gizab District, Urozgan Prov-

ince, and delivered vaccines to control the situation.

Western Region

WHO provided supplies to Herat regional hospital.

WFP issued a total of 184 tonnes of food to various projects during the reporting period. Out of the total disbursement, 66 tonnes of wheat was issued to ARAA, an implementing NGO partner for a flood protection project in Guzara District. The total food distributed benefited 16,000 people.

The construction of Ghurdarwaz Bridge, in District 5, Herat City was completed. The project was funded by UNHCR and implemented by Herat Municipality, under supervision of UNCHS..

FAO Livestock supplied Pasteurella vaccines for cattle and sheep in Shindand and other districts in Farah Province.

55 wells were equipped with hand-pumps in Shahrak District, Ghor province and Bala-Buluk of Farah province.

UNHCR Herat verified return of 100 displaced families from the neighbouring Faryab Province.

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THE UN: S.3, S.6, S.5.3, (S.4)
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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 276

12 August 1998

Pledges and contribution

The Government of United States of America has made a pledge of US\$2,900,000 for the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Afghan refugees.

Kuwait Joint Relief Committee informs that, with the support of its member organizations and a Saudi Philanthropist, it undertook a massive relief operation for the earthquake victims in Afghanistan. A sum of US\$70,000 had been allocated for this purpose.

From the frontline

Fighting continues in the central and northern regions with large numbers of troops deployed on all front line areas.

The general security situation remained calm in Kabul, while the situation in northern Afghanistan is extremely tense. The Taliban captured Mazar, the biggest city in the north, on 8 August and Taloqan, the capital of Takhar Province in the remote northeast of the country, on 11 August.

Impact of aid suspensions in Kabul

The impact of wide spread suspensions of NGO-implemented assistance programmes in Kabul has caused major concern for those humanitarian organisation still operating in the city.

Although, a proportion of vulnerable families continue to receive assistance through ongoing UN, ICRC and NGO programmes in Kabul, there are others who in the past were virtually dependent on exter-

nal assistance, and whose ability to survive is seriously affected.

Kabul talks

Negotiations between the United Nations and Taliban authorities in Kabul - through a Joint Consultative Committee established earlier - have satisfactorily concluded an agreement that will allow international non-governmental organizations to return to Kabul. On 17 August, representatives of the NGOs and Taliban Authorities, with the support of UN colleagues, will start to consider all technical issues concerned with the relocation of NGO facilities in Kabul.

As a result of this agreement, many United Nations programmes that were suspended in Kabul will be able to resume as well.

Humanitarian Updates**Central Highlands**

WFP completed the distribution of 122 tonnes of wheat flour to 1,500 vulnerable people in Sharistan, Uruzgan Province.

78 peace packs from the Association of Girl Guides of Japan were distributed to boys and girls in four schools in Bamyan.

80 sweaters, donated by China, were distributed to returnees women in Lal, Ghor Province.

However, the rapid evolution of the military situation in Afghanistan and the growing tension in this region has compelled aid agencies to reduce their presence and limit their activities. This directly affects

the outcome of the recent Common Programming related meeting, which concluded on the need for an immediate increase of NGO and UN involvement in this region.

Central Region

A growing number of facilities is unable to continue effective operation due to shortages of supplies. There are reports of a growing number of requests for medical and surgical supplies. WHO, UNICEF, ICRC and IFRC continue to respond to such requests where possible, but it seems clear that should shortages continue, ability of health staff to respond to patient needs will be seriously reduced.

WHO has reported several confirmed cases of cholera in the past week and a task force (comprising of MOPH/ WHO/ UNICEF) has been set up to take measure to ensure containment of the outbreak at the early stages, if possible.

UNICEF is involved in support for preventive measures, and is supplying 85 ORT corners in health facilities, as well as a city-wide sanitation campaign.

Construction of four wells, equipped with handpumps, have been completed in Baraki and Churkh Districts of Logar.

Eastern Region

FAO Crops ploughed 600 square metres of mung bean plots, applied urea top dressing on rice plots in Shesham Bagh research station, and distributed few common vegetable seeds to the progressive vegetable seed/crop growers, for planting in different districts of Nangrahar Province.

Southern Region

UNOPS, through a local commercial organisation, is undertaking the Canal Pada No. 2 flood protection measure in Shiga District, Kandahar Province.

In Balabulak and Pusht-e-Rud Districts of Farah, UNOPS is constructing 12 canal crossings and 21 shallow wells to provide irrigation and safe potable water.

UNICEF installed handpumps on semi-deep wells in different villages of Dand District, Kandahar Province.

FAO Crops distributed 500 tonnes of summer crops seeds to 2,000 contract seed growers in Farah, Nimroz, Kandahar, and Urozgan Provinces.

Breast-feeding Week was officially inaugurated in the Mirwais Hospital, where representative of MOPH and concerned NGOs explained the importance of breast-feeding to the community members.

Western Region

The breast-feeding promotion week was successfully celebrated under the auspices of UNICEF, in Herat city. 14,000 mothers attended the sessions.

FAO Livestock distributed 45,000 doses of PPR vaccines in Rabat Sangin District, Herat.

UNCHS restored an open drainage system in District 7, Herat city.

UNICEF conducted a one day seminar on safe water, sanitary latrine and personal hygiene practices for local district authorities and representatives of villages in Herat.

WFP issued 1,600 tonnes of mixed food for FFW, FFS, Institutional Feeding and IDP feeding projects.

Fourteen staff from basic veterinary workers operating in the PEACE Initiative districts in this region, received a refresher course.