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Assistance for Afghanistan

## WEEKLY UPDATE

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Issue No.388

15 November 2000

### Pledges and Contribution

The UK-based Department for International Development (DFIED) has pledged the amount £400,000 to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) for its drought response in Ghor Province.

### Health

WHO and UNICEF teams met the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) officers from Oruzgan, Nimroz, Helmand, Kandahar and Zabul provinces and reviewed the findings of the first round of fall NIDs, and expansion of the Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system in southern region of Afghanistan.

WHO continues to train 100 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in five districts of Kandahar province and also trained 3,600 social mobilisers, supervisors, health co-ordinators and volunteers to implement the second round of NIDs in eastern region.

### Supplies

WHO provided medical and non-medical supplies to a number of health facilities, clinics and provincial hospitals in Mazar, Badakhshan, Ghazni, Jalalabad, Helmand and Zabul provinces.

In order to jointly identify eligible beneficiary clinics in areas of high return in eastern Afghanistan, UNHCR and WHO

Jalalabad discussed on distribution of medical supplies donated by the Republic of China through UNHCR.

### Agriculture

Wheat seed processing and distribution and planting of improved wheat seed continued in Kabul, Logar, Kunar, Nangahar, Mazar, Kunduz, Paktia and Paktika provinces.

Budding of more than 25,000 seedling rootstocks were completed in Argandab, Daman, Dand and Panjwai districts in Kandahar province.

Improved wheat seed with a matching quantity of urea mineral fertiliser was distributed to farmers in Maruf District of Kandahar, and Garmsir District of Helmand province.

In the poultry back yard programme 240 farmers were visited in Dand District of Kandahar.

Over 1,500 doses of various vaccines were provided to veterinary field units in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

FAO also distributed 75 tonnes of improved wheat seed in Shindand District, in Kandahar and established District Seed Associations for better management of seed multiplication programmes in 2001.

### Education

In eastern region, the Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) Laghman with support

from UNICEF organised a teacher-training course for 135 female and male home-school teachers and supervisors. Similar courses were organised for 150 teachers in Kunar Province.

### **Food Security**

WFP Kandahar distributed wheat to 3,500 drought-affected and 450 returnee families in Zabul, Kandahar, Oruzgan and Nimroz provinces.

### **Repatriation**

Last week the Government of Pakistan closed the border at Torkham and Quetta. This measure followed the influx of approximately 30,000 Afghan refugees in the last two months who were fleeing fighting in the northeast and economic migrants seeking respite from drought.

The UNHCR returnee monitoring team has interviewed 137 heads of households in various villages of Bati Kot, Jalalabad. According to the interviewed families, their return in 2000 was motivated by a relative peaceful situation in this region and timely provision of initial and reintegration assistance by UNHCR for those who had returned to the same area in the previous years. They highlighted the impact the assistance had on the returnees' livelihood.

During the monitoring, the team interviewed a number of single male returnees who had just been repatriated from Iran under the Joint Programme of UNHCR/Iranian government.

UNHCR encashment centres in Jalalabad and Khost assisted 12 returnee families/ 71 individuals last week.

Shelter projects were monitored in two districts of Nangahar province last

week. The returnee families were among those repatriated both spontaneously and in organised groups this year. The level of completion was 100% at the time of the monitoring.

A total of 510 families/2,200 individuals voluntarily repatriated through Kandahar and Helmand from Pakistan last week. The returnees were provided with UNHCR's standard repatriation package (cash grant, plastic sheeting and wheat) and tea.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is implementing voluntary repatriation under the Joint Programme in co-operation with UNHCR.

### **Water and Sanitation**

Rehabilitation of eight karezes, capable of irrigating 1,210 jeribs of land, was completed in Kandahar last week. More than 300 families directly benefit from the project.

### **Demining**

The manual teams and mine dog groups surveyed and marked 130,000 sqm of high priority agricultural area for clearance in Dand District and cleared 94,000 sqm of high priority land in various districts of Kandahar last week. Over 500 people have received mine awareness training in southern region.

### **Disability**

UNOPS/CDAP have recruited 11 additional Afghan women as community development workers in Kandahar, Herat and Farah. Together with the previously employed 10 female colleagues in southern Afghanistan,

they will continue to work with local communities on disability, education and human rights issues.

### **Narcotics**

Wheat yield has increased in five districts of Badakshan where Afghanaid's community development programme is operating. In Argu District, wheat production from improved seeds introduced by Afghanaid has more than doubled. Moreover, farmers' income from wheat exceeded their income from poppy. A comparative income analysis, carried out for Argu farmers, showed that net income from one jerib of wheat was 105% higher than that of poppy. As a result, farmers have requested Afghanaid to supply more improved wheat seeds and fertilisers to the area.

### **NGO Training**

A ten-month training programme aimed to improve the technical and managerial skills of Kabul-based Afghan NGOs ended last month. The programme was implemented by the Ariana Construction and Rehabilitation Unit (ACRU) and was funded by the Canada Fund/CARE. Over 650 NGO staff members were trained in computer, management, accounting and report writing.

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Assistance for Afghanistan  
WEEKLY UPDATE

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Issue No.389

22 November 2000

### Pledges and Contribution

The UK-based Department for International Development (DFID) has pledged £500,000 to UNHCR for its education programme for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and £100,000 to the UN-supported Comprehensive Disabled Afghans Programme (CDAP).

### Closure of Afghan-Pak Border

The UN is concerned about Afghan minorities, who may be denied their right to asylum as a result of the continued closure of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan would face an increase in the number of internally displaced persons if the border were to remain closed. At present, the UN estimates there are approximately 200,000 displaced persons in Afghanistan, including those displaced by conflict in 1999. In the absence of local authorities providing adequate assistance for internally displaced persons, their support depends on the local population, often impoverished, and on the assistance community, which faces an uphill struggle with just under half of funding needs met so far this year.

At present, some 11,000 families are displaced as a result of conflict in Afghanistan's northeast. Joint UN-NGO missions took place from 11 to 13 November from Tajikistan to assess reports of additional displaced people on islands between Tajiki-

stan and Afghanistan. The mission found approximately 11,400 displaced persons in this location, living in makeshift shelters.

Like Afghanistan, Tajikistan is suffering from the effects of severe drought. It is still unclear whether Afghan refugees would be allowed to enter Tajikistan following the government's decision to seal its border in mid-September.

### Food Security

Four months after this year's harvest, at the end of October, 45,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have become dependent on food aid for their survival in Herat City.

IDPs are settling on the outskirts of Mazar and more than 5,000 have recently arrived in Charkent District of Balkh Province. An unknown number of IDPs are present in Sholgara District (Balkh), and more people are said to be moving out from the affected areas of Hazarajat and heading towards Iran and Pakistan.

More families are now dependent on income from labour markets, where the number of men who are seeking employment is rapidly increasing. An urban labour market survey - carried out by WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) in October - found that 'real' (inflation adjusted) wages have fallen over the past year by up to 49%. The fall in purchasing power since last year in the cities of Faizabad (57%), Herat (54%), Mazar (49%), Kabul

(19%), Kandahar (4.4%) and Jalalabad (22%) reflects the increasing strain being placed on the urban centres by a desperate rural population. In Mazar, the average labourer's income is only enough to feed himself and one other person. Only in Jalalabad and Kandahar can average households (6-member families – usually with just one earning member) provide adequately for their minimum food needs. A further divergence between prices and wages are anticipated as the winter approaches – making these families less secure.

The joint WFP-Oxfam-ICRC Emergency Operation in Chaghcharan, Ghor Province, was completed on November 15<sup>th</sup>. A total of 7,200 tonnes of wheat were distributed among 29,000 families. The operation was completed just before the start of the snowfall, which will block the passes for the next five months.

By the end of October, WFP Afghanistan had increased the monthly utilisation of commodities to 18,000 tonnes (compared with 10,900 tonnes in October 1999). In total, since the start of the Emergency Operations in August, 24,800 tonnes of wheat has been utilised in Food for Asset Creation schemes and Free Food Distribution alone.

WFP Afghanistan has only enough resources to continue its Emergency Operations until the end of February – five months before the next harvest could bring an end to the current food crisis.

### **The Situation in Eastern Region**

In eastern Afghanistan, relatively less affected by drought than other areas, the drought has exacerbated the overall situation and forced some people to leave their place of origin and become either refugees

in Pakistan or seeking shelter internally. With the border of Pakistan closed since 11 November, more than 400 displaced families have taken up residence in Jalalabad City.

The rainy season, which was supposed to start from mid October, is late. This will certainly perpetuate the impact of the drought and may mean that more areas are affected. Mitigation activities are ongoing, including karez and road rehabilitation, cleaning springs and canals, digging wells, sanitation, preventative health, and food distribution. WFP has also identified 15 more drought-affected districts for intervention.

Although the basic food items are available in local markets, people do not feel confident about the future due to the prevailing drought and the influx of IDPs in the region, particularly after the closure of the Pak-Afghan Border. The combination of drought, inflation, unemployment, and IDPs is expected to have a negative impact on the overall food security situation. By the end of the year, a complex humanitarian situation may develop due to water shortages, food deficit, and harsh winter cold.

In view of the increasing number of IDPs in the region due to the drought and continuing war in the North. UN agencies have developed a contingency plan of intervention in case the situation worsens. In the context of this worsening scenario, the assistance community would be engaged only in life-saving activities such as: (a) direct relief supplies; (b) provision of potable water; (c) emergency health services; and (d) resettlement.

In Hesark, the rehabilitation of almost 30 karezes, springs, and canals and resurfacing of a 6km-long road is in progress. In Chaparhar District, rehabilitation of

26 karezes, excavation and cleaning of 63 shallow wells have been completed and resulted in a considerable increase in water discharge. Over 3,000 families in 11 villages will benefit from the project.

UNICEF excavated 80 semi-deep wells, and constructed around 500 latrines all over the region.

## Health

The second round of the Fall National Immunisation Days (NIDs) started on 13 November 2000. The Badakhshan NIDs, due to climatic conditions, was postponed. A total of 36,000 health workers have been trained for the campaign. All UN agencies, NGOs and government authorities attended the inaugural ceremonies.

The UNICEF representative for Afghanistan monitored the NIDs in eastern region, and noted the advantageous results of the house-to-house strategy (chosen to ensure high coverage of children) in Jalalabad and the remote surrounding areas. The strategy was also applied for nomads, who do not have 'doors' to knock on.

## Drugs

The Representative of UNDCP Country Office for Afghanistan fielded a mission to Jalalabad last week. He discussed a number of drug control issues with the authorities in Nangahar, and also visited Surkhrud District to talk to the district shura and farmers.

A two-day outcome evaluation workshop was carried out for the staff of Drug Control and Co-ordination Units and UNDCP programme officers in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad. The objective of the workshop was to enable the staff to carry out drug awareness and drug preven-

tion campaigns and develop further basic drug awareness workshops in various locations. The next outcome evaluation workshop will be held in March 2001.

The Drug Demand Reduction Project of UNDCP Afghanistan, in conjunction with the BBC Afghan Education Project, has recently published a Pashtu/Dari booklet providing basic information about medicine and drugs/intoxicants. The document can be used in training programmes in the fields of healthcare, education and community development. Copies of the booklet are available in the UNDCP Afghanistan Office, 22 Nazimuddin Road, F-8/1 Islamabad.

A UNDCP-supported reconstruction of eight Karezes, providing irrigation water for over 200 hectares of land, was completed in Ghorak District of Kandahar province.

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNHCR

In order to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNHCR, the agency been organising several activities, involving refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia in Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta since October.

Art and sport competition programmes among refugees are planned to be staged in Islamabad on 21 to 23 November. The Government of Pakistan will issue a commemorative stamp to mark the anniversary.