

AFGHANISTAN (1)



UNITED

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AMBASSADEN ISLAMABAD		
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16 DEC. 1997		

Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

9 December 1997

124

Issue No. 244

Pledges and contributions

Saudi Arabia has donated US\$ 250,000 to UNOCHA for the Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Afghanistan.

From the frontline

The general security situation in the country has been relatively quiet and no significant military activity has been reported.

To the north of Kabul, reports of sporadic fighting and more intense exchanges of rocket fire continued to be received during the past week. The front line is still 20-30 km to the north of the city. Reports of sporadic clashes between opposing sides on the Jalrez front were also received.

Although a gradual return to normal conditions is in progress, factional tension prevails in Mazar and the surrounding region. Security and law enforcement in the city is uncoordinated and civil administration has not yet been established.

The Province of Kunduz remains in control by Taliban forces. Further clashes against them from neighbouring Takhar Province were reported during the past week.

Reportedly, the Badghis front in the northwest remains active along the Morghab River.

Tensions remain in Kunar due to guerrilla activities.

Bamiyan food situation

The World Food Programme is preparing for an airlift of food supplies from Peshawar to Bamiyan. Wheat has started arriving from the north and distribution is

already taking place. Wheat has been purchased in Kazakhstan and brought by train to Termez, near the Afghan border. Approximately 1000 tonnes of wheat have arrived in Termez and a consignment of 150 tonnes has gone to Bamiyan. 3000 tonnes of locally produced potatoes and some wheat have reached 78,000 people living in the most affected parts of the region.

Support group

Participants at last weeks' Afghanistan Support Group meeting in New York expressed enthusiastic support for the new holistic Aid Strategy for Afghanistan. Almost 100 representatives of UN member states, UN agencies, NGOs, and the ICRC attended the meeting, and endorsed the proposal to move towards establishing a single common assistance programme and independent evaluation capacity. It was, however, agreed that it was too early to start financing the programme out of a common fund.

Delegates debated the political situation in the country, noting the need to focus attention on external parties' involvement in the conflict as well as the different factions within Afghanistan. They also addressed the Human Rights, the gender issues and the UNDCP poppy eradication programme.

The State Secretary from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in London in May 1998, and will be co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the USA.

Eastern Region

MADERA has started a mineral food blocks manufacturing project in Jalalabad. Local resources are used and the aim is to provide a cheap supplement to mineral feeding of animals.

FAO Crops has implemented an integrated crop and food production project in Jalalabad. The project is funded by UNDP and the objective is to increase the production of improved cereal seeds.

UNHCR is funding a shelter assistance project in Sayedkaram district in Paktia Province. The project is implemented by DACAAR and the objective is to assist repatriated families in rebuilding their houses. A total of 103 families will benefit from the project.

Northern Region

UNOPS has initiated the implementation of a flood protection project in Faizabad in Badakshan Province. The project will be carried out in collaboration with the community and benefit 10,000 persons.

UNOPS has facilitated the formation of four Village Cluster Development Committees (CVDCs) in Faizabad. With these community organisations, seven workshops have been conducted, to build the community capacity of rehabilitation and development planning.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 245

16 December 1997

Pledges and contribution

NORAD has donated US\$ 50,000 to the Society for Promotion of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH).

From the frontline

The general security situation in Kabul has been relatively quiet, although some additional checkpoints have reportedly been set up at major intersections in the city centre. Reports have come in of sporadic exchanges of artillery and rocket fire to the north of Kabul. Reports of preparation and development of respective positions at the front north of Kabul have also been received. The front line area is still 20-30 km north of the city. Reports of resumed fighting in the Najrab and Tagab areas have been confirmed.

Factional tension prevails in Mazar city and the surrounding region. The province of Kunduz remains occupied by Taliban forces. Sporadic heavy clashes against them from neighbouring Takhar Province were reported during the past week.

Reportedly, the Badghis front has been reinforced by both sides. The Badghis front remains active along the Morghab River.

Reports of heavy, localised fighting in Qarabagh district in Ghazni between the Taliban and Hazaras were received during the past week. Tension due to guerrilla activity in Kunar continues.

Human rights

The UN Human Rights Rapporteur for Afghanistan and his team last week concluded their latest mission to Afghanistan. As well as visiting prisons and making a general assessment of the human rights situation of the rural and urban areas, the team looked into reports that various faction leaders had killed thousands of prisoners of war – and some civilians – and buried them in mass graves. The team found evidence of large-scale burials, although it is difficult to assess exactly how many people were killed. A forensic expert is currently carrying out more detailed investigations. A full human rights report, including information about the graves, will be completed later this month.

Cultural heritage

The contribution from NORAD to the Society for Promotion of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage, is to promote the preservation of the Jam Minaret in Ghazni and the Buddhas in Bamiyan. The minaret will be protected against water erosion from a nearby river by constructing a gabion wall. Repairing water drainage, and building a protective wall in the front will help preserve the largest Buddha. An international expert will assess the needs for the other buddhas. The contribution from NORAD, will also support different ethnic groups and societies working towards preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage.

Strategic framework process

Following the Afghanistan Support Group's endorsement of the new aid strategy for Afghanistan, the 1998 Consolidated Appeal is being prepared to reflect and promote the strategy's themes. The Appeal will be issued in late January. Meanwhile, an interim appeal is being launched to meet immediate requirements to enable certain activities to continue into the next year. US\$ 5,992,085 is requested to support specific on-going projects, which lack sufficient 'carry-over funds' to extend their activities through the first quarter of 1998 until new funds are contributed. Activities include: providing clean water for Bamiyan, support for education in Badakshan and preparation for the 1998 polio eradication campaign.

Bamiyan food situation

The airlift of food supplies from Peshawar to Bamiyan started on 16 December. The flight operation is complex, with great dependence on weather situations, but WFP will attempt to deliver approximately 2,500 tonnes of mainly wheat by plane. So far 3,500 tonnes of locally purchased potatoes have been transported by road within the province and provided to 80,000 people.

E-mail communication

All recipients of the Weekly Update are requested to send their e-mail address and fax number to the UNDP/UNOCHA office in Islamabad. Please send it to following:
E-mail: unocha@unocha.sdnpc.undp.org.
Fax: +92 51 211 450

Humanitarian update

Central Region

In Kabul, many families still occupy temporary accommodation. Operational agencies have plans to provide coal for vulner-

able groups, and for heating health facilities.

A joint WHO and UNICEF delegation visited Kabul to verify a polio outbreak. The team worked in collaboration with MoPH and NGOs and carried out rapid surveys at community and hospital level. The results will be available shortly.

WFP bakeries assist 211,564 beneficiaries daily. 59 trucks arrived from Peshawar with 1,369 tonnes of mixed food.

Mine action operations continue in Sarobi, while most teams have moved to their winter locations in the south of the country. Last week there were two mines and three UXO incidents, involving eleven citizens. Three children died.

Eastern Region

Last week, UNICEF met the local shura in the region to discuss safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. The project including the production of concrete rings and digging of wells, will ultimately provide clean water to 1,000 people. 15 households have now access to safe sanitation.

Northern Region

UNOPS has approved an informal education and 'out-of-schools' children project. The project will be carried out in collaboration with Save the Children (US), and is expected to provide basic education to 4400 women and girls in 7 districts.

Western Region

UNICEF provided nutritional supplements to the Herat regional hospital, and the EPI teams in Herat and Farah Provinces.

WHO provided 8 months supply of therapeutic equipment to Herat hospital, plus 120 blood bags and textbooks to a nursing school.

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23-December 1997

Assistance for Afghanistan
WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 246

Pledges and contributions

The Swiss Government has donated US\$400,000 to support the UNDP P.E.A.C.E. Initiative in Kandahar. This is the first direct donor government contribution to this initiative.



Mr. Gerolf Weigel and Mr. Alfredo Witschi-Cestari signing the agreement at Swiss Embassy on Friday.

From the frontline

Fighting between the Taliban and the forces of the Northern Alliance continued in Central, Northern and Eastern Regions throughout the reporting period. No significant military activity has been reported in the remainder of the country. The general security situation in Kabul has been relatively quiet during the reporting period, although some additional checkpoints have reportedly been set up at major intersections in the city.

To the North and West of Kabul, reports of exchanges of heavy artillery and rocket fire in the Shakardara, Guldara and Jalrez areas were received during past week.

The front line area is still approximately 20-30 km to the North of the city. Although a gradual return to normal conditions is in progress, factional tension prevails in Mazar city and the surrounding region. The province of Kunduz remains occupied by a significant Taliban force. Sporadic, heavy clashes against this force by opposing elements from neighbouring Takhar Province were reported during the past week. Reports of isolated cases of fighting in Samangan Province have also been received. The security situation Herat city is reported to be generally stable, although heavy fighting, during the past week on the Badghis front has been reported. The road from Mehtarlam to Dawat Shah northwest of Jalalabad was reportedly closed during the past week due to fighting in that area.

Paigham

Paigham- the newsletter produced under the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) component of the UNDP P.E.A.C.E. Initiative will now appear as a monthly 16-page magazine. The audience: Afghan families living in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The aim: to produce a magazine by Afghans for Afghans that fosters the rehabilitation and peacebuilding process.

Contributions are invited from staff of UN agencies and NGOs and their friends. Please send articles and pictures to Ariana Yastali at UNDP Afghanistan, House 292, Street 55, F-10/4, Islamabad.

No Update next week

There will be no Weekly Update on 30 December. We wish all our readers a very happy New Year.

E-Mail communication

All recipients of the Weekly Update are requested to send their e-mail address and fax number to the UNDP/UNOCHA office in Islamabad. Please send it to following:

E-mail

unocha@unocha.sdnpc.undp.org or
ariana@undpafg.org.pk

Fax: +92 51 211450

Mine Action

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan bid farewell this week to its Programme Manager Bill van Ree. Bill, who has now returned to Australia, became involved in mine action in Afghanistan in 1989 as a member of the Australian Army contingent to the multi-national mine clearance training team for Afghanistan. He returned to mine action in Afghanistan in 1994 and became Manager of the Programme in 1996.

Bill's replacement is Ian Bullpitt who also has a long association with mine action in Afghanistan. He too was part of the original Australian Army training contingent. He has served as the Programme's Regional Manager in Peshawar and most recently as the Programme's Planning and Operation Manager in the Mine Action Center for Afghanistan's Islamabad office.

A series of bicycle races for disabled competitors were held in Jalalabad on 17 December 1997. The event was organized by the Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation (AABRAR) and included races over varying distances for adults and children riding bikes and in wheelchairs. Mine Action organisations, including the Organisation for

Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR) and the Afghan Technical Consultants, helped out by providing transport for participants and having an ambulance on standby. OMAR also held a mine awareness display to promote an understanding of the land mine problem in Afghanistan.

The official opening of the Austrian Government funded Eye Clinic at the Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar was held on 14 December 1997. The clinic's establishment means that deminers suffering eye injuries will no longer have to be transported to Quetta for emergency intervention. Members of the local community will also have access to its facilities.

BBC

BBC AED (Afghan Education Drama) with UNESCO's financial support, has recently launched a new initiative by producing simple, illustrated story books for Afghan children. The initiative begins with publishing the story "The Lion And The Woodcutter" which is told in different versions among Afghan communities. The story is based on a famous Afghan proverb "the wound from the axe is curable that of the word is not". The moral of the story is that of peace, tolerance and co-existence and was used and told in the "New Home, New Life" drama.

Humanitarian update

The Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB) reports that a series of training courses commenced in Peshawar for 250 Afghan NGO staff members. The courses cover subjects such as, management, participatory rural appraisal, working in partnership, and proposal writing and reporting.

Central Region

During the past week, UNICEF conducted a three day training workshop on acute respiratory infection. 14 participants from paediatric hospitals and primary health care facilities attended. In addition, a one day trauma training session was carried out at Maiwand hospital for 10 female psychosocial facilitators from Save the Children (US). Workshops were also conducted at the Orphanage for boys and girls in carpentry, childcare activities and handicraft.

UNHCR monitoring at Pul-e-Charki checkpoint reports 539 families outgoing and 207 families incoming during last week. In Logar Province the shelter programme implemented by MEDRA completed 370 returnee houses.

In 1998, UNCHS will be producing reinforced concrete beams to support destroyed houses. The beams will be made at the Kabul Housing Factory where UNCHS has commenced work on rehabilitation of the steam system.

WHO has presented a x-ray developer and fixer along with medical and surgical equipments and malaria textbooks to Kabul hospitals and health facilities.

WFP distributed 710 MT of mixed commodities.

Afghan German TTP completed the construction of 3 clinics and 3 school in AZRA district of Logar on Dec.22, 1997. These projects were funded by UNHCR and WFP.

Eastern Region

FAO Crops dispatched a total of 2.6 MT of improved wheat seed to the seed unit in Asadabad, Kunar Province. Six different varieties of wheat were planted on 4000 square meter of land in the Sheshambagh Research Station in Jalalabad.

Afghan German TTP is presently implementing a training project for the re-

habilitation of Mine Crippled Youth in Khost province, Afghanistan. The project teaches the trades of tailoring and shoe making.

Northern Region

During the last week WFP Faizabad distributed 12 MT of wheat in Faizabad for 103 women in a food-for-training project through RAFA. In addition, 36 MT wheat was distributed in Ishkashem for 1000 beneficiaries under the Emergency Food Assistance project. This project is implemented by a joint committee comprised of representatives from WFP, local authorities and community elders.

Western Region

FAO Crops distributed 187.5 MT each of wheat seed and fertilizer to 2021 farmers in five P.E.C.A.E. Initiative districts. In addition, 17 sprayers, 5 tractors, 3 wheat threshers, 3 maize shellers, cultivators and 1 seed drill were distributed in the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative district of Khoh-I-Safid.

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UNITED



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Assistance for Afghanistan
WEEKLY UPDATE

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Issue No. 247

7 January 1998

UN criticized over human rights

Radio Shariat last week broadcast statements apparently made by the leader of the Taliban movement, criticizing the UN's appeals for an end to the ban on women's access to education and employment. The UN has spent the past week trying to discover what the implications of these statements might be. One significant concern is that the statements might put the security of UN staff, both Afghan and international, at greater risk.

Bombs disrupt food deliveries

On 31 December, Taliban aircraft dropped bombs on Bamiyan airport close to a WFP-chartered cargo plane that had brought in 5 tonnes of badly needed wheat. Later that day, the market place in Bamiyan was hit and one civilian was, reportedly, seriously injured. The following day bombs landed about 300 metres from a UN passenger plane, as UN officials, who had gone to investigate the previous day's incidents, were disembarking. No damage or injury was sustained. The emergency food airlift was suspended.

The UN Coordinator led a delegation to discuss the issue with the Kandahar authorities on 3 January. On 7 January the UN received a memorandum from Kandahar rejecting its appeal for guarantees of safe passage for the emergency food supplies. The authorities said they might reconsider the issue if the Bamiyan authorities released Taliban prisoners from jail. The UN Coordinator made a press statement objecting to the imposing of politi-

cally motivated conditions on a humanitarian assistance effort.

Situation in the north

The UN has not yet been able to resume activities in northern Afghanistan. The UN Coordinator attempted to visit Northern Alliance leaders with a delegation of UN officials, but was unable to do so because bad weather prevented the aircraft from landing. Efforts to set up new appointments are ongoing.

There is an urgent need to provide assistance to victims of the conflict in this region, but multilateral assurances regarding the security of UN staff of equipment must be given before this can happen.

From the frontline

Fighting between the Taliban and the forces of the Northern Alliance continued in the Central, Northern and Western Regions.

The general security situation in Kabul has been relatively quiet during the reporting period, although additional check-posts and security patrols continue to operate throughout the city.

Reports of exchanges of heavy artillery and rocket fire were received from areas to the north and west of Kabul. Military activity continues to be reported from the Tagab Valley. The town of Alasai, to the Northeast of Tagab, was, reportedly, captured by Masood's troops during the week. Although a gradual return to normal conditions is in progress, factional tension prevails in Mazar city and the surrounding region. Recent reports of an inter-faction

vided by UNCHS for the development of community fora, which will be the focus for a range of service functions, including income-generation and other activities.

UNICEF and UNCHS continued to support small-scale water supply initiatives in Kabul and Logar provinces, with the installation and maintenance of handpumps. UNICEF supported the construction of latrines in the city.

FAO Crops procured a quantity of almond and apricot seeds for the establishment of 30 fruit tree nurseries, 10 of which are located in Laghman province. The land preparation and seed and fertilizer distribution programme for fruit tree nurseries continues.

A team from the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah visited Kabul in December and has agreed in principle to make available a sum of US\$ 220,000 as soon as possible. The funds will be used for: nutrition of malnourished children, purchase of fuel for warming of various hospitals during winter, a mass immunization campaign against polio, and rehabilitation of educational institutions. The projects agreed are to be executed through the Kuwait Joint Relief Committee.

Eastern Region

WFP initiated a new project in Metherlam, the provincial capital of Laghman to rehabilitate orphanage homes as well as providing food. 32 tonnes of food will be provided by WFP to feed 250 orphans for a period of six months. The orphans are currently receiving primary education. The bakery project in Jalalabad has been extended for another four-month period starting 1 January, 1998. About 5,760 tonnes of wheatflour is expected to be utilized during the period. Some 150,000 people residing in Jalalabad city and the old IDP camps will receive subsidised bread daily. The

project will also provide employment to 1,200 people in the existing 84 bakeries in Jalalabad, Mumtaz, and Hadda camps.

DACAAR has recently completed a UNHCR-funded well improvement project in Shrizad district, Nangarhar, (100 wells); Rodat, Paktia (50 wells); as well as Sayed Karam (100 wells) and Chamkani (100 wells) both in Paktia. The wells now produce clean drinking water which will improve related health and sanitation and will reduce the incidence of water born disease. The community provided the necessary labour to complete the project.

Northern Region

During the last week WFP Faizabad distributed 36 tonnes of wheat in Zebak district (2,600 metres altitude) to 800 beneficiaries and 79,200 tonnes of wheat in Baharak district (1,480 metres altitude) to 2,200 beneficiaries. Beneficiaries each received a total of 36kg of wheat, which will feed them for for three months.

With UNDP funding, UNOPS has approved a sanitation sub-project, which is expected to reduce river contamination and the spread of parasitic diseases among villagers, through the construction of 417 pit latrines in Faizabad. Rehabilitation work is also being carried out on the water supply system of Zafar Abad, Faizabad in order to provide safe drinking water to over 1,000 villagers. With the assistance of the community, UNOPS is beginning the repair of a canal and irrigation intake between two villagers in Faizabad, which is expected to irrigate 2,000 jeribs of land and revive crop production.

UNOPS is rehabilitating the Isari primary school in Faizabad, attended by 230 students. The organization is also rehabilitating one of the three girls' high schools in Faizabad, which is providing a

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UNOPS is rehabilitating the Isari primary school in Faizabad, attended by 230 students. The organization is also rehabilitating one of the three girls' high schools in Faizabad, which is providing a

safer educational environment to 865 girls and 50 female teachers.

FAO Crops carried out agriculture base-line surveys in nine villages in the Faizabad area.

A three-member team of the Spanish NGO Almondo is currently assessing ways of providing health assistance in Afghanistan. The team visited Mazar-I-Sharif during the past week.

Western Region

UNHCR distributed 3,120 blankets out of a targeted 7,500 to IDPs who did not receive blankets last year. UNHCR is also arranging for the repatriation of 26 Tajiks to Dushanbe.

FAO Livestock distributed 177,000 doses of *Enterotoxaemia* vaccines to 14 veterinary file units.

UNICEF distributed supplies to vulnerable and poor women in the city and provided equipment and training materials to seven home-based projects. UNICEF also delivered 13 heaters and 5,000 litres of fuel to the Badghis provincial hospital.

UNCHS, with the municipality and WFP removed 152 cubic metres of solid waste from Herat city.

WHO trained 23 representatives of Enjil district in basic development needs and methodology and completed a socio-economic survey of two villages. They also provided seven heaters to the regional blood bank and regional hospital.

FAO Crops conducted the following activities:

- Planted six farmer fields demonstration in central Farah.
- Planted 100 jeribs (20ha) in ISE farm and 200 jeribs (40ha) of contract seed growers' land with different varieties of improved wheat seed.

- Repaired the seed processing plant at seed complex building in Herat province.
- Distributed 50 tonnes of improved wheat seed through UNOPS in Shin-dand. Sixteen tonnes each of improved seed and mineral fertilizer were distributed in Bakwa and two UNDP P.E.A.C.E. districts of Farah province.
- Continued land preparation and input distribution for fruit tree nurseries establishment in five P.E.A.C.E. initiative districts in Farah province.
- Planted total 12.5 jeribs of land with four different varieties of improved wheat seed under crop improvement programme for seed multiplication purpose.

Southern Region

FAO Crops distributed 102 tonnes of improved wheat seed and 95.7 tonnes of mineral fertilizer (urea & DAP) in five UNDP P.E.A.C.E. initiative districts of Kandahar province. FAO Crops also continued land preparation and input distribution for fruit tree nursery establishment in five P.E.A.C.E. initiative districts of Kandahar province.

The Afghan NGO, ADA, is implementing integrated rural development projects in southwest and central Afghanistan. These include improved seed and fertilizer distribution; horticulture rehabilitation and development; canal and karez rehabilitation and development; farm mechanization, vocational training; support for higher education; soil conservation; water supply; micro-hydropower; road and bridge repair and construction; human resource development; and veterinary and integrated education

UNITED



NATIONS

Assistance for Afghanistan WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 248

13 January 1998

Pledges and contributions

The Government of India is to contribute US\$ 800,000 to WFP, WHO and UNOCHA for food distribution in Bamiyan.

From the frontline

Reports of intense exchanges of heavy artillery, rocket and mortar fire to the north and northeast of Kabul, have been received. The front line is still 20-30 km to the north of the city. On 8 January, Tameer, near Sarobi, was reportedly held by the Taliban. Massoud's forces were holding positions in the Tagab area. The town of Sorobi itself is currently secure, but northern Ghazni is tense due to sporadic fighting. Sporadic exchanges of rocket and artillery and rocket fire were reported to have taken place on the Jalrez front. Although a gradual return to normal conditions is in progress, factional tension prevails in Mazar and the surrounding region. Factional clashes took place in Mazar on 2 and 4 January.

It has been reported that northern forces have crossed the Morghab River and advanced to Mangan. Reports of Taliban military air traffic in the Qala-I-Nau area have been received.

Reportedly, fighting between local Taliban commanders took place in the north of Kandahar.

Reports indicate artillery exchange between two Taliban militias on 7 January in Jalalabad. Tensions remain in Kunar due to guerrilla activities.

Bamiyan

A delegation led by the UN coordinator is visiting Bamiyan, Kabul and Kandahar this week to discuss issues including the Bamiyan food crisis. No reports of further attacks on Bamiyan have been received. UN operations in Bamiyan remain suspended until security related negotiations with the Taliban are concluded.

BBC Newsletter

The first edition of BBC AED Evaluation newsletter, introduces a new needs assessment system of evaluation for "New Home, New Life". Different themes will be covered in three-month cycles. At the end of each period, an assessment report will be presented and discussed with a consultative committee and representatives of the aid community. The priorities identified from the evaluation will be the basis of the script of "New Home, New Life". The BBC is hoping for a greater cohesion of its efforts with the aid community, and the adoption of a campaign approach in certain fields.

Repatriation report

During the last quarter of 1997, the number of returnees crossing the border from Pakistan to Afghanistan increased. Although the total number of returnees in 1997 was lower than in 1996, the last quarter of 1997 indicates a positive trend of repatriation. In 1996, approximately 120,800 Afghans returned, and last year 84,400.

Humanitarian update

Central Region

UNHCR reports that 2,813 people left Kabul City, and 773 entered the city during the past week. Out of these, 222 came from Tagab and Nejrab districts.

The Department of Vice and Virtue, MoPH and international agencies have agreed to re-establish female patient care in Aliabad hospital in Kabul. The project is funded by UNDP/UNCHS and will rehabilitate neurological facilities in the city.

WHO delivered 50 surgical and medical items, and 10 polio investigation sets to MoPH in Kabul.

UNICEF is carrying out training of 50 health professionals in Logar and Kabul, and training of media personnel and volunteers in ARI control.

UNHCR has supplied materials for the repair of Kabul stadium. The work is being carried out by Habitat.

Eastern Region

WFP has provided 74 tonnes of wheat to a food-for-work programme in Jalalabad. The 6-month project will be carried out by WHO and the objective is to restore wells used for drinking water.

WFP has also extended a bakery project in Jalalabad. For 4 months, 5,760 tonnes of wheat flour will be used to produce subsidised bread to 150,000 people.

MADERA has completed a drainage project in Mohmand Dara district. The project, funded by WFP and NAC, has provided irrigation of 1,400 ha of land and the number of beneficiaries is 2,100 families.

Western Region

UNHCR distributed 94 blankets to IDPS in Shahidia, and 341 tonnes of wheat was distributed to 975 families in Khosrabat and Ghurian.

UNHCS removed 613 cubic metres of solid waste from the city in collaboration with the Municipality.

UNICEF provided nutrition supplies to the regional hospital, and 4200 litres of heating fuel to the ophthalmic centre in Herat.

Northern Region

During the last week WFP Faizabad distributed 12 tonnes of wheat in Baharak for 36 women in a Food-for Training project implemented in collaboration with Afghan Aid.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

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Pledges and contributions

The Government of India has pledged an in-kind donation of medicines and medical supplies to Afghanistan valued at approximately US\$ 800,000 equivalent. The contribution is being channelled through WHO and coordinated by UNOCHA.

From the frontline

The general security situation in Kabul has been relatively quiet. Due to severe weather conditions, the front-line to the north and north-east of Kabul is reported to be quiet.

The security situation in Herat is reportedly tense and heavy fighting in Badghis Province is continuing.

Jalalabad City and regional provinces were said to be relatively quiet during the reporting period. On 14 January rockets fired by unknown gunmen killed three and injured seven in front of the Customs Office near the Torkham border. Reports of sporadic fighting in Alishang district were received. Kunar and Ghazni have been reported to be calm. On 13 January ICRC drivers and international staff were stopped at a gunpoint by Arabs from a nearby military base, when driving on the Charbagh road, behind Darunta.

BAAG/PRDU workshop in UK

The meeting of 70 people, predominantly from NGOs, also included donors, UN representatives and a number of Afghans. The topics were "From Rhetoric to Reality" and "The Role of Aid in Local Peace-

building in Afghanistan". The workshop was organised by the British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), and the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) at the University of York. Conclusion: the aid community should further define how it can contribute to peace-building and how its efforts at the local level must be complemented by activities at the national and international level.

Currency regulations

On 18 January, the Taliban administration announced new controls over the money market. The authorities will fix the afghani/dollar exchange rate on a daily basis in a bid to halt speculation and end wild exchange rate movements.

In non-Taliban areas, the exchange rate currently stands at around 70,000 afghanis to the dollar. In Taliban-controlled regions the Afghani stands at 31,000 to the dollar. Throughout 1997, the rate fluctuated between 21,000 and 26,000 afghanis to the dollar. Meanwhile, there are widespread reports of a large influx of new afghani notes onto the market.

Consolidated appeal

The 1998 Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan will be formally launched on Wednesday, 4 February. Copies of the Appeal, which outlines the assistance community's objectives for the current year will be airfreighted to New York and Geneva next week.

Strategic framework forum

An e-mail forum will be launched to facilitate consultation on the Framework. Participants will include the aid community, academics and the media. The objective is to ensure that those involved can both access and contribute to current information, documentation and debate. Please e-mail ross@undpafg.org.pk to register.

Humanitarian update

Central Region

UNHCR checkpoints report that 2,629 people left Kabul City and 781 people entered the city last week. It was said that out of these, 239 people came from Tagab and Nejrab districts in Kapisa Province, which continue to be the focus of hostilities.

The second meeting of the Health Commission, comprising MoPH, UNICEF, WHO, ICRC, UNDP/UNOCHA and an NGO representative, was held in Kabul. The participants discussed ways of resolving operational aspects of health care in the region.

UNICEF continued activities aimed at supporting the control of Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI). They also supported a workshop for mass media personnel and 28 female community workers. An UNICEF mission travelled to Ghazni to deliver supplies to EPI teams and review their activities.

WFP reported distribution of 1,102 tonnes of food through for food-for-work for institutional training and food-for-training in Kabul.

UNHCR has purchased 415 quilts for distribution to families under the Winter Relief Programme.

With the support from WFP, FAO purchased 50 tonnes of maize seed from farmers in Kabul and Logar Provinces.

Eastern Region

UNICEF conducted 3 days training on ARI in Kunar and on safe motherhood at the MoPH in Jalalabad. 26 doctors and health workers, 24 social mobilisers and 28 volunteers benefited from this training. UNICEF provided 350 student kits, classroom equipment and 305,000 notebooks to CARE International, in order to support a home based school project in Paktia.

WFP will to support the construction of two MCH clinics in Metherlam and Rodat districts of Laghman and Nangarhar. It is a food-for-work programme and 10 tonnes of wheat will be provided. 100 labourers will benefit from this project. WFP will also provide 164 tonnes of wheat to another food-for-work programme, for construction of flood protection walls in Alishing district in Laghman Province.

Northern Region

A feeding project, linked to drug detoxification in Ishkashem, Zabak and Wakhan in Faizabad is being extended for another six months. WFP and ORA International undertake the project in which treatment is provided to 720 drug addicts and ex-addicts who are being re-integrated into the society. Awareness of the dangers of drug abuse is also provided.

Western Region

WHO installed an X-ray machine in Farah hospital and repaired three others in the Province.

FAO Crops planted 20 hectares of improved wheat, 0.5 hectares of onion and 1 hectares of Swedish chick peas.

WFP distributed 306 tonnes of wheat to 874 beneficiaries in Herat, 58 tonnes to IDPs and 54 Tajik refugees.