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WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.332

28 September 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area and Northern Displacement

A total of 60,000 people are now estimated to have arrived in Kabul from the Shamali Valley, north of the city.

In the Afghan capital, WFP aid for the displaced housed in the ex-Soviet compound has been extended for another month, and local authorities continue to provide bread. All compound residents have also received essential non-food items. A second package of items will be forthcoming. The NGO CARE is providing safe water and sanitation service, and the UNCHS is supporting various tasks, including the removal of waste from the compound. Mine education is also being provided. Now closed to new arrivals, the compound has a population of some 12,450 people, including over 8,000 children. Small numbers of the displaced have left to stay with relatives in the city.

A new survey of the compound will take place to determine how many families have relatives in the city to see, if support were available, whether they could move out and stay with them. Families in the compound will be told that prime focus for additional support will be given to host families outside the compound. While there is no change in the health status of displaced persons in Kabul, host families might have trouble in shouldering their care throughout winter. Therefore, the UN may need to assist up to 5,000 displaced families

in various parts of the capital. However, not all the displaced are expected to be able to leave the compound, and the UN plans to winterise the facility, extend water supply and sanitation facilities, and provide increased drainage for washing areas.

Some 80,000 to 85,000 are still displaced in the Panjshir Valley, where three international staff of WFP, UNICEF, and the UN Coordinator's Office have joined the mission of national staff established earlier. They are monitoring the population flux, the condition of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the distribution of supplies as well as providing co-ordination.

According to provisional UN estimates, up to 35,000 people in Panjshir may need shelter over the winter, for which plans are underway. In addition, up to 50,000 persons displaced there may need food aid over the winter, for whom WFP is planning up to 6,000 MT of food over eight months. So far, 10,000 blankets and 1,000 plastic sheets have arrived, as well as 608 MT of food. The first WFP convoy of 27 trucks carrying 500 MT of wheat arrived at the UN base camp in Bazarak on 22 September. The second convoy of an additional 500 MT of wheat moved from Ishkashim, on the border with Tajikistan, on 22 September. Despite UN prepositioning, food shipments have now been delayed by fighting in the north. Under normal circumstances, each convoy takes up to ten days to cover the 500 km to reach the base camp, travelling through mountainous roads and close to frontlines.

In both Kabul and the Panjshir Valley, the UN is ready to assist displaced civilians to the extent possible. It has assessed resources available and needed, and has requested necessary emergency funds of over three million dollars from donor countries. In order to prepare for an eventual return of the displaced, aid agencies involved in IDP support are requesting permission to independently assess the situation in the Shamali Vally.

Appeal preparation

In preparation for the 2000 Appeal, the last of the five thematic group meetings took place in Islamabad on 21st and 22nd September. 40 participants from UN agencies, NGOs, and donor-countries attended the meeting, which was on refugee return. Following presentations from colleagues working in countries hosting Afghan refugees on their expectations for the next year, information was shared on the numbers and profile of the returnee population in 1998 and 1999. Participants also shared a review of reintegration strategies undertaken. The meeting revised strategic objectives and strategies for repatriation and agreed on the future role and work of the thematic group.

Food aid/Food security

WFP has approved two emergency food distributions for the districts of Bamiyan and Shahrstan, in the Central Highlands. More than 4,000 MT of wheat for over 120,000 people in these areas is expected to arrive between October and January of 1999/2000, before the roads close for the winter.

The Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) team of WFP estimates

that the Central Highlands and, in particular, Bamiyan District is one of the most food insecure and poorest areas in Afghanistan. The economic blockade imposed by the Taliban in 1997 served to increase cereal prices as the region relied on purchasing cereals to complement limited local production. The blockade was lifted in September 1998, but at the beginning of 1999 the population was poorer as personal assets, including livestock, have been sold to purchase food. Recent food needs assessments in Bamiyan and Shahrstan indicate that at least some families will have difficulty in meeting their food needs over the year. Many of the recipients of the distribution are internally displaced persons due to the blockade, fighting and this year's dry winter. WFP implemented emergency food distributions in the districts of Behsud I, Behsud II, Panjao and Waras in the Central Highlands earlier this year.

In Mazar, the WFP VAM survey data suggests that food insecurity in this area is as problematic as in Kabul. It is estimated that between 130,000 and 280,000 people are food insecure, including 10,000 – 40,000 people living in very poor households without male workers. In order to respond to the food aid needs of these people, WFP plans to start a bakery programme in Mazar targeting 112,000 people in the winter of 1999/2000.

The house-to-house survey to identify the most vulnerable families amongst the population in Mazar city has been completed by the WFP in collaboration with Community For a Development Organisation (CFDO). The next step is to short-list the most vulnerable from all households surveyed. The target date for the opening of the bakery is beginning of November.

Health/Education

EPI/NIDs

WHO and UNICEF in collaboration with the MoPH and other partners in the health sector in all regions of Afghanistan are preparing to implement the National Immunization Days (NIDs) for polio eradication in the country from 25th to 27th October and 27th to 29th November. A national EPI programme to train all vaccinators has now been launched by WHO in collaboration with MoPH. A two-week long Training of Trainers course is taking place in Kabul for 21 EPI trainers participating from five regions, and a similar course is being implemented in Faizabad.

Due to the climatic condition expected in November, and difficult logistics in some areas, the first round of NIDs took place one month earlier from 25th to 27th September 1999 in Bamiyan and Badakhshan Provinces.

A joint mission of MoPH, WHO and UNICEF to assess the requirements for re-establishing EPI routine activities went to Bamiyan two weeks ago. The mission visited Bamiyan Center, Yakaolang, and Panjao Districts to formulate plans for a provincial cold room and the management structure. A follow-up EPI mission returned to train vaccinators for the early round of NIDs in Bamiyan and deliver supplies for the campaign.

In four districts of Kunduz and Pulikhumri District of Baghlan, WHO has implemented with the Provincial EPI Management Team (PEMT) the second round of the house-to-house immunization campaign against polio.

Traditional Birth Attendants

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan has trained six Afghan female Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) trainers from ARCS, and Afghan Red Crescent Society, in Peshawar during two weeks in September.

The six women, from Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Laghman and Ghazni, are now back in Afghanistan putting new experiences into practice. The purpose of the TBA programme is to reduce maternal deaths and diseases and infant mortality. TBAs are also playing a bridging role between communities and health centers.

Since 1994, 1,181 TBAs have been trained by SCA.

In Gulran district of Herat Province, WHO in collaboration with MoPH conducted a basic training course for TBAs and Village Health Volunteers (VHVs). The courses continued for 18 days and were attended by 12 trainees.

Malaria Outbreak

An outbreak of falciparum malaria has been reported from Qala-e-Nau, of Badghis Province. With the technical assistance of WHO, MoPH has sent two teams, one to investigate the report and take anti-malarial supplies, and the other to assist the staff at Badghis Provincial Hospital. This outbreak of malaria is unprecedented in the area with 150 confirmed cases and two deaths so far.

In Herat Province, WHO continued the distribution of anti-malaria bed nets.

Cholera Control

The first round of the joint programme of MoPH, WHO, UNICEF and WFP to chlo-

minate shallow wells in Kabul covering 120,000 recorded wells is complete and, as a monitoring mechanism, 2,100 wells were tested for residual chlorine. In conjunction with this intense chlorination activity, female hygiene educators visited 5,000 houses to communicate information on prevention and control of diarrheal disease. The second round will start in one week's time. In order to monitor the water safety and regular supply, a baseline survey of 20 wells in all parts of Kabul city was conducted. The survey included water table location and water sampling to test for portability.

In eastern Afghanistan RRD with the support of UNICEF chlorinated 400 wells where an increase in diarrhoea cases was recently reported.

Health training

In the Greater Azro Programme, WHO has trained surveyors to conduct a health needs assessment for the Safe Motherhood Initiative in Khaki Jabar, Sarobi, Hesarak, Sherzad, and Sayed Karam Districts.

MoPH with the technical support of WHO organized training of 17 female health personnel on the use of ultrasound technology in Malalai Maternity Hospital in Kabul.

Water and Sanitation

In UNICEF's WES programme, five hand-pumps were installed in Kamba, Rejoy, Kunda, Kahnjan and Azadkhan villages of Alinegar district in Laghman Province, benefiting some 2,000 people.

Agriculture

FAO Livestock

The annual anthrax vaccination campaign was started in Chaprahar, Wazir and Pachir districts of Nangrahar province. In other regions of the country, vaccine distribution continued as usual.

86 kg of improved oat seed was distributed among selected farmers in Chaprahar district of Nangrahar province for demonstration and seed multiplication.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation

In Mazar, under the UNCHS sanitation programme, a total of 240 cubic meters of solid waste was removed from District 5 and a septic tank was repaired and reactivated. A green house was constructed in District 8, while the construction of another greenhouse is ongoing at the community forum in District 3. A total of 275 metres of trench were excavated to lay pipes for the neighbourhood-upgrading scheme of Karti Bukhdi, District 8, Mazar.

In Kabul, UNCHS continued to support education, income-generation, community based sanitation and health care education in Districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15 and 16.

In Herat, UNCHS continued to support construction work of two latrines in the hospital compound, which are now almost complete.

Returnee Reintegration

Under a UNHCR-funded project, DACAAR completed the work on drilling six tube-wells (serving 120 returnee families) in Spin Boldak District of Kandahar and construction of 25 latrines and 30 bathrooms in Shamul Zai and Shinkai Districts of Zabul Province.

144 shelters for returnees in Qalat, Shamul Zai, and Shah Joi Districts of Zabul were completed.

A poultry raising/kerosene incubator training was conducted for 300 returnee families in Azro district of Logar Province last week.

With the intention to provide shelter and other re-integration assistance, the UNHCR survey team identified some 200 returnee families entitled for shelter and other initial reintegration assistance in Musahi and Charsiab Districts of Kabul.

UNHCR's monitoring reports indicate a food shortage affecting returnees and local residents in Shinkai District of Zabul Province. This food deficit is largely attributed to the poor harvest of wheat and a drastic decline in the production of almonds.

Repatriation

253 families of Afghan refugees returning from NWFP Pakistan received UNHCR repatriation standard packages in Jalalabad and Khost UNHCR encashment centers during the last week. Another 143 families have returned from Pakistan to their areas of origin in Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and other provinces. These returnees received the UNHCR standard repatriation package, comprising cash, wheat and plastic sheeting in UNHCR Kandahar and Lashkargah en-

cashment centers. Additionally, during the first 10 days of September, some 540 families returned spontaneously from Pakistan to their areas of origin in Baghlan, Kunduz, Balkh, Samangan, Sar-i-Pul, Jawzjan, and Faryiab Provinces.

Last week, some 1,749 Afghan refugees returned spontaneously from Iran, through Islam Qala border crossing point.

58 families and 2,745 single Afghan refugees were deported via Nalooki/Zaranj border crossing point into Afghanistan. During the week another 315 persons were deported via Islam Qala.

The International Organization of Migration, (IOM) is supporting a local programme for repatriation of female health workers. The first two of planned 30 are ready to leave Peshawar for Takhar and Loghar, where they are going to work at SCA-supported health clinics.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.331

21 September 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area and Northern Displacement

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are still streaming out of the Shamali Valley, north of Kabul. Despite an earlier decrease, larger numbers entered the capital during the past week, with 550 families on 11th September alone. Since early August, over 11,000 families, or 55,000 people, have been registered at checkpoints leading into Kabul. In addition to previous reports of the destruction of houses, crops, and the agricultural infrastructure, the UN has now received reliable information indicating that a systematic cutting of trees, including fruit trees, is occurring in the Shamali. This may have a devastating effect on the ability of the displaced to earn a living when they return.

The population of the ex-Soviet compound has now risen to 12,300 persons, of whom 8,400 are children. Due to overcrowding, new arrivals are being turned away. WFP continues providing high-energy food to the compound as a supplement to the two loaves of bread per family provided by local authorities. New arrivals are being given essential supplies such as blankets, soap, and candles.

The nutritional status of compound residents is being monitored by an NGO, and WFP is taking part in the joint needs assessment of the displaced both within and outside the compound.

Since the UN envisages that some of the displaced persons may remain throughout the winter, preparations to assess their needs are underway.

In the Panjshir Valley, the newly arrived UN mission set up a base in Bazarak this week. Consisting of three national staff, they are monitoring the distribution of WFP food, sent into the area, and looking into the flux of the population. Some people have left, and earlier estimates of 100,000 displaced have been revised downwards to 85,000 to 80,000 persons. Apparently some of those leaving have returned to the Shamali Valley, while others have headed towards Kabul and Faizabad.

Some 15,000 to 20,000 people in the Panjshir Valley are without shelter, and plans are underway for meeting their needs. Ten thousand blankets have now arrived in the area from UNHCR stocks in Termez.

Depending on the numbers who stay, and their level of need, the UN may face severe difficulties in providing adequate assistance.

The UN task force has estimated that up to 50,000 displaced people in the Panjshir Valley will require food aid over the next eight months.

WFP has conducted a thorough emergency food needs assessment in Panjshir. It has been noted that the host population there, comprised of about 145,000 people, is stretching its resources to help the displaced. In addition, a majority of the displaced are vulnerable to food insecurity. WFP has so far dispatched 108 MT of cere-

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als to Panjshir, while another 500 MT are on the way. According to WFP, needs may be as high as 6,000 MT of cereals. As per WFP estimation, a maximum of 3,000 MT of foods will be transported before northern routes close for the winter.

UN international staff members, including one from WFP, are expected to leave for Faizabad on 21st September and then proceed to the base camp in Bazarak located towards the centre of the valley.

The UN expects both sides of the conflict to respect the humanitarian nature of this assistance and allow food convoys unhindered access.

Mission

A UN mission visited Kunduz Province last week to review the situation of up to 10,000 IDPs in that area. This was the first visit to the province by international UN staff in two years. Some of the IDPs are reported to be in need of shelter and food as the winter approaches.

Food aid/Food security

WFP headquarters in Rome is currently carrying out country case studies of internally displaced persons. Afghanistan has been included in the countries to be covered. The visit has been organized between 7 and 16 October.

WFP has approved ten projects in the last week: an auxiliary midwives year-long food-for-training course for Jalalabad for 30 women, eight food-for-work projects for provision of potable water or flood protection measures for Herat, Kandahar and Kabul and one supplementary feeding project for malnourished children and pregnant/lactating women in Kabul.

These projects will benefit 2,360 females and males through the provision of food aid.

Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Afghanistan has recently organized surveys to monitor drought and this year's post-harvest food security situation. Data collection is being carried out by VAM survey teams, through WFP sub-offices and in collaboration with several NGOs.

Health/Education

EPI/NIDs

A joint WHO and UNICEF team visited Sari-Pul and Jawzjan Provinces to supervise EPI routine activities. In order to hand over vaccines for a house to house EPI mopping up campaign, another joint team visited Kunduz and Puli-Khomri.

In all areas, preparations for the next EPI/NIDs campaign scheduled for later this fall are underway.

The importance of this campaign is underscored by the detection of cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) in various regions of the country. This week, WHO found two cases in Herat, one in Kunduz, and two in Helmand.

Cholera Control

In the chlorination campaign, over 30,000 shallow wells were chlorinated in the southern region.

Health training

WHO conducted a three-day training course for 24 Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) on malaria and its prevention in Shindand

District of Herat Province. Malaria training was also conducted in Mazar-i-Sharif.

A one-day seminar on the treatment and control of TB and implementation of WHO Direct Observance Treatment Strategy (DOTS) in the Herat Regional Hospital was attended by 50 physicians.

Medical supplies

WHO provided medical supplies to Mazar, Jawzjan, Puli-Khomri, Ghazni and Sari-Pul Public Health hospitals and clinics.

Water and Sanitation

The installation of handpumps on 12 of the 25 semi-deep wells has been completed in Shiga-Daman District of Kandahar. 52 shallow wells have been improved, of which eight were equipped with handpumps.

The construction of 476 latrines has been completed and stones and cement has been delivered to 70 additional sites.

In Uruzgon Province, UNICEF has begun making improvements on 150 shallow wells.

German Agro Action, with support from UNICEF, is undertaking improvement and survey of 400 latrines in Kandahar.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO released woolly apple aphid parasites in several orchards in Jalrez District of Wardak Province. In addition, FAO monitored 5 fruit tree nurseries of Solidarite in the same district. Meetings and discussions were held with the District trainer of Logar

Province at Charkh and Barak-I-Barak Districts.

FAO monitored research field activities in the eastern region, and trained community contract seed growers on seed production techniques.

In addition, FAO trained 60 local community farmers on fruit crop pest and disease management, and provided technical advice on mechanical control of pomegranate borers and apricot caterpillars to the local orchard owners in Kandahar, Uruzgan and Kabul Provinces.

FAO accompanied the PEACE evaluation mission to Balauluk, Farah and Shindand and visited the seed processing plant and storage in Khak-e-Safid District, the Afghan seed complex in Herat city, and the silk production process in Enjil District of Herat Province.

FAO Livestock

Under fodder crop activities 11 choppers were distributed to farmers of Arghandab, Punjwai and Dand Districts of Kandahar Province.

Under poultry programme activities 16,000 doses of Newcastle, Gumboro, Fowl pox, Anthrax and Enterotoxaemia vaccines were distributed to Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in the eastern region.

FAO accompanied the evaluation mission visiting veterinary field units in Guzara District of Herat Province.

Thirty families in Dand district of Kandahar were surveyed by female staff for backyard poultry activities. Two female and two male poultry trainers from the area are currently in training in Islamabad.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation

In Kabul, UNCHS continued to support education, income-generation, community-based sanitation and health care education in Districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15 and 16. Under the city wide sanitation programme a total 1,011 cum solid waste was removed from different districts of the city. Habitat's shelter programme continued in District 8. Over 50 houses were recycled and 12 more rehabilitated in Districts 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 in Kabul.

The Mazar sanitation programme removed 170 cu.m of solid waste from different districts in the area.

A number of trenches have been excavated for the extension of pipes for water supply schemes of Karte Bukhdi, gozar-e-Siagerd, Kart-e-Nawshad, Kart-e-Turkmanabad, and Mazar.

The Herat drainage improvement programme continued in Districts 4 and 8. The Municipality, UNCHS, director of the Department of Social Affairs and community representatives participated in a gathering arranged by the Community Forum in District 5 to select a Consultative Board for the district.

UNOPS started a tailoring course for eleven women identified by the village development committee and a tractor-repairing course for ten trainees in Shega District of Kandahar. Community-managed construction of a community center was also initiated in Kandahar.

The rehabilitation of Shuran Dan drainage in Daman Dand Districts, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, has also been undertaken in the area.

A one-day review of micro-credit programmes in Panjwai District and another review workshop with representatives

of district executive committees from Dand, Damand, Panjwai, Arghandab and Shege Districts were initiated by UNOPS last week.

UNCHS continues to upgrade 7 kms of Kandahar city drainage and to construct public latrines. In addition to initiating a tailoring project for women, UNCHS has finalised a baseline survey of Kandahar city indicating an illiteracy rate for females of 98.55% and 81% for males.

Mine Action

A mine awareness workshop, with 32 participants from 16 mine action agencies, was held in Kabul last week. The workshop aimed to reassess the mine/UXO threat in Afghanistan; identify high-risk groups and activities, and develop an appropriate new core mine awareness curriculum. The workshop will be followed by a second on mine awareness methods and techniques, and a third to develop better learning aids.

Meanwhile in Jalalabad, trials on 23 mine detectors from 8 international manufacturers continued. Detectors were tested on a range of mines, in different soils, and in varying climatic conditions. A parallel trial on personal protective equipment (body armour/visor) will commence in Kabul next week.

Four revision courses were held for deminers in Kandahar and Zabul Provinces last week. A battlefield in Lashkargah was cleared of 246 UXOs, while one agricultural and two residential sites were cleared of mines. As a result, about 170 persons were able to rebuild their houses, and some 1.4 jeribs of land could be irrigated.

Over 900 people were trained in 36 mine awareness courses held in Kandahar, Uruzgan, Helmand and Zabul provinces.

Several new clearance tasks have been allocated, with one being in a temple.

Two minefields and a battlefield of 1,155,600 sqm in Khak-I-Jabar were cleared of mines and/or UXOs last week.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.330

14 September 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area and Northern Displacement

The focus of UN humanitarian activities continues to be on providing for the immediate needs of families displaced from their homes in the Shamali Valley.

Significant numbers of people are still entering Kabul. An increasing proportion of them seem to be moving from areas north of the frontlines, having been initially displaced to the Panjshir valley during the fighting in August, and now seeking refuge with relatives in Kabul. Records from the entry points to the city suggest that 11,121 families (almost 55,000 people) were displaced to Kabul from Shamali between 8th August and 11th September 1999. The population of displaced persons in the ex-Soviet compound has reached 12,300 persons. Only a small proportion of new arrivals seem to be heading to the embassy compound.

Efforts continue to provide food and non-food items, with WFP supplying CSB rations for the population camped in the embassy compound. Food distributions by the authorities continue to this growing population. In addition, distribution of essential non-food items continues with support from a number of UN agencies and NGOs. UNICEF has supported the establishment of an oral rehydration therapy (ORT) corner in the compound.

Agencies monitoring living conditions in districts 11 and 15, where many of

the displaced have found shelter with relatives, report no obvious changes in living conditions. The ICRC has provided standard IDP food and non-food packages to some 4,500 displaced families in the city.

Given the destruction of homes and agricultural infrastructure and crops in the Shamali Valley, many of the displaced seem resigned to spending the winter in the city. Agencies are preparing a contingency plan for meeting possible additional needs of communities, both in the embassy compound and the city at large. This will include provision for water supplies, sanitation, and washing facilities (for women and children), winterisation of embassy blocks, basic health care, and support for educational activities.

In collaboration with WFP, UNICEF will support with supplementary food the present IDP population in the ex-Soviet embassy.

In Panjshir, the UN has established a base in the area. UN international staff will monitor the distribution of WFP food sent to the area and the movements of the displaced. So far, 108 tons of wheat flour have arrived, and more is on the way. Non-food items, including blankets and plastic sheeting, are also en route.

Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

The UN Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, concluded her two-week visit to

the region. The visit was prompted by six years of allegations about violence against women in Afghanistan. To look into these charges, she travelled to Faizabad and Kabul, where she met local authorities, as well as Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar, where she spoke to Afghan refugees.

Ms. Coomaraswamy noted that widespread and systematic violations of human rights against women remained official policy, although the authorities seem to be responding to enormous international pressure and pressure from Afghan women.

Despite professions by the Taliban authorities of their commitment to all international laws and conventions--to which Afghanistan is a signatory, she noted widespread violations of women's rights in Taliban-held areas. Some improvement in the status of women over the past two years is however evident. She remarked in particular: the existence of home schools as well as limited primary educational institutions for girls run by the Religious Ministry in Kabul; increased access of women to health care; and the permission given for widows to work. She also noted much variety in the observance of discriminatory edicts, especially in rural areas.

The Special Rapporteur cited several areas of discrimination against women, which she has substantiated during her recent trips. These included: violations of the physical security of women and the practice of lashing and public beatings, violations of the right to education, violations of the right to health, and violations of the right to employment, which is responsible for the rise in begging and prostitution. She also commented on violations of the right to freedom of movement and freedom of association, and spoke about family rights and the rights of minority women.

She also noted that violence against women reached its peak before the Taliban

when the mujaheddin were in control of Kabul.

She attributed the situation, in general, to the combined effect of twenty years of war and poverty.

Funding

For the Appeal 1999, the Government of the Netherlands and the European Commission pledged US\$ 747,863 and US\$474,665 for the repatriation and integration of Afghan refugees and returnees.

Appeal preparation

The inaugural regional co-ordination body meeting was convened in Kabul on 30 August, with participation from the chairs of the various sectoral co-ordination groups. Mr. Erick de Mul, UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, opened the meeting.

In preparation for the 2000 Appeal, UNOCHA Peshawar facilitated a two-day (8-9 September) thematic group meeting on basic social services held in Peshawar. About 47 participants representing UN agencies and NGOs attended the workshop.

Food aid/Food security

As part of a joint initiative with UNICEF, WFP is collecting information on primary schools in Badakhshan Province. A WFP consultant left for Faizabad on 14 September for a two-week stay in the northeastern province. He is expected to visit as many districts as possible in order to gauge some indication of the levels of enrolment of girls and boys, attendance rates, reasons behind the suspected low enrolment and high drop out figures for girls, physical conditions of

schools, and the structure of the school system.

WFP and UNICEF will use this information in determining whether or not food can be used as an incentive to increase girls' enrolment and decrease dropout figures for girls.

Health/Education

The Basic Development Needs (BDN) programme supported by WHO is ongoing in five villages in three districts of Herat Province. WHO is providing interest free-loans to the inhabitants of those villages for various activities.

EPI/NIDs

A joint UNICEF/WHO mission has gone to Hazarajat to review the potential for resuming EPI activities in that area.

WHO visited Helmand Province and supervised/monitored activities of malaria, EPI, TB, etc. The team conducted an orientation session with the doctors in health facilities of Lashkargah City to accelerate activities of the Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system.

In Badakhshan, a joint MoPH and WHO delegation visited Kishem District to supervise EPI fixed centres and the TB programme.

WHO met with the Public Health Directors of Ghazni and Paktika Provinces to select 20 health workers for EPI from 10 districts of Paktika Province and distributed bicycles and a motor bike for the focal points of the AFP surveillance system.

Surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) remains ongoing. Ten new cases have been detected in Kandahar, Herat, Kunduz and Baghlan.

Cholera Control

WHO visited various health facilities in Pulikhumri and Baghlan to assess the cholera outbreak in Khinjan District, Baghlan Province. The suspected cholera outbreak in Ander district of Ghazni is now under control.

In Kabul, UNICEF and other agencies have supported the chlorination of up to 75,000 shallow wells. Cases of diarrhoeal disease and cholera are on the wane in the area.

In addition, WHO conducted a one-day training workshop on prevention of cholera and usage of safe water, sanitation, and personal/environmental hygiene for 25 community leaders in Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces.

Health training

WHO conducted one-day orientation session for mullahs and imams of Shindand District of Farah Province on malaria control and prevention.

WHO conducted a three-day training course on malaria control for 25 Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) from different regions of Baghlan Province.

In collaboration with SCA and MSF, WHO completed a one-week refresher-training course for 12 vaccinators representing different EPI fixed centres of Kunduz Province.

Medical supplies

WHO distributed medical supplies to Grishk District Hospital, community centres supported by UNCHS in Kandahar, Khas Urozgan District-5 and to health fa-

cilities in Zabul Province. WHO also provided 200 blood bags and 200 transfusion sets to Herat Regional Blood Bank.

WHO distributed medical supplies to Faizabad Public Health Hospital and x-ray supplies to Takhar Public Health Hospital. WHO in close collaboration with the Regional Malaria Department is continuing the distribution of impregnated bed-nets in Herat City, Guzzarah, Torghondi, and Enjil Districts of Herat Province.

Provision of medical supplies remained ongoing in all regions.

Education training

Under the UNHCR education programme for Azro/Tizin, training was conducted for Tizin school teachers and headmasters.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO carried out an agriculture and irrigation needs assessment survey in Khak-e-Jabar district of Kabul Province.

FAO continued cleaning and treating wheat/barley experimental material for conducting research trials in the coming 1999-2000 season in FAO research farms in Mazar and Taloqan.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation

A Group Revolving Fund project designed for returnees, both male and female (400 persons), in Azro District of Logar was completed. The programme was handed over to the local Fund Management Committee. The Committee and beneficiaries were provided with necessary training

on collection, re-distribution of loans, record keeping and financial management in order to enable them to keep the programme running.

Under a similar programme in Tizin District, the first cycle of loans was disbursed to beneficiaries.

In Kabul, UNCHS continued support for education, income-generation, community-based sanitation, and health care education in Districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, and 16. Support was provided for Kabul municipality to dispose of 1,068 cubic meters of solid waste from the city. Shelter rehabilitation continued in district 8, where materials for 37 houses were recycled. In addition, 41 houses were rehabilitated in districts 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 of Kabul.

Mine Action

The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA), the co-ordinating body for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA), is holding comprehensive trials on a number of state of the art commercially available metal detectors.

The mine detectors required by the MAPA must be a commercially available product suited to climate and environmental conditions found in Afghanistan. The trials will help evaluate which metal detectors are suitable for mine clearance operations in Afghanistan.

The trials will be conducted in four phases over the period 6th to 18th October 1999. The first week of the trial was carried out from 6th to 10th Sep 1999.

Repatriation

219 families, which include 1,335 individual Afghan refugees, return from NWFP

Pakistan last week. They received the UNHCR repatriation standard packages in Jalalabad and Khost UNHCR encashment centers.

Over the last week some 80 families, which include 560 individual IDPs who were displaced to Kunduz City due to recent fighting in the area, returned to their villages of origin in Dasht-i-Archi District of Kunduz.

Narcotics

In 1999, the production of raw opium in Afghanistan has reached the highest levels ever recorded anywhere. The production of an estimated 4,600 metric tons of raw opium marks nearly a 120 percent increase over production in Afghanistan in 1998.

UNDCP released these findings following the completion of the annual Opium Poppy Survey, which was conducted by 90 surveyors nation-wide. The area under cultivation increased from 64,000 hectares in 1998 to 91,000 hectares in 1999--a 43 percent increase of the area currently cultivated. About 97 percent of the land under poppy cultivation is in Taliban territory. UNDCP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimate that the total area of cultivable land stands at around 8 million hectares.

Opium poppy was grown for the first time in the provinces of Jawzjan and Kunduz, bringing the number of provinces where opium is grown to 18 out of 31. The number of districts where opium is cultivated jumped from 73 in 1998 to 104 in 1999. Because of bad weather in 1998, and a lower harvest than anticipated, farmers have been saddled with debts that they could repay only by growing more opium. Additionally, the price of opium at the time

of the planting season (around US \$60 a kilogramme versus US \$37 in 1997) was a strong incentive.

Despite the overall increase, UNDCP has succeeded in reducing cultivation in the districts of Maiwand and Ghorak (Helmand Province), two of the four pilot districts targeted by alternative development projects. With the co-operation of the community and the Taliban, cultivation there decreased 20 to 30 percent. The Taliban also have demonstrated good will through the destruction of 34 processing laboratories and 400 hectares of opium poppy.

With 4,600 metric tonnes, Afghanistan accounts this year for a production three times larger than the rest of the world put together. The second largest producer, Myanmar, is now a distant second with 1,200 metric tonnes, while another 300 tonnes are the combined output of Laos, Thailand, Columbia, and Pakistan.

Mr. Bernard Frahi, Representative of UNDCP Country Office for Afghanistan, travelled to Kabul from 7th to 9th September 1999. The objective of his mission was to discuss drug control issues with the Taliban authorities and alert them about opium poppy cultivation increasing and drug trafficking in the country. The authorities promised to support UN efforts for drug control in the country.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.329

7 September 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area and Northern Displacement

The recent UN mission to the Panjshir Valley has found that up to 100,000 persons have been displaced by recent fighting in the area. Working with estimates provided by NGOs and the displaced themselves, the mission found the figures relatively accurate after crosschecking in seventeen locations.

About 30% to 40% of the displaced are either housed in public buildings or are out in the open; 50 to 70% of the displaced have found shelter with local families, as in Kabul. The mission also confirmed that local authorities have tried to help the displaced with the few resources they have.

While the health situation in the Valley is now under control, displaced families still need food, shelter and blankets against the increasingly chilly weather. The UN has sent in 108 MT of food aid to the area, which arrived this week. In addition, the most needy among the displaced will be assisted by the United Nations with a one time distribution of food and non-food supplies. Transport of plastic sheeting and blankets is underway.

In Kabul, 9,400 displaced have been housed in the ex-Soviet Embassy compound. Activities to accommodate the immediate needs (food, clean water, sanitary conditions, warm clothing) of the increasing numbers of people in the compound are ongoing.

Contrary to a recent media report, WFP continues to distribute Corn Soya Blend (CSB), edible oil, and sugar, and has done so without interruption. The distribution of two loaves of bread per family per day by local authorities also continues.

Monitoring of new arrivals from Shamali into the capital continues. Since 8 August, over 43,000 persons have entered the city. Most continue to seek refuge with relatives, principally in districts 11 and 15.

The United Nations has repeatedly requested official permission to undertake independent surveys of the IDP population in the city, but to no avail.



IDPs in Kabul (Reuters)

Central Highlands

Although the people of Hazarajat are not affected by the current fighting, they are also confronted with hunger and poverty.

UN surveys have recently identified as many as 200,000 to 300,000 persons among the most vulnerable in Hazarajat. Across ten districts, they are being assisted through a combined UN and NGO food se-

curity programme to help 30.000 households feed their families.

In Bamiyan District of Hazarajat, 100% of the population had been displaced in the spring conflict. The burden of looking after the displaced has mainly been borne by families in neighbouring districts. As elsewhere in Afghanistan, people in Hazarajat who can barely feed their own families have become host to as many as four families. In Bamiyan, two-thirds of the population have now returned and are starting to rebuild their lives. Half of the houses have been destroyed or damaged, and vital assets lost. In a special rehabilitation project for Bamiyan, the UN and partner agencies are committed to distribute food, generate employment, help people rebuild their houses, and rehabilitate health services.

The Hazarajat co-ordination meeting was recently held in Peshawar. The meeting aimed at: 1) strengthening assistance activities in Hazarajat, through contributing to enhanced co-ordination, 2) to scale up assistance activities in Hazarajat.

Missions

Mr. Kevin M. Kennedy, Chief, ELB/OCHA New York, and Ms. Merete Johansson, Chief, CERB/OCHA Geneva are visiting Pakistan and Afghanistan from 6th to 13th September.

Funding

The German Government pledged US\$1,000,000 to the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan.

Food aid/Food security

Two WFP food-for-work projects were completed in the past few weeks in Kandahar Province. A dike protecting four villages from seasonal flooding was constructed in Dand District. WFP provided 22 MT of food for distribution to 60 daily wage labourers. In a second project in Kandahar City, WFP provided 213 MT of food to 260 daily wage labourers for a sanitation project, which upgraded drainage facilities, cleared solid waste and installed garbage bins.

A food-for-work canal reconstruction project was completed during the week in Baharak District of Faizabad. WFP provided 22 MT of wheat for distribution to 40 daily wage labourers.

Three WFP members left Kabul for the districts of Lal and Yakawlang, in the Central Highlands, for an emergency food needs assessment on 2nd September. The mission is the first of its type by WFP in the area and is expected to last three weeks.

In six districts of northeast Badakhshan, the NGO FOCUS has provided 3,000 metric tons of wheat flour, oil, corn-soya blend and pluses in the last two months. Distribution is ongoing. By mid-October, 230,000 beneficiaries will have received 6,690 MT of food donated by USAID. Depending on the extent of need, families will be given food sufficient for between one and five months.

Health/Education

WHO visited Baharak District to assess the activities of the Baharak District clinic and transported drugs and food rations for TB patients.

The first Mother and Child Health (MCH) coordinating committee met at the WHO office in Ghazni. Health NGOs and WFP attended the meeting. The meeting focused on nutrition and Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) training programmes in the region. WHO visited Rabat Village of Deh Yak District of Ghazni where the Basic Development Needs (BDN) programme is due to start. The main goal of the programme is to involve the community in decision-making and promote self-reliance. The team also transported medical supplies to the district health facility.

Kuwait Hospital in collaboration with the Kuwait Joint Relief Committee Branch Office in Kabul arranged a free medical camp service for 200 eye, ear, nose and throat (ENT) patients in Logar Province between 25th to 28th August. In addition to the treatment and/or operation of many neglected cases, the KJRC surveyed the prevalence of eye and ENT diseases. The KJRC plans to arrange similar camps in other provinces and to extend training facilities for at least one female and male doctor for each province at their hospital in Peshawar.

EPI/NIDs

WHO, UNICEF and the Regional EPI Management Team in Mazar-i-Sharif are sending a joint team to resume routine EPI activities in Sheberghan and Sari-Pul Provinces.

WHO has found two acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases, one in Aqcha District of Jawzjan Province and the other one in Mazar City.

Cholera Control

In Ghazni and Kabul, Cholera Task Forces continue collecting reports of diarrhoea and suspected cholera cases, which are decreasing.

A joint MoPH, WHO, UNICEF, WFP and NGO shallow well chlorination campaign is ongoing in Kabul. 45,000 out of 130,000 shallow wells have been chlorinated in different districts of Kabul.

In Pulikhumry, WHO, UNICEF, MoPH and FOCUS expect to finish chlorinating 8,000 shallow wells by the end of this month. FOCUS is providing food-for-work for the 32 staff members of the MoPH responsible for carrying out the chlorination. The UN provided the training and the chlorine.

Health training

WHO completed a two-week training course on clinical management of tuberculosis at the Tuberculosis National Institute in Kabul for 26 doctors, nurses and technicians from Ghazni, Logar, and Kabul.

Medical and non-medical supplies

In the north, WHO distributed medical supplies to the Faizabad Public Health Hospital and to Jurm, Kishem, and Qaraquzi health facilities. WHO also distributed medical supplies, including a salmonella diagnostic kit, to Mazar Public Health Hospital and a complete microscope set, medical books, 2000 bed-nets and malaria drugs to Faryab Public Health Hospital.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

In the food-for-seed programme, FAO released 100 MT of WFP food wheat to ISRA-Kabul and 150 MT food wheat to IRC Khost.

FAO also monitored research field activities and recorded agronomic data of bean research trials in Agam District of Nanagarhar Province.

In Enjil District of Herat, FAO sprayed five grape demonstration orchards with safe agro-chemical components. FAO also applied homemade pesticide on 13 melon fields in Herat/Farah and trained 78 local community farmers through informal training on pest management.

FAO Livestock

In western Afghanistan, FAO monitored Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in Farah and poultry farms in the city of Herat. An FAO female veterinarian also monitored village-trained women of Guzara District.

The second 21-day module of the Animal Health and Production Improvement training course for 55 veterinarians was completed and the staff left for field trials.

Animal vaccines were provided in Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, and Zabul. Routine animal health and production activities in 255 veterinary field units countrywide continued.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation

In Kabul, the restoration of electricity to Ata Turk Hospital supported by UNCHS was completed. In the UNCHS shelter-

recycling project, construction materials of 22 houses were recycled and 13 houses were rehabilitated in Districts 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Kabul.

Herat Municipality arranged an inauguration ceremony for opening the city main drainage (CMD) project, funded by the Netherlands Government. The construction work of 5,226 metres was completed by UNCHS with community co-operation in twenty-two months.

With support from UNCHS, a 400 metre covered drain in Bad Morghan District of Herat was completed. A 400 metre open drain in district 2 was also completed.

DACAAR has completed a project on improved water management practices in Ghazni. Benefiting close to 1,000 families, the project aims at increasing agricultural production through saving water.

In Kandahar, DACAAR has completed an integrated development project. The project introduced new/improved agricultural practices, crop varieties, and water management practices.

In both DACAAR projects, funded by the EC, the community contributed the necessary labour.

Mine Action

In Paghman District of Kabul Province, over 60,000 sqm of high priority agricultural and residential areas have been cleared and handed over to the owners for use last week. Over 1,700,000 sq. m of battlefield have been cleared in Paghman, Khaki Jabar and ward 10 of Kabul Province.

Over 117,000 sqm of mined area and about 3,000,000 sqm of former battle areas have been surveyed/marked in three districts of Kabul and Logar Provinces.

The clearance of four residential areas in Kandahar has allowed 300 families to rebuild their houses. A road connecting two villages in Nahri-saraj District of Kandahar was also cleared.

The MAPA said farewell to photo-journalist George Gittoes after his two-week Aus Aid-funded mission to document mine action and mine victims for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in Western and Central Regions. Mr. Gittoes has prepared an image bank of some 2,000 photos for use by the MAPA and other interested agencies. The MAPA is now hosting a researcher from the University of Warwick (UK), Mr. Russell Gasser, who is assessing the effectiveness of prodding tools used in mine clearance projects.

The Regional Manager of MAPA (Herat) has assessed the health facilities and roads that will be used during the medical evacuation of de-miners to Turkmenistan.

Repatriation

Over 530 families returned from Balochistan and NWFP (Pakistan) to their areas of origin in Kandahar, Helmand, Kunduz, Baghlan, Nangahar, and Badghis Provinces. These returnees received UNHCR's standard repatriation package of cash, wheat and plastic sheeting.

Forcible returns of Afghan refugees from Iran continue through the border at Islam-Qala (Herat) and Milak and Naloki (Nimroz) where UNHCR regularly monitors the situation. While observed deportations through Islam-Qala have diminished in 1999 and amount to about 8,000 persons to date, the numbers deported through the borders Milak and Naloki in Nimroz continue to be very high. During the last ten days alone, 58 families and 2,005 single

Afghan refugees were deported from Iran through these border-points.

This brings the total number of Afghan deportees from Iran to Nimroz since 27th December 1998, when deportations started through these border-points, to 2,907 families and 41,108 singles.

Overall, more than 66,500 Afghans have been forcibly returned to Afghanistan from Iran.

In Kabul, agencies were briefed about the Joint Reintegration Project for returnees under the Greater Azro Initiative in Eastern and Central region funded by the Government of Japan. The meeting recommended moving the planning process for this project from Islamabad into the field and establishing co-ordination groups both in Kabul and Jalalabad

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.328

31 August 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area

In Kabul, displacement is continuing from the Shomali Valley on a daily basis. It is now estimated that as many as 40,000 individuals may have arrived in the capital since the recent fighting. New arrivals confirm that houses and crops have been destroyed. They also report systematic destruction of the agricultural system. Boundary walls are being demolished, and irrigation systems wrecked.

This is resulting in the loss of trees and important fruit crops ready for harvest. If this is widespread, it will have a devastating impact on local communities.

The diplomatic compound in Kabul occupied by displaced persons now houses 8,000 people. They are being assisted by emergency food aid provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), and by bread distributions from the local authorities.

Given the increasing numbers of displaced in the compound, their vulnerability and the low probability of their return in the short term, the WFP food ration, scheduled to end last week, has been extended for up to another thirty days. The local authorities have been requested provide unlimited access to the compound by the United Nations and to continue the bread distributions. The United Nations has also requested that they provide rice and vegetables to vary the diet.

Basic non-food items have been distributed in the compound, and CARE has completed 52 latrines. Drinking water is also available.

WHO continues to monitor the health situation of the IDPs and the health facilities in the city, which are providing services for them.

One mine awareness team is training newly displaced people at Khair Khana, the internal crossing point between rival Afghan forces. Mine awareness has also been given to other IDPs entering Kabul in recent weeks.

Northern Displacement

In the Panjshir Valley, UN assessment of the number of displaced persons and their needs is still underway. However, reports by the Northern Alliance of 250,000 displaced persons appear to be exaggerated.

The situation in Panjshir remains very fluid. Estimates established by NGOs working in the area put the number of displaced persons at between 60,000 to 75,000. A definitive estimate is difficult at this point because the displaced are in several locations. Also, a number of displaced men seem to be shuttling from the Panjshir to the Shomali Valley to bring back possessions and supplies, or to work on their fields. While most of the displaced in the area appear to have found temporary housing with local families, some are in need of food, shelter and blankets.

The United Nations is prepositioning supplies for the displaced in Panjshir. As a first measure, the WFP is now sending to Panjshir 108 MT of food that it had stocked in Tajikistan

In addition to the displaced in Panjshir, a total of just over 10,000 IDPs are in Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, and Pulikhumri. Most of these 10,000 are located in Kunduz Province. According to UNHCR, the number of individuals in Pulikhumri is now 1800, with 300 arriving in the last week. In Kunduz, WHO has provided medical supplies for a mobile health clinic for the displaced.

The Mine Action Programme has deployed survey teams to Badakhshan, Shomali and Panjshir areas to assess any potential threat to IDPs, particularly from possible newly laid minefields.

Missions

Mr. Kamal Hossain, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights for Afghanistan is expected to arrive on 8th September. Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Violence Against Women, who arrived on the 31st August, will be visiting Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Funding

The Government of the Netherlands has contributed US\$7.3 million for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. The most recent contributions, in August, were for mine action, co-ordination, strategic monitoring, repatriation, immunisation, drug control, and disability programmes.

Health/Education

EPI/NIDs

A coordination meeting of UN agencies and NGOs was held in Faizabad City. The participants discussed the National Immunisation Days (NIDs) campaign, and activities of UN agencies and NGOs. It was reported that 80 individuals have come to Kurano-muna Jan District, which has a common border with the Panjshir Valley.

Cholera Control

A joint well chlorination programme of MoPH, WHO, UNICEF and WFP started in Kabul City. 42,500 wells have been chlorinated in the city so far in the campaign, which will continue until October 1999.

Sixty cases of deaths from cholera have been reported in Kamdich District of Nooristan and Data Noor District of Ningarhar Province. In response to requests of concerned NGOs and authorities, UNICEF provided 9,000 packets of ORS and other supplies to the MoPH for distribution in the affected areas.

Health training

In Kabul, WHO completed an ultrasound training course for doctors and distributed certificates to the graduates in a ceremony that was held at the Ministry of Public Health.

In collaboration with Health Net International, WHO conducted a three-day training course for 10 persons on the impregnation of bed-nets in Kabul City. At the end of the training, 400 bed-nets were given to the trainees for distribution.

In Kunduz, a six-day rabies control campaign organized jointly by MoPH, Municipality, SCA, and WHO was implemented.

Medical supplies

In Kunduz, WHO distributed medical supplies to the Afghan Red Crescent Society clinic, Kunduz Cholera Camp, the Malaria Unit of Imam Sahib District, and Ali Abad District Basic Health Centre.

In addition, the WHO team in Badakhshan visited Eshkashim, Zebak, and Orgo Districts and distributed medical and EPI supplies to clinics. WHO also provided medical supplies to hospitals and clinics in Faizabad and Takhar, Jurm, Sharibuzurg, Baharak, and Khash District of Badakhshan.

Water/Sanitation

A UNICEF mission to Terin Kot in Uruzgan Province monitored Water and Sanitation (WES) activities. Work on the improvement of 150 shallow wells in Terin Kot and Dehrawoud District is ongoing with the help of local communities.

The registration office of the local hospital has reported that, unlike last year, not a single case of cholera has so far been reported this year from the three schools where 1,100 students are enrolled. The reason given is the rehabilitation of the Terin Kot water supply system.

Eight handpumps were installed in Momandara and Narang Districts of Ningarhar Province to benefit 2,400 people of the area. 400 wells have been chlorinated the eastern region. In Shinkorak District of Kunar, work continues on the water supply scheme.

Education Training

With support from UNICEF, a two-day training workshop on teaching methods and preparation of teaching aids was organised by the Rural Rehabilitation Development (RRD) for female and male teachers and supervisors of community based home schools in Surkhrud District.

Agriculture

FAO Livestock

FAO's women village trainers trained 392 women in livestock production and animal health in Logar, Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat. The training curriculum was developed after a needs assessment conducted among village women livestock workers. Trainers have subsequently selected 18 trainees to participate in the regular livestock vaccination programme.

In addition, two women veterinary field units were established in Logar and Kabul Provinces. They provide curative and preventative animal health services to women farmers.

Mine Action

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) still has a shortfall of around US\$ 6 million for 1999 and is continuing to search for funds.

In the last month, MAPA, the largest mine action programme in the world, has carried out technical (level two) survey of 3,853,720 square metres of mined area and 6,268,487 sq. metres of battle area. MAPA cleared 4,280,984 square metres of mined area and 7,415,476 sq. metres of battle area. The MAPA also trained 104,566 individuals in mine awareness. This brings the total cleared to date to

187,316,670 square metres of mined area, and 1999,599,314 sq. metres of battle area. Since the outset of the programme, 1,026,655 devices have been destroyed, and 5,146, 905 individuals, of a population of some 18 million, have been trained in mine awareness.

The cost of demining has steadily dropped from US\$ 1.68 in 1993 to US\$0.60 per square metre from 1997 on.

In addition to destruction and removal of mines and ordnance, the MAPA carries out constant training and monitoring. Refresher training has been provided to 408 deminers in the past month, and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Training Agency, one of the Afghan implementing agencies, also carried out two demining courses for a total of 35 new students, and a demining pre-deployment course for 30 students.

In Kabul, heavy fighting between rival Afghan factions from 1992-96 left Kabul city and surrounding areas with major mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) problems. Kabul currently has the following mine action teams: 39 manual mine clearance; 4 mine dog clearance; 16 survey; 3 battle area clearance; 5 explosive ordnance disposal (EOD); 10 mechanical mine clearance, and 15 mine awareness. Most mined areas in the city itself have now been cleared, freeing mine clearance teams to move into surrounding areas; however battle area clearance and explosive ordnance disposal is ongoing.

Last week an irrigation canal providing water to 8 villages was found to be mined, and a mechanical team has been deployed to clear it. MAPA teams also cleared a 235-sqm minefield that forms part of a Ministry of Agriculture research farm. Mine awareness is ongoing with one team work-

ing specifically with the Hearing-Impaired Foundation of Afghanistan (HIFA).

In the refugee return areas of Azro-Tizin in eastern Afghanistan, survey teams have been deployed as part of the multi-agency Returnee Reintegration Common Programme.

The Afghan Technical Consultants Technical Advisor has assessed the UXO situation in the Western Region of Afghanistan. He found that emergency EOD tasks in Herat Province alone will require an EOD team for six months; in addition, an EOD team is required in and around Chaghcharan City of Ghor Province. Two teams have now been despatched to the Western Region to carry out tasks requested by communities and mine awareness teams.

In addition, following a request from local authorities and the NGO co-ordinating body ACBAR, a minefield in Sanj village, in Herat was surveyed and cleared. This will provide agricultural land to village families. In Tirapul village, the community requested and received clearance of 14,400 square metres of grazing land. This will benefit both the villagers and those returnees who use the heavily travelled road between Herat and the Afghan Iran border.

One important role of the teams in Western Region will be the disposal of a large, public and extremely hazardous UXO museum in the town of Zandajan. The museum, which contains numerous rockets, mortars, shells, and bombs, including 500 kilo bombs with the fuses intact, was reported by volunteer mine committees set up by MAPA mine awareness teams.

Preparations for mine detector trials to be held in Jalalabad in September are now being completed. Preparations are also underway for a series of mine awareness workshops. The first of these, to be held in

Kabul next month, will focus on the content of the mine awareness curriculum, with subsequent workshops to be held on methods of delivering those messages, and to develop mine awareness teaching/educational materials. A working group has also been established to develop a curriculum based on mine and UXO-related stories from the popular BBC radio soap opera 'New Home New Life'.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.327

24 August 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area

Displaced persons continue to arrive in Kabul at a steady rate of 120 to 150 families per day. About 6,800 families (up to 31,200 individuals) have entered the city since August 8. They are in addition to those who entered earlier in the month. Monitors indicate that the bulk of the arrivals are from Qarabagh, Istalif, and Mir Bacha Kot, north of Kabul.

In the diplomatic compound, a survey has indicated that 1,000 families were present as of 22 August. They are all living in very basic conditions and have few personal possessions. In addition to WFP's distribution of corn-soy blend, the authorities continue to supply bread to the compound. ACF will undertake another nutritional assessment of the compound this week. The WFP distributions are scheduled to end on 27 August and the responsibility for the care of the displaced will be given over to the local authorities. This is in line with the United Nations' stated policy of not abetting forced displacement.

No serious deterioration has been reported in the condition of those displaced persons living in the city outside the compound. However, ACF reports that there is an increase in the number of children attending the four ACF supplementary feeding centres in district 11. Home visits have been increased in this area to respond to this development. Chlorination of wells is also

being undertaken to prevent the outbreak of cholera.

Since some families have been able to bring livestock into the city, prices of animals have dropped between 10% and 30% in the main markets of Kabul. The sale of these animals by Shamali families, while helping them financially in the short run, will inevitably have an impact on their ability to provide for themselves over the winter.

Northern Displacement

This week, the United Nations is deploying a needs assessment mission to Panjshir. NGO reports state that up to 60,000 people from front line areas may be displaced in the Panjshir. Of these, 15,000 are estimated to be without shelter. Shelter and food are being pre-positioned in Badakhshan for forwarding to Panjshir as necessary. The United Nations mission will verify numbers of displaced, assess their needs and determine coordination requirements.

UNHCR has reported the displacement of about 10,000 persons from 22 villages in Dashte Archi, Imam Saheb and Sher Khan Bandar to Kunduz City due to recent fighting. The IDPs are accommodated in damaged public warehouses, government buildings, schools, and homes of relatives, while some are in the open. Most have few personal possessions. The IDPs have been provided with drinking water (UNHCR) and medical assistance (MSF,

SCA, WHO and MoPH). However, since some of the displaced are in areas without medical clinics, SCA has established a mobile health team. They report some incidence of diarrhoea, skin diseases, and malnutrition.

Some IDPs from Shamali valley have reportedly arrived in Taloqan as well as some IDPs, also from Shamali, in Pul-i-Khumri.

Last week, the Update mistakenly reported that the number of IDPs reported by UNHCR in the north was not verified. We regret the error.

Funding

The Government of Norway has thus far contributed US \$7.3 million for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Just over four million was within the Consolidated Appeal. The most recent contributions, in August, were for mine action, co-ordination, strategic monitoring, repatriation, immunisation, drug control, and disability programmes.

The Government of Japan last week announced a donation of US \$ 11,0740 to the NGOs Guardians and the HALO Trust for Afghanistan through its Grass Roots Assistance scheme. The funds will be used for land mine clearance and rehabilitation of land mine victims through the provision of artificial limbs.

This was the first assistance granted to any NGO involved in relief and humanitarian activities in Afghanistan through the Grass Root Assistance (GRA) scheme. The scheme extends direct assistance to the people of Afghanistan through NGOs and local organisations.

Food Aid

WFP Afghanistan has recently approved a number of projects in all regions, which will provide close to 2,000 tons of food for the needy. They include food-for-work in infrastructure rehabilitation in Badakhshan (over 1,000 families); food-for-work in central region for chlorination of wells, water supply, flood control, and shelter rehabilitation (almost 1,000 families); food for work in Herat for flood control (311 families); food for work for drinking water supply in Kandahar (150 families); and food for work for the third phase of the Jalalabad city sanitation project. These projects will also benefit the community at large.

In addition, WFP is extending food assistance for four institutional feeding projects in central region. These include a new therapeutic and supplementary feeding programme in Ghazni and Jaghori hospitals and in three mother and child health clinics in Ghazni. Implemented with WHO and MSF, the project will benefit 2,281 mothers and children.

Food security monitoring training for seven NGOs took place in Peshawar on 23 August under the auspices of the Regional Co-ordinator for the Central Highlands, in conjunction with the WFP Afghanistan VAM Officer.

Health/Education

WHO organised a meeting on coordination of TB activities as well as Mother/Child Care in the Northern Region, which was attended by all health related agencies and NGOs. The sub-committees also considered laboratory needs, cholera drug resistance and the improvement of the weekly diarrhoeal disease reporting system.

EPI/NIDs

Nine more cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP), due to polio, have been reported in Balkh, Saripul, and Kunduz. WHO is investigating.

Cholera Control

MoPH and WHO received reports about the outbreak of diarrhoeal disease from Nish District of Kandahar Province. WHO sent a medical team with medical supplies to investigate the situation. In east Nooristan, WHO also received reports of a cholera outbreak. Laboratory tests are being conducted, and WHO is monitoring the situation. A WHO team supervised a cholera camp in Baghlan MoPH civil hospital, where on average seven suspected cholera patients are admitted every day. To help prevent the disease, chlorination of 8,000 shallow wells is underway in the area over a two-month period. UNICEF and WHO conducted a training course for 32 participants on the procedure.

Health training

UNICEF and WHO facilitated a workshop on Primary Health Care in Mehterlam Hospital, Laghman Province. The two-day workshop was aimed at strengthening the district's primary health care. Laghman has been selected as a model province for strengthening primary health care.

UNICEF also conducted a Safe Motherhood Initiative/Mother and Child Health task force workshop in the maternity ward of Mehterlam Hospital for female health workers.

The Safe Mother Initiative, which aims to lower the high maternal mortality rate, and support to the primary health care system are two elements of UNICEF's current Health and Nutrition Programme for Afghanistan.

Medical supplies

In Central Region, WHO distributed medical supplies to six clinics/hospitals, food rations for TB patients and 100 health books. WHO also distributed anti-TB drugs to Faizabad Public Health Hospital, and medical supplies to health facilities in Badakhshan. Routine distribution of supplies and medicines was ongoing in other regions.

Water/Sanitation

Work on the Shinkorak piped water supply project for Asadabad in Kunar Province has begun with the support of UNICEF. Benefiting some 7,000 people, the project will result in the construction of a water storage reservoir and forty public fountains, among other things.

In Narang district of Kunar, the district target of 800 latrines has been completed.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO continued procurement of mineral fertilizer (DAP and urea) and other required agriculture inputs for conducting research trials and implementation of the small seed increase programme in both FAO research farms in Mazar-I-Sharif and Taloqan.

FAO monitored 18 pilot demonstration orchards in Nawzad District of Hel-

mand Province, and provided technical advice on pest management to district and community trainers.

In Herat, Badghis and Farah Provinces, FAO trained 257 local community farmers through informal training in plant protection.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction

DACCAR has finished rehabilitating six boys' and girls' schools, three in Qarabagh district of Ghazni and three in Alingar district of Laghman. Funded by the European Community, the schools will be run by Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and in one case by the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee. Over 2,300 school children will use the facilities.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.326

17 August 1999

Update on Displacement

Kabul Area

During the last week the UN continued to address the needs of villagers forced by fighting from their homes in the Shamali Valley, north of Kabul.

On 13 August, in addition to those already in Kabul, thousands of newly displaced persons began arriving in the Afghan capital. Many families reported that their homes and crops were deliberately set alight after they were forced to leave.

Monitors at the three road entry points to Kabul report that 20,000 people arrived from 13 to 16 August. Given the volatile situation in the valley itself, and continued fighting, it is difficult to estimate how many civilians might still be on the road toward Kabul. The United Nations currently estimates that 30,000-40,000 displaced have fled to Kabul since the beginning of August.

The majority of the recent influx of IDPs are seeking refuge with relatives in the city, but numbers continue to grow at the ex-diplomatic compound, which was temporarily made available by the authorities. WFP began a daily distribution of 150g of corn-soy blend, 20g edible oil and 20g sugar per person to 850 displaced families in the compound on 8 August. The operation was originally slated to cover a five-day period but has been extended for up to 15 more days. These families are also receiving bread distributed by

the authorities. Care International continues work on improving sanitary facilities within the compound, as well as providing safe water.

In co-ordination with the ICRC, NGOs and UN agencies continue to monitor living condition in districts where IDPs have settled, and to strengthen existing public services, where necessary.

WHO has assessed the health situation in Khair Khana and Karte Seh, where recent IDPs have been housed. No major increase in the incidence of disease was found.

Northern Displacement

From 3 to 9 August, a mission comprised of the Deputy Co-ordinator, the RCO for Mazar, WFP, and ACTED checked reports of IDP movements into southern Badakhshan. They travelled from the city of Faizabad to the Anjuman Pass, which links the Panjshir valley with Badakhshan. They found that few displaced persons had entered Badakhshan, and that some who had been in the pass had returned to Panjshir.

The mission concluded, however, that contingency planning and pre-positioning of food and non-food items was necessary in case of further arrivals.

WFP is therefore preparing for the potential arrival of IDPs in Faizabad by beginning the movement of food commodities currently stored in Osh, Kyrgyzstan and Ishkashim towards Badakhshan. WFP Af-

ghanistan is currently reviewing logistics routes in the area.

In Panjshir, the United Nations has received reports of an as yet undetermined number of IDPs from the front line areas. NGO reports state that up to 60,000 people may be displaced in the Panjshir. Of these, 15,000 are estimated to be without shelter. Shelter and food are being pre-positioned in Badakhshan for forwarding to Panjshir as necessary. The United Nations will deploy a needs assessment mission to Panjshir as soon as feasible.

In Kunduz, UNHCR reported the displacement of an unverified number of persons from 22 villages in Dashte Archi, Imam Saheb and Sher Khan Bandar to Kunduz City due to recent fighting. The IDPs are accommodated in damaged public warehouses, and some are in the open. The IDPs have been provided with drinking water (UNHCR) and medical assistance (MSF, WHO and MoPH). Some IDPs from Shamali valley have reportedly arrived in Taloqan as well as some IDPs, also from Shamali, in Pul-i-Khumri.

Funding

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan received US\$100,000 from the Italian Government.

Currently donations and pledges to the MAPA fall approximately 10 million below its projected target of 26.5 million dollars for this year's activities.

1999 Appeal

The UN Co-ordinator's Office has published the *Mid-Term Review* of the 1999 Appeal for Afghanistan. The document provides a comprehensive breakdown of all

funding received and shortfalls for the year by agency and by sector. In particular, the report analyses the impact of funding levels on the humanitarian programme overall. It notes lack of adequate response to human rights programming; health, water, and sanitation activities; protection, reintegration and transport of returnees; and aircraft operations. Of especial concern has been the lack of response to activities supporting sustainable livelihoods in areas such as sustainable vegetable and seed crop production and animal health and production.

Appeal 2000

Preparations for the Consolidated Appeal for the year 2000 are underway. The Office of the Co-ordinator has organised a series of workshops in Jalalabad, Mazar, Herat, Kandahar, Faizabad, and Peshawar. Attended by NGOs and UN agencies, the one and a half-day workshops reviewed current priorities and identified gaps and priorities for the coming year.

Meetings of the thematic groups will follow up the regional meetings.

ProMIS organised a two-day (12 – 13 August) Activity Tracking Information Management System (ATIMS) workshop at the UN Co-ordinator's office, Peshawar. About 50 participants from different NGOs attended. The presentation focused on the project submission process, project overview, place/duration, budget, and other details in preparation for project submissions for the 2000 Appeal. The UN Co-ordinator's Office in Peshawar will also arrange an ATIMS Dari/Pashtu workshop.

Health/Education

Education

A UNICEF survey in Mehtarlam, Laghman Province, showed 31 home schools for 1,016 students.

Two female monitors of UNICEF visited three villages in Surkhrud and Qarghai districts and met with women and teachers of home schools with health and hygiene education messages. They also formed a five-member committee of local women in Sultanpur village to solve their common problems.

The Afghan Publishing House of the BBC Afghan Education Project, with UNESCO's financial support, has recently published an illustrated storybook for Afghan children. *The Story of Soap* is an attempt to introduce more innovative ideas for conveying vital health messages. It highlights the importance of the use of soap and cleanliness in combating disease.

The story is simple but convincing and has a clear message. The book, published in both Dari and Pashto, can be obtained from the BBC Afghan Education Project in Peshawar.

EPI/NIDs

NIDs/EPI related activities are ongoing in various areas of the country. In Ghazni, WHO organised a National Immunisation Days (NIDs) review and micro-planning meeting with the participation of health NGOs and NIDs coordinators. In Kunduz and Baghlan, WHO conducted training for volunteers in the immunisation campaign and started a six-day door to door immunisation campaign for children under five.

AFP (acute flaccid paralysis) surveillance is active in Kunduz and adjacent areas. The surveillance system found seven AFP cases in northeastern region in the last week. Samples were sent to WHO in Islamabad for investigation.

In Nangahar, Kunar, Laghman, Mazar, and Kandahar, WHO conducted AFP training for medical workers.

Cholera Control

Regular cholera task force meetings are ongoing in various locations and the task forces continue to monitor outbreaks of diarrhoea. In Herat Province, 770 diarrhoeal disease cases have been reported from five health facilities. In east Nooristan, MoPH and WHO sent medical supplies and a team to investigate reports of suspected cholera.

WHO in collaboration with MoPH, UNICEF and WFP completed preparations for chlorinating shallow wells in Kabul, Jalalabad and Kunar. The chlorination of wells will continue for two months. Cases of cholera have declined significantly. In Kandahar, UNICEF, UNCHS, MSF and the Department of Public Health have collaborated on chlorinating 10,280 wells since 30th July. The second phase of the project started on 11 August.

In Jalalabad, WHO conducted two three-day training courses on prevention and control of diarrhoeal disease. 20 female and 28 male health workers attended the courses.

Cirrhosis Update

A joint MoPH, WHO, and WFP mission visited Gulran District of Herat Province and distributed supplementary food (14.4 MT) and high protein biscuits (provided by

WFP/UNICEF) to those suffering from cirrhosis. Although new cases continue to be registered, the fatality rate is substantially reduced.

In total, 285 cases have been registered with 59 deaths. The Health Co-ordination Committee (HCC) strongly suggested that a joint team of epidemiologists, agronomists and toxicologists should visit the district to guide health education.

Health training

WHO in collaboration with MoPH completed a three-month anaesthesia-training course for female doctors and paramedicals in Kabul. MoPH will employ female anaesthetists in various hospitals in Kabul and in central region. WHO also supported a one-month training course on the use of diagnostic ultrasound for fourteen male physicians in Kabul.

In Robat Sangi District of Herat Province, WHO conducted a six-day refresher-training course for 10 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs).

A UNICEF sponsored two-day training on the use and maintenance of latrines was conducted in Asadabad in Kunar Province from 2 to 3 August for 40 members of local shuras, religious leaders, and RRD staff.

Water/Sanitation

In UNICEF's Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme (WES), 20 wells have been drilled, five wells improved and five handpumps installed in Shigga and Daman Districts of Kandahar Province. 400 latrines were completed in the Daman District for household use.

Ten handpumps were installed in Qasba and Sanger villages of Alinegar District in Laghman Province, and four in Ghezgai and Hazarnaw villages of Nangarhar Province to benefit some 4,200 persons.

Mine Action

From 2 to 6 August, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan held its regular Quarterly Planning and Review Conference in Islamabad. All fourteen Afghan, international and one Iranian NGOs working under the MAPA umbrella participated in the 1999 mid-year review, then moved on to planning for the year 2000. Representatives from WHO, CDAP, ICRC, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, and UNDP Iran also participated in the meeting, which included mine, unexploded ordnance and mine awareness workshops.

A new Afghan NGO, AMAA, has been funded by the MAPA. AMAA carries out mine awareness using husband and wife teams that live in the community or village while training local volunteer mine awareness trainers, and setting up community mine committees or 'shuras'.

The Mine Action Centre, Afghanistan, which raises funds for and coordinates the programme, is currently preparing to hold trials of eight mine (metal) detectors in Afghanistan this September. The trials are aimed at determining which detectors are most suitable for the types of mines--particularly difficult to detect minimum metallic content mines--terrain, and rugged conditions found in Afghanistan. Results of the trials will also be of use to other Mine Action Programmes, which have expressed interest.

MAPA is assisting Australian war photographer and artist George Gittoes, who is photographing and documenting mine victims' stories and mine action activities on behalf of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Mr. Gittoes will spend a week each with mine action teams in the Eastern and Central Regions of Afghanistan, and will also visit the Northern Areas of Pakistan, where mines, and mine injuries, are becoming a significant humanitarian concern.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO continued processing, treating and bagging of wheat and barley for conducting research trials in the 1999-2000 season in FAO Crops research farms in Mazar-i-Sharif and Taloqan.

FAO continued planting fifteen different cultivars of potatoes in its research farm in Jalalabad.

Livestock

FAO's second course in animal health and production improvement (PIHAM) for fifty-five field veterinarians started on 4 August in Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar and Khost regions. The duration of the course is twenty-one days.

The veterinary monitor in Kabul reported an outbreak of pest des petits ruminants (PPR) and sheep pox in Kabul, Logar and Ghazni Provinces. Vaccines were dispatched to these provinces and a vaccination campaign has started to prevent further spread of these diseases.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction

Through community fora UNCHS continues to support children's education, income-generation, community-based sanitation and health care education in districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11 and 15 of Kabul City. In addition support was provided for Kabul municipality to dispose of some 800 cubic meters of solid waste from the city. Work continued on drainage improvement in district 4, while shelter rehabilitation proceeded in district 8.

Repatriation

A tri-partite meeting on repatriation, chaired by the Chief Minister of NWFP, involving UNHCR, the Pakistan Commission for Refugees and the Afghan authorities led by the Minister for Repatriation and Martyrs, took place in Peshawar on 9 August. During discussions the authorities of NWFP indicated their readiness to provide substantial technical and financial help for rehabilitating destroyed infrastructure, which often is an impediment to refugee return. They asked UNHCR to make proposals for such activities in areas of high refugee return.

UNHCR proceeded on mission to Saripul with Taliban and returnee representatives in an attempt to find a permanent solution for a group of 185 landless returnee families. Before leaving Afghanistan, the families were semi-nomadic pastoralists. They now intend to settle as farmers but claim that they are unable to do so in the area they previously occupied.

Forcible Return

UNHCR's field unit in Zaranj reported the arrival of 40 families and 1,110 single returnees, who were deported from Iran through the border at Nalooki (Nimroz).

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.325

10 August 1999

Update on Displacement

The UN has begun providing limited food assistance and safe water to civilians displaced by the recent fighting around the front lines north of Kabul. Approximately 500 families, who have found refuge in an abandoned diplomatic compound in Kabul, are being assisted. Habitat and CARE are establishing sanitary facilities.

Although families from the Shomali valley were initially sent to Jalalabad by the Taliban authorities, they were subsequently relocated to Kabul.

While forced displacement from the Shomali valley area seems to have ceased, the United Nations is still trying to determine the numbers affected both in Kabul and in northern Afghanistan. In addition to the families accommodated in the diplomatic compound, a larger number of other recently displaced families in Kabul have found refuge with friends and relatives in the capital. Staff from the UN, the Red Cross, Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF), MEDAIR, and CARE are assessing their health and living conditions.

Many of the displaced persons in the Panjshir area seem to be returning to Shomali, while some have moved north to Takhar and Kunduz Provinces.

While there is sufficient food and medicine for those in need at present, the United Nations in Afghanistan and Tajikistan is making contingency arrangements to pre-position shelter and other humanitarian supplies in case of increased need. An as-

essment mission in Badakhshan has advised that such pre-positioning is necessary under the present circumstances.

Pledges and Contributions

In response to the 1999 Appeal, the Government of Japan has donated US\$3,400,000 for the returnee reintegration common programme in Nangahar, Paktia, and Logar. The funding is designated for UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, UNDCP and UNESCO. It will be used in support of programmes in water, sanitation, health, shelter, education, income generation, agriculture, drug control, small-scale infrastructure and de-mining.

Food Security

Following the recent FAO/WFP Crop Assessment mission, specific areas have been identified as being at risk of food insecurity. They include several areas in Hazarajat (Kohi Baba, Bamiyan, Saighan, Shibar, Yakawlang, Dai Kundi, and Lal), as well as northern rainfed areas, Mazar, Ghor, Faizabad/Takhar, northern Kandahar, and Badghis.

Health

EPI/NIDs

WHO in collaboration with MoPH and UNICEF conducted a one-day Expanded Programme for Immunisation (EPI) review and National Immunisation Day (NID) mi-

cro-planning meeting in Kabul. UNICEF staff from Jalalabad also attended. Further NIDs micro-planning sessions are being organised by UNICEF in Kandahar, Helmand, Urozgan and Zabul.

In Kunduz and Kandahar, AFP surveillance system is ongoing. WHO sent seven Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases and four samples of suspected cholera to WHO in Islamabad.

Cholera Control

Cholera Task Forces met in Herat, Ghazni, Kandahar and Kunduz. In Herat, Kandahar, and Kunduz, UNICEF is chlorinating wells to prevent further outbreaks of the disease. The task forces reviewed the weekly diarrhoeal disease surveillance reports, and discussed the issue of rehabilitation of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) centres in health facilities in northern and western regions.

In Kandahar, in the last week of July, UNICEF reported 836 acute diarrhoea cases, out of which four children died.

UNICEF organised a team of health educators for social mobilisation on control of diarrhoea in Kandahar City.

Health training

UNICEF supported training of doctors and nurses of cholera ward in Mirwais hospital.

WHO conducted training courses for AFP surveillance focal points, Village Health Volunteers and Traditional Birth Attendants in western and southern regions.

Medical supplies

WHO provided medical and non-medical supplies to a number of clinics, health facilities

and hospitals in the western, southern, central, and northern regions.

WFP and WHO distributed 15 MT of assorted food to the Herat Regional Hospital.

Water/Sanitation

UNICEF installed twenty handpumps on semi-deep wells, benefiting 4000 people in villages around Mehterlam City in Laghman.

In Laghman, Ningarhar and Kunar provinces 350 wells were chlorinated by the Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD).

Eighteen handpumps were installed and 100 double-pit latrines were constructed in Gozara District of Herat. The development of a piping system from a spring in Baghak area to nearby villages in Herat Province progress.

UNICEF's current Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme (WES) is the largest provider of water and sanitation systems in rural areas. With the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development as the major counterpart, the WES programme aims to construct or rehabilitate handpumps, dug wells, boreholes, latrines, piped water systems, and sanitation systems.

World Breastfeeding Week

World Breastfeeding Week was observed throughout Afghanistan. Five regional UNICEF offices in Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar inaugurated the week. Before the week, UNICEF trained staff in hospitals and clinics, health educators, clergy, and community leaders in breastfeeding.

Disability

The Comprehensive Disabled Afghan Programme (CDAP) and the Hearing-Impaired Foundation of Afghanistan (HIFA) organized a one-day disability exhibition in Kabul. More than 200 pieces of fine art, prepared by hearing impaired children under special education in HIFA, were on display.

Prizes were awarded to hearing-impaired artists, who obtained first, second and third positions in a poster competition arranged by CDAP and HIFA.

In Wardak, eight women have completed three months training as mid-level rehabilitation workers in Chak-e-Wardak Hospital. They will work with disabled women and children through home visits and provide services in the home. They are also qualified to make referrals to specialised centres for the disabled.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO weeded and irrigated summer crops research trials, small multiplication plots and vegetable seed production plots in FAO Crops research farms in Mazar and Taloqan, and continued processing and procurement of improved wheat seed in Logar, Kabul, Kandahar and Farah Provinces.

In Peshawar, FAO conducted a potato training course, in which more than thirty implementing partners and field staff participated.

Livestock

FAO Livestock monitored fodder crops demonstration plots and poultry farms in Nangahar and Herat Province.

Repatriation

Nearly 200 Afghan families (1,227 individuals) returning from Pakistan received UNHCR's standard repatriation package (cash, plastic sheets and wheat) in Jalalabad, Khost and Kandahar last week.

A group of 10 families (45 individuals) voluntarily repatriated, with UNHCR assistance, from Iran to the Western region. They received their repatriation grant in Herat.

UNHCR continued discussions with the local authorities about the long-term settlement of a group of 185 landless returnee families from Iran, who refused to move to their areas of origin in Sar-e-Pul and are now stranded in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Afghanistan Assistance Website

The Afghanistan Assistance Website is now available on the Internet at the following address:

www.pcpafg.org

Managed and maintained by Programme Management Information Systems (ProMIS) of UNDP/FAO, the site offers searchable documents and information on Afghanistan, the assistance effort, principled common programming, and UN/NGO home sites. Inter alia, it provides state of the art maps and mapping capacity for the user, as well as daily news, photos and many usable links to other sites.

ProMIS welcomes comments from website visitors.

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**Assistance for Afghanistan
WEEKLY UPDATE**

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Issue No. 324

03 August 1999

Emergency Appeal

An emergency appeal has been issued by the Islamic State of Afghanistan for humanitarian assistance to the people displaced as a result of the recent fighting to the north of Kabul.

An assessment of the situation and preparation for possible UN and NGO response are under way.

Workshops to Support the Preparation of Appeal - 2000

Regional workshops, designed to move forward the process of principled common programming and help support the preparation of the Consolidated Appeal 2000 for Afghanistan, have been ongoing throughout July and into August.

The intention of these workshops is to review current programmes, identify priority areas of activity for the year 2000 and determine primary objectives for each thematic (sectoral) area.

A number of workshops were held in Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, and Peshawar from 11th to 30th July. Further workshops will be held in Mazar, Faizabad, Jalalabad and Islamabad in August and early September.

Food Aid/Food Security

WFP has completed its joint emergency food distribution with MADERA in Behsud I and II districts of Hazarajat. During this

operation a total of 18,510 vulnerable families received WFP food assistance, which amounted to some 2,159 MT of wheat and Corn Soye Blend (CSB). In addition, WFP continues to provide support for the bakeries programme, institutional feeding, food for seed and food-for-work activities in the region, for which a total of 1,197 MT of food was distributed last week.

Health

Regular cholera Task Force meetings are ongoing in all regions of Afghanistan to review diarrhoeal diseases surveillance reports, monitor the situation, and distribute health education materials/messages to communities.

The recently established Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance system in Kunduz found two more AFP cases in the area last week.

WHO team met with MoPH and the Malaria Regional Directorate on the training of trainers for distribution and impregnation of bed-nets, and conducted a workshop on malaria control in Mazar. The workshop was attended by 10 persons representing five northern provinces.

WHO team met with MoPH authorities to hand over the Emergency Ward building, recently rehabilitated by WHO, to the Regional Public Health Directorate in Mazar.

WHO and UNICEF supported a one-day workshop for EPI managers and supervisors on National Immunisation Days

(NIDs) micro-planning for the central region, in collaboration with MoPH.

With support from UNICEF, the World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) was celebrated in MoPH Kabul, at which the deputy minister of health stressed the importance of breastfeeding and suggested that this should be included in public education programmes.

Health training

Radio Shariat broadcast a number of public awareness spots, highlighting the importance of appropriate treatment for diarrhoea.

Medical supplies

WHO provided medical supplies to the Malaria Unit and a number of health facilities in Ghazni Province.

WHO in collaboration with the Regional Malaria Department distributed 400 bed-nets in Herat City, Guzarah, Tourghondi and Enjil districts, Herat Province.

Water/Sanitation

Work continues on UNICEF-supported community-based water improvement schemes in Kamari and Erganak (Kabul), as well as Khawar and Mohammed Agha (Logar). The latter projects will benefit up to 3,000 people. In addition, support has been provided for the construction of latrines in Deh-Sabz (Kabul).

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

UNCHS continues support to urban communities in Kabul by assisting community-

based education, income generation, shelter rehabilitation and sanitation activities.

Although the shelter recycling project has been temporarily suspended, roofing work has continued for some families.

Training

As part of the Azro/Tezin Education project, UNHCR trained 12 trainers from its implementing partners in Peshawar last week. The programme (for the lower primary grades) included issues related to the use of the "Teachers Guide" book developed by UNHCR (1998).

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO monitored seed production field activities in Kabul, released 100 MT food wheat for procurement of improved wheat seed to IRC, Khost, and handed over vegetable seed cleaners to FAO implementing partners.

Seed cleaning/treating of wheat, barley research trials and small wheat seed multiplication plots activities are on going in the northern region.

FAO also monitored improved wheat seed threshing process in Argandaband procured 166 MT improved wheat seed through community shuras in five PEACE Initiative districts in Kandahar.

Livestock

A ten-day backyard poultry refresher course for village trainers (female and male) from Jalalabad and Kandahar Provinces, organized by FAO Livestock was completed last week.

1,900 doses of Anthrax and 2,500 doses of Enterotoxaemia vaccines were

provided to various Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) of Kandahar region last week.

Mine Action

According to the Regional Mine Action Center, two UXO incidents took place in Kabul in the past week, which left two children injured.

UNICEF, in collaboration with SCF (US), supported a two-day training course on landmine awareness for community volunteers and Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) staff in Deh-Sabz, Kabul.

Repatriation

440 Afghan families (over 2,200 individuals), have recently returned to northern, eastern and south-western regions of the country.

A total of 1,577 families (8,725 individuals) have returned between April and July to Northern Afghanistan, namely Baghlan (503 families), Kunduz (433 families) and Balkh (399 families), Jowzjan (204 families) and less than 100 families to Samanangan, Sar-I-Pul and Faryab Provinces.

Narcotics

Studies undertaken by the UN Drug Control Monitoring System focus on issues that are considered to be of strategic importance to improving the design of current and future alternative development initiatives, as well as assisting the wider development community integrate drug control objectives in Afghanistan.

A recent UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) study centered on itinerant harvesters working in Helmand prov-

ince, exploring the motivations and circumstances that influence individuals in their decisions to work as itinerant harvesters, and the role that this off-farm income opportunity plays in their overall livelihood strategies.

The study concluded that the labour intensive nature of opium makes it vulnerable to increases in the cost of hired labour during the harvest time. As such, it is suggested that greater consideration needs to be given to both land owners and land labourers.

Given the increasing fragmentation of landholdings in rural Afghanistan and the absence of non-farm income opportunities, there would appear to be a necessity to address the needs of itinerant harvesters during the design and implementation of regional development initiatives aimed at achieving a sustainable reduction in opium cultivation.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No. 323

27 July 1999

Special Envoy to SG, Mr. Brahimi's Visit to the Region

From 17th to 21st July, Amb. Lakhdar Brahimi visited Tashkent to attend the "6+2" meeting. The representatives from the two warring factions of Afghanistan, the Taliban Movement and the United Front (UF), joined the "6+2" meeting for the first time. While in Tashkent, the SESG, the Taliban and the UF were engaged in separate talks with other delegations.

On 21st July, Amb. Brahimi travelled to Kabul and stayed until 25th July. He held meetings with Mullah Muhammad Rabbani, Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, Mullah Muhammad Hassan and Maulawi Zahid who are the Taliban's President, Minister of Culture and Information, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, respectively. Amb. Brahimi reiterated to the Taliban leaders the necessity of direct negotiations with the UF, starting from the issues of cease-fire and exchange of prisoners. He also urged the Taliban to talk to Iran and the US to solve their problems with these countries.

Cultural mission to Herat

On 26 July, a cultural mission left for a four-day visit of Herat. The mission consists of the Ambassadors of Italy and Greece, both members of the Executive Committee of the Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH) and of two UNESCO officials.

The delegation was joined by Prof. Andrea Bruno, an Italian architect and conservation specialist, who has many years of experience in dealing with Afghanistan's monuments. Before the war, he worked on Herat's Citadel, in Ghazni and made numerous trips to Jam Minaret to prepare for the building of a gabion wall to protect this unique 11th century Minar from erosion by Harirud River. Prof. Bruno plans to make an assessment of the current status of Herat's monuments for SPACH/UNESCO and also hopes to visit Jam Minaret.

Crop and Food Supply Assessment Report

This year marks the third joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Afghanistan which took place between 22nd May and 23rd June 1999. The objective of the Mission was to estimate the cereal harvest and import requirements, including food aid needs.

Members of the mission and WFP-funded survey teams were able to visit Kabul, Herat, Faizabad, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar-I-Sharif. In addition, discussions were held with UN agencies, donors, local authorities, ICRC and NGOs.

For 1999 the harvested area for irrigated wheat is expected to be reduced by about 3% compared to 1998. This year's irrigated wheat harvest is expected to yield 1.99 million MT as compared to 2.02 million MT. Yields were good in the Eastern and Southern-Western regions due to suffi-

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cient water availability, while in the Central, Northern and Southern regions reduced availability of irrigated water has diminished yields.

Low rainfall has caused the failure of the rainfed wheat crop in the Eastern and Southern regions. Reduced rainfall, yellow rust and other pest damage have reduced potential yield in the Northern region. This year's wheat rainfed harvest is expected to yield 512,000 MT, a reduction of 37% compared to last year's total of 814,000 MT. Overall, there is expected to be a reduction of 11.8% for all wheat crops and a 16% reduction for all cereal crops.

WFP emergency food aid in the pipeline for 1999 is 97,000 MT, while 109,000 MT are planned for 2000, dependent on donor contributions being secured. Despite commercial imports and food aid, a shortfall of as much as 220,000 MT may result in 1999/2000. WFP and its partners in Afghanistan will keep the situation under continuous review and will appeal for additional resources should they be needed.

Food Aid/Food Security

The second meeting of the Kabul food security group was held on 25th July. Participants discussed the outcome of the recent FAO/WFP Crop Food Assessment survey, which indicates a record cereal import requirement for the country. The meeting went on to discuss the anticipated impact of the present drought in this and other regions, which has already affected rain-fed crops, especially wheat. The minutes of the inter-agencies Food Security for Hazarajat, held in Behsud on 15th-16th July, were also discussed.

WFP reports that the joint distribution of food with MADERA to vulnerable

rural communities in Behsud Districts I and II in Hazarajat continues, with some 2,138 MT of wheat flour and corn soy blend (CSB). In addition, WFP continues to provide support for the bakeries programme, institutional feeding and food-for-work activities in Kabul and elsewhere in the region for which a total of 356 MT of food was distributed during the reporting period.

Health

The seventh meeting of the health technical co-ordination committee was held on 25th July in Kabul. Among other issues, agreement was reached between MoPH, WHO and UNICEF on the issue of drug quality control, and the final data and report on the two recent rounds of NIDs were distributed and discussed.

WHO sent medical teams to investigate the outbreak of diarrhoea diseases and cholera, and held one-day training courses on family and environmental hygiene, sanitation, and preventive measures of water-borne diseases in Farah, Herat, Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces, where regular weekly Cholera Task Force meetings are ongoing.

WHO teams visited southern and central regions to evaluate and monitor anti-malaria activities. Malaria coordinating meetings and health training sessions are ongoing in a number of provinces in the area.

Aimed at empowering communities, WHO teams visited Orzu and Rabat villages of Ghazni Province to select proper places for starting Basic Development Needs programme.

While the EPI surveys have been completed in all regions, WHO and UNICEF conducted an EPI coverage survey to evaluate the coverage of NIDs. WHO also

organized regular meetings of district coordinators to evaluate the results of NIDs and EPI routine activities in central and northern provinces of Afghanistan.

The MoPH and WHO surveillance system on reporting and management of diarrhoeal cases is ongoing.

Medical supplies

WHO provided drugs, assorted food, chlorine, bed-nets and equipment to a number of health facilities, clinics and hospitals in all regions. In addition x-ray machines were installed in the emergency ward of Public Health Hospitals in Mazar and Sari pul.

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

In order to provide safe drinking water, UNOPS is rehabilitating a tube well, benefiting 7,000 persons in Kishm, Badakhshan.

Restoration of WHO-supported malaria and TB units of Ghazni Province, by providing medical and non-medical supplies, is underway.

UNCHS continues support to urban communities in Kabul by assisting community-based education, income generation, shelter rehabilitation and sanitation activities. As part of this programme, a total of 1,061 cu.m of solid waste has been removed and disposed of. Work on 700m of drains continues under the drainage improvement project, 10 houses are under rehabilitation, and restoration of electricity to Ata-Turk Hospital is underway.

Training

In Kabul, UNOPS/ARRP facilitated a three-day seminar for the Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) on methods required for

community-based rehabilitation programmes. Over 100 staff of RRD from 24 provinces attended the seminar. Emphasis was placed on formation of community development organisations at the village and district levels to plan and implement activities for improving the living conditions and community welfare.

UNOPS/ARRP is helping community development organisations to support social services in Azro (Logar) and Sarobi (Kabul).

Human Concern International (HCI) awarded certificates to the first batch of trainees in skill development and micro-credit project for Afghan widows and orphans in Akora Khattak refugee camp on 12th July 1999.

Representatives of UN agencies and NGOs, social workers and elders of the camp attended the ceremony.

The first phase of the one year training programme, on tailoring, carpet weaving, embroidery, knitting, carpentry, leather goods making and carpet weaving for widows and orphans, covered six months training and ended in June 99.

Agriculture

Livestock

117,400 doses of anthrax vaccine were sent to various Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in Mazar-I-Sharif.

In close cooperation with FAO, UNOPS/ARRP through Cluster Village Development Committee of Deh-Dana, is training 320 widows in poultry, and distributing 3,200 chicks to the trainees in Kabul.

Income Generation

In Azro, Logar Province, UNOPS/ARRP is training 42 widows and poor women in tailoring and provided them with necessary tools on credit. The credit scheme will be managed by community development organizations, and money obtained will remain as village revolving funds for training and credit for more women.

In Maruf Khil village, Azro, UNOPS/ARRP is providing revolving fund for an income generating activity Community Cooperative store. The store will be managed by the community development organizations and the profit derived will remain as village revolving fund to support social services. Over 2,000 individuals will benefit from this project.

Mine Action

In order to facilitate repatriation, food security and transportation, and to ensure safe settlements, different residential, agricultural and grazing areas and former battlefield locations in Kabul, Ghazni and Logar provinces were cleared from mines and UXOs in July. In addition, communities have been given mine awareness to minimize life-threatening incidents in the region.

The Regional Mine Action Centre Kabul has cleared part of a road, which links Sarobi to Tezin District in eastern Kabul.

Repatriation

Over 350 families/1750 individual Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan to eastern and southern regions received UNHCR standard repatriation packages, i.e. cash, wheat and plastic sheeting.

UNHCR's ongoing education, health, shelter and construction projects, aimed to facilitate the re-integration of returnees in Azro and Tezin, were monitored last week.

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Assistance for Afghanistan WEEKLY UPDATE

20 July 1999

Issue No. 322

Afghanistan Support Group (ASG)

A mission comprising representatives of past and future chairs of the ASG (Canada, Japan and Sweden) visited Kabul on 13th July to brief the authorities on the outcome of the ASG meeting held on 21st and 22nd June in Stockholm.

UN mission to Mazar-i-Sharif

A mission of UN international staff visited Mazar from 5th to 12th July to both support and assist with the expansion of ongoing programmes and continue preparations for the full resumption of others. Field missions traveled to areas in the six north-central provinces—Faryab, Jowzjan, Saripul, Balkh, Samangan and Baghlan—and extensive activities were carried out within Mazar.

Mission activities included reviewing and monitoring ongoing health, water, sanitation and irrigation, structure repair projects; and making preparations for future activities, e.g. establishing cross-border logistics and warehousing facilities, polio surveillance mechanisms, etc. and carrying out needs and situation assessments of crop yield reductions, food security, and returnee re-integration issues.

Meetings were held with the authorities and technical agencies, and a dialogue maintained regarding UN principles. The authorities were re-briefed on agency plans, capacities and limitations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of other ministries participated in the inaugu-

ration of the Nahr-e-Shahi canal headworks reconstruction project (this canal provides water for Mazar city and irrigates much of eastern Balkh).

A development of note was the arrival in Mazar of a group of over a hundred returnee families who had declined to return to their places of origin in Saripul Province. Pending longer-term resettlement these have been moved onwards to Mazar by the authorities and reportedly temporarily accommodated in the partially depopulated east of the city. Given the reluctance of many refugees to return to their places of origin and the ongoing repatriation - both forced and voluntary - from Iran, it is to be expected that this trend may increase and that more will gravitate to the urban areas or be officially relocated, thus swelling the numbers of urban poor and the demands on already stretched and often disputed resources. This pattern, amongst others, will be monitored over the coming months.

Considerable praise was paid by mission participants to their national colleagues who have maintained operations in the absence of international staff over the last two years. All stressed the need for a full and complete re-engagement of agencies and of the need to now make up for lost time and to address the pressing humanitarian needs of the region.

A full-time UN international presence will be re-established in Mazar as of the start of September.

Crops Assessment Report

Based on the FAO/WFP Crops Assessment Report, the cereal output for the 1999 harvest is expected to be reduced due to low rainfall, increased pest infestations and an increase in the planting of cash crops rather than cereals. While some 3.24 million MT of cereal is expected to be harvested, the cereal import requirement for 1999/2000 is expected to be somewhere in the area of 1.1 million MT. For the same period, commercial imports are estimated at 800,000 MT as compared to 600,000 in 1998, leaving a shortfall of 323,000 MT.

WFP emergency food aid for 1999/2000 is planned at 97,000 MT of cereal, which will leave a deficit of 226,000 MT.

Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM)

According to WFP VAM, the vulnerable areas of the Central Highlands are not primarily reliant upon local cereal harvests for food security. Food is obtained through trade; the amount of surplus cereal on the market determines the price paid for cereal. In addition, reliance on agriculture may become a source of vulnerability in 1999, if the cereal crops fails; livestock will be affected by poor forage conditions, the lack of rain will lead to under production of wild foods in '99, and loss of productive assets, particularly livestock, will lead to low income and purchasing power.

Food Aid/Food Security

The WFP Country Office has transferred 3,200 MT of wheat from stocks allocated to northern Afghanistan, and borrowed 4,000

MT of wheat from mills. These resources are expected to carry programme activities through the middle of September.

The emergency distribution (phase II) in the Central Highlands began on 12th July. 325 MT of wheat and 54 MT of Corn Soy Blend (CSB) were distributed to 3,250 families in three days.

WFP reports that the joint distribution of food with MADERA to vulnerable rural communities in Behsud Districts I and II in Hazarajat continues, with some 1,100 MT of wheatflour and CSB delivered to date. It is proposed to distribute food assistance to up to 18,500 beneficiaries, including IDPs and vulnerable families in these districts. In addition, WFP continues to provide support for the bakeries programme, institutional feeding, and few activities in Kabul and elsewhere in the region, for which a total of 1,953 MT of food was distributed during the reporting period.

Education

A health education training workshop was organised in Peshawar by Save the Children (UK) with support from UNICEF for 11 education monitors and the Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) health educators working in the eastern region.

UNICEF Kabul distributed educational supplies to primary and secondary schools in Sayed Abad district of Wardak Province.

Health

Following regular training courses for surveyors, WHO has started EPI cluster surveys in all regions of Afghanistan.

WHO, in collaboration with MoPH and health NGOs, completed a workshop

on TB manual and conducted training courses for 16 female and male medical and para-medical staff of Maiwand hospital in Kabul.

A WHO team visited Keshim and Sheghnan Districts (Badakhshan) and Taloqan (Takhar) to evaluate the results of NIDs, and assess the health situation. The team distributed medical supplies to the Taloqan regional hospital and malaria units in the area.

In order to assess the situation for Faizabad city water supply project, a WHO mission visited the health and local authorities and community leaders in Badakhshan. WHO conducted consecutive courses on EPI cluster survey, Acute Flaccide Paralysis (AFP), measles and neonatal tetanus for doctors from Zabul, Helmand, Nimroz and Urozgan provinces.

A Monthly Health Coordination Committee meeting to evaluate the health situation and to form a Task Force for the control of a possible outbreak of diarrhoeal disease and cholera was held in Herat last week.

Regular courses on Safe Motherhood Initiative for 30 Gynecologists, midwives and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) from Herat, Badghis and Ghor provinces have been conducted by WHO in the region.

A WHO/UNICEF meeting for preparation of a joint work-plan regarding the Breast Feeding Week was held in the Herat Regional Hospital.

A Cholera Task Force of MoPH, UNICEF, WHO and health NGOs meeting was held in Herat to discuss necessary measures for the possible out-break of cholera.

So far 2,465 cases of acute diarrhoea/cholera have been reported in the re-

gion. In Kandahar alone, 25-30 cases are being reported on daily basis. Following meetings/coordination the Infectious Diseases Ward (IDW) in Mirwais hospital in Kandahar is being developed into regional referral centre. UNICEF is supporting MoPH and NGOs in intensive social mobilisation in connection with the prevention and control of the acute diarrhoea/cholera.

A round table discussion with a group of ORT monitoring team and a female member of mass media was aired in a Radio Education programme, in addition to spots on cholera, Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases (CDD) and other UNICEF themes through Radio Shariat in Kabul.

Female and male health educators disseminated health messages to communities by house-to-house visits, holding separate gatherings of female and male community members in Gozara District of Herat Province.

UNICEF Jalalabad fielded a mission to Paktika, Paktia and Khost provinces to monitor health activities and the results of NIDs.

Health Training

13 TBAs have been trained on preventive measures of CDD in Pul-e-Alam, Khushi and Kharwar Districts of Logar Province. Sporadic/suspected cases of cholera are still being reported from the area.

Safe Water/Sanitation

RRD Ningarhar organised a three-day refresher training course for 35 technicians and drillers on handpump installation and drilling, integrated with health and hygiene promotion. One handpump was installed in Mehterlam and two in Alinegar, Laghman,

to provide safe drinking water to some 1,000 persons.

UNICEF delivered 105 handpumps and accessories to RRDs Laghman, Ningarhar and the Herat Municipality for installation in the area. Spare parts for hand-pump repair were provided to RRD Badghis.

Six handpumps were installed and 30 double-pit latrines constructed in Gozara and Enjil District of Herat Province.

In Mazar, through a joint effort of urban communities and municipality, a total 410 cu.m of solid waste has been removed, from the city.

A local Shura to identify the needs and coordinate with RRD for the provision of water, and sanitation facilities to their communities was formed in Katal village, near Mehterlam city of Loghman Province.

Medical supplies

WHO provided medical and surgical supplies, including bed-nets to prevent malaria and leishmaniasis to hospitals and clinics in Ghazni, Jowzjan, Baghlan and Mazar provinces.

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

In Kabul, Community Fora representatives, municipality members, and local authorities have signed a protocol of understanding that legalizes the existing and future Community Fora, including four women's Fora operating in the north of the city. This latest development serves to legitimize social activities, thereby giving impetus to increased community participation and ownership. Particularly promising is the legalization of women's community fora, which

will allow further gender programming to occur.

UNCHS (Habitat) continues support to urban communities in Kabul, by assisting community-based education, income generation, shelter rehabilitation and sanitation activities. As part of this programme, 1,071 cu.m of solid waste have been removed and disposed of, drainage improvements have been made, 14 houses have been rebuilt, 2,485 metres of electricity transmission cable and 27 insulators installed in Ataturk Hospital.

In Herat, recent infrastructure improvements included the construction of two Khandaks and the gravelling of roads.

A training course on environmental improvement was established for a number of Community Fora in Mazar-I-Sharif.

The Anardarah District hospital in Farah province is being renovated and developed with the establishment of Emergency Obstetric Care centre.

Construction materials were provided to RRDs Kunar and Laghman for water and sanitation projects in Narang and Alinegar districts of Laghman Province.

Regional EPI Management Team (REMT) warehouse in Kabul is under construction. This will increase the capacity of REMT to handle supplies for the region and other provinces.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO attended a regional workshop on preparation of the Appeal-2000 and monitored FAO seed production field activities in few districts of Herat Province.

Livestock

A week course for four staff from Takhar and Bamiyan Provinces started in Islamabad to discuss livestock production activities (introduction of fodder crop and cattle breeding).

Mine Action

In order to facilitate repatriation, food security and transportation, a total of 50,368 sqm of agricultural area, 56,260 sqm of roads, 70,927 sqm grazing area, 26,843 sqm of residential area, 17,250 sqm of irrigation/canal and 1,421 sqm of former battle field area were cleared by manual, MDG and mechanical teams in Kandahar Province last week. In addition, nearly 2,300 local inhabitants, Koochies and IDPs of the area have been given mine awareness.

A two-day training course was held on land mine education for female staff of RDD, as well as community mobiliser/health education in both Deh-sabz and Bagrami Districts in Kabul.

Repatriation

Over 400 families/2183 individuals Afghan refugees returning from Balochistan and NWFP (Pakistan) to southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, received UNHCR standard repatriation package, i.e. cash, wheat and plastic sheeting.

UNHCR reports on protection activities linked to the return of 100 families to Khushi district (Logar) from Pakistan. In addition, support was extended to the poultry project in Azro, with an additional 2,000 chicks and 10,000kg of feed distrib-

uted to 100 returnee families in Logar Province.

UNHCR organised a three-day teaching trainer workshop for participants from Kabul, Logar, Kunar and Laghman Provinces in Peshawar on 8th and 9th July.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.321

13 July 1999

Food Aid/Food Security

The second phase of the central highlands emergency distribution is underway. The first convoy carrying 200 MT of wheat and 50 MT of Corn Soy Blend (CSB) left Kabul for Behsud I and Behsud II on 8th July. The operation, planned to target 12,333 families with 1,850 MT of wheat and 308 MT of CSB, is scheduled to be completed in four weeks. WFP's implementing partner for this phase of the operation is MADERA (NGO).

UNHCR has reported that nearly 2,000 Afghans have returned to their country from Iran thus far for 1999. As an agreement has not yet been reached between the Government of Iran and UNHCR, the expected return of 120,000 Afghans for 1999 seems to be scaled back to 60,000. WFP, in a joint WFP/UNHCR project, is providing 300 kg of wheat to returning families.

Education

UNICEF undertook an informal survey, which revealed more than 100 home-schools with enrolment of some 2,500 girl students in the eastern region.

UNICEF provided stationery supplies to over 200 deaf and dumb students in a school, run by Hearing Impaired Foundation of Afghanistan (HIFA) in Kabul.

UNICEF held a meeting with Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) and community leaders in Wardak Province to

discuss problems of women and girls. UNICEF agreed to provide stationery to a girl home-school in response to a request by a female participant of the meeting.

UNICEF Kabul organised a three-day football tournament of school children from 4th to 7th July, celebrating the Children's Day. 160 players from 16 districts participated in the tournament.

Health

Joint Cholera Task Forces comprised of MoPH, WHO, UNICEF, technical institutions and NGOs are meeting regularly in each region of Afghanistan to evaluate disease surveillance reports and distribute anti-diarrhoea drugs and supplies. Health messages to communities about ORS and hygiene and chlorinating of wells are also parts of the programme.

WHO conducted a course for 16 EPI surveyors, and provided 20 health books and malaria treatment guidelines to training centers in Ghazni Province.

A WHO EPI consultant visited Mazar-I-Sharif to evaluate the results of the NIDs rounds in the region.

The ORT/HES campaign was completed in the country with regions implementing it in different weeks due to staggered deliveries of supplies.

In Herat, 4,111 girls and 4,366 boys were treated for diarrhoea, and 523 sessions on hygiene education were held.

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A meeting to review EPI activities and NIDs micro-planning in southeastern region was also organized by WHO. The meeting was attended by representatives of MoPH, UNICEF, Ibnesina, and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA).

The AFP surveillance is ongoing in Kundoz and Baghlan Provinces, where four AFP cases were found.

UNICEF Kabul finalised preparations for holding the second round of EPI campaign from 13th to 15th July for areas not covered during the first round.

Health Training

WHO conducted three courses in Mazar-I-Sharif on AFP focal points on the expansion of AFP surveillance and reporting on measles and neonatal tetanus for social leaders, trainers and health workers including females on ORT, hygiene and sanitation.

A three-day training on ORT/HES and a six-day Training of Trainers course in Safe Motherhood for trainers and female health workers from Kabul, Logar and Wardak Provinces completed last week.

A regional Mother and Child Health (MCH) meeting was held in Jalalabad, where female representatives from Public Health Departments, UNICEF, WHO and NGOs participated. Social health issues including blood bank, neonatology, family planning, local food demonstration in MCH clinics and training of female staff were discussed in the meeting.

Safe Water/Sanitation

Ten handpumps were installed in Dehsabz and Kharwar Districts in Kabul providing safe drinking water to some 2,500 people. Female staff of Rural Rehabilitation De-

partment (RRD) continue to disseminate hygiene messages to women through house-to-house visits.

In Gozara and Enjeel Districts of Herat Province five dug wells equipped with handpumps were improved, one bore well drilled, and four double-pit latrines constructed.

Two female health educators from RRD disseminated messages on safe water, sanitation and personal hygiene to school children and female members of the community through door-to-door visits.

Medical supplies

WHO provided medical supplies to Puli-Khomri Regional Hospital and Clinics.

Anti-malaria drugs, microscopes, and health education leaflets were also provided to health facilities in Faryab, Saripul and Balkh Provinces.

Disability

A two-day national workshop on micro-credit was organized by Comprehensive Disabled Afghan programme (CDAP) and ACBAR in Peshawar on 28th- 29th June.

UN agencies and NGOs involved in micro-credit programmes in Afghanistan attended the workshop.

The aim of this workshop was to agree on principles and best practices on micro-credit in Afghanistan.

It was concluded that relevant agencies would follow a coordinated strategy on application of interest charged, common currency, duration and type of loans, recovery rate, guarantor system, criteria for selection of beneficiaries, monitoring, fund ownership and savings.

A task force under the umbrella of ACBAR was proposed to coordinate the micro-credit programmes in Afghanistan in accordance with the Principled Common Programming.

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

UNCHS signed a protocol with the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, to implement community development programmes in all regions. The agreement will also allow active participation of women in Habitat's community-based development activities. Based on another agreement between the Kabul Municipality and UNCHS, the rehabilitation of a morning hall for women in district 10 of Kabul city resumed. Habitat's community-based education, income generation, shelter rehabilitation, sanitation and construction projects are ongoing.

The construction of schools in Khaki Jabar and Musaei, in Kabul and Logar Provinces, started in 1998, has been completed.

Gravelling of roads in District 3 in Herat was completed and handed over to the related Neighbourhood Rehabilitation Committee (NRC).

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO carried out food assessment survey, monitored wheat crop farmer fields demonstrations and contract seed growers and weeded/irrigated summer crop research trials in both Mazar and Takhar research farms in the northern region.

FAO also trained 862 community farmers in different aspects of plant protection, carried out sunn pest outbreak survey and monitored fruit crops demonstration

orchards in Karukh District of Herat Province.

Livestock

A one week course on milk quality testing for field staff from Kandahar and Kabul completed in National Agriculture Research Centre (NARCA) in Islamabad.

Mine action

In order to facilitate repatriation, food security and transportation a total of 36,482 sqm of agriculture area, 29,543 sqm of grazing area, 36,480 sqm of residential area and 8,055 sqm of former battle field area in Kandahar were cleared by manual, MDG and mechanical teams last week.

In addition, a total of 2,250 local inhabitants, Koochies and IDPs in Kandahar Province have been given mine awareness.

Repatriation

Over 270 families/1611 individual Afghan refugees returning from Balochistan and NWFP (Pakistan) to south and eastern regions received UNHCR standard repatriation package, i.e. cash, wheat and plastic sheeting.

UNHCR's ongoing projects which aim to facilitate the re-integration of returnees in Azro were monitored. The first cycle of the group revolving fund project, composed of 40 groups of 10 female and male is completed. Major activities under this project ranged from sheep/goat rearing, dealing in food items and dry fruits, to knitting and embroidery. 2,000 chicks were distributed to returnee families under the poultry project that provides skills training on kerosene incubators and poultry raising for 300 returnee families (women). One high and four

primary schools with 1,200 students are running smoothly. Three health facilities are operational in three strategic locations where curative and preventive services are provided by professional medical doctors and lab technicians.

A shelter project to provide assistance to 532 recent returnee families has been undertaken in Kandahar, Zabul and Helmand Provinces.

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Assistance for Afghanistan

WEEKLY UPDATE

Issue No.320

6 July 1999

Access via Uzbekistan

The Government of Uzbekistan agreed to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance by barge across the Amu (Darya) River into Balkh Province of northern Afghanistan. The United Nations is currently engaged in re-establishing a permanent presence of international staff in Mazar-i-Sharif for the first time since their evacuation in the fall of 1997.

Food Aid/Food Security

According to a WFP Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) survey team, recently returned from the northern rain-fed areas of Afghanistan, the combined effects of drought and Sunn pest may reduce wheat yields by up to 50% to 70%. The second WFP VAM survey team returned from Ghor. Preliminary indications suggest that crops losses in Ghor Province are similar to those in the northern rain-fed areas of the country. The third WFP VAM survey team is currently undertaking surveys in Badghis Province.

WFP VAM provided staff from Focus (UK) with a two-week training in baseline needs assessment in the highland areas of Badakhshan.

WFP is introducing Corn Soya Blend (CSB), a highly nutritious blended food, into selected activities. Acceptability testing of the CSB in WFP's widows' bakeries and in institutional feeding projects in Kabul suggests that the CSB is agreeable to

Afghans. In order to ensure correct usage and understanding of the product, WFP's implementing partners are conducting information campaigns, which highlight CSB's nutritional value and describe the various ways in which it can be used in meal preparation such as in bread, porridge or as a base component for vegetable soup. WFP plans to distribute a total of 756 MT of CSB to 56,000 in-patients and outpatients throughout Afghanistan. In addition, 130 MT of CSB was distributed to over 9,000 families during the emergency food distribution to the districts of Waras and Panjao in Central Highlands.

Education

An education sub-committee meeting was held at ACBAR office in Peshawar last week. UNESCO announced that it will conduct a survey in collaboration with UN agencies, SCA and SCF (UK) to find out the percentage of Afghan school age children who have access to education both in and out of Afghanistan (Pakistan and Iran).

A two-day workshop for female/male teachers and supervisors of home schools was held in Surkhrud District of Nangrahar Province. Participants suggested including hygiene and health messages for students.

In order to compensate for time lost in the start of the academic year, schools in Laghman will resume classes soon after the final exams.

Health

The recent outbreak of severe diarrhoea in Afghanistan has now been confirmed to be cholera. WHO supplied drugs and UNICEF, WHO, MoPH and NGOs have established cholera task forces in all areas of the country. In addition, a WHO mission visited Spin Boldak in Kandahar to further investigate the outbreak there. With assistance from UNICEF and WHO, the Regional Public Health Directorate in Kandahar is investigating an outbreak in Siory area. In Baghlan, a joint team visited a village where a suspected cholera outbreak has occurred.

The Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) and Hygiene Education and Sanitation (HES) campaign was officially launched by the authorities on 27th June. The ORT/HES programme will continue in diarrhoea-prone areas even after the intensive ORT/HES campaign.

During the second round of NIDs, children were vaccinated in five districts of Parwan, two districts of Kapisa and three districts of Bamiyan, in addition to the districts reached during the first round.

Health Training

In Kabul, WHO conducted a course on ultrasound in Jamhuriat hospital to train 13 doctors in using ultrasound to diagnose diseases. WHO will also conduct similar courses for female doctors.

WHO conducted a training course for 10 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and 12 Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) in Gulran District of Herat. WHO also conducted a one-day training course for physicians and health workers on Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) in Ghorian District of Herat Province.

Cirrhosis Outbreak

During the week, WHO held three meetings at the Governor's House and Regional Public Health Directorate on liver cirrhosis (Veno Occlusive Disease) in Gulran District of Herat Province. The participants set forth short and long-term measures for the control of the disease. UN agencies and NGOs pledged to contribute to the control of the disease. 200 cases have been registered with 55 deaths to date.

WFP and WHO will begin a supplementary feeding programme and health education campaign for the prevention of this disease. WFP will contribute 176 MT of food, of which 50 MT will be used as wages for 40 health educators. The cost to WFP will amount to over US\$70,000.00.

Safe Water/Sanitation

WFP approved a joint MoPH, WFP and UNICEF chlorination of shallow wells project in Jalalabad.

The Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) in Kabul organised a capacity building workshop for its senior staff. The meeting expressed appreciation to UNICEF for its support to RRD, especially in training and technical support programmes.

In Narang District of Kunar, RRD constructed double vault latrines in 100 houses bringing the total to 500. Under Shiga/Daman WES projects in Kandahar, 200 latrines were constructed in Mundisar and Shor Andam villages.

UNICEF's Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) programme is the largest provider of water and sanitation systems in rural areas. With the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development as the major counterpart, the WES programme

aims to construct or rehabilitate hand-pumps, dug wells, boreholes, latrines, piped water systems, and sanitation systems. Community participation is critical in the siting, construction, and maintenance of the pumps and wells. The programme also delivers messages on hygiene.

Medical supplies

WHO distributed medical supplies to 59 health facilities on June 27th June for the ORT/HES campaign. WHO also provided supplies in Farah, Herat, Faryab, Balkh, Baghlan, Kunduz, Kandahar, Paktia, Khost, Badakshan, and Takhar Provinces.

Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

In Kandahar, UNCHS completed three construction projects. The Shekarpoor Bazaar bridge in District 2 was handed over to the community. In District 3 of Kandahar, rehabilitation of the Kalai Fasil main drainage system was also completed and handed over to the community. The total length of the rehabilitated drainage system is nearly 1 km.

UNCHS also completed the solid waste clearance operation in Kandahar that started last year. In total, 9205 cubic meters of solid wastes were removed from the city to the designated dumping site.

Two new community fora, one for men and one for women, were established through UNCHS social programmes. The fora are now preparing to start various activities supporting social, economic and infrastructure recovery.

In southern region, WFP approved a food-for-work flood protection measure for Maruf District, Kandahar Province. It will be implemented in collaboration with the NGO ANCC/ALO. The project aims to

protect the 2,000-meter riverbank by constructing 31 dikes and two retaining walls. The project will employ 165 workers and use 120 MT of wheat as wages.

In Shinkai District of Zabul Province, the Regional Public Health Director officially inaugurated the Zabul Provincial Hospital. Representatives of UN agencies and NGOs attended the ceremony. The hospital was rehabilitated by WHO.

In Kunar and Nooristan, WFP and MADERA are undertaking the second phase of a food-for-work reforestation project. Phase I used 1,100 MT of wheat as wages for 440 men and 70 women and produced 245,000 saplings, planted in Kunar and Nuristan areas in 1996. The new phase plans to employ 160 men and 70 women with 500 MT of wheat for production and plantation of additional saplings.

UNCHS continues to support urban communities in Kabul, by assisting community-based education, income generation, shelter rehabilitation and sanitation activities. As a result of UNCHS ongoing programme activities 855cum solid waste was disposed of in the city.

WHO completed the construction of an Emergency Ward of the Mazar Public Hospital which is ready to be handed over to the Regional Public Health Directorate.

Agriculture

FAO Crops

FAO Crops has begun a two-week course for Afghan beekeepers and extension workers. The course aims to make bee-keeping more cost effective and independent of external inputs. The course will demonstrate the usage of equipment that can be made within Afghanistan. It will also teach par-

participants how to make a range of products using honey and beeswax. In the long term, such training will help Afghan beekeepers to develop a self-sufficient industry.

Thirty men and women including commercial and refugee beekeepers, and staff from NGOs and UN agencies involved in community development will attend the course at the NARC Honeybee Research Institute in Islamabad. The course is being funded by DFID (UK) and organised by FAO in co-operation with the NARC Honeybee Research Institute.

FAO field staff trained a total of 1064 community farmers on pest management through informal training in Herat, Farah, and Badghis. 200 extension pamphlets were distributed among the community farmers in these areas.

Livestock

An annual consultation meeting was held in Kabul from 28th to 29th June. Field staff of Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), livestock production, Veterinary Service Association (VSA), Poultry Farmer's Association, representatives of local authorities and FAO officials attended the meeting. A number of animal health and production issues were discussed.

A workshop for trainers in Veterinary Training Centers was completed in Islamabad on 25th June. Ten participants attended.

Mine action

As of July 2, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) had removed one million explosive devices from Afghan soil.

MAPA has been operating in Afghanistan since 1989, and the event represents a landmark for humanitarian mine action programmes. Because of the work of 4,700 personnel, one million Afghan civilians may have been saved from serious injury or death.

Due to improved training and safety procedures for MAPA personnel, this achievement has been accomplished simultaneously with a 50% reduction of injuries to de-miners in 1999 as compared to 1998, and a 75% reduction as compared to 1997.

One of the most important MAPA initiatives at present is the de-mining of former front lines in Northwest Afghanistan, which span both residential and agricultural areas, and where displaced persons from Herat and refugees from Iran are now returning. Before the commencement of the mine action programme there, at least 35 to 40 civilians were injured in mine-related incidents each week. Now that mine awareness training and de-mining began, this number has been reduced to five casualties per week.

The Mine Action Programme, in conjunction with ICRC and WHO, also initiated a programme which will for the first time track all civilian mine injuries throughout Afghanistan. The system will become operational later this year.

MAPA is facing a 33% funding shortfall and will require another ten million dollars by September to continue its activities.

Repatriation

UNHCR resumed assisting voluntary repatriation from Iran with a pilot project in which 1,506 Afghan refugees repatriated to Afghanistan from Bardsir and Rafsanjan camps in Kerman (Iran). The repatriation took place in three convoys of about 500 refugees each who reached Islam-Qala on the Afghan border on 26th, 28th and 30th June. UNHCR, through IOM, provided the returnees with transport assistance from Islam Qala to Herat, where they received their standard repatriation package, comprising a cash and wheat component. The returnees were registered, medically screened for travel fitness and their further transportation from Herat to their final destinations in northern Afghanistan. UNHCR and officials of the Ministry of Martyrs and Repatriation currently escort the convoys. The reception of these first groups of returnees went smoothly due to cooperation of UN agencies and IOM as well as the local authorities.

Last week some 3,000 returnees from NWFP, Pakistan were verified by UNHCR in Jalalabad and Khost, where they received their entitlements of cash, wheat and plastic sheeting. Another 184 families returned from Balochistan to Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Ghazni Provinces.

Voluntary repatriation from Pakistan is ongoing. More than 50,000 refugees returned to their places of origin in different regions of Afghanistan since January 1999.

The government of the People's Republic of China contributed blankets, shoes, sweaters, medicines and tea worth US\$368,688 to UNHCR for Afghan returnees.

