

Minutes

REACT Meeting

3 December 2018, 10.00 – 12.00 UN Conference Hall

Co-Chairs:

Mr. Rustam Nazarzoda, Chairman, Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES)

Mr. Luciano Calestini UN Resident Coordinator a.i and UNICEF Representative in Tajikistan

Summary of discussion:

Welcome remarks:

The co-chairs opened the meeting by welcoming the participants.

Mr. Luciano Calestini, UNRC a.i welcomed and expressed gratitude to the Chairman of CoES for active leadership of REACT partnership. He also, highlighted that on December 10, 2018 world marks the 70th anniversary of that extraordinary document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Rustam Nazarzoda, CoES Chairman also expressed his high appreciation to all REACT partners for support and cooperation, which led to tangible support and assistance to disaster affected population. He mentioned number of projects to be initiated in 2019 and continued with CoES priority areas in 2019, which included the following:

- Implementation of CoES Development Programme for 2018 – 2022;
- Advocacy and lobbying of endorsement of National DRR Strategy by Government of Tajikistan;
- Organization of regional Central Asian Conference on DRR, inviting other neighboring countries as Pakistan, Afghanistan, India (to be supported by UNDP);
- Capacity building of staff on Sendai Framework implementation monitoring and reporting;
- Organization of Field Simulation Exercises in the risk prone areas, considering technogenic risks as well;
- Awareness raising among population on existing risks, mitigation measures and etc, including organization of public events on occasion of International DRR Day in the regions.

The co-chairs proceeded with introduction of agenda and participants.

Recent emergencies in Tajikistan – Mr. Firdavs Hakimov, Deputy Head of Crisis Management Center, CoES

- For the period of January – November 2018, around 165 natural disasters of different scale occurred, resulting in 17 fatalities and economic damage at around 34 million Tajik Somoni. The most frequent type of disaster being the mudflow, landslide and avalanche.
- Largest number of disasters have been registered in Districts of Direct Subordination, while the highest damage (around 50% of total damage) occurred in Khatlon region.
- For the same period of 2017 around 800 disasters have been registered in the country while damage was around 29 million USD.
- It was noted that damage cost in 2018 is higher compared to 2017, while number of disasters is significantly lower. Presenter explained that damage cost of 2017 included only direct damage, while damage cost of 2018 included cost of secondary effects, as well as some recovery costs (e.g cost of lost harvest).

Development Programme of Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of Tajikistan for 2018 – 2022 (Programme) – Mr. Fayzullo Ummatullozoda, Head of Main Department on Operations Management, CoES

Participants were briefed about the progress achieved in implementation of CoES Development Programme, highlighting the following:

- Legal and regulatory framework governing area of emergency situations and civil defense has been analyzed and draft Law “About Civil Defence” prepared;
- A new specialized Rapid Response Team is established in Zeravshan valley and staffing of existing Search and Rescue teams in the regions has been increased;
- A new facility of Republican Training Center of CoES was constructed and facilities of several military units and district departments of CoES have been renovated and reconstructed;
- Engineering and explosion unit is established within Central Search and Rescue Department of CoES;

Presentation was continued with introduction of areas prioritized for implementation in 2019 – 2020 by CoES, including:

- Submission of draft Law “About Civil Defense” to Government of Tajikistan for endorsement;
- Allocation of additional staffing positions to regional representations of CoES and SAR teams;
- Establishment of training Centers for Diver-Rescuers and Mine-Rescuers;
- Strengthening Anti-Hail services and establishment of Canine Service within CoES;
- Establishment of evacuation points for affected population in hazardous areas on mountain passes.

Network of regional REACT groups – Ms. Firuza Tursunzoda. Deputy Head of International Department, CoES/REACT Secretariat

REACT activities below the national level are accomplished by Regional REACT groups. Regional REACT groups work in accordance with the principles and procedures agreed by REACT partnership at national level. The operating conditions for each of the Regional REACTs in Tajikistan are somewhat different. Although all Regional REACTs operate under the Chair of the local CoES office, the Secretariat for each Regional REACT is provided by different organizations, and more importantly, the capacities and involvement of partner organizations varies from one region to the other. Currently, operating conditions of regional REACT groups as following:

- Sughd REACT group has been functioning permanently since 2006. Secretariat is provided by local NGO “YGPE”. As of 2018, Zeravshan valley is covered by Sughd REACT (previously Zeravshan valley was covered by a stand-alone regional REACT group);
- Up to end of 2018 western part of Khatlon region was covered by regional REACT group based in Bokhtar city, while eastern part of Khatlon was covered by different REACT group based in Kulyab city. Secretariat for both groups was provided by Oxfam. Due to changes in operating conditions in the region, it is now agreed that as of early 2019 only one regional group REACT Khatlon based in Bokhtar will continue functioning, while Secretariat will be provided by Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan.
- In 2018, REACT GBAO has been established under the Chair of CoES Department in GBAO. Group is based in Khorog and Secretariat is provided by AKAH. First meeting of the group was held in October 2018.
- REACT Rasht group has been dysfunctional for last year, due to changes in operational environment. However, CoES is ready to revitalize the group and Secretarial assistance from any interested agency is welcome.

Furthermore, participants were introduced to different operations and campaigns organized jointly by CoES and REACT partners throughout 2018, including response operations, celebrations of International DRR Day and etc

Inter-Agency Contingency Planning – Ms. Shahlo Rahimova, National Disaster Response Adviser, OCHA/REACT Secretariat

Participants were informed that back in June 2018, REACT Secretariat was tasked to prepare a draft Earthquake Scenario for development of next REACT IACP. For that purpose, an Inter-Agency Working Group (AKAH, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, CoES, OCHA) developed and presented draft scenario, which assumed 7.0 M

earthquake during night- time, in mid-January with the epicenter close to Khorog, GBAO. Scenario assumed around 190,000 affected population with around 20,000 people being displaced.

Meeting discussed and endorsed proposed scenario, planning assumptions, IACP objectives and implementation deadlines.

Emergency response preparedness of health sector – Igor Pokanevich, Representative and Head of Country Office, WHO Tajikistan

Participants were introduced to the health-related emergencies worldwide in 21st century and WHO Health Emergency Programme goals and objectives at global, organizational and country levels. The main aspects of the Programme include (a) identification and communication of health events and risks, (b) ensuring access to essential health services, (c) utilization of risk mitigation strategies for high threat infectious hazards, and (d) assessment and elimination of critical gaps, including in IHR core capacities.

In Tajikistan, WHO provides tailored and targeted support to strengthen IHR (2005) core capacities, and early detection and response to all-hazards health emergencies (Surveillance, early warning and response, laboratories, training). Also, WHO supports Government in conducting simulation exercises and trainings to test and strengthen national coordination capacities to respond to existing risks. In 2019, WHO Tajikistan will continue implementation of Health Emergency Programme, promoting inter-agency and multisectoral approach and by applying existing tools. Among others, Joint External Evaluation (January – February 2019) will be conducted as well as sub-regional joint meeting on Emergency preparedness will be organized (February 2019). Furthermore, being a Lead Agency, WHO will facilitate revitalization of Health Sector Group, fostering networking and information sharing and best practices for health emergency and disaster risk management, including preparedness.

Cash-based transfers in emergencies - Yusuf Bafozoda, Social Policy Officer, UNICEF Tajikistan

Proportion of humanitarian assistance delivered in cash worldwide has increased during recent years (19% of total assistance in 2014). Cash transfers provide number of advantages, including; choice, cost-effectiveness, dignity, economic recovery, flexibility and empowerment. Cash transfer mode can be applied, only when specific conditions are in place. Those conditions include the following: people are used to purchasing essential goods from markets, crisis led to application of coping strategies damaging livelihoods or dignity of affected population, sufficient goods are available at local market, markets are functioning, and accessible, operational environment is suitable for safe and effective cash delivery.

Takin into account advantages of cash transfers during the emergencies, UNICEF Tajikistan is considering application of Cash Transfer mode in emergencies. For that in November 2018, Cash Preparedness Assessment has been undertaken by group of specialists. Assessment considered following aspects:

- Policy framework for humanitarian response;
- Capacity to deliver cash assistance;
- Coordination mechanisms;
- Feasibility of delivering cash through social protection system; and
- Targeted Social Assistance Programme.

Based on the results of the assessment, the model of the programme will be designed in consultation with all the relevant REACT members during December 2018 – February 2019. The testing of the model is expected during March – September 2019.

REACT priorities for 2019 - Discussion led by Co-Chairs.

As many priorities have been presented and discussed by partners throughout the meeting, no separate discussion was held.

Closing remarks

- The co-chairs adjourned the meeting by thanking the participants.