

Disaster & IDP Crisis

Situations of IDPs

No Let-Up in Suffering of IDPs at Camps

Although most flood survivors put up in government-run relief camps in the city have returned to their hometowns, there has been no improvement in the basic facilities being provided to the rather smaller number of the internally displaced persons in these camps. A visit to the tented village set up in Musharraf Colony of Keamari Town in the aftermath of the floods showed that the IDPs continued to live in pathetic condition with meager support from the government and none from the non-government organizations, which seem to have almost withdrawn their support.

[Dawn – December 01, 2010]

Flood-Hit Growers Await Free Fertilizer and Wheat Seed

Growers from the flood-hit areas of Khairpur Nathan Shah, Mehar and Johi have been waiting free of cost wheat seed and fertilizer despite completion of all formalities. They had been visiting offices of agriculture and revenue departments in the backdrop of provincial government's announcement that free wheat seed and fertilizers would be distributed among them. According to a senior revenue official, due to non-availability of computerized record of the growers, distribution of crop input was being delayed. He added that since the mukhtiarkar offices have been given computer facility, the input would be distributed soon. Meanwhile, the flood-affected growers staged demonstrations in Johi and Sita Road on the second consecutive day on December 08 in protest against delay in supply of wheat seed and fertilizers. In Sita Road town, growers held a demonstration on the call of Awami Tehrik. Talking to journalists, flood-hit growers, including Ali Asghar Rind and Asad Solangi, maintained that the DCO, revenue and agriculture officials had failed to distribute wheat seed and fertilisers while wheat sowing season had almost ended. They said that the growers had been visiting offices of mukhtiarkar and DCO but their problem stood unresolved. In Johi, growers decried unfair distribution of seed of wheat and fertilizers. Ghulam Qadir Rind, president of Abadgar Association of Johi, accused the revenue officials of preparing fictitious lists of growers. According to EDO Revenue of Dadu, Syed Ghazanfar Shah, 5,000 applications had so far been received from flood-hit growers for the purpose.

[Dawn – December 09, 2010]

UNICEF Paints Bleak Picture of Flood-Hit Areas

More than four months after the worst floods in the country's history, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that winter will worsen the situation for children who are already suffering from acute respiratory infections and malnutrition. Polio is spreading rapidly as 126 new cases have been detected this year as compared to 89 in 2009 – an enormous cause for concern especially as Pakistan had made significant strides towards eradicating polio. Pakistan is one of the four polio endemic countries in the world and low ongoing coverage in areas experiencing difficult security in the north, overcrowding and poor sanitation as a result of the floods have exacerbated the threat for children. Daniel Toole, UNICEF's Regional Director for South Asia said that this crisis is far from over. It has just evolved in very different ways from one part of Pakistan to the next and the humanitarian effort has had to adapt swiftly to reach children and women most in need as their needs change.

[Daily Times – December 08, 2010]

Watan Cards

Watan Cards: Politicians 'Misused' Scheme to Oblige Supporters

It has been learnt that the politicians in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa allegedly misused Watan Cards to oblige their political supporters. However, the provincial government denies any wrongdoing in the distribution process. According to reliable sources, a large number of Watan Cards have been distributed among supporters of federal and provincial ministers and legislators during over the last three months. In retrospect, the federal and provincial governments had pooled Rs5 billion to offer financial help to more than 282,000 flood survivors in the impoverished province. The money was transferred to the United Bank Limited (UBL) selected by a federal government authority in mid September. But flood survivors claim that most of the Watan Card recipients were not affected by the deluge and that they were obliged by lawmakers and ministers, both federal and provincial. Opposition legislators also

endorse this claim. They allege that Watan Cards worth Rs2 billion have been misused during the last three months. Flood survivors allege that several ministers and lawmakers have used Watan Cards for political purposes, allegedly to strengthen their vote-bank. They allege that thousands of supporters of Pervaiz Khattak, a provincial minister, have been issued Watan Cards in Nowshera district alone, which is his constituency. PDMA chief Shakil Qadir, finding himself helpless, wrote a letter to the provincial government calling for ensuring transparency in distribution.

[The Express Tribune – December 29, 2010]

Flood-Stricken: Over 100,000 Families go Without Watan Cards

Sources said that over 100,000 flood-stricken families in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa have still not been provided with Watan relief cards by the provincial government due to the mismanagement of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). The mismanagement on the part of the district officers and political interference by the ruling parties have been cited as the main reasons for such a state of affairs. An official of the PDMA, who requested to remain anonymous, told *The Express Tribune* that lack of manpower forced authorities to depend upon district officials, who were forced by politicians to accept the lists of those 282,000 families who were entitled to receive Watan cards. Each card gives the recipient Rs20,000. **The cards have officially been given to 182,000 flood victim families while the rest are waiting for their turn.** The charge has been leveled by the people of Nowshera which had been hit the hardest by floods in the province. The district officials and politician are also being accused of preparing fake lists of the affectees. This charge has come mainly from “white collar” flood victims. The provincial chief of the NDMA, Shakil Qadir, had admitted that an unauthentic list of the flood victims was under investigation. He had also admitted that there was political interference in the process of issuing Watan cards but had added that it was the privilege and prerogative of the elected parliamentarians to influence the process. **The absence of PDMA at the district level has been cited as the actual cause of official mismanagement and political interference. The provincial government has so far not been able to establish District Disaster Management Authorities due to the lack of interest.** The NDMA law demanded the establishment of DDMA in each district of the province. A World donor body official noted that thousands of flood-ravaged people have been left at the mercy of a disinterested provincial government. Police baton-charged hundreds of flood-affected women and children who had gathered to receive their watan cards in Nowshera district on November 04. The protesting flood victims have alleged that they have been denied Watan cards and other relief goods by the authorities. After being beaten by police, the flood victims staged protest in front of Nowshera Press Club on November 04. They accused the provincial minister Pervaiz Khattak of favoritism in the distribution of the debit cards. Such protests and demonstrations by the flood victims in almost all the district of K-P have become a routine.

[The Express Tribune – December 06, 2010]

Domestic & Foreign Assistance

Tent Schools Proposed for Flood-Affected Children

Writers, politicians and leaders of civil society have demanded that tent schools should be established in the flood-affected areas on emergency basis and students should be given books. Addressing a workshop on “Post-flood Education in Sindh and Citizens’ Concern”, they said that unprecedented floods in the province had destroyed education infrastructure and demanded its restoration. The event was by We Journalists, Strengthening Participatory Organization, Institute of Social Movement and the UNDP at the local press club. They demanded that attendance of teachers in schools should be ensured and classes should be held in shifts to compensate loss of students. They said that education of children in relief camps should be resumed.

[Dawn – December 01, 2010]

Rehabilitation: Saving the Future of Flood Affected Children

An international non-government organization has launched a campaign to rebuild over 490 schools in the flood-affected districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), Punjab and Sindh provinces. The initiative will benefit over 74,000 school children. Under the campaign, schools destroyed by the floods in Swat, Lower Dir, Shangla, DI Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, DG Khan, Shikarpur and Jacobabad will be repaired and renovated. Schools in these districts were also damaged when they were used as temporary relief camps. The rehabilitation work includes repairing doors, windows, furniture, bathrooms and boundary walls. Save the Children Country Director David Wright said that we are improving children’s access to education by not only rehabilitating the school buildings but also by improving the educational environment by conducting teachers training and providing teaching

tools and learning materials. he said that in parts of southern Punjab and Sindh, where many schools are still inundated with flood water, 176 temporary schools are being established to provide education to 26,000 children, he added. To date, Save the Children has reached more than 2.3 million flood-affected people through emergency health care, distribution of shelter materials, hygiene items, household kits, water purification sachets, food, child protection, education, livelihood support, nutrition, and water and sanitation activities.

[The Express Tribune – December 24, 2010]

Flood Rehab: NGO to Build ‘Model Village’ in Mardan

A non-governmental organisation is rebuilding a village for the flood affected people in Mardan district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The village will be rehabilitated by Human Development Foundation (HDF) in collaboration with the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA) under its ‘Misali Basti’ (model village) project. The groundbreaking ceremony was performed by Dr Atiya Khan, chairperson HDF North America (HDFNA) and Dr Zeelaf Munir, President APPNA at Samar Bagh Village on December 30, says a press release issued by the Foundation on December 31. According to the release, it will be a people-centric village where all the basic amenities of life, including educational facilities, healthcare, clean drinking water and a healthy environment for the local community will be provided. The foundation’s chief executive officer Azhar Saleem said, the destroyed village will be fully rehabilitated in three years with the assistance of the community at a cost of over Rs73 million.

[The Express Tribune – December 31, 2010]

PRCS Completes Flood Relief Phase

About 143,085 flood victim families have been provided food and non-food support by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) during the flood relief operations, which has officially ended and the society has announced that the second phase of support for livelihood and health will continue for next 18 months. Briefing journalists on December 23, PRCS chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar said that the relief phase had been completed successfully with the support of International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and other sister national societies. She said that the food and non-food support by these organisations to the flood victims contributed to the 10 percent of total disaster needs. Since the onset of floods the society provided food packs and cooked food to 208,479 families and non-food item to 129,298 flood victim families.

[Dawn – December 24, 2010]

USAID Provides \$4.3m for Flood-Affected Families

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided an additional US \$4.3 million to address the immediate needs of more than 240,000 flood-affected people in Punjab and Sindh. USAID-Pakistan director Dr. Andrew B. Sisson stated that this project, funded by USAID’s Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) reaches out to the most vulnerable families and focuses on relief and early recovery through a series of holistic and integrated initiatives, including provision of shelter and household items, water and sanitation, livelihoods support, and child protection. Implemented by Save the Children, the project has already provided shelter and household items to more than 7,000 families in Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Muzaffargarh. Items such as cooking utensils, gas cylinders, jerry cans, soap, and towels will help flood-affected families with their most basic yet essential daily activities, including cooking, eating, and storing water. The project also aims to reduce the likelihood of disease for 160,000 flood-affected people in Sindh through improved access to clean water and education on sanitation and hygiene practices. Save the Children will help to rehabilitate and rebuild damaged water and sanitation infrastructure, which will involve repair or construction of new water sources, and the installation of hand pumps. In addition, the project will include the construction of bathing areas for 50,000 people, the provision of 50 community clean-up kits, building latrines, and spot drainage improvements at 50 sites in order to upgrade existing drainage systems and encourage cleaner sanitation practices. The project has already established child-friendly spaces in Sindh, where Save the Children has provided children with psychosocial support through art, play, and life skills coaching. Save the Children also intends to recruit and train 1,000 hygiene volunteers to implement hygiene promotion activities such as group discussions, dramatizations, and household visits.

[The News – December 03, 2010]

Flood Crisis Highlighted at Cancun Talks

By Rina Saeed Khan

The Pakistani delegation held a side event at the UN climate talks in Cancun on December 07 to draw attention to the “World’s most devastating floods: Pakistan’s extreme climate event”. The event was organized by LEAD-

Pakistan and was attended by a number of journalists and NGO officials. The two parliamentarians from Pakistan sent by the PPP government, Samina Paganwalla from Gujrat and Noor Ul Haq Qadri from Fata, were also present on the stage. The event began with a documentary made by Serendip Productions showing moving scenes of the devastation caused this summer by the increasingly erratic monsoon. In the documentary, **Minister of Environment Hameedullah Jan Afridi, who also spoke later at the side event about Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, noted that "Pakistan will not be a silent witness. We need to act now"**. Former minister of state for environment Malik Amin Aslam who has been participating in these talks for a number of years, stated that "We are fighting two wars in Pakistan: the war against terrorism and the war against climate change". The science has become clearer now and climate change is a physical reality, however the world community is "caught in the complex and intricate web" of climate change negotiations and can't move forward. The next speaker was Qamar Uz Zaman who is the former head of the Met Office in Pakistan and currently preparing Pakistan's new climate change policy. He explained how this summer's torrential rains were caused when the normal monsoon system from the Bay of Bengal met a cold westerly system over the mountainous region of Pakistan causing over 300mm of rain to fall in just three days.

[Dawn – December 09, 2010]

Impact of Floods

Income Support Goals: 'Floods Force 2m Families below the Poverty Line'

The federal government fears that another two million families in the country have fallen under the abject poverty line as this year's devastating floods washed away their homes, their livelihoods and their belongings. The central government has launched a nationwide poverty survey in the country through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) with the financial assistance of the World Bank, which is likely to be completed by mid-2011. **In an interview with *The Express Tribune*, Farzana Raja, the chairperson of the multi-billion public welfare BISP, said an estimated seven million families have fallen below the extreme poverty line in the aftermath of the floods.** Previously five million families, with an average of five to six members each fell in the category of extreme poverty. Ms Raja, who enjoys the status of a federal minister, said a countrywide poverty survey based on international standards has already been launched after the successful completion of the pilot project in 16 districts in all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Results from the pilot survey have identified 0.8 million families as extremely poor. She said that families who fall below the score of 16.17 will be considered for a government stipend in the near future. This is the segment of society which earns less than one dollar a day, a standard now considered obsolete internationally. The government has fixed 16.17 as the cut-off score. **She said that if a daily income of less than two dollars is considered as the new benchmark, the number of families living in extreme poverty would rise significantly.** The survey being conducted is based on an internationally recognised score card system. The pilot survey was held in Multan, Mianwali, Pak Pattan, Layyah in the Punjab, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar in Sindh, Karak, Lakki Marwat, Batgram, Musa Khel, Qila Saifullah, Turbat in Balochistan, Ghanchai, Diamer in Gilgit-Baltistan and Poonch in AJK. The World Bank has provided \$60 million to the BISP of which less than half the amount will be spent on the survey. The BISP chairperson claimed that that her department has evolved a unique system that can scrutinise the information submitted by applicants.

[The Express Tribune – December 12, 2010]

Floods Released Toxic Chemicals into Environment

A report has said the unprecedented floods, which hit the country in July and August, released some 3,000 tonnes of dangerous chemicals into the environment. The report, titled '**Climate Change and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Inter-Linkages**' and published by the UN Environment Programme, is the first study to look at how climate change will affect POPs regulated under the UN Stockholm convention. The report says both measurements and models show that as evaporation increases with warmer temperatures, more of the chemicals are released from landmasses, rivers and lakes where they are stored, and once in the atmosphere, they can travel great distances. The report says that the storms and extreme weather events like this year's floods in Pakistan are another factor in the release of POPs into the environment, when disasters release stockpiles stored in drums.

[The News – December 14, 2010]