

Disaster & IDP Crisis

Situation of IDPs

1.1m Waiting for Aid in Balochistan

The most devastating floods in Balochistan's history have forced more than 1.1 million people to live in open sky in different parts of the province who are in a dire need of food, shelter, medicines and clean drinking water. At least 80 people have so far died of gastroenteritis, cholera and other waterborne diseases in Dera Murad Jamali, Sibi, Quetta and Khuzdar where hundreds of others are experiencing the deadly effects.

"We are living on the roadside while waiting for government aid. We lost our home and other valuables when Dera Allahyar was inundated in floodwater," Pir Bakhsh, an aged man told a group of journalists who visited the affected areas of Jaffarabad, adding that they were unable to save their cattle and other belongings. "We fear thousands of flood-affected people would die of starvation if the international community fails to provide immediate relief to them," PPP parliamentary leader Sadiq Ali Umrani said, adding that the Balochistan government did not have resources to tackle the crisis. He also urged the foreign countries, the UN and other international donor agencies deliver the relief and financial assistance directly to the province.

"Any delay in providing food, drinking water and shelter to the affected people can cause another human tragedy," he warned.

The official sources say the situation is worsening in the 11 affected districts of the province where 75,267 houses were damaged while the standing crops on 6,91,700 acres of land had also been destroyed. The health officials said hundreds of cases of various diseases including that of eye and skin had become very much rampant, as they also pointed to the acute shortage of medicines in hospitals and medical camps in the district while a large number of patients are being treated in Dera Murad Jamali, Sibi and Quetta. Many dislocated people from the adjoining areas of Sindh are staying in different relief camps set up in Dera Murad Jamali, Sibi and other areas. "Balochistan is hosting more than one million flood affected people and it is too difficult to provide each and every person the relief goods and food but the provincial govt is making all out efforts to deliver," Raheela Durrani, the focal person for the relief efforts in Balochistan, told this scribe. "A committee under the supervision of chief secretary had been set up to look after the matter," she added. Raheela mentioned that Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani had so far provided only Rs 50 million while the provincial govt had so far released Rs 250 million for the flood-affected people of Balochistan. On the other hand, Deputy Consul General Iran Ali Raza Kashifi said that his country had decided to send medical teams to Balochistan but the Pakistani authorities were not issuing visas to them. He said the unnecessary delay was complicating the relief efforts. Meanwhile, the officials of some NGOs have warned that in case of failure in taking immediate steps for relief and rehabilitation, the situation would further worsen as the affectees have also lost their livelihood sources.

[The Nation – September 9, 2010]

At least 3.9m Children, Women Need Food Support

Over 2.5 million children under the age of five have been affected by floods, says a report released by an international anti-poverty agency. There are about 1.4 million (eight per cent) pregnant and lactating women among the affected people and over one million are elderly or otherwise vulnerable.

The Actionaid report said there was an urgent need for nutrition assistance, especially for young children and pregnant and lactating women. It said also called for community-level programmes to fight acute malnutrition and dissemination of messages on feeding and hygiene for infants and young children in the affected areas. The number of schools being used as shelters has decreased to 5,258 and 1.3 million people are living in them. At least 9,484 schools have been damaged and there is a need to provide temporary structures and supplies such as tents, school-in-a-box kits and recreation kits to ensure continuation of education during the transition period from tents to permanent buildings. Increased numbers of suspected malaria cases are being recorded in Sindh and Balochistan. UN assessment teams have reported a 20 per cent increase in the use of unprotected water sources and confirmed a widespread need for sanitation assistance.

Households have indicated a need primarily for cash grants, material for repair of houses and rehabilitation of lost livelihoods. Movement of people back to their homes in areas where waters are receding requires relief and early recovery responses. Some relief camps are being closed in southern Punjab, including three of the initial 11 camps managed by the army. People in camps are being encouraged to return to their areas in order to

register for compensation. Many areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan are still hard to reach or inaccessible.

The report says that specific needs of women and children in terms of health, hygiene and protection are not being addressed. There are security risks in some affected areas, including Balochistan and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and southern Punjab. Camps do not offer enough space for people to keep their surviving livestock. Some families have started to return to their damaged houses, while those who have lost their homes are putting up in the camps. There is a serious risk of diseases, including malaria and diarrhoea, spreading in the affected areas. Medical aid is not enough and essential medicines are scarce. The report stresses the need for a plan to ensure the displaced children's right to education. It calls for immediate launching of cash-for-work programmes to generate income for affected people, decrease their dependence on handouts and kickstart local economies. The Actionaid said it was developing a framework for a longer-term response spanning over three years, covering coordination, financing, protection from violence against women, livelihoods, community participation, climate change, etc.

[Dawn – September 4, 2010]

2m Children Face Measles, Polio Threat: UNICEF

The UNICEF has come up with a startling observation that two million Pakistani children under the age of five years are vulnerable to measles and polio. According to the Pakistan chapter of the United Nations Children's Fund, it had made public its apprehensions at a recent event hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency to promote immunisation in flood-affected areas. An official of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), Dr Sikandar Bosan, and the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Faisal Karim Kundi, had attended the event. In a statement posted on Pildat's website, Dr Azhar Abid Raza, a health expert working for Unicef, said: "In 77 districts of the country, more than two million children under the age of five have direct threats from measles and polio. Emergency vaccination efforts are required to protect the most vulnerable group in emergencies -- pregnant women and children." Immunisation, he said, would protect more than 20 per cent of the displaced population from vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) -- polio, measles, hepatitis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, childhood tuberculosis and influenza (Hib).

[Dawn – September 5, 2010]

Displaced Children Bearing Enormous Educational Loss

The floods that played havoc with several parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on July 28 have also affected a large number of children whose studies have been disrupted as they are living in camps. The situation is disturbing in Nowshera and Charsadda, two central districts of the province that faced human and material losses in the flooding. Several schools were swept away or damaged in the calamity. Visits to the camps in Charsadda and Nowshera districts showed that temporary shelters set up for the people displaced by the floods had no proper system in place to help the children continue their education. The administrators at the camps said the government and other relief agencies were more concerned about the pressing needs of food and health facilities even though temporary schools were urgently needed to keep the interest of the students intact in their studies. At least one organisation — National Commission for Human Development— has realized the urgency of the issue and started imparting education to children at the Khandar Camp set up at the Government College of Technology in Nowshera. Three young girls Anam, Naila and Kainat living in the camp have volunteered to teach a group of 70 children. They believe human-beings have the right to education and it is the responsibility of the educated lot to teach others.

[The News – September 20, 2010]

UNFPA Warns of Fatal Risks to Pregnant Women in Flood-Hit Areas

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) warned that thousands of pregnant women displaced by floods face heightened risks of death and disability unless relief efforts are increased to meet their needs. According to UNFPA estimates, nearly 500,000 out of the 21 million flood-affected women are pregnant and every day around 1,700 of them go into labour, and more than 250 of them would experience complications, which call for lifesaving medical intervention. Yet most of those displaced in the crisis still lack access to proper health services, including skilled delivery assistance.

The official informed that maternal mortality is high in Pakistan in normal times, the UN estimates that 320 women die for every 100,000 live births. Trauma, malnutrition and poor hygiene make the flood victims more vulnerable. As part of the coordinated humanitarian response to Pakistan's emergency, the UNFPA is focusing on safe delivery and other reproductive health concerns. It is helping assess needs for basic services as the

floods continue to displace people, and restore damaged health centres and hospitals after waters recede. “We urgently need to scale up reproductive healthcare to the flood victims,” said UNFPA Assistant Representative in Pakistan Dr Naseer Nizamani. “The number of women who still lack assistance is enormous.” Besides supporting health authorities in the flood-affected provinces, the UNFPA is conducting reproductive health training and offering critical supplies to non-governmental service providers. These range from clean delivery kits for births outside health facilities to medical instruments and essential medicines for clinics offering safe deliveries. The fund is also, among other things, providing personal hygiene supplies and working to protect displaced women and girls from violence. As estimates of flood damage and displaced people continue to grow, so do estimates of the resources required to respond. The UNFPA is currently seeking \$12.6 million for relief and early recovery activities in the next 12 months. International donors have pledged \$3.5 million to date.

[Daily Times – September 8, 2010]

Quality of Food, Water in Camps Unsatisfactory

Despite the passage of considerable time relief agencies and government institutions are unable to ensure quality of food and water being provided to flood-affected people in various parts of the province and housed in about 40 camps administered by the city government of Karachi. Visits to a couple of camps revealed that the supply of safe drinking water in adequate quantity and the provision of decent meals and other basic facilities to flood survivors remained a challenge for relief agencies and government institutions even after the passage of two weeks of setting up of camps in the city. On the other hand, waterborne diseases, including gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, skin diseases and eye infection, are on the increase. At one of such camps set up at the Workers’ Welfare Board Flats in Gaddap Town, a group of people who have come here from Kandhkot, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Khairpur and Thul said that people were falling ill after having eaten substandard food at the camp.

Health officials said that a total of 13,270 gastroenteritis, or diarrhoea, cases were reported at 38 camps of the City District Government Karachi till the morning of Aug 31. Of them, about 4,800 (36 per cent) were registered at the town health office camp of Gadap established at the Workers’ Welfare Board Flats. “The trend of reporting of diseases at the camp in question also suggests that the people residing in the camp have some problems with the meals and water, otherwise there is no reason that gastroenteritis, skin diseases and eye infections show an increasing trend,” said representative of a non-governmental organisation extending relief services at the camp.

[Dawn – September 2, 2010]

IDPs Number at Musharraf Colony Camp Doubles in 10 Days

A picture of acute mismanagement, the tented village set up in Musharraf Colony in Keamari Town urgently requires government intervention at a higher level as the number of internally displaced persons is steadily growing there while little efforts are in place to meet their needs, it has been learnt. A section of the IDPs protested against the lack of basic amenities, unfair distribution of relief goods and delay in the provision of government compensation for their losses. The tented village with one of the largest concentrations of flood survivors in the city lacks a system to restrict the number of IDPs whose population is increasing day by day. According to a rough estimate, the number of IDPs at the camp increased from 4,000 to over 9,400 in just 10 days. Currently, only three officials of the revenue department are deputed by the provincial government to look after the needs of the over 9,000 people. About 900 tents are erected at the site.

The paramedics providing health services at the camp expressed serious reservations about the quality of food and said that no checks existed at the camp to ensure that healthy food was being supplied. Volunteers of a non-government organisation involved in relief efforts at the camp said the government had done no basic assessment of the number and needs of IDPs, which was one of the major reasons for chaos at the camp. Besides, the continued arrival of new IDPs was failing relief efforts, they claimed. The IDPs demanded that the government must provide assistance to meet the nutritional needs of small children. There was no constant supply of milk, affecting the health of small children, they said. According to data compiled by lady health visitors, the total number of children at the camp is about 673. Of them, 400 children are under the age of two years. The number of pregnant women and women of children bearing age is 190 and 450, respectively. The staff claimed that the children were being vaccinated and the pregnant women were referred to hospitals. Forty-two women had delivered at health facilities while there had also been births at the camp.

The IDPs suffer from a host of ailments. However, a bigger problem seems to be non-cooperation among the various health groups — Sindh police, the Karachi city government and a team of midwives and dispensers

representing the Govt Qatar Hospital in Orangi — operating at the camps independently. The Qatar hospital team was unaware of the presence of a skin specialist at the Sindh police camp while doctors at the Sindh police camp said that they were working independently without any coordination from other health groups. And, the same appeared to be true of the city government's staff. Skin infections, vomiting and diarrhoea were the main problems among the IDPs, according to health professionals. Experts said they had no authority to check or express doubts about the quality of food, which, they said, could be causing vomiting and diarrhoea.

[Dawn – September 9, 2010]

Economic Impacts of Flood

Pakistan Agriculture may Need 2 Years for Flood Recovery

Pakistan's agriculture industry, a pillar of the economy, could take up to two years to start recovering from devastating summer floods, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said. The ADB and the World Bank are assessing the damage caused by one of Pakistan's worst natural disasters, which destroyed 1.3 million hectares of crops just before the harvest of key products such as rice, maize and sugarcane. "Once the country gets back on its feet, it will be able to meet part of those agricultural import needs that will happen over the next two years," Philip Erquiaga, director general of ADB's private sector operations said. He further said that we are thinking within that time horizon we should be able to see the agriculture sector coming back. Agriculture is Pakistan's second largest sector, accounting for over 21 per cent of gross domestic product. Nearly 62 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

[Dawn – September 20, 2010]

Finance Ministry Revising Flood Losses

The Federal Finance Ministry on Friday started revising and updating its projections of economic losses caused by the recent devastating floods, which have been the worst natural disaster in the country's history. According to the federal government, the international community had been unable to realise the actual gravity and the extent of the flood damages. As soon as the Finance Ministry would complete its loss projections, the actual numbers would be presented to the international and major aid donors during the forthcoming visits of Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi to Western and Gulf countries. According to sources, the federal finance, economic affairs, trade and commerce and foreign ministries had been assessing the actual losses caused due to the massive floods. According to sources, the new report on the flood losses would cover losses to the agriculture and livestock sectors of the national economy as well as the damages caused to the infrastructure, imports and exports, balance of payments and others areas of the economy.

The federal government's earlier estimates of losses to lure a large amount of foreign aid had failed to convince the international community, which made the federal government to revise the projections of losses and damage caused by the massive flooding. Pakistan had received aid commitments of \$1.014 billion for the flood affectees by September from different multinational donors and friendly countries. These amounts included \$346 million in grants. Sindh had been the worst-hit province with 4.015 million people being affected by the floods while 87,237 houses had been destroyed. Punjab had a flood-hit population of 1.908 million while 44,752 houses had been completely destroyed. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had 1.579 million flood affectees while in Balochistan 1.015 people had lost their homes. Gilgit-Baltistan and other northern areas of the country had a flood-hit population of 87,000.

[Daily Times – September 4, 2010]

Relief & Rehabilitation Efforts

Government

PM Forms 15-Member National Oversight Body

Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani finally constituted a 15-member non-political National Oversight Disaster Management Council (NODMC) comprising technocrats, retired bureaucrats and retired judges to monitor the inflow of funds for various phases of post-flood recovery and reconstruction. The NODMC will be headed by UAG Isani who is a federal government nominee while the members are including Ejaz Rahim, Fauzia Naqvi, Ameena Syed, Farid Rehman (Federal government nominee), Justice (R) Mian Allah Nawaz, A Z K Sherdil (Punjab), Fazal-ur-Rehman and Fazlullah Qureshi (Sindh), Justice (R) Sardar Muhammad Raza and Muhammad Azam Khan (Khyber-Puktoonkhwa), Justice (R) Amir-ul-Mulk Mengal and Munawwar Khan Mandokhel (Balochistan), GM Sikandar (Gilgit Baltistan) and Tariq Masood (Azad Jammu and Kashmir).

NODMC Chairman UAG Isani is a renewed educationist and has also served as Vice Chancellor of the Quaid-i-Azam University. Though the Prime Minister originally announced to form 13-member oversight council in the meeting of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) but on Thursday he announced it with 15 members having two more members from the federal government. Interestingly, the oversight council did not include any name proposed by PML-N Chief Mian Nawaz Sharif during a meeting with Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on August 14. The prime minister had announced to constitute a non-partisan and non-political oversight commission to monitor the spending of the funds for the flood victims and ensure the transparency during the meeting of the National Commission of Disaster Management and the CII endorsed the decision. The Prime Minister announced the constitution of the non-political oversight council following his meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday night. Last month on August 14, PML-N Chief Mian Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with the Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and he proposed the formation of the transparent commission. Though at the joint press conference after the meeting, the prime minister had agreed to the proposal but later on, at the opposition of three provinces, it was decided that the provinces would propose their nominees for the council.

The council will review plans for post-flood reconstruction and monitor progress of implementation of the reconstruction. The council will also interact with authorities relevant to reconstruction (Economic Affairs Division, Planning Commission, National Disaster Management Authority and provincial governments). The NODMC will also ensure effective targeting and transparent disbursement of support to genuine victims. It will also be responsible for preparing quarterly reports for Council of Common Interests (CII). According to the terms of reference, the council will commission and supervise audits on utilization of funds.

[The News – September 17, 2010]

Punjab Govt Waived Fee of 65,000 Students in Flood-Hit Areas: Minister

Punjab Education Minister Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman has said that keeping in view the financial grievances of flood affected areas' students, the Punjab government has waived tuition fee of 65,000 students amounting to Rs 300 million. He said he would also recommend to the chief minister for the provision of fee concession in the favour of the students of sub-campuses of the Education University at Multan and DG Khan. He was speaking at the inauguration session of the 2nd International Conference "Realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through Teacher Education". The minister said the Punjab government was trying its best to provide maximum relief to the flood affectees for their rehabilitation.

[The News – September 20, 2010]

Massive Rehabilitation Plan Unveiled: Qaim Shah

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah presided over a high-level meeting to reviewing the flood situation in the province and the relief measures taken by the government and its relief agencies. Salient features of a proposed flood impact recovery plan were also discussed. Adviser to the CM on Planning and Development Qaiser Bengali apprised the participants of the socio-economic impact of the unprecedented flood in the affected districts and also highlighted the proposed recovery plan.

The Chief Minister told the meeting that people of Sindh were experiencing the worst-ever devastation by the floods that had caused huge losses to individual families and a big population. He stressed rehabilitation of infrastructure and the affected population on a fast track, adding that priorities would have to be set for the purpose. Later, speaking to Dawn Mr Bengali said that any recovery plan for disaster-hit land and population used to be stretched over five phases — rescue, relief, early recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction — and added that in eight of the 19 affected districts, rescue and relief operations had already been completed. He said floodwater was still standing in the towns and villages of Thatta and Dadu district and the rescue and relief operations there were being carried out there at the moment. He said that under the new recovery plan, the second phase of early recovery would be launched in eight districts next week with the return of internally displaced persons to their native towns. He said fumigation would be carried out to protect people from diseases and epidemics. In the areas where floodwater had not yet receded, the government would install pumps to drain out the water. "This phase also includes provision of alternative residences to the IDP families living in school buildings and other temporary shelters," he said adding that school buildings would have to be evacuated in order to save students academic year. The adviser said that this phase would be over in three to four months after which the plan would enter rehabilitation phase and then reconstruction phase. In these phases, he said, the government would reconstruct houses and ensure that each of the affected families got a house better than one they had lost to the floods. Budgets would be prepared and finances arranged for the purpose, he added.

BISP Releases Over Rs 4 billion for Flood Victims.

Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has released Rs 4.25 billion under its Emergency Relief Package for providing assistance to flood victims across the country. Under this emergency relief package, Rs. 12,000 are being provided to each affected family in 3 equal instalments of Rs. 4,000 each. The amount is released to disburse first instalment among the affected families through Pakistan Post. BISP has already allocated Rs 10 billion to provide immediate relief to the victims under the flood policy of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. The official said that the programme is providing assistance to the people who are need of an immediate relief to cope with the enormous problems created by the floods. BISP provincial headquarters, NADRA and Pakistan Post officials are working for swift disbursement of million of rupees among the flood victim families registered with the BISP as beneficiaries. According to an estimate, presently more than 20 million people of the country are living under poverty line and only six million of them are registered with BISP. Therefore, a nationwide poverty survey is being conducted to register more vulnerable families under the programme to provide cash grant to them. BISP is striving hard to eradicate poverty from the country with the spirit of serving people and empowering women folk of the society to translate Mohtarma Benazir Bhuttos dream into a reality. Under the Emergency Relief Package of the programme, the terror hit people of Swat, Malakand and Bajaur as well as the earthquake victims of Balochistan have been provided relief on non-partisan basis earlier.

[The News – September 15, 2010]

Education, Vocational Training of IDPs Planned

There are more than 62,000 flood victims in 47 camps in the city and more sites have been identified for accommodating the displaced people, said City Administrator Fazlur Rehman. He said that despite the ongoing financial crunch and the responsibility to look after the city's projects, the City District Government Karachi (CDGK) had been striving to fulfill its moral obligations regarding the needs of the IDPs in camps. In reply to a question, the City Administrator said the provincial government was making funds available to the city government for taking care of IDPs. Rehman said that the provision of food and medicines was not the only task, but there were a lot more things to be done for the IDPs. The city's philanthropists and non-government organisations had been assisting the CDGK as regards provision of food to the IDPs, but the CDGK wanted to take a number of other steps for the IDPs. He said CDGK had started focusing on measures for education of children of flood affectees in these camps, arrangements for sports and recreational facilities, provision of lavatories and arrangements for special dietary supplements for the nursing and expecting mothers. So far, all the helping hands had been concentrating on basic necessities such as food and medicines, but the time had come to aggressively launch other projects including those of education, sports, vocational training, the city Administrator said and added that help of philanthropists and NGOs of the city would be sought for these things. "The situation in rural Sindh will take a lot of time to get normal, so the IDPs could not be left as just the IDPs but through vocational training programmes, the adult IDPs would be provided opportunities to contribute their skills to the nation," claimed the City Administrator. He said he had already issued directives to the CDGK health group of offices to carry out a detailed survey on iodine deficiency and malnutrition cases among IDPs within two weeks. He further said that he was keen to find ways to help the IDPs, particularly women who were facing problems with regard to health and sanitation owing to their social traditions.

[Daily Times – September 4, 2010]

Foreign Aid & Pledges

For country wise latest update on foreign aid and pledges see <http://www.ead.gov.pk/>

UN Gathers Pledges for \$2bn Pakistan Aid Appeal

The United Nations gathered new aid pledges for Pakistan's flood disaster on Sunday after making a record \$2 billion appeal to feed millions of victims. Twenty-five top ministers, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, gathered in New York ahead of the UN summit this week, to discuss the new crisis in Pakistan. Norway more than tripled its emergency aid to \$66 million. "The situation is still highly critical for nine million people. We must now show our solidarity with the flood victims," said Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store. Norway had already pledged 115 million kroner to the earlier appeal and upped this to 400 million kroner (\$66 million). India had made an immediate \$25 million contribution as soon as the appeal was made. The main world powers have until now held back from

announcing their response to the record UN appeal. The UN said the money was needed to buy food, set up emergency camps, rebuild agriculture and villages which had seen drinking water and sanitation wiped out.

Agencies have warned of a looming health crisis with 709,000 cases of acute diarrhoea, almost one million cases of skin disease, more than 800,000 cases of acute respiratory infections and hundreds of thousands of cases of malaria and dengue fever that are spread by mosquitoes. The more than \$2 billion requested by 15 UN bodies will be used to help 14 million people over the next 12 months, the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said. The previous record emergency appeal made by the UN was the \$1.5 billion dollars sought after the Haiti earthquake in January.

[Daily Times – September 20, 2010]

UNESCO Establishes 100 Adult Literacy Centres in Flood-Hit Areas

As Pakistan's education system is greatly suffering after the destruction of more than 10,000 schools by recent floods, UNESCO has established 100 adult literacy and skills training centres in the affected districts. UNESCO is also hosting a pilot teacher-training workshop in cooperation with the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education, on psychosocial rehabilitation of children in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. It is also setting up five early childhood care and education (ecce) centres for IDP camps in Sukkur besides distributing Urdu translations of minimum standards for education in emergencies known as INEE standards. UNESCO has also sent to Pakistan multidisciplinary scientific mission of senior experts to develop strategies to reinforce national disaster resilience along with restoration of early flood warning systems in order to save future lives. The strategy encompasses four key areas i.e., flood hazard forecasting and management; mapping and assessment of geo hazards such as landslides; mapping, development and protection of ground water resources for safe use in emergency situations; and education including technical training and awareness-raising for communities and decision makers.

UNESCO has assessed an immediate need for restoration of cultural livelihoods of flood-affected communities by providing them opportunities of cash for work and training in handicrafts and conservation and repair work at World Heritage Sites. One of the challenges is a peaceful relocation of the flood-affected families taking shelter along with their herds at Makli graveyard, and the UNESCO is coordinating with other stakeholders for providing basic necessities to these families to help them evacuate from these sites. The culture team of UNESCO is closely working with the restoration of world heritage sites in Sindh.

[The News – September 24, 2010]

UAE Army Relief Force Starts Rehabilitation of Flood Victims

The UAE Army Relief Force has started next phase of rehabilitation of flood affected people of Sindh and Balochistan. While briefing a group of journalists from different countries here on Sunday, Brig Abdul Rahman Ibrahim bin Abdul Aziz, UAE Commander, said that during the first phase 5,000 victims would be helped to return to their homes by Chinook planes in Dera Murad Jamali and Jacobabad districts as the water in these areas has receded. Sufficient foodstuff and tents will be provided, so that they will not be confronting any shortcoming, he elaborated. According to the said plan, shortly the UAE team will conduct the survey and make assessment of the cost of the supply of basic necessities and reconstruction activities in these areas. He proudly mentioned that UAE team is the only country carrying out different organised rescue, relief distribution and rehabilitation programmes in Sindh and Balochistan. He said in collaboration with the Armed Forces of Pakistan, the UAE Army Relief Force has been continuously working to evacuate people and bring them to safer places. Brig General Abdul Rahman said they started work after the appeal of government of Pakistan and orders of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the follow up of General Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces to help the badly affected people of Pakistan in the time of national crisis caused by the floods. So far, more than 1,800 people have been evacuated from the most affected areas. He said the UAE Army was the first one to reach the most affected areas in Punjab and moved fast enough to jointly work with armed forces of Pakistan. The UAE Army's intensive relief operation in Pakistan once again proves its full commitment to humanitarian and ethical responsibilities and its keen interest to save lives and human dignity, he added. Furthermore, it shows the core strength of its brotherly bilateral relations. He proudly shared that Pakistan Army Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani made a special visit to Multan to meet the UAE military team. It was great boost for the team. "We are also providing and extending our diversified assistance but integrated health campaigns and programmes are needed in Balochistan and Sindh." Moreover, a mobile medical hospital is currently engaged in the different areas of the Punjab to provide flood victims proper medical care and medications in order to make them safe from the infectious diseases," he added. Talking about his team, he said it has professional doctors, well trained nurses, and specialists working for a noble cause to help the needy people in the most affected areas.

WB, ADB Want Quick Rehabilitation of Flood Victims

The World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have expressed no-confidence over the existing long procedure to approve development projects in the flood-hit areas of Pakistan and asked the authorities concerned to come up with efficient and short procedures to approve these projects so that reconstruction process in the flood-hit areas could be kicked off soon, a senior official of the Planning Commission said. “The donor banks are of the view that the existing long procedure to approve the uplift projects is time consuming and is also fraught with some weaknesses, so the authorities concerned need to come up with an efficient and speedy procedure to accord approval to the projects for reconstruction of the flood-ravaged areas of the country,” the official said. He said they argued that the speedy reconstruction of the houses and supporting infrastructure need to be completed in a short time, as the government cannot afford to accommodate the affected people further in tents, particularly in the winter season. Meanwhile, the WB and ADB have indicated that they are going to come up with preliminary damage need assessment report to be based on the raw data early this week after the flood played havoc with the country. “The preliminary report then will be taken up with the provinces for further discussion and the comprehensive Damage Need Assessment report will be finalised by October 15,” the official explained. The preliminary report, he elaborated, will be based on 85 percent of the total data about the affected areas, as some of data about colossal damages in Balochistan and Sindh is yet to be received as the floodwater is still there which is receding now.

About 14 sectors got badly damaged in the deadliest floods, and the WB and the ADB have appointed a focal person in each sector. The official disclosed that both the donor agencies have recommended to the government to build all houses in the flood prone areas behind the protection dyke so that houses could be kept away from the flood.

[The News – September 27, 2010]