

Disaster & IDP Crisis

Situations of IDPs

Pakistanis Ruined by Floods Brace for More Hardship

Six months after Pakistan's epic floods demolished this farming village in the southern province of Sindh, its residents still live in limbo on a roadside. Let down by their unpopular government, and too poor to rebuild their homes, villagers living in tents can only pray the next monsoon season in July would not bring more upheaval. Alimi Khoso said that we are hardly getting any help; pointing to a dirty plaster around her two-month-old granddaughter's leg, broken in an accident in a tent camp. Where will we go if there are more floods? We do not even have enough money to run away. In Ramli Khosa, about 1,500 people reside in rows of bare, white tents donated by Arab and Western aid groups. They must travel about a kilometer to fetch water in tough conditions felt in many flood-affected parts of Sindh province, which was hardest hit by the disaster. In interviews in several villages only a few people said they received compensation from authorities – Rs 20,000. That does not go far. Prices remain unbearably high after floods destroyed crops and cut food supplies. Farmers say it could be years before they are able to plant again. To survive, some toil as labourers, earning about a dollar a day. Government help is unlikely to come soon. Without implementing painful economic reforms, the government will keep struggling to secure the sixth tranche of an \$11 billion IMF loan propping up the economy.

[Daily Times – February 01, 2011]

Severe Cold Claims Child's Life in Mohmand IDPs Camp

A child died due to severe cold at a camp, set up for internally displaced persons at Nahqi area in Mohmand tribal region, on February 06. Sources said that Amna, the one-year-old daughter of Hazrat Hussain, died at tent No 41, block 7 at Nahqi camp in tehsil Haleemzai due to severe cold. The baby girl, who belonged to Gaingji Dwezai, contracted a cold related disease on way to the camp. They said that she died within a couple of days at the camp owing to lack of medical facilities here, the inmates of the camp told Dawn. It was second death at the camp as an old man also died due to cardiac arrest a couple of days ago. They complained about lack of basic amenities at the IDP camps. They added that four persons are being provided only one shawl. Imagine, how the people can bear the severe cold without proper blankets. The displaced tribesmen said that a large number of children of all ages were exposed to chilly weather and epidemics. An aged man from Sagi said that if situation remains the same many more will fall prey to diseases. There is no MBBS doctor and life saving medicines at the camps. The inmates said that only volunteer medical practitioners and dispensers were handling the patients.

[Dawn – February 06, 2011]

Rehabilitation Process – Issues & Responses

Protests against Delay in Survivors' Rehabilitation

Activists of the Sindh United Party held demonstrations and observed hunger strikes in a number of districts on February 06 in protest against delay in rehabilitation of flood-affected people and repair of flood-ravaged river dykes. In Hyderabad, scores of activists held a sit-in on the press club road for about two hours. Addressing the protesters, SUP President Syed Jalal Mehmood Shah said that corruption had destroyed the country. He said the government's responsibility did not end at giving away just Rs20,000 each to a small number of flood-affected people because about two million survivors were still waiting for food and rehabilitation. The government of Punjab has rehabilitated 75 per cent of its damaged irrigation infrastructure through its own resources but the Sindh government has done nothing in this regard and no effort has been made to repair the damaged river and canal dykes. He alleged that the rulers were using the Watan Card as a political bribe and there were instances in which the card had been given to people in areas which had not been affected by the flood. In Thatta, SUP activists led by its local leaders observed a token hunger strike in protest against artificial cuts in river dykes during floods.

[Dawn – February 07, 2011]

Dadu Selected for Rehabilitation Plan

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Chief Executive Officer Qazi Azmat Isa has said that rehabilitation of flood-ravaged towns and villages will begin in three to four weeks, initially from Dadu, Dera Ismail Khan and

Muzaffargarh districts. He was talking to journalists on February 05 after visiting the flood-hit village of Reejhpur, Khairpur Nathan Shah taluka, with rural development experts and head of NGOs. The village, comprising 250 houses, was destroyed by water gushing out of seven breaches in Khuda Wah canal on September 02, 2010. Mr Isa said that most of flood survivors had returned to their villages but they were living there without shelter and education, health and other basic facilities. He said that the rehabilitation plan included construction of houses, schools, health facilities and other damaged infrastructure. He said that the PPAF with the help of World Bank, USAID and other donor agencies would start rehabilitation work in Dadu district with the collaboration of the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) and the Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO). He asked flood survivors to constitute village-based organisations and said that rehabilitation funds would be utilised through the organisations. TRDP chief executive officer Dr Sono Khanghrani said that 7,000 houses would be constructed in Dadu district in the first phase of the plan. He appealed to geologists to conduct a survey of Khairpur Nathan Shah town which had been badly hit by last year's flood and said that it would be made a model town. He warned that expected rains in May might further destroy the agriculture sector of Sindh if branches in the canals were not plugged and their banks not strengthened till April 30. Earlier, a PPAF delegation held a meeting with TRDP officials here and asked them to assess the damage caused to school buildings and other infrastructure by the flood.

[Dawn – February 06, 2011]

Govt Distributes Rs 28.6bn Among Flood Victims

Government of Pakistan has distributed Rs 28.6 billion among 1.483 million flood-affected families through NADRA's Watan Card — each card has Rs 20000 cash assistance. Deputy Chairman NADRA, Tariq Malik stated this while briefing the UN delegation headed by Margareta Wahlstrom, Special representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction who visited NADRA Headquarters today for briefing on Flood Relief System. Tariq Malik while elaborating the overall progress said that in Punjab, 608,824 flood-hit families received Rs 11.96 billion while in Sindh 558,997 families received Rs 10.11 billion. In Baluchistan Rs 1.85 billion have been distributed among 102,945 families and Rs 3.8 billion were disbursed among 199,414 families in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said in AJK and Gilgit Baltistan Rs 188,450,000 distributed among 10,173 families and Rs 61,626,000 given to 3,263 families respectively. He said the selection of beneficiaries is one of the most contentious aspects of any post disaster cash transfer programs in various countries. "NADRA walked extra miles as our aim was to protect the most vulnerable among the flood victims like women household, widows, special persons and minorities," he told. He told 120,081 Watan Cards were given to the households headed by women folks in the remotest areas of Pakistan — and 11,746 Watan Cards were given to minorities notified by the provinces. Emphasising on Grievances Redressal System, Tariq Malik explained that 3.2 million people visited Watan Card centers, 335,044 complaints were received and NADRA has verified that 167,063 were eligible of Watan Cards of which around 155,000 have been given Watan Cards.

Fifty percent (50%) of the complaints were not genuine as these included people who already had received Watan Cards or their family member had received Watan Card. "We are not closing complaints redressal system, and would like to entertain all complaints on case to case basis," he added. He urged the media, international donor agencies and NGOs to focus on facts and real data, not on anecdotes or stereotypes or politically motivated press reports aiming generalisation based on isolated incidents. Neva Khan, Country Director Oxfam, Madhavi Malagoda ARIYABANDU, Regional Programme Officer, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction were among the members of delegation.

[Daily Times – February 20, 2011]

Argentinean Embassy provides funds for flood victims

The Argentine Ambassador Rodolfo J Martin Saravia on February 02 handed over Rs 1.07 million to an NGO 'Karachi Relief Trust' for flood victims. According to a press release, the embassy raised the funds to assist the flood-hit people of Sindh. Karachi-based NGOs managing director Khayam Husain, received a total of Rs 1.07 million. Husain said the money would be allocated for ongoing rehabilitation program and would also be utilized for construction of five new homes. The embassy collected these funds through an auction of paintings of Argentine artists in last December, in Karachi, and Saravia hosted the reception to celebrate the 200 years of Argentine Independence. It was the first event, ever organized by the Argentine Embassy in city. This allowed both Pakistanis and Argentineans to get closer through culture and humanitarian aid as it was a real bridge-building activity.

[Daily Times – February 03, 2011]

Flood Relief: WFP Ends Free Food Distribution

Facing a shortfall of \$548 million in expected donations, the World Food Program (WFP) has suspended its emergency food distribution in areas of Pakistan worst affected by the floods of 2010. The WFP's already meagre resources were not able to cope with the additional burden of catering to the needs of flood victims in the country. While the organisation launched a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) to deal with many of the internally displaced people's nutritional needs, it was able to raise only 12 per cent of the \$622.7 million it needs to finance the operation.

The Agency claims that unless it receives more donations soon, it will be unable to provide life-saving assistance to the many thousands of people that depend on the WFP for their sustenance. The WFP faces an additional burden of being unable to buy food commodities from international markets as countries limit their exports this year after a sharp increase in global food prices. In order to cope with the difficulty in procurement, the program has launched an alternative to its food distribution scheme. As floodwaters recede and local agricultural commodity markets return to normalcy, the WFP will be handing out cash to flood victims to buy their own food. The organisation already conducted a successful pilot project in Buner in 2010.

The WFP will be handing out the equivalent of the value of its food packages – which comes to Rs5,000 – to flood victims in Nowshera and Charsadda in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The money will be handed out in the form of cards which can be used at branches of United Bank. Much of the country has begun to recover from the flooding, leaving the WFP to end its relief efforts in most areas after February. However, parts of Sindh remain submerged and over 600,000 people in Balochistan have still not been able to return to their homes. The people in these areas, coupled with refugees from the conflict in the Mohmand tribal agency, will continue to receive assistance for the next two months.

[The Express Tribune – February 19, 2011]