

Health Cluster Bulletin



H ighlights

Four out of 50 prefabricated structures that WHO is planning, to temporarily rebuild the Basic Health Units that have been destroyed in the earthquake are completed in Bagh, Balakot and Muzaffarabad. One prefabricated health unit that UNFPA constructed has been operational for the past month.

In the meantime, the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has asked the health cluster to jointly look into the permanent reconstruction of health facilities in the earthquake affected area. The slogan "to build back better" entails a rationalization of the reconstruction process: the location of each health facility will be carefully decided and justified using several indicators, such as the health facility utilization rate. ERRA plans to reconstruct and repair over 300 health facilities in the next three years. The ERRA Draft Strategy for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of the Health System is currently under discussion between the ministry of Health and other health partners.

Training of over 250 lady health workers is making a positive impact on the access of women to health care, as well as on the overall availability of health staff in the earthquake affected areas.

With the weather, the living conditions for the earthquake affected population are proportionally improving. Several spontaneous returns have been reported from people living in tented camps back to their remote villages.

The health cluster in Islamabad and in the field is also contributing to the UN Action Plan for Relief to Recovery. The Humanitarian Plan aims to avoid a gap between the end of the relief phase and the start of reconstruction, and covers a one year period from April 2006 to April 2007.

Earthquake-resistant Building Codes

A special government committee of technical experts and officials has recommended replacing the current Building Code of Pakistan, to include earthquake-resistant and construction practices. A new comprehensive building code should avoid massive destruction in future earthquakes.

Pakistan lies on the boundary of Eurasian and Indian plates and for centuries the plates are pushing against each other directly under Balakot and Muzaffarabad.

Besides building codes, Pakistan should look into mechanisms to enforce the building codes on engineers, architects, construction companies and craftsmen. Extensive training to improve building quality has been identified as an important aspect of this building code enforcement programme.

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Reconstruction



The United States has pledged \$510 million to support relief and reconstruction efforts by the Pakistan government. USAID, the US development agency, has committed to the reconstruction of at least all health facilities in Bagh. In addition, the United States has committed \$1.5 billion over five years to support education, health, economic growth and governance programs throughout the country.

Newly constructed prefabricated basic health unit in Anwar Sharif, Muzaffarabad



The Bahrain Red Crescent Society will be reconstructing two schools, a university college, an orphanage and a medical centre in the earthquake affected areas.





Disease control

A total of 195 health facilities are now participating in the Disease Early Warning System (DEWS). 88% of these were sending their epidemiological findings to WHO as per the latest Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report.

The main causes for consultations remain Acute Respiratory Infection and Acute Watery Diarrhoea.

Field hospitals

US MASH Field hospital handed over to Pakistani military

The United States Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) has been transferred to the Pakistani military. All of the 200 U.S. military medical personnel have left Muzaffarabad, where the 84-bed MASH unit treated more than 20,000 patients since October.

The MASH facility is worth \$4.6 million USD, consisting of medical equipment, medical supplies, and power equipment. The portable hospital consists of a primary health care and emergency medical treatment section, a surgical suite with two operating tables, two intensive care units, wards, a pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology units. All US military presence will be withdrawn from by end March.

Nutrition



Health & Nutrition Survey in Earthquake Affected Areas of Pakistan helps planning health and nutrition interventions

The results of the health and nutrition survey conducted in the affected earthquake area by UNICEF, WHO, WFP and the Ministry of Health do not indicate a serious crisis, as the results should be viewed in the context of existing poverty conditions and other multiple aggravating factors such as winter weather, massive household destruction, high unemployment figures and high morbidity. The survey covered several areas such as access to safe drinking water, nutrition status and hygiene and sanitation practices.

The survey recommends:

- Targeted supplementary feeding in food unsecured areas and therapeutic feeding centres as a preparation to enhance the capacity of managing severely malnourished children.
- Improved coverage of measles immunization and vitamin A supplementation, multiple micronutrient supplements that includes iodine and better management of diarrhea and acute respiratory infections;
- Appropriate targeting and continued distribution of existing food aid;
- Better hygiene and sanitation practices/ opportunities, and increased access to safe drinking water; and
- Establishing of nutrition surveillance and monitoring system and a follow-up survey after 6 months to assess the change in status of the populations.

Environmental Health



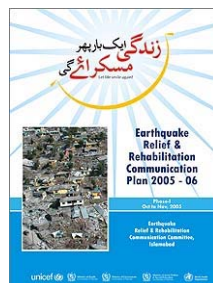
Results of extensive drinking water testing in Battagram and Bagh show that 38% of the tested water samples are unfit for drinking purposes. To ensure a continued water quality, WHO organized a two-day workshop on water quality surveillance and monitoring for 11 NGOs.

Septic tanks were installed in the Cuban Hospital in Thakot, and 11 Basic Health Units were provided with water and sanitation facilities.

17 incinerators for the disposal of medical waste were installed in health facilities in Battagram, with three more planned.

Communication

Earthquake Relief & Rehabilitation Communication Plan for a systematic and coordinated health education and communication response to the earthquake. Its objectives are to create awareness and motivation in order to prevent further sufferings, diseases and disabilities and to encourage information sharing/ coordination amongst concerned ministries, agencies and other partners. The Communication Plan brought together the Ministries of Health, Environment and Social Welfare as well as UNICEF and WHO and other partners to address three programme areas: Health, Water & Sanitation and Child Protection



Others



Islamic Relief Pakistan donated surgical kits, wheel chairs, crutches, ophthalmology equipment and medicines to the District Headquarters Bagh, AIMS in Muzaffarabad, the Ayub Medical Complex Abbottabad. Islamic Relief is funding two mobile clinics in Bagh through **Response International**, providing medical services to 20,000 people and is planning for long term medical services in Neelum Valley.



The Turkish government has pledged 150 million USD to Pakistan for humanitarian assistance relief and construction operations. Turkey helped transporting 62 tonnes of emergency supplies, such as medical equipment, including a field hospital. The Turkish medical team treated 20,000 patients and vaccinated around 30,000 people. Turkey also donated 3 million USD to the UN system.



In Mansehra, the **RedR** and International Health Exchange (**RedR-IHE**) and the Sphere Project conducted a workshop on the minimum standards in water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, food security, nutrition and food aid, shelter, settlement and non-food items, as well as participation issues in earthquake-affected areas.

The NGO **HOAP** has been successfully mobilizing 800 volunteers from across Pakistan, of up to 50 are working in its Balakot and Shangla base camps. HOAP's volunteer doctors are giving free consultations and distributing free medicines in medical camps such as in Jabri, UC Shawal Moizullah, which is dealing with general out-patient cases, orthopedic cases, crushed injuries cases, infected wounds and post operative cases on a daily basis. HOAP will be assisting in the reinstallation of the Basic Health Unit in Jabri. HOAP has also trained a local Lady Health Visitor (LHV) from Alari, an area above the snowline.



Australian Aid International (AAI) supported and monitored the Polio Campaign in Haveli.

AAI has signed an MOU with UNICEF to implement a family hygiene program in Haveli Tehsil and already received the first donation of family hygiene kits utilizing Lady Health Worker Supervisors and Lady Health Workers. AAI will facilitate the distribution of blankets donated by WHO and UNICEF to ADHO, Haveli



Internews helps improving information access in Pakistan's earthquake zones. Thanks to a special radio program 'Jazba-e-Tameer' or 'Radio of Hope' the NGO Internews disseminates relevant messages on health and sanitation, women's rights, and others addressed to the earthquake affected population through FM radio stations <http://www.internews.org.pk/>



Miscellaneous

Public Health in Complex Emergencies course

The Public Health in Complex Emergencies training program (PHCE) is a two-week residential course that focuses on critical public health issues in complex emergencies. The goal of the course is to enhance the capacity of humanitarian assistance workers and their organizations to respond to the health needs of refugees and internally displaced persons affected by these emergencies.

Three courses will be organized in Beirut, Lebanon from 6-18 March, in Thailand from 8-20 May and in Uganda from 6-18 November 2006. [click here](#) to download the [brochure](#) and [application form](#) or go to the website of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre <http://www.adpc.net/>

The WHO Handbook for Journalists on the influenza pandemic (including bird flu) [pdf 756kb]

