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For Information and Coordination Purposes, International Health Partners from within and outside Pakistan are kindly invited to contact the OMH/WHO Emergency Coordination Center at the following contacts: health@whopak.org, Phone: +92 300 50 10 635 and +92 51 9263240.

South Asia Earthquake Situation Report # 9

16 October 2005

Highlights

- The aftermath of the earthquake, the devastation and the impact on people's lives has been underestimated.
- The health system in the provinces affected has collapsed.
- Thousands of injured are being treated daily.
- The lack of safe drinking WATER will soon become a major health risk.



Balakot, Pakistan 15 October 2005

Source: Osama Ali-Maher, WHO Pakistan

Health impact

- WHO assessment teams currently in various locations of the affected areas in Northern Pakistan report that the gigantic devastation goes far beyond any other devastation they have seen. The effects of the earthquake on the affected community are enormous. The lack of basic necessities such as food, water, blankets and tents are also affecting health workers in the field.
- The previously existing health system has ceased, as many health facilities have been destroyed or damaged, and health staff are either highly traumatized, injured, deceased or occupied taking care of their family members.
- The city of Bagh has been totally destroyed, with not one single building left standing. The impact of the disaster is still not clear in inaccessible areas such as Neelum Valley (north of Muzaffarabad). Less than 50% of the entire affected area has been accessed.
- Medical and surgical field teams report thousands of patients treated per day. The large number of injured is overwhelming the current capacity. Many injured may not be treated on time, resulting in unnecessary deaths and incapacity.
- The university grounds in Muzaffarabad, where thousands of injured have gathered awaiting treatment, need urgent sanitary intervention. Water tanks and latrines need to be set up and solid waste collection needs to be initiated immediately.
- The bad odour due to a large number of dead bodies still covered under the rubble, is being alleviated through spraying campaigns with chlorine solution.

- Pakistan Institute for Medical Sciences (PIMS) is receiving hundreds of patients daily and is sending stabilized patients to other public hospitals around the country in order to admit the seriously injured.
- A 100 – 200 bed hospital is being set up at Chaklala Military Airport to admit patients directly on arrival. The MoH will decide where to send them after treatment.
- Patients are now coming in with infected open fractures and gangrene. WHO expects that the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities for the affected population will soon create a major health threat, which can be prevented by providing sufficient quantities of clean drinking water. The hospital has put up tents in the hospital grounds for patient's families.
- Mental health problems, due to the severe traumatic events people have experienced should be addressed soon.
- There is a need to revive primary health care services as soon as possible and ensure emergency obstetrics, child health services and management of chronic diseases.
- The WATSAN cluster group is reporting an increasing incidence of bloody diarrhoea in Balakot while there is a lack of health personnel to cope.
- An increasing number of people from outlying villages are moving into Balakot seeking assistance.

WHO Response

- WHO has initiated health coordination in Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Mansehra and will be setting up a field office in Muzaffarabad.
- Measles vaccines have been provided for a campaign to reach all children under age 12 in the provinces affected.
- Currently, up to 40 national public health experts have been recruited to go to the affected regions next Monday. Another 200 physicians from Punjab are available for immediate mobilization.

Other UN agencies and health partners response

- IOM has distributed 15,000 tents to the affected population, with another 67,000 still to come.
- More field hospitals and medical relief aid are arriving. IOM and the Pakistan Medical Associations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad are mobilizing a medical team consisting of 22 doctors, paramedics and volunteers to Balakot and Muzaffarabad. UNFPA will be setting up 6 mobile Mother and Child Health Care units. IFRC is establishing a hospital on Balakot helipad ground and has distributed 5 emergency health kits. 6 trucks of relief supplies have left for Mansehra and Balakot. MDM has 3 surgical teams working in Balakot, Mansehra and Battagram.
- UNICEF distributed 7 primary health care kits to serve the needs of 10,000 people in Muzaffarabad and Mansehra. UNICEF also provided a water generator, 50 solar refrigerators, and 100 trauma kits. UNHCR distributed 21 medical tents, medical kits and vaccine carriers.
- American Refugee Committee (ARC) has reached a remote area in Bagh after 12 hours of travelling and distributed 500 winterized tent and hygiene kits.
- The ICRC field hospital with almost 60 medical staff in Muzaffarabad will be fully operational next Tuesday, in collaboration with the Norwegian Red Cross. ICRC is conducting assessments in the area and is involved in airlifting patients to Islamabad. ICRC and the Pakistan Red Crescent are coordinating the search for lost family members and the care of unaccompanied children.
- IRC is providing food, sleeping bags, and tents in Abbottabad, Shangla, Battagram and Balakot. They will also be providing psychological aid to the affected population.
- CIDA will set up a water purification plant in Muzaffarabad. CIDA has provided financial assistance of \$1.7 million to WHO, \$2 million to UNICEF, \$1 million to ICRC, \$1 million to IRC, \$5 million to UN for deployment of helicopters.

Urgent needs

- WHO is appealing to the international community for a large quantity of water purification plants to be made available as the lack of safe drinking water is a major health risk.
- All health facilities need to have a sustainable source of clean drinking water.
- Meanwhile, Chlorine tablets and /or water treatment sachets are needed in large quantities.
- The urgency for winterized tents and blankets is increasing with the weather becoming colder every day.
- The need for mobile operation theatres is still in effect, these should be able to move to the affected areas beyond Mansehra and Mozaffarabad.
- The number of injured survivors with long term rehabilitation needs is expected to be very high and will overload the tertiary and specialty facilities.

Donations

- The British Government has donated USD 252,951 for WHO support to the disaster response.
- The Swiss Government has donated USD 100,000 for WHO support to the disaster response.
- The Norwegian Government has donated USD 250,000 for WHO support to the disaster response.
- The Principality of Monaco has donated EURO 100,000 for WHO support to the disaster response.
- The Government of Italy has donated EURO 250,000 for WHO support to the disaster response plus in-kind donation of 5 Trauma kits A, 5 Trauma kits B, 5 New Emergency Health Kits and transport.
- The Government of Australia has donated USD 1,899,696.
- The Government of Ireland has donated EURO 100,000 for WHO support to the disaster response.
- The Government of Sweden has donated USD 1,928,020 against the Flash Appeal.
- The Government of the United States has donated USD 2,000,000 against the Flash Appeal.
- The Government of Canada has donated CDN 1,750,000.