

News Bulletin

24 February - 10 March 2010

At a glance

- Likelihood of spring hazards deemed high
- Food security improved in Zeravshan
- \$1.5 million for better health in crisis
- Strengthening Search & Rescue in Tajikistan

Current issues

Likelihood of spring hazards deemed high

Tajikistan's *Hydro-Meteorological Agency* (Hydromet) forecasts heavy rains and snow in the mountains for the month of March. Precipitation might be up to twice the usual amount. The agency also says that the snowpack recorded in areas feeding the Pyandj, Vakhsh, Varzob and Zeravshan river basins is above the multi-year average.

Hydromet therefore warns that snow, rain and snowmelt may trigger various hazards over the spring months. This includes avalanches in Anzob, Shakhristan, Rasht and the western districts of *Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast* (GBO) and flash floods in Ayni, Khovaling, Muminabad, Sangiston and Vose.

Avalanches already killed four people in the past weeks: two people in Shugnan district and one boy in Ishkashim district of GBO; in the northern Sughd province, a Chinese citizen was killed on 25 February when an avalanche hit the Shakhristan pass.

For more information: earlywarning.tj@undp.org

Response activities

Food security improved in Zeravshan

The *German Technical Cooperation* (GTZ) is supporting vulnerable communities in several districts in Zeravshan valley to improve their food security.

In 26 villages in Ayni and Mastchoch districts, 188 tons of seeds, including potato, cereal, fodder and vegetable seeds, and 70 tons of fertilizers were provided to 1,600 families. Village Development Committees were trained on the efficient use of seeds and fertilizers. In the same districts and in Penjikent, 1,500 people with disabilities, pupils of selected boarding schools and patients of health centers received a total of 172 tons of free food rations. In addition, 670 children were given Christmas presents and clothes.

GTZ also supports communities to improve drinking water supply and irrigation infrastructure. Four drinking water systems were constructed in Ayni and Penjikent districts; two irrigation channels and two water pumping stations with the connected irrigation systems are being repaired in Penjikent. In the same district, one drip irrigation system for tree plantation is under construction. These interventions are accompanied with training for newly created or existing water user committees.



Construction of drinking water system in Yori, Penjikent | GTZ

The activities are part of GTZ's Disaster Risk Management Program, implemented in collaboration with *Innovation and Participation for Development*, a local NGO.

For more information: luc.patenaude@gtz.de

\$1.5 million for better health in crisis

Japan is providing a grant of \$1.5 million to the *World Health Organization* (WHO) for the execution of its project "Strengthening Health Facilities' Ability to Deliver Care during Crisis along the Tajik-Afghan border."

The project will start with a detailed vulnerability assessment for 15 district health centers and one facility at provincial level. Subsequently, detailed immediate and medium-term risk reduction plans will be drawn up for the 16 facilities. Fifty health

center staff in a management position will be trained in risk management and public health in emergencies.

At the end of the project, 16 key facilities will be able to continue health care delivery at times of crisis or disaster thanks to structural and functional improvements to the centers and their staff. Emergency medical supplies will be in place in all these sites.

The project also includes activities aiming at restoring essential medical services in areas in Pyandj and Qumsangir affected by the 2009 spring floods. Over 1.2 million Tajik people served by health facilities along the 1,200 km long border with Afghanistan are expected to benefit.

For more information: craighampton.who@tajnet.com

Strengthening Search & Rescue in Tajikistan

The *Disaster Risk Management Programme* of the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP/DRMP) is supporting the *Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense* (CoES) across the country to strengthen its Search & Rescue capacity.

New buildings are being constructed in Khorog, Kurgan-Tube and Rasht to provide office space, storage capacity, and a resting room for the CoES Search & Rescue Teams. Existing buildings are being rehabilitated in Khujand and Kulyab for the same purposes. The five centers will also be provided with special Search & Rescue equipment. The buildings and the refurbishing will be finished by Mid-April.



Rehabilitated CoES Search & Rescue office in Kulyab | UNDP

In Dushanbe, the premises of the national Search & Rescue division of CoES, commonly referred to as Tsentrospass, are also being renovated and equipment was procured. Tsentrospass staff will be trained in urban Search & Rescue methods in line with international standards by specialists of the *Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency* (MSB), formerly known as the *Swedish Rescue Services Agency* (SRSA).

A rubble field was built as a training space for urban exercises and the training will subsequently be provided to all CoES teams across the country by Tsentrospass staff.

The project is co-funded by the *Swiss Development Cooperation* (SDC), MSB and UNDP/DRMP.

For more information: mukhtor.hasanov@undp.org

Contact us: REACT Secretariat in Dushanbe
react.dushanbe@undp.org | (+992 47) 441 07 37 | www.untj.org
37/1 Bokhtar Street, VEFA Center 6th floor, Dushanbe, Tajikistan