

60 Days of UNHCR's Emergency Response to South Asia Earthquake

14 December 2005

Sixty days after the devastating earthquake that hit South Asia on 8 October 2005, UNHCR remains steadfastly committed to support the Government of Pakistan in its life saving relief efforts. The Government and military have been at the forefront in meeting the enormous logistical needs to both keep people alive in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, as well as establishing camps for people displaced by the earthquake. The United Nations Country Team in Pakistan established a cluster system in response, and UNHCR was designated the lead agency for the camp management cluster (CMC). The cluster works in close collaboration with the Government and other clusters like shelter (led by IOM), food and nutrition (WFP), health (WHO), water and sanitation (UNICEF), logistics (WFP), protection (UNICEF), education (UNICEF) and IT/Telecommunications (WFP).

Kids play in Bassian camp, Balakot, North West Frontier Province (NWFP). / UNHCR / M. Pearson / October 2005



Cooperation, Coordination and Responsibilities

After High Commissioner António Guterres visited the earthquake-affected area on 24 November to assess the devastation and relief work, UNHCR reaffirmed its commitment to support the local authorities in its relief efforts.

The Government is primarily responsible for coordinating relief efforts, including the overall supervision of camp management, with the UN CMC supporting coordination with all agencies involved in camp management to ensure a smooth transition from military to civil administered planned camps.

In the first weeks after the earthquake, the principal objective of humanitarian agencies including UNHCR was to maximize the delivery of relief items to survivors in high altitude villages and hamlets before winter set in. In the second month, the focus for UNHCR shifted to ensure that survivors who had moved to lower altitude relief camp situations had the means to survive the winter.

As at 8 December UNHCR has surveyed a total of 376 camps (which include many self-settled/spontaneous camps and small camp-like situations as well as 40 larger camps established by UNHCR in coordination with the Government) with a total population of 183,000 people.

The challenge of this operation is not the total camp population, but rather the immense number and variety of camp situations spread across a difficult terrain – from small self-managed spontaneous camps, camps managed by a diverse range of civil society groups, to planned military camps. Ensuring that adequate levels of assistance are provided in this diverse camp situation has required a different approach from UNHCR than that originally envisaged under the cluster system. UNHCR has met the challenge by establishing a large number of multi-sectoral mobile teams to monitor camp situations and provide immediate technical and community based assistance in coordination with others. By end of December, UNHCR will have augmented its capacity to over 60 operational mobile teams.

Operational priorities

1. Maintain and upgrade database of all earthquake relief camps and profile of population in camps. On-going mapping and profiling of camps and camp populations, is now being strengthened with a dedicated data management capacity being established in the two hubs of Mansehra and Muzaffarabad with inputs from all CMC members (including the Government and UNHCR's Quick Impact Mobile Teams). UNHCR will provide overall data coordination, with clear links to be established with the Humanitarian Information Centre and other relevant clusters.

2. Winterize camps to ensure survival of camp population over harsh winter months. The CMC and the emergency shelter cluster have merged to address this issue. UNHCR is setting up a targeted distribution of non-food items (NFIs), specifically three winter blankets/quilts per person, 2 pieces of plastic sheeting and four mattresses per tent. Efforts are underway to identify families, especially vulnerable groups, who have not yet received adequate assistance in camps. Camp cluster members will distribute kerosene stoves and 15 liters of fuel per family per month (UNDP will also co-fund and support this distribution). UNHCR and the CMC partners are working with the Government to enhance fire safety measures in camps.

3. Improve delivery of services in camps (water and sanitation, health etc). Initial gaps in the provision of services by the clusters and many other entities have been clarified by the Camp Management Strategy endorsed by the Government of Pakistan on 28 November, with the Government issuing the strategy as instructional guidance to the provincial authorities now being implemented at the field level. The strategy was prepared and endorsed by the CMC partners, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all actors (across a range of sectors and clusters, including agencies delivering services and those responsible for the day-to-day management of camps) supporting the Government, which retains overall responsibility for camp management. Each of the different cluster activities is of equal importance and must be addressed simultaneously.

4. Contingency planning. As winter deepens, there have been conflicting reports of possible mass influxes from the upper valleys to camp situations in the lower valley. UNHCR is working with the Government on contingency plans to receive an additional 60,000 persons in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and over 20,000 in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Other clusters have been consulted and are involved in this exercise. UNHCR is working with the Government to identify new camp sites and expand existing sites. The Government has already set aside an additional 25,000 tents and UNHCR continues to dispatch relief items (stoves, plastic sheets, blankets) from its warehouses and external suppliers to respond to a possible mass influx this winter.

The implementation of this strategy relies heavily on cooperation with the Government, the military, the civilian administration which will take over from the military, and other clusters and shared responsibilities according to the UN cluster approach.

Achievements To Date - Saving Lives

In the race against the winter, UNHCR has taken the following steps in the past 60 days:

Delivery of relief items to alleviate suffering

UNHCR has delivered over 2,730 tonnes of relief items to the earthquake-affected areas from stocks within Pakistan, and from Afghanistan, Denmark, Dubai, Jordan, India, Iran and Turkey. This includes close to 600,000 blankets, over 21,000 tents, close to 100,000 plastic sheets and 600 rolls of plastic to keep shelter dry, over 35,000 mats, over 32,000 jerry cans, 28,000 kitchen sets, thousands of stoves and lanterns as well as hundreds of sleeping bags. The majority of these relief items have been transported with airlifts donated by NATO (Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Turkey, UK have provided aircrafts for transportation).

UNHCR tents and blankets are stacked ready for loading onto the waiting C-130 aircraft from several NATO countries at Incirlik airbase in Turkey / UNHCR / October 2005



Emergency staff deployed

UNHCR emergency teams have been deployed to five hubs covering Muzaffarabad and Bagn in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and Mansehra, Balakot and Batagram in NWFP. There are now 87 staff dedicated to the earthquake emergency, with 44 in NWFP, 23 in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, as well as vital logistics, supply and programme staff in Islamabad.

An additional 23 staff are being deployed, mostly from within the region, to further strengthen and decentralize relief efforts to the hubs. By the end of December, UNHCR's team working on the emergency on the ground will total 110 staff.

Emergency staff deployed include a senior coordinator to manage the relief operation, 2 senior coordinators and 2 deputy coordinators for the hubs to direct activities in NWFP and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, 4 site planners, 3 water and sanitation engineers/site planners to ensure assistance to the water and sanitation cluster, 6 field officers, 4 supply/logistics officers, 2 programme officers, 1 administration officer, 1 senior PI officer, 1 senior external relations officer, 1 senior protection officer, 9 field/community services officers and 10 field assistants.

Additional cars and telecommunications equipment will also be deployed to facilitate working conditions in the field. Accommodation for staff still presents a challenge for expatriates of all agencies, especially in the Muzaffarabad area.

Quick Impact Technical Mobile Teams (QIT teams)

Since 8 October, the needs of the earthquake affected population were so urgent, that many persons moved into camps, or set up their own camps before sanitation facilities, water system or communal areas could be set up by the respective clusters. As a result, some sites are not only overcrowded, but services are inadequate. Agencies need to have a fully flexible presence on the ground with a flexible technical response capacity, as well as tools and materials to support the government to provide services in newly planned camps and improve conditions in the hundreds of existing spontaneous camps.

To manage the challenge of this multi-sectoral and cross cluster response, UNHCR has created a rapid response capacity with mobile teams operated by implementing partners (BEST, IDSP, InterSOS, and THW) to rapidly meet the urgent needs of people living in camps and self-settled/spontaneous camp-like situations, especially where basic service delivery has been slow or inadequate. Quick Impact Technical Mobile Teams (QIT teams) have been deployed to ensure rapid technical intervention in site planning/development/construction, water and sanitation and essential service delivery.

The teams work closely with Government/civil administration, other clusters, national and international NGOs and the Emergency Task Force with WHO, UNICEF and UNHCR. The QIT teams are also focusing on the decongestion of spontaneous/self-settled camps in urban areas as well as on control and prevention of possible outbreaks of disease due to poor water/sanitation conditions. UNHCR coordinates the technical teams, working closely to share information.

The activities undertaken by the QIT teams include the following:

- participate in the decongestion of camps to ease overcrowding, prevent fire hazards and improve access to clean water and sanitation in close collaboration with the members of the Emergency Task Force;



The South Korean Emergency Relief Centre building stoves for a kitchen. Bassian camp near Balakot in NWFP. / UNHCR / B. Baloch / October 2005

- assist the Government in site planning and site construction for new planned camps, and set-up of proper shelter, fencing, lighting and community spaces;
- in coordination with UNICEF, ensure that water and sanitation systems as well as waste management disposal mechanisms are set up in planned camps at the beginning and also assist UNICEF in meeting its responsibility in the water and sanitation cluster;
- construct latrines and washing facilities in spontaneous camps and major settlements to limit the risk of public health hazards;
- assist UNICEF to repair water systems or ensure adequate provision of potable water especially in spontaneous camps and major settlements where water sources were severely affected or contaminated;
- repair/set up various infrastructure on demand, such as water pipes, latrines, fencing, lighting and community spaces;
- improve existing temporary shelters and the living conditions in major settlements by providing technical advice on the spot.

Twenty mobile teams are currently on the ground. They are composed of experienced craftsmen with different specializations, and are self-contained with trucks, tools and equipment.

Camp Management Support Mobile Teams (CMM Teams)

An additional capacity has also been developed in the form of Camp Management Mobile (CMM) Teams, designed to advise and train local NGOs and local communities to run self-settled/spontaneous camps, raise awareness of local communities on specific topics to help them adapt to life in camp-like situations, and sustain their coping mechanisms.

The CMM teams work under the direct supervision of UNHCR hub coordinators and programme officers and jointly with UNHCR community services and field officers with this community services/protection intervention complementing the technical intervention of the QIT teams. Coordination with UN agencies leading other clusters (such as UNICEF for education and protection) and with the Emergency Task Force will be primarily ensured by UNHCR at the field level.

The CMM teams are composed of NGO staff experienced in working in refugee camp situations. The CMM teams interact with different actors (army, civil authorities, local NGOs, charities, international NGOs and existing leaders or local organizations running some major settlements). The CMM teams use a community based approach to empower the community and to ensure that the most vulnerable people are protected and that issues of age and gender are fully taken into account.



Preparation for a new site. Batagram. / UNHCR / B. Schuler / December 2005

The main tasks of the CMM teams are to:

- contribute to the current mapping exercise, gathering information on existing settlements, assistance gaps and arising phenomena that need to be addressed. This information will be exchanged with UNHCR for appropriate liaison with and bridging assistance from Pakistani authorities, other UN agencies, the Emergency Task Force or other NGOs concerned;
- support local NGOs and community leaders in mobilizing community support within spontaneous camps and settlements;
- in close collaboration with the members of the Emergency Task Force (see Camp Management Strategy Paper), support the decongestion of camps, prevent fire hazards and improve access to clean water and sanitation, mainly by raising awareness on hygiene and health precautions as well as on protection and safety-/security-related matters (such as distance of cooking areas from shelters, separation of latrines, provision of electricity, monitoring most vulnerable people's access to assistance, gender issues, etc);
- support coordination of camp activities;



Camps from the air, Batagram. / UNHCR / B. Schuler / December 2005

- establish committees to support distribution and water/sanitation maintenance and sub-committees grouping women, elderly, handicapped and youth; and
- monitor and identify vulnerable people and their social and protection needs and – in a second phase – guiding people towards existing services such as psycho-social support, legal advice on land property issues, etc.

UNHCR plans to have over 60 mobile teams operational by December 2005 (35 QIT technical teams and 25 CMM teams).

Other assistance in camp management

Besides coordinating the provision of basic services in planned and spontaneous camps, UNHCR is also assisting the Government by facilitating the handover of camps from the military to the civil administration, especially in NWFP. UNHCR is also supporting the government to coordinate activities in camps, ensure camps are a safe, secure and dignified place for displaced persons to live according to international standards, and advocating for access to and enjoyment of basic human rights by all segments of the population. This requires a multi-sectoral protection and assistance response as well as a search for durable solutions to ensure the rights of the displaced people.

Looking Forward: Plans Throughout the Winter

A much stronger collaborative effort is needed this winter to address the needs of people in spontaneous camps led by military and supported by all UN clusters, CMC partners, local technical departments, as well as tribal, religious and other community leaders.

Ongoing training and capacity-building: The cluster lead agency will build the capacity of the military and civilian administration and NGOs to address the issue of standards. It will also transfer the knowledge on winterization and decongestion of camps.

The vulnerable population in camps will be given priority in the protection/assistance framework for the earthquake-affected population.

UNHCR's winterization efforts and contingency planning have been strengthened by the additional provision of some 42,000 stoves, 50,000 plastic sheeting and 250,000 blankets which will continue to be delivered to the operation.



Survivors cooking at Bassian camp, near Balakot in NWFP. / UNHCR / B. Baloch / October 2005

Review Exercise

UNHCR is currently undertaking a rapid field-level assessment of UNHCR's operational response to the humanitarian emergency in Pakistan. The review exercise will examine internal and external factors to evaluate the emergency response thus far, as well as make recommendations for the advancement and eventual conclusion of UNHCR's operational response in Pakistan. The results will be shared with the Government of Pakistan, agencies, donors and other partners before the end of December. UNHCR will also participate in a comprehensive evaluation exercise with all agencies involved.

Link with Early Recovery and Rehabilitation

To ensure an appropriate and timely link to early recovery and rehabilitation, it is crucial that the affected people participate actively in early reconstruction and rehabilitation. This can be done by identifying, registering and promoting family and community unity at the camp level in order to assess the feasibility of an assisted community-based return.

Therefore, when selecting implementing partners, it would be advisable to prioritise those NGOs that will be also involved in the long-term effort of reconstruction and rehabilitation to facilitate this transition from relief to early recovery/reconstruction.

Projected Needs

The budget for this operation covering 6 months from October 2005 amounts to USD 30 million. Expenditures after sixty days into the emergency already amount to some USD 9,6 million. Further expenditures will cover increased deployment of mobile teams, transport costs for NFI for winterization, replenishment of NFIs and other operational and support costs.

UNHCR's planning assumption after 6 months onwards is that persons will gradually leave the camps and return to their homes as temperatures improve allowing for reconstruction activities to commence. By this time it is also assumed that the civil administration will have increasingly taken over the day-to-day management of planned camps. By early 2006, UNHCR will be in a position to better assess any additional needs beyond April 2006, and approach partners for support for an extended programme from spring to autumn/winter 2006.

	2005	2006	Total
Transport/Logistics	3,125,883	1,600,000	4,725,883
Domestic Needs	3,500,000	2,754,000	6,254,000
Water	560,000	910,000	1,470,000
Sanitation	700,000	900,000	1,600,000
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	3,654,000	1,770,000	5,424,000
Community Services	700,000	1,549,000	2,249,000
Legal Assistance/Protection	408,134	848,000	1,256,134
Agency Operational Support	550,000	879,940	1,429,940
Total Operations	13,198,017	11,210,940	24,408,957
Programme Support	1,679,900	1,948,526	3,628,426
Support Cost (7%)			1,962,617
Grand Total	14,877,917	13,159,466	30,000,000

Funding Overview

As at 14 December 2005, a total of USD 29,545,597 has been confirmed as cash contribution. In addition, we firmly project USD 516,620 from Private donors. UNHCR is very grateful to the following donors.

Donors	Amount (USD)
Governmental/Inter-governmental	
Australia	370,370
Canada	854,701
Czech Republic	299,569
Denmark	3,139,717
European Commission	4,939,043
Italy	323,415
Japan	1,000,000
Kuwait	500,000
Norway	5,981,413
Republic of Korea	50,000
Sweden	3,811,944
Turkey	500,000
United Kingdom	2,224,199
United States of America	4,000,000
Sub-total	27,994,371
Private Donors*	
Australia for UNHCR	161,238
Germany UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe	588,235
PricewaterhouseCoopers	7,752
Private Donors Canada	413,927
Private Donors Greece	79,947
Private Donors Switzerland	775
Private Donors in USA	4,973
Rissho Kosei Kai (JPN)	17,699
Shinnyo-en (JPN)	100,000
USA for UNHCR	176,680
Sub-total	1,551,226
Grand Total (Cash)	29,545,597
In-kind contributions	
NFI Airlift by NATO Member States	
Denmark	Cash value tbd
France	2,421,308
Greece	Cash value tbd
Italy	"
Turkey	"
UK	"
NFI Land transportation	
Turkey	"
Deployment of a site planner	
UK	71,174
Grand Total (In-kind)	2,492,482