

KOSHI FLOOD : GENERAL COORDINATION MEETING MINUTES

01 April 2009
OCHA, Biratnagar

1. General Situation Update

The Koshi Flood General Coordination Meeting (GCM) started at 1300hrs with an introduction of participants, distribution of the last GCM Notes, Situation Update, draft Discussion Paper on current humanitarian concerns and the updated Koshi Flood Response contact list. The cluster updates were shared by the respective cluster leads, as well as I/NGOs.

Return Package Update: The Chief District Officer (CDO) Sunsari updated the GCM on the progress of the government Return Package. The government Return Package of NPR 50,000.00 was distributed since 15 March from the District Administrative Office (DAO) Sunsari. A total of 1,240 families from the flood affected area received the sum, as of 1 April. The registration for the Return Package is continuous for Haripur, Paschim Kusaha and Shreepur VDCs. During this period, DAO is targeting to apply from Shreepur- 1 to 4, 7 and adjoining area of Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in Paschim Kusaha with a blanket approach. It was decided that all flood-affected households could apply to the Return Package regardless of zones. A total of 3,800 families applied for the government Return Package, as of 1 April.

The Local Development Officer (LDO) Sunsari added that the Koshi Victim Struggle Committee (KVSC) is pressurizing the government for the implementation of the recommendation made by the High Level Task Force (HLTF). Few households (HHs) from Red and Yellow Zone applied for the Return Package to date, however KVSC is disturbing the application process in protest against equal amounts distributed for the Return Package to all zones. Nevertheless, the local government intends to provide the Return Package for the benefit of the flood victims, which requires supporting the displaced that voluntarily return to the flood-affected areas.

Toolkits Distribution: NRCS is distributing Toolkits to flood-affected families at the same time when IDPs receive their Return Package cheques from the GoN. Since the Return Package process is slow, NRCS will distribute Toolkits to all displaced flood-affected households without waiting for the issuance of the Return Package. The LDO emphasised the need to ensure information is clearly disseminated to the flood-affected population to enable the IDPs to differentiate Toolkits supported by NRCS and Shelter Box Toolkits.

RRU Update: The initial two month duration of the RRU completed since 28 Falgun (11 March 2009) and the CDO has recommended to Government extending for an additional two months. However, no decision was reached by the Government on its continuity. The DDRC decided that RRU meeting will be incorporated in the GCM until a decision is made.

Progress on High Level Task Force: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is working on the report provided by HLTF with the formation of a team representing five Ministries that will recommend to the Government approval of the recommendations. The Local Government is also awaiting the response of Central Government's decision for its implementation in the flood-affected area.

2. Update from Camps

a. Situation Overview: The number of residents in camps decreased significantly this week. A number of camps in Spur area are vacated with the exception of 40 HHs in camp G1. 130 HHs remain in Saptari camps as of 31 March. However, it is expected that only Neharu Park will remain with 60 HHs by the end of this week. An estimated 95% of the population are relocated from Saptari camps. But in Sunsari side, Majority of IDPs are located in Jhumka Prison Camp, Lauki Devkota (Shelter Box 1), Paschim Kushaha

Dam and Lauki Border Custom Camp with 257, 267, 150 and 100 HHs respectively. IDPs located in Mahendra Highway and Madhuban VDC Cattle Shed is least with 11 and 25 HHs respectively.

b. Issue Discussion

Camp Consolidation: The LDO highlighted the importance of camp consolidation in the present scenario of Sunsari Khola camp which is vulnerable to flooding and the majority of IDPS are landless, as well as in Mahendra Highway C camp, where a small number of IDPS reside. Lauki Custom Border Custom Camp has capacity to relocate the IDPs from Sunsari Khola and Mahendra Highway for which DDRRC will determine with timeframe.

NRCS suggested addressing the landless IDPs residing in camps F and G through the Recovery Programme.

Resettlement: DDRRC is in the process of identifying appropriate locations for resettlement of those who can't return (GoN assumption 2,500 families) to the area with the consultation of victims, KVSC and local political parties. Also, the local government is in the ahead of the response of Central Government on the recommendation of HLTF.

Livelihood Programmes: The District Development Committee (DDC) Sunsari and DEPRESC Nepal signed the MOU to implement "Food for Work" with the assistance of WFP. The FFW will be equivalent to 1699.11 MT commodities and planning to implement small infra-structural programme from 01 April 2009 contributing for livelihood enhancement. UNDP has approved NRP 17 Million to implement livelihood programme through QIPSI Programme in Sunsari. ADB has approved NRP 32 Million for Western and Koshi Flood affected area. Government of Nepal has allocated NRP 120 Million for land reclamation programme.

c. Cluster Update

WASH: Construction of deep tube well in Jhumka IDP camp by WSSDO with support from UNICEF is about to complete. A generator supported by UNICEF, for constant supply of drinking water with the help of submersible pump, has arrived in WSSDO Sunsari. Distribution of WASH materials to the IDPs is continuous in all the camps which have been supported by UNICEF and Plan Sunsari. WEL, partner of UNICEF repaired a total of 345 tube wells in return area of Shreepur-1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, and Paschim Kusaha-3 and 4. WSSDO is planning to hand over the WASH facilities to the beneficiaries in Shreepur VDC-7.

WSSDO, Sunsari is testing drinking water samples of Shreepur-7, Kumyahi with the support of PLAN-Nepal. WASH Cluster through WSSDO, Sunsari will request UNICEF for the aid in testing water of all the formal IDP camps and returned areas.

People from returned areas are requesting immediate drinking water facilities especially from Haripur VDC and there is no current plan with the WSSDO constructing new facilities, but there is a plan from ADB funding which may take a while. LDO suggested that some of the tube wells in Jhumka Camp are not functioning due to the low water table, which could be shifted to return areas of Shreepur-1 to 4 for immediate water supply encouraging returning in the yellow zone. WSSDO and UNICEF will conduct a field verification and start within a few days.

UNICEF support to the WEL partners was completed by the end of March and partners are continuing support with "No Cost Extension" for April. UNICEF is planning for the next phase.

Health: DPHO provided an update on the health services provided in the camps. DPHO is in the process of site selection to construct a health facility in Shreepur in collaboration with RRN. Recently health services were provided through rental buildings having 2 rooms where 3 staffs are deployed and

still there is lack of furniture. DPHO is concerned that children under age of 5 years may miss the Polio Campaign in the Camps.

Community Development Organization (CDO)-NGO provided tube well materials to Hospital-Inaruwa and DPHO to manage cost for installation. LDO emphasized to share the information of support from partners to minimize the duplication.

The Women Development Officer (WDO) emphasised the need to provide food for at least for one week to pregnant women in the birthing centres. For which, DPHO could manage food for 24 to 72 hrs from the government prescribed norms.

Protection: WOREC is operating care centres for pregnant and lactating mothers in each camp, constructing a hut consisting of a bamboo frame and tarpaulin. Because of heavy wind over the past weeks, those huts are severely damaged and tarpaulin needs to be replaced to continue the care centre. The Protection Cluster meeting decided to request UNICEF Biratnagar to provide 25 pieces of tarpaulin so that those care centres could be continued.

UPCA with support from Save the Children conducted a parenting education programme training for facilitators during 19-20 March 2009. Also, UPCA is conducting peer education orientation for total 37 children from IDP camps on 30 March 2009.

TPO with support of UNICEF is conducting second phase of orientation for frontline workers in Sunsari during 28-30 March 2009. The same kind of orientation will be conducted in Saptari starting from 31 March 2009 for three days.

Food: IDPs of flood-affected area are pressurizing the DDC and DAO for further assistance of food. DDRRC decided and made recommendation to Central Government for the assistance of "Cash for Food" for 3 months aiming to distribute only to those who can't return. DDC will form an implementation plan in coordination with the partners that will ensure to minimize the overlapping with FFW and not to attract people back to camps. On the other hand, returnees will benefits from FFW. The cash will be equivalent to ration provided by WFP. Also, Cash for Food will discontinue if recommendation of HLTF is addressed the issue by the Government decision. LDO requested GCM participants assistance for the distribution of this cash to the victims. NRCS will make decision on its support to the process in the District Branch Unit.

Education: The DEO updated the group that decision was made to provide the cash grant of maintenance and furniture support for all ten Madarsas at the rate of NP 42,000 per Madarsa. Education cluster will monitor closely after releasing money and make sure that the fund is utilized properly. Second phase of 5-days child-friendly training for primary teachers from flood affected area has been scheduled for 01 April 2009. DEO will conduct the training which has been supported by UNICEF. There is lack of 13 teachers as per demand because of the increase in the number of students to 11000 from the initial estimate of 7000. DEO provided student kits worth NRP 150.00 per set of cloths in their respective Schools.

UNICEF completed the monitoring of educational institutions. Data analysis is ongoing and the report will be finalized next week. Operation of schools in the camps will be confirmed after the verification of how many IDPs are living in the camps and return areas. DEO requires support for the construction of school buildings, maintenance and furniture. Also, the maintenance of the Schools will be done in coordination with FFW programme.

Shelter/NFI: NRCS is planning for general distribution of toolkits to the flood affected victims but tarpaulin distribution will be on a need based. There is 3,000 in stock. LDO requested to identify needy victims in coordination with supporting agencies.

Save the Children distributed 205 tarpaulin and 72 kitchen utensils sets, and Plan Nepal distributed 259 blankets in Jhumka Camp this week.

3. Recovery and Reconstruction

The flood-affected displaced population voluntarily returned to their area of origin from the camps, including areas within the Red Zones this week. However, for many there are no basic facilities available in the return areas which is realized the urgent attention with the increasingly harsh weather conditions with high winds, heat, storms and approaching monsoon. Camps G2, H1, H2, I, J and K are vacated completely. Camps E, F1, F2, G1 and L have 6, 15, 27, 15 and 7 HHs respectively residing in the camps which will be vacated within few days except in camps F1 and F2 (landless and intending to remain in location, as have crops).

a. Resettlement Tracking and Monitoring: A tracking matrix to be updated regularly to identify where the people are moving in the return areas and what basis services are available. IOM will continue the DTM and planning to take support from NRCS. Re-verification will be made that gives the idea for resettlement. Since the local government have lack of human as well as financial resources, LDO proposed to form a monitoring team comprising of UN Agencies and others to provide feedback. The team will maintain data of the return area and identify the additional tarpaulin required.

b. Cluster Update

Food and Nutrition: A MoU was signed between District Development Committee (DDC) Sunsari, Local Development Fund (LDF)/QIPSI-Sunsari, WFP and DEPROSC-Nepal on 27 March 2009 aiming to improve the food security situation of the flood-affected IDP returnees. It intends to create employment of an average of 50 days to the IDPs through the combination of Food for Work and Cash for Work.

Each beneficiary will be entitled to receive 4 kg rice and 0.5 kg Pulse per work day as FFW with support from WFP and NRP 60.00 on top of it as incentive to cover other daily needs with support from LDF/QIPSI. The programme aims to support 1699.11 MT commodity and NRP 17,754,000.00 as cash for work to 6168 HHs.

NFI includes construction materials, skilled labour cost and transportation of such materials from the market place to the construction site. All NFI cost required for this programme is NRP 3,426,750.00 for Sunsari will be supported through DDC, LDF/QIPSI.

Incentives for Returnees Support Staff and fuel for generator operation cost is NRP 389,800.00. This includes the daily incentives for 41 support staffs for 30 days.

The MOU will be effective from 1 April 2009 and will remain in effect until 30 June 2009.

LDO shared that skill based long term training is planning through UN Habitat, Plan Nepal and WFP to the flood affected victims, for which consultation is being with political parties, victims and KVSC.

Agriculture and Livestock

The Expression of Interest (EOI) was published in DADO, DDC, DAO and related NGO Federations as a result of which 20 NGO submitted EOI to FAO Office Biratnagar.

In Sunsari- 12000 Urea Molasses Block has been delivered and is in the process of distribution. 300 MT of Rice Straw distributed during 2nd round and 540 MT is planning to distribute during 3rd round through District Livestock Service Office in support of FAO.

In Saptari- 8000 Urea Molasses Block was distributed. 460 MT of Rice Straw is in the process of distribution during 3rd round. Veterinary Medicines are supported during in one day camp on 1 April 2009.

Coordination with Saptakoshi Flood Recovery Agriculture and Livestock Office (SFRALSO) Biratnagar and DADO Sunsari continues for the identification of gaps and needs in crop sector.

4. Any Other Business

LDO requested to all support agencies to provide status of expenditures made in Koshi Flood response to DDRC Sunsari.

LDO request UN OCHA's support to update the discussion paper to form a Plan of Action for the current caseload in camps, a contingency plan / plan of action for the monsoon season and a contingency plan for the DDRC Sunsari for disaster preparedness in 2090.