Situation report #.1
Heavy flooding in Yemen
(25 October 2008)

Current Situation

A tropical storm hit the provinces of Hadramout and Al-Mahra on October 23, 2008 and after 30 hours of non-stop rain unleashed massive floods and swept through these provinces causing huge destruction and causalities. According to reports the most affected districts are Tarim, Al-Qotn and Shibam. Heavy floods caused destruction and damage of public infrastructures such as roads, electricity network, water supplies and others. Information on the magnitude of damage as well as number of affected population, number of deaths and injuries are scanty, but based on the media reports around 650 houses have been collapsed and 49 dead bodies are so far recovered. The number of casualties is increasing as more areas are reached.

Government helicopters are providing rescue operation and many people have moved from their houses and now residing in safe places including government buildings. Schools, businesses and government officers are closed.

We are trying to collect information from different sources including media, government, and WFP and UNHCR offices that have presence in these two governorates.

- The government of Yemen has declared the governorates of Hadramout and Al-Mahra as Disaster areas;
- The President of Republic is now in the disaster affected areas leading the rescue and relief efforts;
- Military helicopters are carrying out rescue operation as the roads to the affected areas are damaged;
- A cabinet meeting under the Prime Minister was convened today to discuss the situation and provide coordinated support to the victims;
- According to different sources, all districts of Hadarmout have been affected by storm and heavy rains. The total population of Hadramout, including Socotra Island is 1.3 million. The most affected area in Hadramout is the costal areas in Mukala and Al-Wadi in Sayoun;
- Based on a recent report more than 630 houses are destroyed in the districts of Tarim, Shibam, Qatum and Wadi Al-Ayen. So far, 49 dead bodies have been recovered. Many people are missing. The number will certainly increase once the isolated areas are reached.
Many people left their houses to safer places such as schools and public buildings;
In Mukala city (capital of Hadramout) roads linked the city to the airport and with the governorate of Aden and other governorates have been damaged;
According to metrology department in Yemen, this storm is moving towards the governorates of Mareb and Al Jouf and also towards the governorates of Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Shabwa, Taiz, Ibb, Dhamar, Sana’a and Amran.
The Government is warning of more floods and landslides in different parts of the country including Sana’a as more rains are being forecasted;
No report is available, so far, from Al-Mahra governorate and Socotra Island.

**Action taken under the Health Sector:**

- Soon after receiving the news of the disaster on Friday, October 14th, the Ministry of public health and population activated the emergency response operation room to communicate with concerned parties and coordinate the relief efforts. The Deputy Minister for PHC and other related staff of MOPH including the surveillance department, emergency medical services, and others worked round the clock to communicate with the officials of affected governorates, government entities in Sana’a and others in order to collect the available information and start relief efforts.

- A coordination mechanism was established between the WHO and MOPH and with Un agencies to respond to this situation.

- Today (25 Oct. 08) morning, the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPH&P) dispatched an emergency team, headed by Dr. Jamal Nasher, Deputy Minister for Planning and Health Development, and comprises of people from the Departments of Emergency Medical Services, Surveillance and Curative department of Al Jumhori hospital, by air to Hadramout for assessing the extent of damages,

- Today, the MOPH&P dispatched emergency medical supplies to the affected areas by Helicopter

- WHO sent one Inter-agency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) to Hadramout governorate with the above mentioned team,

- WHO requested the DO/Yemen for the security clearance of one WHO staff to accompany the MOPH&P mission to Hadramout in order to assist in the rapid assessment efforts of MOPH&P. In light of the security phase III in Yemen, it will depend on the security clearance and the DO/Yemen is working on this request.
WHO is also mobilizing other resources including the US$ 100,000 (from the RB) which is within the WR authority during a declared disaster situation,

WHO established a local procurement committee to work with the MoPH&P team for any emergency procurement,

WHO is also providing technical support to the MOPH&P to prepare an action plan for control of water born diseases in the aftermath of these floods. One of the important priorities is to start as soon as possible malaria control activities in the affected areas.

The UN Emergency Preparedness and Response (UNEPRT) is going to meet today at 15:00 to discuss the humanitarian situations in the flood affected areas and possible assistance,

UNRC will discuss with the government, hopefully by tomorrow, on the possibility of flash appeal

**Action needed from EMRO side:**

- We just sent a request to the Regional Office to establish an allotment number and AMS Code in order to utilize the RB resources under the WR authority during disaster situation (US$ 100,000). We are waiting for the reply to be sent to us as soon as possible.

- Procurement of insecticides for malaria control programme should be accelerated by LSP/EMRO as the prevailing situation in the flood affected areas require immediate control actions including spraying.

- We seek support of EHA/EMRO to send to Yemen emergency health kits as soon as possible.

- If the government agrees with the flash appeal, we need EMRO’s technical support and possibly visit of RO staff to assist us in preparing WHO’s part of the appeal.

**The situations are still evolving and more information is coming and I will keep you updated on the new developments on regular basis.**

Thank you and best regards,

Ghulam Popal
WR Yemen