

Health Situation Report # 1 September 8, 2014

Flood Emergency 2014 | Pakistan



Pakistani army helicopter hovers to rescue trapped people from a flooded area on the outskirts of Islamabad

Highlights

- Vulnerable population from within the Chenab and Jhelum rivers flood plains has displaced to the safer locations and relief camps have been setup;
- At least 193 deaths and 364 injuries/accidents are reported across the country with at least 600 household damaged and 556 villages affected.
- A total of 466 flood relief camps are established so far in affected districts.
- There are urgent needs of medicines, food and safe water in affected districts/displaced population. Department of Health Punjab has officially requested WHO for support in terms of Emergency Health Kits, Diarrheal disease Kits and Anti Snake Venoms (ASVs)
- Worst affected districts: (in Punjab): Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Jhelum, Chiniot, Sargodha and Okara; (in AJK): Hattian Bala, Haveli and Sudhnoti; (Gilgit Baltistan): Diamir.

Situation Update

Heavy Rains in upper Punjab, Kashmir and Indian Occupied Kashmir has triggered floods in the rivers Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi and Sutlej. These rains and floods have reportedly resulted at least 119 deaths and many injured in affected districts of Punjab so far. The deaths are predominantly due to roof collapses, electrocution accidents. Reports indicate widespread destruction of the critical infrastructure, habitats and livelihoods.

The death toll is likely to rise as reports were coming in of floodwaters sweeping through villages in rural areas. Moreover, India has reportedly released 818,000 cusec of water in Chenab which is passing through Head Maralla and Head Khanki and expected to reach south Punjab (Head Punjnad) on Monday 8th Sep, 2014.

Currently, River Chenab at Khanki & Qadirabad is in Exceptionally High Flood Level. River Chenab at Marala is in Very High Flood Level & falling. River Ravi at Balloki is in Medium Flood Level. River Jhelum at Mangla, River Ravi at Jassar & Shahdara are in Low Flood Level.

Flood warnings have been issued by Multan, Muzaffargarh, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur district administrations and various camps have been established by district administrations at various high risk points in these districts along the rivers Chenab and Sutlej banks. Population living in low lying and river belts have been evacuated to avoid losses.

In worst case scenario around 3 million people will be affected by disaster in Punjab.

Pakistan has suffered deadly monsoon floods for the last four years -- in 2013, 178 people were killed and around 1.5 million affected by flooding around the country. In 2010, country was suffered hugely because of similar disaster, commonly known as "Super Floods".

Public Health Concerns

According to reports, over 700 villages have been inundated across Punjab, mainly central region of Punjab. The affected districts include Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Jhelum, Chiniot, Mandi Bahauddin, Kasur, Okara, Sargodha, Jhang, Rawalpindi, Sheikhpura and Lahore. 200 villages in Hafizabad & Mandi Bahauddin, 80 villages in Chiniot and 35 villages in Gujrat have been inundated. Access to several towns & villages in Narowal, Sialkot, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujranwala, Jhelum and Hafizabad is compromised.

There are reports of widespread collapsed houses both in rain affected urban and rural areas. The population from most of the affected village was evacuated to safe places still there are people who are trapped in the waters. Flood relief camps are established for affected and displaced population by district administration and Department of Health. Daily DEWS reporting to monitor disease trends in affected areas has been initiated. The camps have started reporting though compliance varies due to infrastructure damage and subsequent HR and communication problems. Major public health concerns include:

1. Increase in ARI, Diarrhea, and Skin Diseases in affected population
2. Damage to roads and infrastructures thus compromising access to information and health services.
3. Shortage of essentially required medicines due to substantial magnitude of problem.
4. Damage to crops and stored grains thus resulting acute shortage of food both for human and livestock.
5. Accidents & Injuries
6. Shortage of Anti-Snake Venom & Anti-Rabies Vaccines
7. Interruption in routine vaccination activities

Health needs, priorities and gaps

According to sources from Department of Health Punjab, so far 190 UCs are affected due to rains and floods in Punjab. To meet the health needs, 230 fixed teams and 236 mobile teams have been deployed in the affected districts. There is an urgent requirement for provision of sufficient medicines and vaccines for treatment of mainly occurring diseases. The department of health Punjab is striving hard to meet the needs and challenges posed by this emergency, yet the magnitude of problem is so stretched, that there is a definite requirement of an urgent and adequate support from humanitarian partners.

DG Health Punjab has sent a letter for support to WHO for immediate provision of 100 EHKs to ensure timely health services delivery to the affected population.

Other priority areas include:

- Shelter for flood affected population
- provision of safe water for affected population
- appropriate sanitation & disposal services
- Supplies for water purification & chlorination
- Food & Nutrition
- MNCH Services
- Transportation and Referral services
- Vaccination for commonly occurring diseases and routine EPI

WHO's Action

WHO Sub office Punjab is in continuous coordination with Department of Health right from the beginning of contingency planning phase for the monsoon season. Brief summary of WHO actions is as below:

- ***Pre-Monsoon contingency planning meeting with Department of Health and other stake holders.***
- ***Pre-positioning of some stocks at hub stations- this year 10 EHKs, 500 ASVs, and 500000 Aqua tabs were prepositioned in Lahore & Multan.***
- ***10 additional EHKs were handed over to Department of Health Punjab to cater the emergency situation.***
- ***Activation of daily DEWS reports from the affected districts to monitor the disease trends for major communicable diseases.***
- ***Regular coordination with the provincial and district flood emergency cells and other humanitarian partners.***
- ***Need assessment & gap analysis with flood focal persons at district and provincial levels.***
- ***Started supporting Department of Health in damage assessment activities.***

Resource mobilization

Emergency health kits, ASVs, aqua tabs and medical supplies were provided from contingency stock available in WHO Warehouses in Multan and Lahore. The medicines need to be replenished to maintain supply chain for emergency response.

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