HIGHLIGHTS

- According to the latest information, as a result of this week’s earthquake at least 10 people have been injured and approximately 1000 households have been affected. The assessment of the situation is still ongoing and more accurate figures will be made available as soon as access is restored.

- Some affected villages are still inaccessible due to rock falls that are blocking the roads and to the inclement weather that have delayed the rescue operations. As a result, people are sleeping outside without adequate shelter, clothing or health supplies.

- The first helicopter delivered some humanitarian aid (food, warm clothes and medicines) to Bartang valley in the early morning on 11 December. Some 25 displaced people, including 4 injured and 12 children have been evacuated by helicopter.

- UNICEF has dispatched non-food items and other lifesaving humanitarian supplies for about 500-600 households with support of the NGO FOCUS using pre-positioned stocks that will need to be replenished, in addition to more resources that will be needed to cover the humanitarian and recovery needs.
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

On 7th December, a powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 struck Tajikistan with its epicentre 357 km south-east of the capital Tajikistan (Dushanbe) and 22 km of the Sarez Lake. The intensity of the tremors in the epicentre estimated 7.2 points, in the Sarez Lake 5-6 points and in Dushanbe – 3-4 points. The earthquake caused significant damages in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). The confirmed total number of casualties is 2 and dozens are injured in GBAO. At least 17 aftershocks of 5.0 Magnitude and lower have been recorded as of 10 December.

Preliminary reports show that approximately 3,689 adults and 719 children are displaced and/or isolated and are in need of assistance. Some villages such as the Upper Bartang Valley are still inaccessible due to rock falls that are blocking the roads and the inclement weather that has delayed the rescue operations. As a result, people are sleeping outside without adequate shelter, clothing or drugs. The main mode of communication with the villages is by two-way Codan radio systems. There are 58 emergency stocks in GBAO with non-food items such as tents, cooking sets, and shovels. However, the stockpiles do not include hygiene and sanitation equipment, medicines or enough tents and blankets to address the needs of the affected population. There is an urgent need for basic non-food supplies. Currently, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) are supporting road clearance efforts and are on stand-by for supply distribution once access becomes possible.

The national weather forecast services report an approaching cold wave that could result in dropping temperatures by up to 10-15 degrees Celsius countrywide. As current severe weather conditions have already put additional obstacles in reaching the affected communities, the severe weather forecast will only compound the vulnerability of these communities.

According to the Government’s update, immediate needs include winterized tents (yurts), food supplies and fuel for road and debris clearance. The Lake Sarez safety assessment conducted by national experts together with World Bank experts concluded that at the moment there are not significant risks related to the dam.

Estimated Affected Population

Initial estimates indicate that more than 1,000 households/families (with on average 5 people per family), have been directly affected/displaced. At least 2 people were killed 10 injured. Around 700 houses and infrastructures, including 224 houses were completely destroyed and 495 houses, 10 schools and 2 medical points were partially damaged. Some 2600 families live in the 31 villages affected by the earthquake with a population of approximately 14,000 people, including 2600 children. The assessment is still ongoing and more accurate figures will be made available once access is restored.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

The Government has appealed to the diplomatic missions and international organizations to provide humanitarian support to the communities affected by the earthquake.

The Assessment Working Group set up by the Government of Tajikistan coordinates the assessment and response at the national and regional level. The first helicopter could reach the affected communities in Bartang valley to delivery some food, warm clothes and medicines on 11 December. 25 displaced people, including 4 injured and 12 children have been evacuated by the same helicopter to the centre of GBAO.

Humanitarian Strategy

International humanitarian assistance to small and medium-scale emergencies in Tajikistan is provided through the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team - REACT. REACT is co-chaired by
Committee on Emergency Situation at the national level together with the UN Resident Coordinator as Co-chair, and by the CoES, at sub-national level.

In order to support the Government of Tajikistan in the relief efforts for the affected communities, OCHA, as part of REACT Secretariat with the other UN agencies including UNICEF are collecting information on the available resources for more effective response to the needs of the affected people. Once the situation of the needs on the ground becomes clearer, REACT will evaluate the needs to possibly launch a coordinated emergency and recovery plan and appeal process.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF is working with the authorities, the other UN agencies and the NGO FOCUS on assessing the humanitarian needs to deliver lifesaving assistance using prepositioned stock with partners, as well as identifying potential gaps. More resources will be needed to cover all humanitarian and recovery needs.

UNICEF is ready to respond and cover the needs of 5,000 people in WASH, NFIs and Education. UNICEF has already dispatched NFIs and other humanitarian supplies, which can cover the needs of about 500-600 households via the NGO FOCUS. These supplies include:

- 1000 Water-containers (collapsible)
- 10 Water tanks (collapsible, 1500 L)
- 718 Baby Blankets (cotton, 90 x 130cm)
- 980 Blankets (wool-blend, 150 x 200cm)
- 665 Bedlinen sets for adults (1.5X2M)
- 265 Bedlinen sets for adults (1.3X0.9M)
- 100 Buckets (hard plastic, 100L)
- 584 Household emergency assistance packages
- 500 Hygiene kits
- 2000 Water purification tablets
- 11 Health basic kits

UNICEF is also providing Communication for Development messages to inform the affected population on key messages to protect children during emergencies.

UNICEF is also partnering with local NGOs to provide psychosocial support to the children of the affected communities.

UNICEF with partners continues to coordinate the emergency response and assessing the situation in the following sectors:

- **Education** (lead agency UNICEF)
- **Food Security and Nutrition** (lead agency WFP)
- **WASH** (lead agency UNICEF)
- **Child Protection** is coordinated through a sub-group under the Protection Section (lead agency UNICEF). In this sector, UNICEF will engage local partners to provide psychosocial support for children in the affected areas.
TAJIKISTAN SITUATION UPDATE # 2

Security

All UNICEF staff including those who were on mission are accounted for and safe. One UNICEF consultant, a field monitor, is based in Khorog, GBAO. UNICEF is in regular contact with him to ensure safety and security.

Next SITREP: 18th December 2015

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