Highlights

- As the result of the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit Gorno-Badakhshan on December 7, at least two persons have been trapped and killed under rock-falls and ten injured according to Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan.
- Although the potential risk of structural outburst of Lake Sarez, 20 km away from epicenter, has been assessed as low at this stage, the situation requires close monitoring.
- Several unconfirmed reports of a number of damages to households in the communities near the epicenter.
- Geographic complexities of the area coupled with rockfalls may impede access to the affected communities.
- Shelter, NFI, health, food, and WASH may be the sectors of concern depending on the extent of damage caused.
- 82 km of road completely blocked by stones and landslides.
- Two schools in Bartang valley sustained different levels of damages.
- The Government has indicated the intention to use intact schools as temporary shelter for displaced people. Advocacy and coordination are needed with the local authorities to limit the disruption of the education activities for children.

Date: 08 December 2015

More than 500 houses are reported to have been damaged (419 houses in Rushon district and 8 houses in Vanj district and the rest in Murghob district);

At least 2 people were killed, 10 injured. Over 70,000 people live in the 3 affected districts, out of which 5,300 are children below 5 and 1,680 are pregnant women. UNICEF is assessing the exact number of children affected by the earthquake.
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Government and humanitarian actors present in the field (FOCUS, ACTED and Red-Crescent Society and others) are conducting initial assessments of potential damage in the affected sites that are currently accessible. Still 82 km of road is blocked, which hinders the access to affected villages and communities.

According to the Government’s update, immediate needs are winterized tents (yurts), food supplies and fuel for road and debris clearance. Lake Sarez safety assessment conducted by national experts together with World Bank experts concluded that there is no significant risk related with the dam so far.

Estimated Affected Population

More than 500 houses are reported to have been damaged (419 houses in Rushon district, 8 houses in Vanj district, and the rest in Murghob). While more precise information on the number of affected population will be made available after an initial assessment, over 70,000 people live in these three affected districts. Out of this, more than 5,300 are children below 5 and 1,680 are pregnant women. In Bartang valley in Rushon district, an isolated and hard to reach area close to the epicenter, there is a population of 8,000. UNICEF is still assessing the exact number of children affected by the earthquake.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

The Government of Tajikistan established a commission to coordinate the assessment and response at the national and regional level. The Deputy Prime Minister called for ad-hoc Donor Coordination Council meeting on 8 December 2015 to provide updates on the damages and losses and call for international support in conducting the assessment and providing necessary assistance.

UNDP is ready to provide 50 winterized tents and first aid medical kits as and if needed. UNICEF also echoed its readiness and commitment to provide life-saving supplies and provide response in the Education, Health, WASH and Child Protection sectors, including provision of psychosocial support to the affected population through already established agreements with local and international partners based in GBAO region and based on the experience of the response to the mudslides in July of this year. As part of the response to mudslides, UNICEF prepositioned 5 tents, 5 carpets, and 4 school-in-a-box to benefit 160 children in total, 2 recreation kits for 100 children, 4 Water buckets - 100l, 3 metal garbage bins, 1,000 water-purification tablets to benefit over 1,500 persons for a month, and communication materials in the FOCUS warehouse located in Gorno-Badakhshan region. UNICEF also keeps stock of Household Emergency Assistance Packages, Hygiene kits, Blankets/bedlinens, Water Tanks, education and health supplies in its warehouse in Dushanbe. These items can be used immediately for response to the current emergency. Red-Crescent Society reported that Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) proposal would be submitted to ECHO. Government is preparing an appeal for international support, which will be made available on 9 December 2015.

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 CoES at the national level together with the UN Resident Coordinator as Co-chair, and by the CoES at sub-national level.

REACT operates through sector coordination groups and regionally based REACTs. The sector coordination groups are supposed to coordinate relevant response and preparedness activities (with focus in development in pre-crisis) within their sectors. Three Sector Coordination Groups, led by the following agencies, are functioning at the moment:

1. **Education** (lead agency UNICEF)
2. **Food Security and Nutrition** (lead agency WFP)
3. **WASH** (lead agency UNICEF)

*Child Protection* is coordinated through a sub-group under the Protection Section (lead agency UNICEF). Other Sector Coordination Groups will be activated when the needs arise.

As per the REACT framework, after initial assessments are completed, it is expected that more thorough sector assessments will be undertaken.

To date, the emergency has not yet triggered the appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator or the Cluster-approach in coordinating the emergency response.
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: 11/12/2015