

AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN ACTION PLAN (HAP) 2010

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decades of war and an escalating conflict, combined with frequent earthquakes and seasoned hazards such as drought, landslides, extreme winters and floods have left the majority of people in Afghanistan extremely vulnerable. The 2010 Humanitarian Plan (HAP) aims to improve the coordination of humanitarian programming and activities by identifying, prioritising and addressing the most acute needs in Afghanistan. It is based on a thorough analysis of the social, political and security context, and an in-depth humanitarian needs assessment. Projects and priorities included in the HAP underwent a comprehensive peer review vetting process in line with detailed criteria, which was led by OCHA at regional, cluster and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) levels, before final endorsement by the Humanitarian Coordinator. This document represents the HCT's best judgement of the priorities and needs within the complex situation that is Afghanistan today.

The ongoing and escalating conflict, with incident levels rising 30 to 35% from 2008 to 2009, has had an increasingly harmful impact on the population while simultaneously restricting humanitarian space. Less than 40% of the country is categorised as a 'low-risk/permissive environment'. Attacks on humanitarian actors have remained constant despite a reduction in non-essential programmes, and thus in exposure. A deadly, targeted attack on a United Nations guesthouse in Kabul in late October 2009, plus increasingly direct threats against the UN, has forced aid organizations to review security arrangements and to reassess the impact and critically of their programmes. This review may necessitate adjusting planned activities and budgets in the coming weeks or months and, potentially, a greater dependence on NGOs and other non-UN actors. Consequently, NGO efforts towards meeting humanitarian needs must receive strong support this year.

Duration:	12 months (January – December 2010)
Key milestones in 2010:	Planting seasons: <i>Winter : October</i> <i>Spring : March</i> Harvest : June – September
Target beneficiaries:	7,020,000: drought-affected, internally displaced, refugees, and returnees
Total funding request:	Funding request per beneficiary:
\$870,561,261	\$124

Meanwhile, the impact of the deteriorating security situation on already vulnerable populations heightens the urgency for humanitarian action. Civilian casualties between January and August 2009 rose 24% over the same period in 2008, a total of 1,561 deaths. Due to the Presidential elections on 20 August, the months of August and September were the deadliest on record with a combined 642 casualties during these months alone. In 2010, given the U.S. decision to send an addition 30,000 troops to Afghanistan and parliamentary elections mandated by the constitution, the situation is unlikely to improve.

In addition to increasing casualties, the conflict has taken a heavy toll on infrastructure, livelihood opportunities and access to basic services, particularly health. Apart from having some of the most alarming health indicators in the world, Afghanistan is seeing increasing numbers of cases of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus, putting additional pressure on a health system already unable to provide care to over 600,000 people. The most vulnerable – including women, children, and the internally displaced – have been most affected.

The upsurge in violence has also made return and reintegration more challenging for both refugees and the displaced. Based on the latest figures from Afghanistan National IDP Task Force, there are currently an estimated 275,945 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Afghanistan, new and protracted, in need of assistance. Renewed refugee concerns over security, political stability and the future of reconstruction activities have affected repatriation trends.

Over and above the effects of conflict, natural disasters continue to affect Afghanistan's vulnerable population, requiring emergency humanitarian intervention. In 2009, earthquakes in Nangarhar killed 22 people and destroyed nearly 300 houses. Spring floods in the north, north-east and west affected 22,000 households. In August, flooding in Jalalabad affected a further 4,000 people. Drought and harsh winter conditions regularly intensify the underlying food insecurity in the country, which sees nearly 50% chronic malnutrition rates, with almost 6% acute and 1.6% severely acute.

Although there has been ongoing investment in Afghanistan, the regularity of manmade and natural disasters frequently undermines any progress made. While the lines between development and emergency sometimes blur, the 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan aims to draw a boundary between dynamic and acute needs, which require immediate response to save lives or prevent irrevocable harm, and needs that are important but chronic, stemming from long-term poverty.

Finally, shrinking humanitarian space not only impairs the delivery of humanitarian services and the ability of populations to access those services but also exacerbates an endemic problem in Afghanistan: limited and inaccurate information. Humanitarian response in Afghanistan is severely hampered by the lack of accurate, available data by which to make immediate as well as longer-term planning decisions. One priority for this year's HAP is the collection and analysis of this key input to improve overall humanitarian programming.

Given the situation and needs outlined above, six strategic objectives have been agreed upon to focus and sharpen the humanitarian response in 2010:

- Ensure preparedness for and response to conflict and natural hazards
- Mitigate the effects of conflicts and hazards for the protection of the affected population
- Enhance protection of civilians and advocate for the respect for international law and human rights
- Ensure that humanitarian programming complements and strengthens the link to early recovery and development assistance
- Improve access to and by vulnerable populations and provide targeted safety nets
- Improve data collection and analysis

The 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan, budgeted at US\$ 870.5, requires urgent and dedicated support to improve the planning and delivery of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. As a complement to the recently launched 2010-2013 UN Development Assistance Framework, the HAP outlines the vital, life-saving actions which are needed immediately to enable longer-term development planning and activity to take root.