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Situation Update “Rebuilding in the midst of Devastation”

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Prepared by CWS-P/A Communication Office

Background:

Although the millions of Pakistanis affected by the floods are unquestionably in high need of immediate shelter, food and other basic necessities, the latest concern for some people is starting over again. The floods have extended in some southern areas and most recently devastated communities in Thatta District. Some areas throughout the country remain inaccessible by road while in others floodwaters receded and have remained that way for more than a week. U.N. estimates reveal that approximately 4.6 million people are without shelter. Thousands of people are on the move within the country, either to seek shelter with relatives and friends or returning to assess damages to their homes and property. Even for those affected families who have some form of shelter, in most cases tents or partially damaged homes, the living conditions are terrible. Prolonged stay under these circumstances poses health and other risks that could lead to a second wave of deaths.

An estimated 3.5 million houses have been destroyed in various parts of the four provinces according to Rehmatullah Kakar, Federal Minister for Housing and Works. The minister announced that assistance with reconstruction and compensation is planned for families whose houses were completely destroyed or partially damaged.

Depending on the scale of destruction in particular areas, the financial position of affected families, and income earning potential, the time it will take for affected families to rebuild their homes varies drastically. While humanitarian organizations and the government plan reconstruction initiatives, individuals like Allah Nawaz, an eighteen year old from Basti Sakhani in D. I. Khan, have started to rebuild their homes. Nawaz shares, “My father is a shepherd, and I am a day-laborer so I know how to build walls and work with cement. Water dried up about a week ago and we decided to collect bricks from destroyed houses to start rebuilding our homes together.” Nawaz along with his uncles were able to start rebuilding because he possesses the required skills. “Thankfully,

everyone in our village is safe from harm but our belongings have gone with the water, our rations are destroyed, and we are afraid of disease that may come from drinking water. We have to reuse the bricks since they now cost Rupees 7,500 per one thousand bricks (US\$ 88) whereas the cost used to be only Rupees 3,500 (US\$ 41).” As with prices of food and other required items, building material is also becoming more expensive. For families who already do not have money and no income earning possibilities, rebuilding their homes will take months if not longer without intervention from the humanitarian community. Nawaz adds, “We have to use our time to rebuild our homes and because of this we cannot work for anyone else, but money is running out.”

While climate conditions differ throughout the provinces of Pakistan so do the housing structures which also include straw, mud, and wooden huts. Nawaz is fortunate to have access to bricks and an added advantage of construction skills. However, many shepherds, farmers, and fishermen are less likely to have this opportunity.

Humanitarian efforts need to emphasize medium and long-term needs particularly with regard to early recovery. This includes several aspects of rebuilding housing. Cost and availability of resources make it impossible for thousands of families to start rebuilding so financial assistance is a foremost priority. Other considerations include the need for laborers to access income earning opportunities. Skilled workers like Nawaz also need assistance in finding construction jobs so they can start meeting other needs for their families. With such widespread destruction of houses and other building structures, a huge skilled labor force is needed to ensure timely reconstruction occurs. Equipping the available labor force with new construction skills will assist in developing income earning opportunities, supply the much needed skilled labor, and also build morale within communities who currently face bleak income and employment opportunities.

CWS-P/A Response:

CWS-P/A recognizes the importance of continuing to reach vulnerable families with immediate food and non-food items. The organization plans to provide an additional 3,000 families with food and non-food items in Sukkur and Thatta and to also initiate two mobile health units in Khairpur and Thatta. At the same time, the organization is planning for early recovery. To assist in meeting medium-term health needs as well as rehabilitation of livelihood means, CWS-P/A identifies three early recovery initiatives. Construction Trade Training Centers, similar to the initiative developed for recovery of the 2005 earthquake, will help build the capacity within communities for reconstruction. Without resources, farmers and owners of small shops will face a longer period of food insecurity. Similar to its food security initiative for IDPs, CWS-P/A plans to initiate cash for work, vouchers, and cash grants to help reestablish agricultural livelihood. Continuation of health services while reconstruction of the government health facilities takes place is essential; CWS-P/A identifies the importance of the establishment and efficient management of basic health units for the affected communities.

CWS-P/A continues its first round of food as well as NFI and shelter distribution in Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It also continues services of its three mobile health units and six basic health units in Mansehra, Swat, and Kohistan.

NCA Response:

NCA is coordinating with its implementing partners, PVDP and Taraquee Foundation by providing technical backstopping to its implementing partners. PVDP has distributed food and non food items and hygiene kits to 50 families today. It will soon be starting its mobile health clinics. Taraquee Foundation's mobile health clinics have provided medical assistance and medicine to a total of 2000 patients. Food and non food item to a total of 200 families have been distributed. At present a coordination meeting with DCO is going on to chalk out further relief response in these areas.

DKH Response:

Diakonie team who were already present in Pakistan (since 2005) has immediately taken action for relief activities within a few days after the floods started. The field team started assistance immediately with the provision of clean drinking water in collaboration with local partner, NRSP, in Nowshera and Charsadda. DKH and NRSP teams continue to work for provision of water and debris cleaning despite continuing rain.

Twenty water tanks have been installed at 11 different points in Nowsherra and Charsadda so far and debris cleaning activities have started in Pashtoon Ghari Village of Nowsherra.

The ACT appeal for this response (PAK102) is being revised and significantly scaled up by CWS, DKH and NCA to include recovery and rehabilitation assistance to the flood-affected population. Total income pledged and received to date is US\$ 3.38 million or 85 percent of the appeal.

Further contributions should be communicated to the ACT Secretariat finance team:

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