Pledges and contributions
The Government of India is to contribute US$ 800,000 to WFP, WHO and UNOCHA for food distribution in Bamiyan.

From the frontline
Reports of intense exchanges of heavy artillery, rocket and mortar fire to the north and northeast of Kabul, have been received. The front line is still 20-30 km to the north of the city. On 8 January, Tameer, near Sarobi, was reportedly held by the Taliban. Massoud's forces were holding positions in the Tagab area. The town of Sorobi itself is currently secure, but northern Ghazni is tense due to sporadic fighting. Sporadic exchanges of rocket and artillery and rocket fire were reported to have taken place on the Jalrez front. Although a gradual return to normal conditions is in progress, factional tension prevails in Mazar and the surrounding region. Factional clashes took place in Mazar on 2 and 4 January.

It has been reported that northern forces have crossed the Morghab River and advanced to Mangan. Reports of Taliban military air traffic in the Qala-I-Nau area have been received.

Reportedly, fighting between local Taliban commanders took place in the north of Kandahar.

Reports indicate artillery exchange between two Taliban militias on 7 January in Jalalabad. Tensions remain in Kunar due to guerrilla activities.

Bamiyan
A delegation led by the UN coordinator is visiting Bamiyan, Kabul and Kandahar this week to discuss issues including the Bamiyan food crisis. No reports of further attacks on Bamiyan have been received. UN operations in Bamiyan remain suspended until security related negotiations with the Taliban are concluded.

BBC Newsletter
The first edition of BBC AED Evaluation newsletter, introduces a new needs assessment system of evaluation for "New Home, New Life". Different themes will be covered in three-month cycles. At the end of each period, an assessment report will be presented and discussed with a consultative committee and representatives of the aid community. The priorities identified from the evaluation will be the basis of the script of "New Home, New Life". The BBC is hoping for a greater cohesion of its efforts with the aid community, and the adoption of a campaign approach in certain fields.

Repatriation report
During the last quarter of 1997, the number of returnees crossing the border from Pakistan to Afghanistan increased. Although the total number of returnees in 1997 was lower than in 1996, the last quarter of 1997 indicates a positive trend of repatriation. In 1996, approximately 120,800 Afghans returned, and last year 84,400.
**Humanitarian update**

**Central Region**
UNHCR reports that 2,813 people left Kabul City, and 773 entered the city during the past week. Out of these, 222 came from Tagab and Nejrab districts.

The Department of Vice and Virtue, MoPH and international agencies have agreed to re-establish female patient care in Aliabad hospital in Kabul. The project is funded by UNDP/UNCHS and will rehabilitate neurological facilities in the city.

WHO delivered 50 surgical and medical items, and 10 polio investigation sets to MoPH in Kabul.

UNICEF is carrying out training of 50 health professionals in Logar and Kabul, and training of media personnel and volunteers in ARI control.

UNHCR has supplied materials for the repair of Kabul stadium. The work is being carried out by Habitat.

**Eastern Region**
WFP has provided 74 tonnes of wheat to a food-for-work programme in Jalalabad. The 6-month project will be carried out by WHO and the objective is to restore wells used for drinking water.

WFP has also extended a bakery project in Jalalabad. For 4 months, 5,760 tonnes of wheat flour will be used to produce subsidised bread to 150,000 people.

MADERA has completed a drainage project in Mohmand Dara district. The project, funded by WFP and NAC, has provided irrigation of 1,400 ha of land and the number of beneficiaries is 2,100 families.

**Western Region**
UNHCR distributed 94 blankets to IDPS in Shahidia, and 341 tonnes of wheat was distributed to 975 families in Khosrabat and Ghurian.

UNHCS removed 613 cubic metres of solid waste from the city in collaboration with the Municipality.

UNICEF provided nutrition supplies to the regional hospital, and 4200 litres of heating fuel to the ophthalmic centre in Herat.

**Northern Region**
During the last week WFP Faizabad distributed 12 tonnes of wheat in Baharak for 36 women in a Food-for Training project implemented in collaboration with Afghan Aid.