Tragic Death of a UN Colleague

It is with deep regret and sorrow that we inform friends of Afghanistan of the sudden and untimely death of Bill Bergquist, a long time UN colleague in Afghanistan. Bill died through an accident, at 02.50 on 01 January, in Dushanbe where he held the post of Senior Humanitarian Officer since November 1998.

Bill started his Afghanistan involvement as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1972, returned in 1990 and again in 1995, also providing assistance to Somalia and Indonesia between postings in Afghanistan.

Until October 1998 he was Regional Coordinator, posted in Kandahar and Herat. Throughout the years Bill contributed extensively towards aid, development and an atmosphere of understanding and congeniality in Afghanistan through his dedicated efforts, accepting dangers in delivering assistance and mostly through his giving and friendly personality. He will be missed by his international and Afghan colleagues.

UNHCR and New Refugees

Hazara refugees have been arriving in large numbers from northern Afghanistan in Pakistani border areas of Peshawar and Quetta.

UNHCR sub-office Quetta has provided a limited one-time assistance programme for the most vulnerable groups of new arrivals. Over 150 families have so far been assisted through Shuhada, a community-based NGO.

Assistance Update

Central Highlands

WFP distributed emergency winter wheat in most of the vulnerable areas of Hazarajat. Distributions continue in Behsud I and II.

With the help of OXFAM and Shuhada, WFP national staff distributed 2,000 tonnes of wheat and BP-5 biscuits in Panjao, Waras and Sharistan. In Behsud I and II, where Madera was still selecting beneficiaries, 200 tonnes of food have been distributed so far. Three tonnes of mixed food, donated by the Government of Pakistan, were distributed to 42 families in Bamiyan.

Central Region

UNCHS resumed provision of winter relief for 9,000 vulnerable families in Kabul. About 1,000 women will directly benefit from the production of sweaters and clothing, and distribution.

Water, sanitation and construction projects, carried out by Habitat and UNICEF, are ongoing.

Approximately 10,000 people received health education on prevention and management of Acute Respiratory Infections, a major campaign conducted by UNICEF.

FAO Crops monitored small-scale irrigation projects in Azro and Tezin, two PEACE-Initiative districts in Kabul and Logar, conducted an introductory survey of germplasm in Wardak, and recorded stand data of wheat yield trials in research farms in Ghazni.
FAO Livestock sent a feed graining machine for poultry to the Kabul Poultry Association.

WFP Kabul released 1,350 tonnes of wheat for training, institutional feeding, food-for-work projects and bakeries.

WHO provided supplies to clinics and hospitals in the region.

**Eastern Region**

FAO Crops dispatched 13 tonnes of mineral fertilizer for the wheat seed multiplication programme, irrigated improved wheat seed demonstration plots in Agam District, recorded stand data of 5 sets of wheat yield trials, weeded wheat research trials and transplanted radish and turnips for seed production in the Sheshambagh research station in Nangrahar.

**Northern Region**

WFP has approved an additional 180 tonnes of FFW wheat for the earthquake reconstruction project and road/pathway rehabilitation on the west (Rustaq) side of the earthquake zone, to be administered by ACTED.

FAO Crops completed 80% planting of winter wheat and barley research trials/experiments in two research farms in Mazar and Takhar (Taloqan).

**Southern Region**

WFP released 62 tonnes of food for repatriation, sanitation and institutional feeding in Kandahar.

FAO Crops completed planting of 25 winter wheat crop Farmer Fields Demonstrations (FFDs) in Kandahar and selected demonstration orchards/sites in Zabul Province for the coming season.

UNCHS distributed clear plastic sheets to vulnerable families in District 2, established a new class in the Community Forum school in District 4, and continued to support construction and sanitation projects in various districts of Kandahar City.

MoPH with the financial and technical support from WHO conducted a one-week workshop on Health Planning - 1999 in Kandahar.

UNICEF-supported water, sanitation, and health projects are ongoing.

Nearly 50 physical and social infrastructure projects of UNOPS were monitored in Kandahar and Farah.

An area of 425 sqm, out of 490 sqm surveyed, has been cleared from mines in the Southern Region. In addition, over 200 people received mine awareness training.

**Western Region**

WFP fielded a mission to Farah to monitor the progress of work for the ongoing food-for-work, food-for-training and institutional feeding projects.

Over 80 tonnes of wheat were issued for training, institutional feeding and health projects in Herat and Ghor provinces.

UNCHS continued to support the City Main Drainage project (phase III), in close collaboration with local communities and the Herat Municipality.

FAO Crops distributed 350 tonnes of fertilizer in Farah, and trained 225 farmers on different aspects of plant protection in Herat.

A joint UNICEF/WHO Health Planning Workshop for the Western Region will be concluded by first week of January. UNICEF handpump installation, well digging and solid waste disposal activities are ongoing.
UNHCR Herat distributed tents, blankets, shoes and clothing to returnees from Iran and IDPs, mostly from Eshkamesh, Imam Saheb, Dasht-e-Archi, and Burka districts of Kunduz.

UNICEF in cooperation with WHO, MoPH, health-related NGOs and local authorities launched a 6-day ARI campaign in the region last week.

A joint UNICEF-MoPH mission visited Farah to introduce the Safe Motherhood Initiative in the area.

**E-mail Communication**
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