**Asia-Pacific Emergency Preparedness Working Group – Q2 meeting**

***Date:*** 11 June 2020, 14:00 – 15:30 BKK Time

***Venue:*** Virtual (Teams)

***Participants:*** About 50 participants attended the meeting including OCHA ROAP, OCHA Country Offices, RCOs, Asian Development Bank, ICVA, WHO, FAO, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, WFP,

***Co-chairs*:** OCHA ROAP, ICVA, IFRC

1. **Horizon Scanning - Early Warning Early Action (non-Covid-19)**

**IASC Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness (EWEAR) analysis**

*The report has been shared with WG members as part of the meeting invitation*

* The IASC Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness (EWEAR) analysis is a bi-annual exercise conducted by analysts under the Early Warning sub group. The analysis identifies the most serious risks based on projected increase in humanitarian needs in the next six months and maps the identified risks against the in-country humanitarian capacity and preparedness level. Risks are grouped into three tiers: very high, high or of moderate concern.
* The report sheds light on the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts, including the disruption of global food supply chains and the deteriorating food security, depreciation of national currencies, declining remittances; widescale job losses, the impact on tourism, and aggravated violence in conflict-affected areas.
* In the Asia Pacific Region, only Afghanistan is listed in the report and classified as of moderate concern, which is related to conflict escalation due to the potential of an intensified Taliban Spring offensive and conflict stakeholders exploiting COVID-19 outbreak.
* Pakistan and India are on the watch list. Pakistan due to heavy snowfall, rains and flooding and India due to increased protests over the Citizenship Amendment Act.

1. **Socio-economic shock and humanitarian implications**

**Asian Development Bank**

*Please see presentation for more details*

* In the last three months, the ADB’s research department conducted a series of impact assessments. An initial analysis was conducted on 6 March when there were only around 86,000 confirmed cases, of which 93 per cent where in China. According to the latest assessment conducted on 27 May, global impact is estimated at US$6-9 trillion (depending on containment measures). The Asia region is estimated to account for about 30 per cent or US$2-3 trillion dollars. The growth rate for Asia Pacific in 2020 is estimated at 0 per cent. ADP will release updated growth forecasts on the 3rd week of June.
* GDP losses of countries in the Asia Pacific region are caused by declining tourism and domestic demand. Domestic demand has declined due to limited/suppressed mobility because of lockdown policies.
* Examples like the Philippines and Indonesia show that decreasing infection rates correlate with stringent lockdown policies and a change in mobility. However, a health-economy trade-off can be avoided. Countries like Korea and Taipei, China have manage to lower infection rates without imposing stringent lockdown measures by massive production and allocation of PPEs, rapid isolation of COVID‑19 cases, and digital tracking.
* Globally, the sectors of agriculture, road/rail transport, water transport, hotels/restaurants, and recreation have been affected the most. For Asia, it is estimated that around 109 million jobs in a short (three months) containment scenario, or more than 166 million job in a long (six months) containment scenario will be lost. Informal sector workers are at particular risk as COVID-19 accelerates digital transformation and automation of routine and manual jobs. In Asia Pacific region, 66 per cent work in the informal sector.
* Over the last three decades, there was a continuous decline in poverty rates across developing countries in Asia. However due to the massive costs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that trend is likely to be reversed to some degree. Under the assumption of a long containment scenario, the poverty rate is expected to increase by 4 per cent, which equals 140 million additional people falling below the poverty line. Inequality is expected to increase, as job losses and wage cuts hit unskilled workers more. Vulnerable groups, such as poor, MSMEs, women and elderly will be affected disproportionately. Ill‑designed and ill-targeted stimulus can further disfavour low-income households and vulnerable groups.
* Policies to soften the economic impact of COVID-19 and smart approaches in re-opening economies balancing health risks are key. Moving towards the ‘new normal’, it is critical to undertake a ‘building back better’ approach that considers building back greener and more inclusive addressing the inequalities created by digitization.

Q&A:

* Save the Children raised the question if ADB is forecasting beyond 2020, in particular on poverty in the region.

Answer: ADB usually conducts a 24 months horizon outlook on growth forecast and economic assessments. On poverty: Panel data is being collected on a monthly basis for selected countries in Asia, which could be used to forecast the impact on poverty.

* Oxfam: Is ADB considering easing the loan schedules for developing countries?

Answer: To help enterprises and companies, ADB is facilitating policies to ease their financial burdens. On the macro level, ADB is cautious with regard to the long-term consequences of easing country-level debt reduction.

* WHO: How are the three vs six months long containments defined? Have other timeframes or differences in containment measures been considered? Is the severity of the pandemic in the respective countries a factor in your model?

Answer: The model being used is based on Q1 data considering decline in consumption, income, investment, international cross-border mobility. The respective assumptions are that after three/six months the virus is contained and economic indicators are returning to pre-COVID-19 rates. The health dimension is not yet incorporated, apart from increases in health expenditures.

1. **Focused discussion on Food Security/Locus Outbreak**

**WFP to present an overview on food security outlook**

*Please see presentation for more details*

* COVID-19 is affecting household income and the ability to purchase on the market and thus is leading to food insecurity and malnutrition. Based on income losses, WFP projects that 130 million people will be newly food insecure, with a particular impact on the urban poor and informal workers.
* Additional stress will be caused by migrant returnees, who are unable to stay or work abroad, heightened conflict and tensions (e.g. in Afghanistan), and the closure of schools and other institutions.
* Food production is not badly impacted by COVID-19, but supply chains are disrupted and the availability of labour is limited because of suppressed mobility/lockdown measures.
* Global supply chains have also been affected, for example by restrictions/quotas on rice and wheat by certain countries, which generated price volatility.
* To understand food security and trends, WFP is monitoring through assessments at household level in addition to macro analysis on market functionality. WFP is publishing these assessments on a regular basis on several countries.
* Based on these assessments, countries of concern are Afghanistan, Nepal, Timor-Leste, and Pacific Island Countries. Countries on the watchlist are Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Lao PDR. Many of these countries are relying on particularly vulnerable industries, such as the garment industry.
* Governments have launched short-term emergency relief programmes, but not everyone in need has been registered and many are at risk of being left out. More assessments are needed for better targeting of vulnerable groups.
* Apart from COVID-19, additional factors will affect food security: High temperatures and continued dryness over SEA are forecasted. Crop activities and yields will be affected by climate events.
* World Vision noted that a closer look at the impact of loss of livelihoods on families and children besides poverty is needed. The result is often psycho-social stress, more domestic violence and negative impact on children.

**FAO to present on locusts situation**

*Please see presentation for more details*

* The desert locust swarms are able to travel up to 150km/day in search for food. In the region, there are currently outbreaks in India, Iran and Pakistan. With the beginning of rainy season, breeding will take place, which is expected to cause a dramatic increase in locust numbers in Eastern Africa.
* If control operations in Iran are not successful, nearly one-third of the population could be affected by the current infestation as the affected provinces are the primary breadbaskets of the country. Eight out of 31 provinces have been invaded by desert locust.
* It is unlikely that the swam will travel to Nepal and Bangladesh, as desert locusts require deserts to lay eggs.
* In Pakistan, over three million people are already facing severe acute food insecurity, mainly due to drought. If the situation becomes unmanageable, losses are estimated at 50 per cent basis for summer crops. Preliminary estimates foresee about 20,000 households to be affected by locusts swarm (mid‑case scenario).
* In Western Rajasthan, India, the locusts swarm is moving back and forth at the border area to Pakistan. There is no expectation for monsoon rain in the next four weeks, which may further favor movement of the locusts swarm to eastern Rajasthan and east of Ajmer.
* Iran, Pakistan and India are expected to continue facing challenges in July, as breeding is already ongoing in these countries. The desert locusts population is currently in transition: Spring breeding is ending and summer breeding has yet to start.
* There is a threat that swarms arriving from east Africa will travel across the Indian Ocean into India.
* To prevent desert locusts upsurges, FAO prioritizes regular monitoring, early warning and timely response efforts. If a swarm is not detected in time, it can have devastating effects on livelihoods.

1. **AOB**

**Update from GiHA WG**

* The GiHA WG had a discussion on how to create a dedicated space to discuss, address and coordinate on GBV. It was agreed to create this space through the modality of ad hoc meetings. Members of EPWG who are interested in coordination on GBV are encouraged to get in touch with the co-chairs of the GiHA WG (Husni [husni.husni@un.org](mailto:husni.husni@un.org); Maria Holtsberg [maria.holtsberg@unwomen.org](mailto:maria.holtsberg@unwomen.org); Leigh‑Ashley Lipscomb [lipscomb@unfpa.org](mailto:lipscomb@unfpa.org); Pamela Marie Godoy <pgodoy@unfpa.org>)
* The GiHA WG is organizing an event on gender and funding in collaboration with COVID-19 WG in participation with women organizations. The event is tentatively scheduled for the week of 22 June.