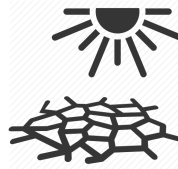


ALERT

DROUGHTS



actalliance

Pakistan

Bangkok, 14 September 2018

SITUATION

The absence of significant rainfall in the last two to three seasons have triggered drought emergency in the southern part of Sindh Province in Pakistan. As per Sindh drought assessment conducted by FAO and EU in 2017, 100% of the area of Tharparkar was facing severe water scarcity. The district of Umerkot was facing severe water scarcity in 83.8% of it's area and moderate water scarcity in the other 16.2%. As of 2018, the situation has become worse due to continuing lack of rainfall in the monsoon season. The national average for rainfall has been -24.4% below average with the Sindh region suffering most, receiving rainfall -69.5% below average. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), most of the districts in the province did not receive any rainfall in the month of August. This situation is leading to adverse effects on agricultural and domestic needs of the local communities in the area, further exacerbating the prevalent problems of poverty and child malnutrition. In the district of Tharparkar alone, nine infants have been reported dead during the month of August, while a total of 375 children have died due to malnutrition in 2018. Due protracted low crop production, the food insecurity and malnutrition issue has further worsened as families are forced to sell the goods that they otherwise would have consumed themselves. Access to clean water has also severely been limited, causing water-borne diseases and compromising the health of the residents. The PMD has predicted no adequate rainfall in the near future meaning that the situation will only worsen with diminishing resources. Crop production will continue to drop while the death of livestock will rise. The health of the community will continue to suffer more as the water and food supplies decline. Analysing the current situation, the district administration has appealed to international and local aid organizations to send their teams and support the government in its efforts to provide relief to the affected people.

NEEDS

Lack of adequate rain has impacted agriculture sector very badly. Most of the families have not cultivated their lands owing to lack of rain, while those who did cultivate their lands have lost their crops. Since the yield is as low as that of the last year, communities have no additions in their stock to address their food needs. Lack of rain has also affected the provision of fodder for the livestock, causing them to be sick or die. With the lack of financial income, the affected communities are compelled to adopt destructive coping mechanisms such as selling their assets, livestock, decrease their food intake, decrease number of meals and quality of food. The low food intake is impacting the health condition of the communities in drought affected areas by worsening malnutrition. Given the situation, emergency food assistance, health services, fodder for livestock and addressing water issues of the affected communities are the top priority for assistance. Special attention needs to be paid to the most vulnerable population which includes the women and the children. The lack of clean drinking water should be considered before food aid is delivered in order to avoid further spread of water borne diseases. Health services are also urgently required as 25-35% of all children are sick and health facilities are 35-60 km away with no proper roads. Furthermore, important issue is the health of the livestock which has also been deteriorating causing financial and nutritional damage to the community. Many families are forced to migrate to find pastures for their livestock, causing further disruptions in their lives. Therefore, the issue of livestock health and provision of animal fodder also needs to be seriously addressed.

The dire situation is further compounded for the drought affected people with vulnerabilities.; more specifically for woman and girls due to social norms that cause them to give up their food for other members of the family. Problems with women's health is also affecting infant health so special attention needs to be paid to maternal health to protect both the mother and the child. As of 2017, most women in the region were anaemic and new-borns underweight. There is a pressing necessity to provide immediate assistance to minimize loss of life and to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are covered first.

STAKEHOLDERS

The following national and international entities are present and doing their best to respond to the crisis:

- District Governments have started coordination meetings with all the stakeholders to devise a plan to address the key issues
- UN agencies are at the monitoring stage and have not yet started on the response
- INGOs are planning their response to the crisis
- National NGOs are working in the areas and have started needs assessments.
- Communities are helping each other on self-basis but with limited resources, they are not in position to cope with the situation.

The emergency response is currently being coordinated by District Governments along with Social welfare department. To ensure that the humanitarian response is well coordinated and complementary, the ACT forum will take part in meetings with all relevant sector stakeholders (particularly District Administration, PDMA Sindh, active working groups and Pakistan Humanitarian Forum) and establish an open line of communication with crisis affected persons and communities to ensure a humanitarian response based on participation and feedback.

ACT Alliance

ACT Alliance works in areas affected by the drought, and is assessing the impact of the disaster to better understand the needs and vulnerabilities. ACT Alliance is currently monitoring the situation and is preparing a rapid needs assessment to have an in-depth context analysis and better understanding of existing vulnerabilities. Furthermore, ACT Alliance will engage in advocacy on the national and international level to ensure that the voices of those affected by the drought are amplified.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org)

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