



Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat participates in Refugee Emergency Preparedness Exercise in Tajikistan



Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 3-4 July 2019 – The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), in partnership with the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence – under the auspices of the Government of Tajikistan – UNHCR, other UN Agencies, government and other humanitarian partners, conducted the second large-scale disaster simulation exercise designed to respond to an emergency situation related to a

massive influx of refugees.

The real-time scenarios – with the responders split over three sites – enabled a test of the emergency response capabilities of the Government and associated agencies. The responders were located at the National Emergency Operations Centre, AKAH’s Emergency Operations Centre in the capital city of Dushanbe and a field site 50 km from the EOCs in Karatag of Hissor valley, which served as the hosting and registration site for the refugees. The aim of the simulation was to strengthen the coordination mechanism, build capacity and coordination skills for future responses and identify gaps in response and coordination during emergencies. The first simulation exercise, conducted last year, provided an opportunity for the emergency agencies to address such gaps.

“In 2018, the Government of Tajikistan brought together the International Community and Civil Society agencies in Tajikistan to determine our readiness for a large scale emergency,” noted Hadi Husani, the CEO of AKAH. “What we learned from that exercise, was that the abilities that we have as a unified team, as a partnership of Government Ministries with the agencies of the United Nations, the Aga Khan Development Network and civil society institutions, is that together we can act rapidly and effectively.”

He further noted that all the relevant institutions were able to mobilise resources on the ground, coordinate and collaborate together and build a platform for mutual engagement which supported communities at risk with dignity and professionalism. “As a part of our joint commitment to continuing to build on this Government and Partner platform, we have reconvened this year to build on our learnings from last year and to continue to deepen the systems that we mutually use to bring us together in preparation for any emergency that we might jointly face in the future,” added Mr. Husani.

AKAH deployed dedicated Emergency Management Staff, its professionally trained Search and Rescue Team (SART), and provided resources, including 24 tents (donated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination in Tajikistan), a mobile antenna to provide cellular network and internet, non-food items, hygiene kits. The agency also staffed an Emergency Operations Centre to support the National Emergency Response Centre.

The simulation exercise provided an opportunity for AKAH to put into practice the Memorandums of Understanding that have been signed with UNHCR, WFP and other UN Agencies, and AKAH's longstanding close partnerships with the Government Emergency Response Mechanism.

“Our long-standing collaboration with the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat and other international organisations enables us to strengthen the preparedness measures, coordination and response to natural or man-made disasters in Tajikistan,” said Kamolov Jamshed, Head of the Main Department of Population and Territory of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of Tajikistan. “This year’s simulation exercise was based on the achievements and learnings of the last year simulation. In addition, we were able to jointly work on the gaps that were identified during the last year event, and came up with the better preparation, response and coordination this year.”

Ms. Rosa Minasyan, Protection Officer, Officer-in-Charge, UNHCR further pointed out that “it is critical that countries facing possible influx follow the lead of governments in countries such as Tajikistan, to work hand in hand with humanitarian actors present in their country, to enhance planning, preparation and better leverage on existing resources”.

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NOTE

The *Aga Khan Agency for Habitat* (AKAH), which merges the capabilities of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, and the Aga Khan Development Network’s Disaster Risk Management Initiative, focuses on preparing for both sudden and slow-onset disasters. AKAH works to ensure that people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response; and that these settings provide access to social and financial services that lead to greater opportunity and a better quality of life. Initially, priority areas of AKAH will include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and India. Read more about the agency at: <http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-agency-habitat>

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/aga-khan-agency-habitat-participates-refugee-emergency-preparedness-exercise>