



Bi-weekly Press Briefing Afghanistan Relief- OCHA - FAO 7 September 2021

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Shotlist

STORY: Afghanistan Relief FAO - OCHA

TRT: 02:50"

SOURCE: UNTV CH

RESTRICTIONS: NONE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

ASPECT RATIO: 16:9

DATELINE: 07 Sept 2021, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

SHOTLIST

1. Exterior wide shot, United Nations flag flying
2. Wide shot, briefing room
3. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jens Laerke, spokesperson, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): "Basic services in Afghanistan are collapsing and food and other life-saving aid is about to run out. As we heard, the Secretary-General has warned of a humanitarian catastrophe. We urge international donors to support this appeal fast and generously"**
4. Wide shot, briefing room
5. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jens Laerke, spokesperson, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): "If properly and fully funded, the appeal will deliver the following: critical food and livelihood assistance to nearly 11 million people, essential health services to 3.4**

million people, treatment for acute malnutrition for more than a million children and women, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions for two and a half million people, protection including for children and survivors of gender-based violence for one and a half million people. There are also projects addressing children’s emergency education as well as shelter and other non-food assistance”.

6. Medium shot, Speakers at the briefing

7. SOUNDBITE (English): Rein Paulsen, Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO: “We are talking already, even before the events that have unfolded in recent weeks, during the month of August. We are talking about a situation where one in three Afghans are acutely food insecure, a situation that is dramatic by any stretch of the imagination”.

8. Medium shot: Speakers at the briefing and the Zoom meeting

9. SOUNDBITE (English): Rein Paulsen, Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO: “FAO and other partners that work in the food security space are focused on a particular window of opportunity now related to the winter wheat planting season. This is a season through which we have an urgent imperative. Towards the end of September, we need to make sure that planting is starting. There is a very short window of time to be able to address that. The seeds can’t wait, the farmers can’t wait. We need to do everything we can to ensure that those vulnerable households are supported”.

10. Close of panellist writing

11. SOUNDBITE (English): Rein Andre Paulsen, Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO: “We really do have an urgent need for 15 million dollars to support what we are doing with wheat and with livestock and support”.

12. Close of audience taking notes

13. SOUNDBITE (English): Rein Paulsen, Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO: “We have a broad estimate that suggests that will be a 25 per cent deficit on the national wheat crop this year, but again, all of these things depend on the ability to implement. Just to say, FAO is in the process of procuring and distributing fully 40 per cent of all the wheat seed available in the country (just to give you a sense of the scale of what we have underway to mitigate as much as possible the deficit)”.

Story

Afghanistan: 'urgent imperative' to start winter planting to avoid acute food insecurity, says UN

The unfolding situation in Afghanistan is causing significant disruption and threatens Afghanistan's critical winter wheat season, which is about to begin, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned on Tuesday, ahead of a major fundraising conference for the country, that is due to take place in Geneva on 13 September.

"One in three Afghans are acutely food insecure, a situation that is dramatic by any stretch of the imagination," said FAO Director of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience, Rein Paulsen, speaking from Islamabad.

Emphasizing the dire situation in the country, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Jens Laerke, warned that "basic services in Afghanistan are collapsing and food and other lifesaving aid is about to run out".

In a call for urgent action to be taken now, ahead of the "fast-approaching winter wheat season," Mr. Paulsen noted that there will likely be a "25 per cent deficit on the national wheat crop this year".

Half of the average Afghan's daily calorific intake comes from wheat and most of the wheat grown in the country is sourced to the upcoming rainfed winter season, the FAO expert said, adding that there was "an urgent imperative towards the end of September".

He added: "We need to make sure that that planting is starting. There's a very short window of time to be able to address that. The seeds can't wait. The farmers can't wait. We need to do everything we can to ensure that those vulnerable households are supported".

In addition to food insecurity, Mr. Paulsen noted that 70 per cent of all Afghans live in rural areas and agriculture provides livelihoods benefits to 80 per cent of the population.

Threats to rural livelihoods have been a growing concern for FAO for months, he said. Without urgent support, farmers and pastoralists could lose their livelihoods and be forced to leave rural areas, adding further pressure to urban and peri-urban areas as internally displaced people.

As of August 2021, FAO has provided livelihood and cash assistance across 26 out of 34 provinces to over 1.5 million people.

In August alone, FAO has reached over 100,000 people. The Organization has also been able to continue operations in 26 out of the 31 provinces where it works. Afghanistan has 34 provinces. Mr. Paulsen emphasized that the FAO remains on the ground in Afghanistan and is

in the process of procuring and distributing 40 per cent of all the wheat seeds available in the country.

But he warned that more resources are required. "We have an urgent need for \$15 million to support what we're doing with winter wheat, livestock and support," he said. OCHA also appealed for support for the upcoming Flash Appeal for Afghanistan to address the immediate response gaps in Afghanistan. The appeal is a prioritization of unmet needs from the Annual Humanitarian Response Plan launched earlier this year, plus new emerging needs. OCHA is seeking "\$606 million to assist nearly 11 million people during the four remaining months this year. This includes two million people not previously covered in the humanitarian response plan. \$430 million of this request is already costed, but unfunded in the annual response plan. \$193 million of the overall \$606 million is for new and emerging needs and changes in operating costs".

Donations will deliver "critical food and livelihood assistance to nearly 11 million people, essential health services to 3.4 million people, treatment for acute malnutrition for more than a million children and

women,” said Mr. Laerke.

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