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UNJLC Pakistan Earthquake BULLETIN No. 11 (Day 25)

As of 1800 hours local, Wednesday, November 2nd, 2005

UNJLC Bulletins aim to provide a clear and concise regular overview of the situation as it exists in the earthquake-affected area of Pakistan and contiguous areas with regards to logistics matters affecting relief work by the humanitarian community. They focus on practical issues that affect the welfare of the afflicted populace and related humanitarian work such as the status of transport routes for humanitarian supplies and personnel into the area, relevant administrative or commercial developments, air (including strategic airlift and helicopter operations), Customs and immigration matters, and availability of accommodation and fuels. They further seek to identify major issues for the humanitarian community and other interested parties, to provide relevant background and constructive recommendations on current issues, and to alert responsible parties to emerging issues. This bulletin was produced daily from October 17th – 22nd but as the emergency has matured was produced with effect from October 24th on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. This will apply until further notice.

Summary and Highlights

- The urgent need to identify and supply people remaining in the mountains, or not reached by the Pakistani authorities or aid agencies, is being addressed through a joint operation co-ordinated by UNJLC, and involving the International Organisation for Migration the IFRC. Known as “**Winter Race**”, this initiative - augmenting the efforts of the authorities – involves dropping small, mobile teams with select relief items into remote areas by helicopter.
- Cargo congestion at the main air point of entry into Pakistan, at Islamabad, is steadily reducing thanks in part to co-ordination efforts by the UNJLC airport team.
- UN Humanitarian Air Services, managed by WFP, continues to provide helicopter passenger services for humanitarian workers to the affected area. UNJLC is prioritising humanitarian cargo on UNHAS helicopters.

1. Activation and Deployment

With international staff deployed in the early stages of the emergency now being rotated out and replaced, UNJLC staff in-country has now settled at 22, comprising 18 internationals and four nationals, plus a seconded four-person military planning team from the UK's DFID, embedded Pakistani civilian and military liaison officers, drivers and local volunteers based in Islamabad.

A third of the 18 international staff are deployed directly in the affected areas covering the main UN logistical supply base of **Abbottabad** and hubs at **Muzaffarabad**, **Bagh** and **Mansehra**. More field deployments, strengthening locations already covered and adding capacity elsewhere, will follow shortly.

The three-person airport team operating at **Chaklala Air Force Base** will continue to co-ordinate incoming humanitarian air movements and cargo as long as it arrives through Islamabad's airports.

Other key activities carried out in Islamabad include **civil-military co-ordination** (vital given the leading role of the Pakistani military in the national emergency response, the important contribution of the US military, and the emerging but potentially valuable role of NATO on the ground), **cargo booking and co-ordination**, **GIS**, and **Information Management**, together with **support for field operations**.

Short-term **Customs**, **immigration** and **fuels** experts may be deployed during the month to address these aspects and provide advice to ensure that they do not develop as logistical bottlenecks as winter takes hold. The UNJLC **Core Unit** in Rome continues to provide administrative and other support to the operation.

2. Operation “Winter Race”

With snowfalls already occurring in the high valleys, the greatest humanitarian concern is the need to reach people in the remotest areas. Those in or near to the key hubs may continue to receive assistance throughout the winter by road. Therefore, a key operational priority is the race to reach those most at risk of being cut off by the winter snowfalls.

Although many affected people have come down from the higher elevations to tented camps or to stay with host communities or relatives, others are remaining in the mountains for a complex variety of reasons. Some – mainly farmers or pastoralists - do not wish to leave their land for fear of being unable to return (with land title in remote areas often being uncertain and resting on continued occupation) and a need to care for the animals which provide their livelihood. For others, life in a tented camp is culturally unacceptable or they do not wish to break up families, with the men remaining to protect homes and women and children moving to camps.

These people will have to receive assistance in-situ, generally through being supplied over the next few weeks with enough shelter, food and fuel to see them through the winter, or through arrangements to drop supplies to them regularly, weather permitting. Helicopters may be unable to land safely in these areas in winter, but sling loads may be possible.

The Pakistani military, with the largest amount of manpower and infrastructure on the ground, is taking primary responsibility for this effect, but faced with a limited number of serviceable helicopters and the high need for assistance, a team of humanitarian agencies has conceived a plan to complement this effort.

ABOUT UNJLC: UNJLC is an inter-agency facility reporting to the Islamabad-based Humanitarian Coordinator for the South Asia (Pakistan and India) Earthquake and strategically to the Inter Agency Standing Committee. Its mandate is to coordinate and optimise logistics capabilities of humanitarian organisations in large scale emergencies. UNJLC operates under the custodianship of WFP, which is responsible for the administrative and financial management of the unit. UNJLC is funded from voluntary contributions that are channelled through WFP. The UNJLC project document for the Pakistan Earthquake can be viewed at the UNJLC website (www.unjlc.org).



Although main hubs and towns in Pakistani-administered Kashmir are generally accessible year round by road, the steep mountain valleys of in the affected area are difficult to reach at the best of times. Access will be almost impossible, even by helicopter, in winter. Picture courtesy of GOAL

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), utilising logistical and operational support from UNJLC, launched a joint operation to drop small teams by helicopter into the remotest areas.

These teams will spend several days on the ground, assess the needs of the area if justified, and then move on to other areas. The teams will be able to call in the necessary supplies by air for beneficiaries they identify. Injured people may be evacuated by return flight for treatment. Areas where the teams will operate are being identified through reconnaissance and information sharing with other humanitarian agencies, and in co-operation with the Pakistani military.

The operation is still in its pilot phase but early indications are that it is effective and will provide valuable augmentation to the national relief effort.

3. UNHAS Passenger Services

The UN Humanitarian Air Services, a UN common service provided to the humanitarian community, has two Mi-8 helicopters dedicated to passenger services in the affected area. Fixed wing operations are not possible into any of the locations, with the possible exception of a small but damaged airfield at Muzaffarabad.

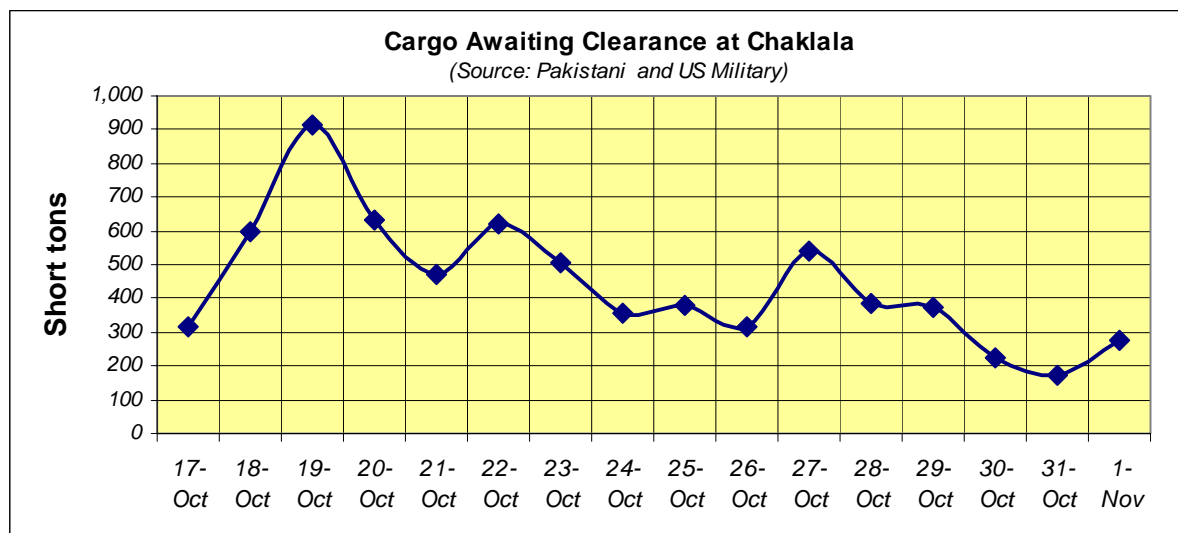
The service is free of charge generally on a first-come-first-served basis to members of the humanitarian community. First priority is given to members of UN agencies, their implementing partners and humanitarian NGO's, government organisations and international organisations, and second priority to donor officials, ambassadors and diplomatic staff accredited to Pakistan (especially from donor countries), and Pakistani Government officials. All other categories of passengers must apply for accreditation through a UN agency and bookings will have to be made through that agency.

To enable UNHAS to make the most effective use of aircraft and confirm bookings, flights will be closed 24 hours prior to departure. This will allow UNHAS to finalise the manifest and confirm seats to passengers. As importantly, in the event that passenger demand is insufficient to warrant allocation of an aircraft, it can then be retasked to important cargo missions.

Information on aircraft in use and routings is available on www.unhas.it as well as on the UNHAS Booking Office Information Line, +92 (0)301 532-3120. Bookings may be done in person or via e-mail using the booking form downloadable from the UNJLC website to Islamabad@unhas.it. Bookings by fax or phone cannot be accepted.

4. Airport Congestion

Congestion at Islamabad International Airport and Chaklala Air Force Base is steadily reducing as cargos are moved out more effectively, and as sea and land freight replaces air as the primary form of strategic transport. See graph below.



BULLETIN ENDS

Contact information and addresses: UNJLC Pakistan Earthquake is located in the WFP Afghanistan Liaison office, **House 3, Street 2, F-8/3, Islamabad** alongside **UN Humanitarian Air Services**. Fax: +92 (0)51 285-0003. A presence is maintained in the UN Emergency Response Centre, UNICEF Building, **90 Marghalla Road, F-8/2, Islamabad**.

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Detailed information on the clusters being used to manage the humanitarian response, including the Logistics Cluster in which UNJLC plays a key role, is available on www.un.org.pk. Daily situation reports from the UN Emergency Response Centre – Islamabad are available on www.reliefweb.int.