Mongolia: Dzud Disaster Response Project

Project Name: Dzud Disaster Response Project

Country: Mongolia

Project Status: Closed

Project Type / Modality of Assistance: Grant

Source of Funding / Amount: Grant 0200-MON: Dzud Disaster Response Project

US $2.50 million

Strategic Agendas: Inclusive economic growth

Drivers of Change: Agriculture, natural resources and rural development - Livestock

Gender Equity and Mainstreaming: Assistance

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy:

There is growing concern for the humanitarian impact on isolated herder families and inaccessible communities in these areas. Many herders and their families are currently in a state of despair, with their livestock looking for better pastures. According to a recent update from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), about 21,500 people from 7,700 households are in movement, out of which approximately 12,500 individuals have no access to medical assistance. In addition, about 20,000 individuals are suffering from food shortages and 9,700 families are lacking heating fuel. These households also lack access to medical treatment and facilities. Heavy snowfall and a lack of machinery to remove snow are obstructing the roads, making it difficult for assistance to reach families that live in remote areas. The situation has not improved with the arrival of spring. The number of livestock lost due to severe winter conditions has increased more than twofold during the last one-and-half months, and reached 5 million as of 29 March 2010. As it gets warmer, the removal of animal carcasses and disinfection of soil is needed to avoid soil contamination and reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The severe weather threatens nomadic herder families who are isolated and facing the risk of losing their livestock. The families exhausted their resources of stockpile food and fuel for cooking and heating and the supplies in the aimags as a whole are limited. Over 831 pregnant women are known to be among the migrating herder families in the most affected areas. The previous practice of sending 60% of them to the aimag centre for improved medical care during delivery is no longer possible. Many aimags have limited medical facilities and none in the affected areas have the equipment and trained personnel to deal with complications during pregnancy and delivery, and newborn care.

The dangerous winter conditions have led the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS) to delay a vacation, requiring children to remain in dormitories rather than face the extreme insecurity of trying to reach their families. In the most affected dormitories, children are living without heat or with limited heat. UNICEF and the MECS predict that there are approximately 22,200 children in 265 dormitories in need of assistance, with 600 children requiring urgent response. As the severity of winter conditions spreads across the country, as many as 492 dormitories will need assistance with more than 41,000 children in their care.

The livelihood of a large segment of the country’s herder population is threatened. Learning from past dzud disasters, the short- and medium-term potential impact of the dzud on the livelihood of affected herders include: (i) increased poverty for the large number of herders who lost their livestock, (ii) migration to cities in masses, (iii) increased unemployment, (iv) psychological stress, and (v) school drop-outs. It is estimated that 60% 70% of all herders own less than 200 livestock. This group is the most heavily affected by the dzud. The herders are using a variety of coping strategies to reduce their animal losses by providing hay and fodder, preparing special nutritional mixtures for weak animals, and keeping the animals inside of gers and in warm shelters. However, those strategies are not sustainable in the long run and can lead to large debts, sales of household assets, and exhaustion of people. Further strain will be placed on government budget as funds will be needed to restore livelihoods of the affected population.

Impact

The project will support herder households affected by severe winter condition in Mongolia.

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome

The project will help the Government to deliver food, fuel, and health and social services to affected herder households in remote areas and remove animal carcasses.

Progress Toward Outcome

ADB’s assistance was timely and well-coordinated. It made a significant contribution to the Government’s own efforts in mitigating dzud disaster consequences. The State Emergency Commission and National Emergency Management Agency expressed appreciation to the ADB for its invaluable contribution and heartfelt support to the Mongolian herders, who suffered during the dzud disaster of 2009-2010. Cash assistance to the most affected herders helped to support their subsistence during the most difficult time when they were unable to buy food and medicine. The assistance was very timely, coming in the spring when herders were devastated, materially and psychologically, in the aftermath of the dzud.

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs

The project consists of activities relating to the provision of life preserving services for communities affected by dzud in Mongolia.
On 19 May 2010 the Government approved the utilization of ADB grant assistance for the following purposes: (i) distribution of financial assistance equivalent to 300,000 togrogs (about $215) to each herder family that lost all of their livestock, (ii) provision of emergency vehicles to affected aimag and soum hospitals to improve delivery of social welfare and health services, and a heavy-duty vehicle for the local emergency management agencies to increase their disaster preparedness, and (iii) provision of special vehicles equipped with disinfection facilities for sterilization and disinfection of dead animal carcasses to prevent spread of human and animal contagious diseases.

Between 21 May and 8 July 2010 the Ministry of Finance (MoF), through Agriculture Departments of aimags Governor’s offices, transferred cash assistance to 8,576 herder families from 13 aimags; these families had lost all of their livestock. This targeted assistance supported livelihoods of herders who were experiencing cash shortage and had no capacity to buy food and medicine, and helped to mitigate the risk of further deterioration of livelihoods during the spring time, when the worst of the winter’s impact was felt.

A portion of the grant assistance was used for procurement of 20 emergency ambulance cars for 20 soum hospitals in 17 affected aimags. The provision of vehicles helped to increase access to health services for communities in remote areas whose access to health facilities were constrained by blocked roads, floods in the spring time, and lack of own means of transportation. In addition, 6 disinfection vehicles were procured for 6 affected aimags to sterilize and disinfect dead animals’ carcasses and prevent the spread of contagious human- and animal-borne diseases. In the future, the disinfection vehicles will be available to provide sterilization and disinfection in cases of outbreaks of diseases and other disasters.

The ADB grant assistance funds were also used to strengthen the national and local Emergency Management Agency’s capacity and to improve its preparedness for disasters. Eighteen heavy-duty minivans equipped with special communications equipment for use in disaster areas were provided to national and local emergency management departments and offices. These helped to improve communication among rescue teams during the disaster to better coordinate rescue activities and enabled them to reach the most remote areas with humanitarian assistance when needed. Local emergency management agencies will be responsible for maintaining equipment and using it for future emergency response operations.

In view of urgent needs, vehicles and equipment were firstly provided from the State Reserve Fund and its replenishment was done afterward in accordance with the Public Procurement Law of Mongolia.

The project activities were closed as scheduled on 14 October 2010. The funds were fully utilized. The MoF has submitted its liquidation statement on 6 December 2010. Within 6 months after submission of liquidation the MoF will submit audit report on the use of grant, including the imprest account and the Statement of Expenditures. The audit will be conducted by the National Audit Office of Mongolia. Upon receipt of the audit report, the grant will be financially closed.

**Geographical Location**
Nation-wide

**Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects**

**Environmental Aspects**

**Involuntary Resettlement**

**Indigenous Peoples**

**Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation**

During Project Design

ADB has been in regular contact with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Mongolia. The UN in Mongolia has adopted a cluster approach and established four clusters on (i) agriculture; (ii) survival, health, and nutrition; (iii) early recovery; and (iv) education. Each of the four clusters conducted assessments of the situation in a coordinated manner and in collaboration with the government. The office of the Resident Coordinator considers the proposed support of $2.5 million from the APDRF as appropriate, taking into account the scale and magnitude of the emergency and early recovery requirement (Attachment 2). The UN is in the process of preparing a 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan to complement the government’s post-disaster response. The amount for the proposed assistance from the APDRF was identified based on the needs requests from affected aimags and consultation with relevant government agencies, including NEMA, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, and Ministry of Health.

UN organizations ($1.7 million), Food and Agriculture Organization ($775 thousand), International Federation of Red Cross ($380 thousand), World Bank ($1 million), Save the Children Japan, and many other development partners have already extended assistance. Bilateral support from the People’s Republic of China (approximately $1.5 million), Russia (approximately $240 thousand), and Turkey is mainly covering fodder, emergency food supplies, medicines, and clothes.

During Project Implementation

Implementation of the activities has been executed in close coordination with other international agencies that provided assistance to the Government of Mongolia.

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**Responsible ADB Department**
East Asia Department

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**Timetable**

| Concept Clearance | 12 Apr 2010 |
| Fact Finding | 16 Mar 2010 to 12 Apr 2010 |
| MRM | 31 May 2010 |
| Approval | 12 Apr 2010 |
| Last Review Mission | - |
| PDS Creation Date | 07 May 2010 |
| Last PDS Update | 05 Apr 2011 |

**Grant 0200-MON**

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