



4th National Advisory Group Meeting

09 November 2017, Yerevan, Armenia

Meeting Report

Welcome note and Introduction

The meeting started with welcome note of Mr Artavazd Davtyan, Deputy Director of the Armenian Rescue Service and PPRD East 2 National Programme Coordinator. He acknowledged the achievements resulting from the cooperation with the Programme, particularly in the sphere of Host Nation Support (HNS), Disaster Loss Data (DLD) and Flood Risk Management (FRM), and expressed the hope that the last year of the Programme implementation will be used more efficiently to learn from the EU experience and good practice.

Mr Andrea Baggioli from the EU Delegation (EUD) in Armenia emphasized the importance of EU cooperation with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Countries in the field of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), particularly since the frequency and magnitude of disasters have increased. He also informed that EU started discussion within DG ECHO – Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the EC regarding the Phase 3 of the PPRD East Programme.

Mr Sergej Anagnosti, Team Leader of the PPRD East 2 Programme welcomed participants conveying the message from Mr Jean-François Moret, EU Project Manager, regarding the prospective Phase 3 noting that the level of EU commitment to Phase 3 depends on the extent to which the existing assistance offered to Partner Countries is utilized. Thus, the 4th round of NAG/CAG meetings serves as a reality check to see where the Programme implementation stands, what has been done compared to what should have been done, and to agree on how to proceed in order to achieve the objectives and the results mutually agreed and reflected in the Programme Work Plan 2016-2018 adopted by the PPRD East 2 Steering Committee in February 2016.

Mr Anagnosti gave a brief Programme overview on what has been done and what are the next steps with regard to the topics selected as priorities for Armenia back in 2015.

EU MOLDEX 2017 full-scale field exercise

Civil Protection Key Expert Mr Michael Elmquist covered the activities undertaken in the Activity Area B – Civil Protection: the civil protection training programme, table-top exercises, and the two-day full scale field exercise EU MOLDEX 2017 held in September in

Moldova, as well as the upcoming Lessons Learnt Conference which will take place in February 2018 in Prague, Czech Republic.

Mr Tigran Gidachyan, MES Exercise Focal Point and HNS Focal Point, acknowledged that success of the EU MOLDEX 2017 exercise was a result of the joint efforts of the Programme team, Moldovan partners and the teams from other countries who actively took part in thorough planning and implementation.

Mr Elmquist explained that the objectives of the exercise were to test cooperation, coordination, communication between the different country teams, as well as HNS; the only aspect of communication that was not tested in the exercise was the social media. Mr Anagnosti mentioned one of the lessons already learnt from the exercise: in both Armenia and Moldova there are customs fees to be applied to the temporarily exported/imported equipment of the rescue teams, which was waived thanks to the efforts of the both Partner Countries, and what is notable – a process of amending the legislation with regard to customs procedures for CP exercises has been initiated in Moldova. Mr Elmquist mentioned that Armenia is one of the two Partner Countries that has a 100-member INSARAG certified team (50 regular members and 50 people in reserve), however, due to budget constraints, for the purposes of the exercise only 24 rescuers from each of the 5 Partner Countries were delegated to Moldova (including the liaison officer and the team leader). In addition, the exercise focal point and the lessons learnt focal point were invited as well, thus totalling in 26 team members for each Partner Country (excluding Moldova). Mr Tiratouryan from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed that Armenia has a MoU on customs procedures signed with the UN OCHA, which is valid for real emergencies, however there are no customs stipulations for drill exercises that require taking out the rescue equipment out of the country and then back into the country. Mr Tepelikyan from the Ministry of Healthcare suggested that one of the ways to regulate this customs issue is to develop and approve a relevant Government Decree ahead of time at the exercise planning stage.

Mr Gidachyan clarified that the Armenian rescue team used air transportation to Moldova, and therefore they had to deal not only with customs, but also had to obtain a number of special permissions from the Ministry of Economy required for dual-purpose equipment, as the ATA Carnet agreement has not been ratified in Armenia¹. As one important element of the HNS, this issue will be discussed preferably during the future HNS inter-institutional WG meetings.

Host Nation Support (HNS)

Host Nation Support – Activity Area B.2 was presented by Mr Antonín Petr, Capacity Building Key Expert, who:

- specified the main steps undertaken in accordance to the Work Plan for 2016-2018;

¹ The ATA Carnet is an international customs document that permits the tax-free and duty-free temporary export and import of goods for up to one year.

- noted that at the full-scale field exercise EU MOLDEX 2017, Armenia, as the country that provided support to Moldova, had an excellent opportunity to test in practice its HNS procedures when preparing and deploying by air the Armenian rescue team;
- emphasized that the discussion of the detailed HNS lessons identified before and during the EU MOLDEX 2017 will be part of the Lessons Learnt Conference to be held on 07-08 February 2018 in Prague;
- summarized HNS achievements in Armenia and raised question how the implementation of the HNS concept in Armenia will continue.

Mr Petr also informed NAG members about the conclusions reached during the meeting held with MES HNS WG on 08 November 2017 that a Government Decree on HNS is currently under development by the MES HNS WG, and that it is expected to be approved by the end of 2018. The first draft of the Decree will be ready by 01 January 2018 and before it is discussed at the inter-agency HNS WG session, it will be shared with the PPRD East 2 expert team for comments/advice. The document will include also the HNS Standard Operating Procedures (HNS SOPs).

Mr Gidachyan mentioned as an achievement the development of the regulation on mutual cooperation of civil airports (Decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on Establishing the Procedure for Operation of the Civil Aviation Airports in Emergency Situations and Mutual Cooperation with RA State Authorities). This Procedure has been developed with the assistance of the UNDP and was approved by the Government; one of the sections of this document is dedicated to airport related HNS.

Mr Ashot Sargsyan from UN OCHA, informed that Governments of Armenia and Georgia are going to introduce similar documents in Armenia (a Government Decree) and in Georgia (an addition to the National Safety Plan), so with this regard there is a specific internationally recognized Model Act developed by UN OCHA and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society. It is based on IDRL (International Disaster Response Law) and it provides the Governments with a template how to formulate in the legal documents all the issues related to international cooperation and coordination during the major disasters, It includes requesting, receiving, and distributing humanitarian assistance and it has also roots in the HNS. This Model Act exists in English and in Russian languages, and it may serve as a basis for achieving certain legal improvements within the national legislation.

Flood Risk Management

Presenting the past activities, achievements, and future action in the area of FRM, Mr Anagnosti reminded that approximation to EU Flood Directive was set as a priority for Armenia, and for this an inter-agency working group needs to be established as soon as possible. PPRD East 2 experts are ready to provide necessary legal assistance for drafting the new relevant laws/bylaws that include the provisions of the EUFD, but the proposed

timelines need to be respected in order to achieve this objective by the end of the Programme.

The MES FRM WG representative Mr Hakobyan informed that:

- An inter-agency WG represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, State Committee of Water Economy of the Ministry of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources, the Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection has been established by MES order dated 15 September 2017.
- On 26 October 2017 a Protocol Decree of the GoA (dated 3 February 2011) has been amended to include the Water Basin Management Model Plan and its Action Plan contents in accordance with the requirements of the EUFD.

Thus, the next step will be to discuss the date for the first inaugural meeting of the FRM WG.

Disaster Loss Data

Mr Anagnosti elaborated on the rationale, current situation and recent information received, on the DLD recommended steps and proposed timelines.

The DLD Focal Point Mr Hovhannes Khangelyan commented that MES is planning to have DLD within the unified electronic management system formation. DLD requires a universal approach in assessment methodology for the entire country, and there is a need of political will and state policy, as the losses are mainly sectoral, and the MES is just coordinating the data. Often the mechanisms for loss assessment are missing. There is also a need to specify the DLD terminology and definition of losses. DLD requires regulations in the legal field that are common for different sector agencies. Also, each agency needs to have a responsible unit dealing with issues of DLD and constantly cooperating with MES.

Mr Sargsyan informed that:

- A new rapid assessment approach is already implemented within MES. This rapid assessment should take place within two weeks after the disaster and should provide rapid estimations not only on humanitarian needs, but also on sectoral needs;
- UNDP is involved in the efforts to introduce the post disaster needs assessment methodology - PDNA - which is widely used in humanitarian community, that aims at harmonization of data received from the Government and from other sources.

Mr Gidachyan informed that:

- An updated MES decree on WGs is expected to be issued soon, and it will be shared with the PPRD East 2 team.
- Respective MES colleagues will provide their feedback with regard to the proposed timelines for the implementation of DLD activities.

- Inter-agency needs assessment tool “Ariana” has been developed for Armenia with support of UN OCHA, and has been approved by MES Decree. The next step should be its practical introduction in the system.
- Within the Sendai Framework, the needs and losses assessment tools have been localized and presented to stakeholder state authorities – the Ministries and Marz (provincial) authorities.
- With the support of the WB, introduction of PDNA is in process at MES.

It has been agreed that MES will inform PPRD East 2 on the timeline needed for establishing the inter-institutional WG and generally on the MES intentions regarding DLD activities by 20 November 2017.

Raising Awareness about Disasters (RAD)

Mr Petr presented the achieved and planned activities within the area of the Raising Awareness about Disasters. MES explained that the legal framework in Armenia implies that drafting a National Strategy of any kind should be preceded by a Concept Note based on a comprehensive research². As the next step, a package of the proposed potential changes in the area of crisis communication and public awareness raising of the national DRR Strategy should be a subject of an inter-institutional discussion at an inter-agency WG. Mr Petr informed on the agreement reached at the meeting held between the MES RAD WG and PPRD East 2 team on 08 November 2017 on two possible ways ahead:

- to discuss with the MES legal department if the results of the PPRD East 2 research conducted in 2015 can be used as a research for the development of the Concept note.
- to discuss with the MES legal department if the National Communication Strategy can be developed under the umbrella of the National DRR Strategy.

The MES should explore which of these two options are feasible and consequently inform PPRD East 2.

MES will jointly with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) implement a three-year technical assistance program on “Public Awareness Network for Crisis and Disaster Risk Management”. It will mainly be focused on raising public awareness before disaster, during disaster (crisis communication) and after disaster (rehabilitation process). Within the framework of this project, it is envisaged to establish a public training awareness centres aimed at increasing the country’s resilience to disasters and ensuring sustainable development.

² By the moment of drafting this Report, an agreement has been reached by the MES that the provisions of the “National Strategy for Crisis Communication and Public Awareness in Emergency Situations” DRAFT will be involved in the National DRR Strategy. On this basis, a public awareness and information policy will be developed with assistance of the PPRD East 2 experts.

Mr Tepelikyan informed participants that it is planned to develop a National Plan for Risk Communication during Emergencies through joint efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Healthcare, with participation of other Governmental agencies and civil society organizations.

Disaster Risk Assessment

Mr Anagnosti presented the current state of DRA activities, the progress achieved, the analyses of the National DRR Strategy from DRA perspective, the DRA roles and responsibilities and recommended road map. It has been agreed that the next steps in regard to DRA activities and the acceptable and feasible timelines will be communicated by MES via email the following week (till 17 November 2017).

Civil Protection Volunteerism (CPV)

Mr Petr informed about the completed joint regional activities, as well as national activities. He mentioned that despite the fact that the CPV was not selected by the Armenian NAG as the priority, there is a good progress made in this area:

- Concept of a Law for Volunteerism was adopted by the Government in March 2017.
- Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia on Volunteer Activity and Voluntary Work was developed
- Draft Government Decree of the Republic of Armenia on Establishing the Procedure and amount of State Compensation to Volunteer Rescuers for Leaving for Emergency Scene for a Term of up to 15 Business Days within a Calendar Year was also developed.

PPRD East 2 experts provided recommendations on last two drafts.

A new MES initiative is to locate the CP units in the remote borderline regions of Armenia, where the local population can be potentially involved in volunteer activities, thus creating grassroots CPV.

It was agreed that within 3-months timeframe, MES will analyse and define the most suitable model approach for development and promoting CP volunteerism.

Possible provision of further Programme's assistance will be discussed later on, based on the model for CPV selected by Armenia and subject to Programme's resources.

ERRA – Electronic Regional Risk Atlas

In summer, a decision was made by the EU to postpone the upgrade of ERRA for the next Phase of the PPRD East Programme. The future long-term sustainability of ERRA is discussed internally within the EC between the JRC and DG ECHO. However, an IT expert will be engaged by the PPRD East 2 to support maintenance, further consolidation and interoperability of ERRA in the Partner Countries till the end of the Phase 2.

Programme Visibility and Programme Management

Mr Anagnosti briefly presented data on PPRD East 2 website, FB page and Newsletters. The 5th round of NAG/CAG meetings will be held before the summer 2018, and the Final Conference of the PPRD East 2 Programme is tentatively planned for September 2018.

Conclusions

The 4th NAG meeting was productive in clarifying the current implementation situation compared to the expected one. The NPC thanked the expert team and all the participants expressing the hope that the limited time till the end of the PPRD East 2 will be used more efficiently to undertake the planned activities and achieve the expected results.