



Situation Report - 19 (May 06 – 13, 2010) Landslide and Lake Formation in Hunza

Highlights

Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani visited Lake Barrier and Gulmit

Water has entered mouth of the spillway channel, resulting in reduction of the freeboard to 33.39 ft, according to FOCUS estimate

Gulmit village, headquarter of Gojal Tehsil, is covered by water from three sides

Length of the lake has extended beyond Gulmit (17 km), reaching the outskirts of Hussaini village

Four Emergency Information Centers are being established in Hunza – Nagar under the leadership of District Administration

FOCUS is establishing an Information Cell in Islamabad and two in Gilgit

Camp management plans have been developed as part of the preparedness mechanism developed jointly by FOCUS and government of Pakistan

All schools have been closed in Hunza – Nagar district

Background

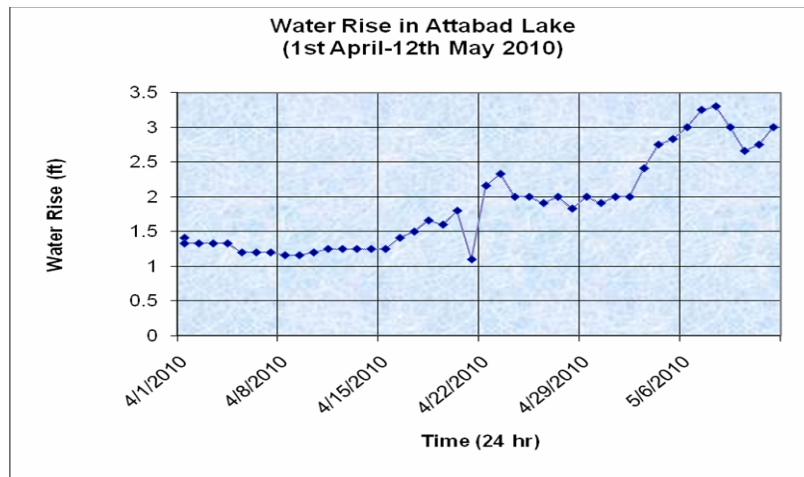
On 4th January 2010, a massive landslide in Attabad – Hunza caused loss of human lives and property and blocked flow of the Hunza River converting it into a huge lake. Some experts opine that the landslide is once in a 200 years phenomenon in this area. The landslide disaster has displaced 1163 people from Attabad while the resulting lake buildup has so far displaced around 87 households from Ayeenabad and Shishkat.

Damming of the Hunza River has created issues and challenges for over 25, 000 people stranded in the Gojal valley due to destruction of the Karakurm Highway, economic lifeline of the region. Cultivable and non-cultivable land, houses and other infrastructure are submerging in the organically expanding lake, resulting in huge loss of means of livelihood.

The lake also poses risks to low laying parts of villages along the length of Hunza River and River Indus in the downstream areas in case of a lake outburst flood.

Situation Overview

Lake Monitoring & EWS



Graph 1: Average water rise level in the lake

Water Inflow in the Hunza River has increased to **2500 Cusecs**, taking the average daily water rise to **3.33ft**. Freeboard has decreased to **33.39 ft**. If water level keeps rising at the same rate it is possible for the lake to overtop by May 22 – 30. Depth of the lake has increased to **329 ft**. Extended length of the lake is around **17 kilometers** and advancing fast towards village Hussaini.



Image 1: A new seepage has developed at toe of the spillway, discharging 8.5 Cusecs of water as of May 13

A new seepage developed at toe of the spillway. This takes the total number of seepage points developed so far to 5, including one that is inactive. Total volume of water discharge from the four active sites is around **89.4 Cusecs** and increasing on daily basis.

Pakistan Army has established optic fiber link between Attabad and Karimabad as part of the Early Warning system. It could be linked with the CCTV camera installed by FOCUS.

It was agreed during a recent meeting that Deputy Commissioner of Hunza – Nagar would be the legal authority to trigger the early warning sirens in case of flooding of the lake formed on Hunza River. An emergency information cell has been established at Karimabad under the leadership of DC.

The first house was dismantled in Gulmit during the reporting period.

A joint risk assessment was conducted in Gulmit by FOCUS and PWD. According to the assessment around 33 households are at risk of submergence in Gulmit. Two market areas are also at confirmed risk.

The local people are evacuating shops, hotels and houses, shifting their belongings and families to safer locations.



Image 2: An under construction house getting submerged in the lake water in Shishkat Payeen

Army Chief, Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, visited Gojal valley and the lake barrier, to oversee the excavation process as well as meet the affected people. He was briefed by FWO officials about the excavation work. The Army chief said that his institution would provide maximum support to the affected people.

An awareness – raising session was held for the community at Aliabad Central Jamatkhana about the potential lake disaster.

The government will decide final dates for evacuating downstream population. Professor David Petley has said that the lake might spillover by 24 -25 May. The government has set the probable spillover date for May 29 – June 4.

FOCUS Pakistan has mobilized staff from Chitral, Karachi and Islamabad to Gilgit and Hunza for taking part in the potential flood response efforts. SART Chital has also been alerted for reaching Gilgit to part in Search and Rescue Operations as well as evacuation efforts, if required.

All schools and colleges have been ordered closed in Hunza – Nagar for the period starting May 15. Many of these schools will be used to house potential IDPs.

Debris Removal Progress

Excavation of the lake barrier continued during the reporting period with the help of dozers and excavators. Volume of the excavation work is not available.

Gojal Valley Relief Situation



Image 3: A portion of the KKH was submerged in lake water between Gulmit and Ghulkin

A meeting was held at Shishkat with local communities, participated by RC Hunza, and local community members. The meeting discussed possibilities of construction of shelters for the IDPs of Shishkat and Ayeenabad.

FOCUS Pakistan provided food, like Flour, Rice, Cereals, Cooking Oil etc. and non – food relief for IDPs in Ayeenabad and Shishkat. AKF helicopter made one sortie, dropping relief items at Shishkat whereas food relief for 100 families was stocked at Shishkat and Gulmit.

Boat services remained operational in the upstream areas during the reporting period, hindered at time by rains and wind.



Image 4: Critical infrastructure has been destroyed across Hunza Valley already

Coordination Committee Meetings

With Commander Force Command Northern Areas (FCNA)

A meeting was held with Major General Qamar.J. Bajwa, Commander FCNA, in Gilgit to discuss Hunza disaster situation and joint response mechanism. President NC, Chairs of FOCUS, AKPBS, VC AKF, CEO AKF and FOCUS attended.

It was informed during the meeting that Pakistan Army will take over the disaster response and the civil administrations and NGOs would be made part of the mechanism. It was also agreed that from AKDN side FOCUS would lead in disaster response and coordination with FCNA. The focal persons would be Col. Mehmood from FCNA and Nusrat Nasab from FOCUS.

Evacuations of vulnerable downstream communities will start after May 15.

Medical facilities, health, hygiene, water and sanitation would remain the prioritized need and the Army expects AKDN to contribute for filling in the gap.

More life jackets will be provided for upstream passengers.

Army will deploy special battalions from May 13 in the target areas and timely evacuation of people will be ensured.

Army will also conduct household survey.

With District Administration

The AKDN representatives lead by President NC held a coordination meeting with the district administration of Hunza – Nagar to review the preparedness measures and define roles and responsibilities. It was informed that the Deputy Commissioner of Hunza – Nagar would be the legal authority to trigger early warning sirens, declaring outflow of water from the lake formed on Hunza River. It was also shared that Emergency Information Cells will be established at four locations, 1) Aliabad, under AC Hunza, 2) Sikandarabad, under AC Nagar, 3) Gulmit, under an additional AC to be deputed and 4) Karimabad, under DC Hunza – Nagar.

Evacuation of vulnerable communities and the establishment of IDP camps in the region based on risk assessment were also discussed reviewed during the meeting.

With RC (Hunza & Gilgit)

Two separate meetings were held with RC Hunza and Gilgit to review the disaster situation and the response plan. Representatives of all AKDN agencies participated in the meeting held with RC – Gilgit.

With AKPBS

FOCUS Pakistan held a meeting AKPBS to review the list of safer place and camp sites and to plan for provision of water and sanitation facilities at the proposed IDP camps.

Information Updates:

For information updates please contact Focus Humanitarian Assistance, Islamabad Office at Tel: 051- 2294051/24 Address: H-335, Sawan Road (Main double Road) G-10/3, Islamabad.

Photographs Credit: FOCUS Pakistan