PRESS RELEASE

MEDIA BRIEF ON DROUGHT LIKE SITUATION IN THARPARKAR

Islamabad, 7th March, 2014 – There are reports of water stress and drought like situation in Tharparkar. However, it has also been highlighted by the Government of Sindh that this is an annual phenomenon when Kolhi and Bheel communities migrate during wheat harvest season with their cattle to irrigated areas for farm labour. NDMA’s interactions with Rehabilitation Department Sindh, PDMA Sindh and DC Mithi indicate that the situation is not as grave as being reported by some quarters. So far deaths of 23 children have been reported at Mithi District Hospital in the month of February but the same are not being attributed to drought according to the health official. NDMA is closely monitoring the situation in the affected area in Tharparkar. PDMA Sindh and Punjab were kept constantly updated on development of drought like situation in all areas likely to be affected including Cholistan, Khairpur and Tharparkar. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) National Drought Monitoring Centre (NDMC) in its report of January, 2014 had stated that significant rainfall had not been recorded over Southern Punjab, and Sindh Regions and water stress and drought like conditions had been reported over Khairpur, Cholistan and Tharparkar districts. In addition, it was further predicted that regional meteorological conditions depicted no significant rainfall in southern parts of the country including Sindh that could help terminate drought conditions. This information was shared with all concerned for necessary mitigation measure.

On 28 February 2014, the Relief Department Sindh has notified entire District Tharparker less few areas as Calamity Affected Area. Accordingly, Government of Sindh released Rs 77 Crore for Food Assistance package. These wheat bags have been procured and distribution of wheat bags has commenced in the affected area. Initially some distribution problems were faced which have now been generally resolved.
At present, NDMA is in constant touch with Provincial Authorities on the current developing situation in all affected areas especially in Dist Tharparkar and has offered all assistance to PDMA Sindh and Rehabilitation Department of Government of Sindh. A team of NDMA officers, under Brig. Mirza Kamran Zia, Member Operations, in consultation with the Government of Sind would complete ground assessment of situation to suggest additional measures, if needed. NHEPRN (ex Ministry of Health Services) has been activated to streamline response related to health and nutrition sectors. Water and fodder situation in area is also being monitored closely through District Administration to mount appropriate response as per the needs.

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