



By Staff Sgt. Marelise Wood  
Combined Security Transition Command --  
Public Affairs

# ANSF, MoPH team up for disaster preparedness

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- Members of the Afghan healthcare community gathered recently at the National Military Hospital for the first-ever seminar on emergency disaster preparedness.

The seminar gave members the opportunity to discuss various healthcare topics as well as participate in an emergency disaster table-top exercise scenario.

The surgeon general in his welcoming remarks addressed the need for preparation.

"It's usual that plans are made after disasters in Afghanistan," said Maj. Gen. Ahmad Yaftali. "But disasters happen all of a sudden and we need to make plans before they happen."

He brought attention to a recent flood in the southwest region that devastated the area as a perfect example of why a plan and coordination among agencies is critical.

"In making plans, we have to ensure that the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Afghan Red Crescent Society, and the Afghan National Security Forces work together in a coordinated effort," said General Yaftali. "This will help us have a strong, effective response and avoid the waste of resources, time and capabilities."

ANA Chief of Operations Lt. Gen. Sher Karimi also addressed the group and set the tone for the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Marelise Wood

**Lt. Gen. Sher Karimi, ANA chief of operations, addresses the seminar attendees.**

seminar.

"Today's workshop is held to have a coordinated plan in order to respond better to disasters," said General Karimi. "I want participants to put emphasis on: establishing a national-level committee with representatives from different organizations to respond better to emergencies and contingencies; correctly computing capabilities of different organizations; providing contact information for the different agencies; and establishing working committees at the provincial level."

With such emphasis being put on working as a team, it was only fitting that team work be put to the test. This came in the form of a table-top scenario that chal-

lenged the group with handling an earthquake and subsequent cholera outbreak in Kabul.

"Afghanistan is geographically predisposed to natural disasters like earth quakes, floods, droughts and cold winters that breed epidemics and other disasters," said Nadera Hayat Burhani, deputy minister of public health. "That's why it's especially important that we come up with a comprehensive plan that we can implement not just for Kabul, but in the entire country."

The seminar was attended by over 75 people from 20 different agencies including the MoPH, Kabul Fire Department, Kabul Police Department, and Kabul Ambulance Service. 