

**LCG Sub-group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER)  
Cyclone ‘SIDR’ (November 2007)  
Minutes of the Special Meeting held on November 18, 2007**

Dr. Mohammad Ayub Miah, Secretary-in-Charge, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management and Chair, DER sub-group, chaired the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex A. A table of response commitments by different agencies is also attached as Annex B.

**MAIN POINTS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**

**Situation Update from the Government of Bangladesh:**

The Chair Dr. Mohammad Ayub Miah gave a brief picture of devastation to the cyclone SIDR in the coastal belt of Bangladesh. He mentioned that as many as 20 districts were affected by the cyclone including coastal areas of South-west on Thursday night. It killed about 1814 lives and inflicting injuries to many others. The highest number of deaths reported in Bagerhat is 610. The death toll is increasingly going upwards. Thousands of houses have been demolished, standing agriculture crops were damaged and a large number of trees uprooted. SIDR caused a big damage to the beauty and biodiversity of the Sundarbans, a place of World Natural Heritage. Road communications in the affected areas were disrupted as ferry boats and pontoons had either been damaged or displaced due to the strong wind. Telecommunications with the cyclone ranged districts were disrupted. The Government took adequate precautionary disaster preparedness programmes well ahead of the hit of the cyclone. The cyclone preparedness committee, the Inter-ministerial Committee on Disaster Management and National Council on Disaster Management hold meetings within a short time and gave necessary instructions to the concerned government and other agencies for taking necessary steps as per the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD). A total of 2,168 cyclone shelters were opened and at least 1.5 million people were evacuated from the more vulnerable areas of the coastal districts within a very short time. More than 42,999 volunteers were engaged to motivate and help people to move to shelters. The Government of Bangladesh quickly responded to the situation and took the following measures:

- The members of the Defense Forces were deployed to start rescue operation and immediate relief activities.
- The helicopters of the Air Forces began ferrying relief supplies to offshore island for the last two days.
- The five gun boats of Bangladesh Navy have been engaged in relief operations.
- About One hundred million taka was allocated as gratuitous relief and house building grants in 11 affected districts from the Chief Advisor’s Relief and Welfare funds.
- More than 4000 MT of rice, 5000 pieces of tents, 17,000 pieces of blankets and Tk.30 million as gratuitous relief grants have been allocated from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.
- Further Tk.30 million is being allocated as house building grants from special fund.
- 13,000 bundles of CI sheets are ready for immediate distribution to the affected areas.

The Government has identified 12 districts including Bagerhat, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur, Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Madaripur, Goplaganj, Shariatpur, Khulna and Satkhira as the severely affected districts. The worst affected upazillas as identified by the Government

includes: Shoronkhola and Morelganj at Bagerhat district, Kalapara, Galachipa and Mirjaganj at Patuakhali district, Amtali and Patharghata at Barguna district, Bhandaria and Mathbaria at Pirojpur district and Kathalia at Jhalakati district. More upazillas could be added to this list if the situation warrants.

According to the Government, the most pressing needs of the cyclone affected people are food, safe drinking water, shelter, clothing, blankets and baby foods. The Government of Bangladesh is ready to welcome any assistance to be offered by the development partners and friendly countries to help the cyclone affected people. They will also appreciate if any agency or country would extend their assistance for implementing cyclone rehabilitation programmes.

The priorities as identified by the Government are: a. Food grain for Gratuitous relief, VGF, Food for Works programme, Test relief programme (200,000 MT), dry food, clothes, house building grants, tents, blankets etc.

Government has categorized the needs of the affected people in three categories. Present, Medium and Long term needs. The present needs include: burial of dead bodies (currently being done by the Joint forces and local administration), resource operation being done by joint forces and local administration, restoration of communication especially roads and telecommunications and immediate relief items like baby food, pure drinking water etc. The medium term needs are: shelter, tent for temporary shelter and house building, cloths and food programmes like VGF, TR, FFW etc. And the Long term needs are agricultural rehabilitation, roads/embankments/houses reconstruction, cyclone shelter building etc.

### **Situation Update from the UN agencies, Donors and NGOs:**

**UNICEF:** The representative from UNICEF was concerned about the safe drinking water facilities for the cyclone affected people. The Chair replied that the urgent need now is ready to use bottle water, water purification tablets, water treatment plants and sinking of deep tube wells. GoB is mobilizing resources and they welcome any assistance to be provided to the Government from the development partners, international agencies, NGOs etc. In answer to a question raised by a participant, the Chair replied that the Government is not yet to seek international assistance and they can only consider this once the final assessment of the damage is completed.

**WFP:** The representative wanted to know the number of distribution figures. In answer, the DG, DRR said that 3000 VGF cards have been allocated for 12 worst affected districts for 3 months. The Chair also said that if any development partners would like to extend their assistance in terms of import of food they are welcome to do so.

**USAID:** The representative from USAID wanted to know the in-country current food stock to meet the short term need. The Chair replied that due to flood, Bangladesh already is experiencing food deficit. GoB has a plan to procure food grains from outside. He also mentioned that procurement of rice from outside is becoming increasingly difficult. India has put some embargo in terms of procuring food grains from there. GoB need is 200,000 MT of food grains. He also informed that there is a shortage of 1 million MT of food grains due to the

damage of the standing crops. But he also said that at present the in-country stock is sufficient enough and comparing to last year the situation is quite stable. Till the month of March and April it could be a problem but in May when the Boro crop will be harvested then the scenario will be changed.

**DFID:** The representative from DFID wanted to know how easily the emergency relief reaches the affected people. And also they got an impression from the media that the affected people are not getting the relief. In reply the Chair replied that the media can exercise their freedom. And in terms of statistics, it is difficult to get the correct figure. He mentioned District Administration and Upazila Administration as the two most realistic sources of information in terms of figures etc. And others can use their own sources which might be contradictory to the government figure. He also mentioned that they have been instructed by the senior body to circulate press releases every two hours from the Control room. They are keeping close and continuous contacts with the fields. DFID congratulated the Government for their excellent preparatory measures taken before the cyclone hit, and they appreciated their quick and professional response. They informed that they will donate 5 million USD through the UN system for emergency relief.

**SIDA:** They wanted to know if the Government of Bangladesh is going to go for an appeal to the international community and if they do they should do it sooner. The representative also mentioned about the issue of better coordination towards effective and timely response.

The Chair also agreed that coordination is an important issue in terms of effective response. He mentioned that MoFDM is the focal point for all cyclone response related coordination. The meeting reached in a consensus that all efforts should be coordinated by MoFDM. Secretary-in-charge informed the meeting that a 03 members committee comprising of Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam, Joint Secretary (Food), MoFDM; Mr. K H Masud Siddique, Director General, Disaster Management Bureau and Dr. Aslam Alam, National Programme Management Expert, CDMP will coordinate government and NGO efforts under the direct guidance of the Secretary-in-Charge.

**UNRC:** The UNRC expressed her deep condolence for the affected people and also the Government of Bangladesh. She also congratulated the Government for their excellent and well coordinated preparatory measures. She informed that the UN OCHA is going to donate USD 7 million for emergency response.

**WFP:** WFP representative informed that they have initially distributed around 20 MTs of High Energy Biscuits as an immediate response to Khulna and Satkhira. They have moved out 80 MTs HEBs in the most affected districts including Barguna, Patuakhali, Perojpur, Barisal, Jhalakati, Khulna and Bagerhat. Furthermore they have finalized the distribution planning of 100 MTs of HEB. They also have a plan to distribute rice to the affected people. He also informed that WFP is exploring the option of rice rationing with the Government. He also said that five WFP assessment teams are now out in the fields to do the assessment. And also 12 persons from four UN agencies (WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP) are also in the fields doing the joint initial assessment of the situation and also to identify the potential needs (immediate, medium and long term) of the cyclone affected people.

**UNICEF:** The UNICEF representative informed that they have made available 5.3 million water purification tablets at the DPHEs for each affected districts. They have also provisioned for Tk.200,000 at the DPHEs as part of the emergency response. They will also concentrate on the protection of women and children as well as education.

**FAO:** The FAO representative informed that they will do the crop assessment and strongly feels that both immediate and medium term recovery support is needed for the affected people.

**UNDP:** The representative from UNDP informed that they are providing dry food, 18,000 tripols, 240,000 water purification powder to 70,000 affected families in 12 worst affected districts.

**WHO:** The representative from WHO informed that they are closely working with the Ministry of Health and have engaged 259 doctors in the cyclone affected areas to provide immediate support to the injured. They have a buffer stock of emergency medicines of USD 1.5 million stored at the Civil Surgeon's office, Central Medical Sore Depot and Upazilla Health Complexes. They have also informed that an emergency surveillance team is working with the Government to monitor any outbreak of diseases.

**CIDA:** The representative from CIDA informed that they will provide limited support to the Government of Bangladesh for response in a coordinated manner.

**JICA:** The representative from JICA said that they will provide different relief items including tents, blankets, sleeping bags, water tanks, generators, water purification tablets, jerry cans, plastic sheets worth of USD 390,000 by end of this week. They also requested the UN agencies to submit project proposals regarding relief operations that might be considered by the Japanese government for funding. And also she informed that Japanese government could consider providing loans or grants for long term rehabilitation programmes for the cyclone affected people.

**AUSAID:** They will make their formal announcement tomorrow regarding immediate response assistance.

**Spain:** The Spanish government has donated 500,000 Euros as emergency response.

**USAID:** The representative from USAID first expressed their deep condolence on behalf of the US Government. They informed that they are closely monitoring the situation. They are providing fresh water to the affected people through their partner NGOs. Four water treatment plants are in the Chittagong port awaiting customs clearance. As soon as this is done, these will be installed at the worst affected districts. They have also donate 2.1 million USD for relief response. They will also give 35 MT of rice from Dubai. In addition to these, they informed that the US military are closely working with the Bangladesh Military to identify the immediate needs of the affected people towards effective response.

**CDMP:** The representative from CDMP expressed his concern regarding the logistical arrangements of transferring relief to the affected people. He emphasized on the fact that more coordination is needed between armed forces and civil organisations. DG, DMB to organize logistics management meeting with the Armed Services division shortly. He also requested all

to provide information to the DMIC Control room so that they can deliver the information in a timely fashion.

The Chair concluded the meeting with a thank you speech to all. He particularly thanked all to attend the meeting in such a short notice. He was happy to know the feelings of all the agencies towards the cyclone affected people. He also thanked the members for their generosity and assistance for the relief operations.

The next DER meeting will take place this Thursday, 22 November 2007 at 12:00 noon at the MoFDM Conference room (Building 4, 1<sup>st</sup> floor).

## **Annex A**

### **ATTENDANCE LIST of DER Meeting held on 18 Nov 2007**

<b>Organisations</b>	<b>Sl</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
GoB	1	Dr. Mohammad Ayub Miah	MoFDM
	2	Mr. K H Masud Siddiqui	DMB
	3	Mr. Sadaruddin Ahmed	DRR
	4	Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam	MoFDM
	5	Ms. Mohsena Ferdousi	MoFDM
	6	Mr. Md. Jahangir Hossain	DRR
	7	Mr. Ian Rector	CDMP
	8	Mr. Masud Bin Momen	MoFA
	9	Dr. Aslam Alam	MoFDM
	10	Dr. A K M Asaduzzaman	MoFDM
	11	Mr. Sirajul Huq Talukder	ERD
Donors	12	Mr. Peter Duncan-Jones	AusAid
	13	Ms. Tahera Jabeen	CIDA
	14	Mr. Chris Austin	DFID
	15	Mr. Johny Sarker	DFID
	16	Mr.Bo Sundstrom	DFID
	17	Ms. Akemi Yoshida	Embassy of Japan
	18	Mr. Kentaro Yokota	JICA
	19	Mr. Sayedul Arefin	JICA
	20	Ms. Ola Hallgren	Embassy of Sweden
	21	Mr. Ashek Ahmed	Embassy of Switzerland
	22	Ms. Sue McIntyre	OFDA, USAID
	23	Mr. Carey Gordon	USAID

	24	Ms. Shahnaz Zakaria	USAID
UN	25	Mr. Ad Spikers	FAO
	26	Mr. Mare Belleneus	FAO
	27	Ms. Renata Dessallien	UNRC
	28	Mr. Rune Brandrup	UNRC
	29	Mr. Manoj Basynat	UNDP
	30	Mr. Md. Tarik-ul-Islam	UNDP
	31	Mr. Louis-Georges Arsenault	UNICEF
	32	Mr. Zulfikur Ali Khan	UNICEF
	33	Mr. Towhid Alam	UNFPA
	34	Mr. Dan Caspersz	UN OCHA
	35	Mr. Markus Werne	UN OCHA
	36	Dr. Khaled Hassan	WHO
	37	Mr. Douglas Broderick	WFP
	38	Mr. Malik Kabir	WFP
NGOs	39	Mr. Chitta Ranjan Biswas	CARE Bangladesh
	40	Mr. Frido Merinck	MSF Holland
	41	Mr. Nurul Amin Bagmer	Islamic Relief
	42	Mr. Farid Hasan	Oxfam GB
DER Secretariat	43	Ms. Meher Nigar Bhuiyan	DER Secretariat (WFP)

**Annex B: Relief operations and resource commitments from UN agencies, donors and NGOs**

Agency	Amount	Remarks
UN OCHA	7 million USD committed	
UNDP	-Flattened rice and molasses covering 70,000 families in 12 worst affected districts -240,000 packets water purification powder -18,000 sheets of tripol	
WHO	259 medical doctors at the cyclone affected areas  Buffer stock of emergency medicines of USD 1.5 million	Emergency Surveillance team working closely with the Government to monitor any outbreak of diseases.

WFP	98 MT HEB covering 600,000 people in 8 worst cyclone affected districts. Additional 100 MT HEB distribution is underway.	
UNICEF	5.3 million WPTs and Tk 200,000 cash at DPHEs	To provide limited support in a coordinated manner
FAO	Crop assessment to be done	They have requested UN agencies to submit their project proposal to them for Japanese Government's consideration.
AusAid		To be announced next day
Spain	500,000 Euros committed	
USAID	2.1 million USD from OFDA for relief committed. 35 MT rice from Dubai on the way	US military closely working with Bangladesh military to identify possible needs towards effective coordination
Islamic Relief, International NGO	3 million pounds committed	

*Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat*