

Save the Children

Cyclone Response - Emergency Situation Report # 2 (Nov. 16 – 4:30 PM)

A super Category 4 storm, Tropical Cyclone SIDR hit Bangladesh at approximately 6 PM Thursday Nov.15,2007. The storm (measuring 350 miles in diameter) first struck at Hiron Point in the Sundarbans area of the Kulna Division, immediately adjacent to Barisal where Save the Children has extensive programming¹. An estimated 17 Districts from the Divisions of Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong were the most effected (3 in the Sundarbans; 6 in Barisal and 8 in Cox Bazaar and Chittagong). Approximately 3 million people were evacuated prior to the cyclone reaching landfall.

Though the intensity of the storm diminished as it hit the Bangladesh coast it remained a severe tropical storm throughout the night. Reports from Save the Children staff located in the impact area are incomplete as access is difficult particularly in Patuakhali and Bhola. Initial perceptions are that despite being of similar intensity and duration to the Bhola Cyclone of 1971, loss in human lives presently appears (fortunately) to be low thanks to early warning, preparedness and timely evacuation. Nonetheless there is expectation that damage has been severe in the outlying rural areas to both crops and infrastructure.. Save the Children in coordination with local authorities has dispatched 19 Upazila assessments teams to evaluate damages and needs. Partial information from the **Barisal District Relief Rehabilitation Office** (this is only one out of six Districts in the Barisal Division) is cited at the end of this report.

More specifically, initial reports from Save the Children's program area report 137 deaths (22 Barisal, 105 Patuakhali and 10 Bhola). (NB: These figures are as yet unconfirmed and only include estimates for 3 of the 17 Districts in the coastal impact area). Power has been out since yesterday afternoon and is not expected to be reestablished for some time². Staff also report extensive water logging. Save the Children's Disaster Preparedness teams reported that there are over 100 cyclone shelters in the Barisal Division but information about quantities of people or projected lengths of stay has not been received. It should be mentioned that many are in rundown conditions without appropriate access to water or sanitation or other basic amenities. Save the Children is exploring additional shelter options should the situation merit. Last night officials from the Government of Bangladesh reported allocating monies to purchase food for the affected populations.

Specific steps taken to date to assess and respond to the emergency include:

- An Emergency Management Committees, comprised of SC and GoB staff (and located in each of the areas where Save the Children is operational) met yesterday (15 Nov.) and the teams are now conducting preliminary post-cyclone assessments 11 Upazilas (out of a total of 38 Upazilas in the Division). The isolated island of Manpur in Bhola district is expected to have some of the worst

¹ Save the Children, which has been operational in Bangladesh since 1972, has been working in Barisal for over two years as part of a USAID Food Security Program. Save the Children currently has offices in Barisal, Bhola Island and Patuakhali and approximately 200 staff on the ground.

² Though communications with cell phones is still possible to many areas, due to damage to telecom infrastructure, we have not yet been able to reach emergency response staff on Bhola Island

damages and is being prioritized. Staff are traveling both by road and by waterways (conditions permitting).

- Senior Save the Children staff possessing prior experience in similar types of emergencies have been deployed to the coastal areas to assist response activities as required. They are bringing an additional water purification plant, 5 dewatering pumps, 2 zodiac boats and 2 water tanks. All have been provided on loan from CARE.
- Preliminary arrangements have been made with the World Food Program (WFP) for provision of high energy biscuits (HEB). WFP has an existing stock of 100 MT of these biscuits near the impact area in the town of Jessore. Each identified beneficiary will receive 15 packets (75 gm each) of HEB as 3 days supplementary ration.
- Emergency equipment (e.g. zodiac boats for conducting assessments and search and rescue, ambulances for evacuation and 1 water treatment plant provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) is already deployed in strategic locations in the impact area and is currently being utilized to support relief operations. Distribution of 10,000 emergency Non-Food Item (NFI) kits is expected to begin today. The kits are comprised of plastic sheeting, water containers, rope, soap etc).
- An additional 1500 blankets and 10,000 water tablets will be dispatched to the impact area later today.
- Though communication has been disrupted, cell phones remain reliable. SAT phones (as back-up) are in place in Barisal, Bhola Island and Patuakhali. (Numbers are available upon request).
- Save the Children has also been in contact with the International Center for Diarrhea Disease and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) who have indicated their support (i.e. provision of ORS packets) and other medical support should public health conditions (e.g. cholera outbreak) deteriorate.

For further information please contact Kelland Stevenson, Country Director for Save the Children by e-mail KellyS@savechildren.org or Margarita Clark, Deputy Country Director at clarkm@savechildren.org or cell 0171-301-2974.

Initial damages reported from the **Barisal District Relief Rehabilitation Office** include:

Damage to 85 unions and 5 municipalities

Affected area: 670 Sq Km

Affected population: 350,000

Deaths: 22

Housing: totally destroyed 30,700; partially 50,800

Livestock killed: 580

Damaged school: 2,015

Damaged mosques: 2,900