

SIDR Cyclone Bangladesh 2007

UN SIT REP # 5

Dhaka, Bangladesh 21th of November 2007

Situation

A super cyclonic storm (category 4) moved north through the Bay of Bengal and hit southern Bangladesh at 7:30 pm on 15 November with wind speed reaching 220 km/h. It continued northward causing extensive damage, especially to the country's southwestern districts.

More than 6 million people in 30 districts have been affected by the storm. Latest official reports indicate 2,942 killed, 28,188 injured and 1,724 unaccounted for. The death toll is expected to increase further. Material damage is severe, with 1.4 million acres of crops damaged, 2.5 million trees felled, 458,804 homes completely destroyed and another 665,529 partially. Over 360,000 livestock are confirmed killed. Damage to public building also widespread, with 1,780 educational institutions totally damaged and some 5,700 partially. Some areas are still inaccessible, but more road and communications lines open up as clearing operations progress. On Wednesday, newspapers reported acute drinking water shortages in inaccessible areas.

The 12 hardest hit districts are Bagerhat, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur, Barisal, Jhalkhati, Bhola, Mandaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Khulna and Satkhira.

Government of Bangladesh Response

Preparation efforts before the storm are judged to have contributed to a significant reduction in the loss of life and destruction of property. Measures included evacuation of around 3 million people, the use of over 2,000 cyclone shelters, and stockpiling of foods, medicines and other relief equipment. Before the cyclone made landfall, radio and loudspeaker announcements were advising the population to seek refuge in the shelters.

The Chief Adviser has allocated 138 million taka for relief and house construction in 11 districts. Deputy Commissioners are procuring and collecting sufficient amount of dry food to face the current situation. So far, MoFDM has allocated 7,070 metric tons of rice, 7,500 tents, 18,000 blankets and 30 million taka as gratuitous relief grants. A special fund is allocating 350 million taka for house building grants. 13,000 bundles of CI sheets are ready for immediate distribution.

While more roads are opened, the military continued to bring relief items to the affected people by planes, boats and helicopters.

As the cyclone hit on 15 November, the Government called a meeting of the Disaster and Emergency Response group. A large number of UN agencies, NGOs and some donors participated. A new meeting of the Disaster and Emergency Response group was convened for Sunday, 17 November. Many donors pledged support to the Bangladesh Government and there was widespread support for having relief efforts coordinated by the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. The next meeting of the Disaster and Emergency Response group meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 22 November, at 12:00 noon.

In a statement on Monday, 19 November, the Government said it welcomed assistance from the international community, as before, through the Bangladesh government, to help mitigate the effects of the disaster.

International Response

A UN team of 12 experts has performed assessment of areas affected by storm and will report on their findings Thursday. UN Heads of Agencies visited the worst affected districts Monday, 19 November, to gain first hand knowledge of the situation. They met assessment and relief teams and confirmed that UN relief is reaching the farthest corners of the affected area. They also noted that material damage was severe, but varied between areas, and that there were indications of small-scale economic recovery.

In coordination with the Bangladesh Air Force, the UN is distributing 208 tons of high-energy biscuits to help 850,000 cyclone victims. 240,000 packets of water purifying powder are reaching 48,000 families. Shelter materials (thick polyesters) will be distributed to 18,000 households whose houses have been destroyed. Partners have started distribution of dry food (flattened rice and molasses) to 70,000 affected families from Sunday. Medical officers have been made available to assist Government response, including 4 for coordinating central response. 60,00 family kits, tube wells, 100,000 Jerry cans, \$ 1.5 million for medicine, 92 MT baby food, 100,000 blankets, 60,000 family kits, 60,000 childrens cloths, 50,000 plastic sheets will be procured and distributed. 50,000 USD has been made available for water and supplies and transportation. More relief will be made available following initial determination of needs.

The UN Disaster Management Team met on 16 November to coordinate response and assessment, and to take early stock of the situation. With the assistance of a mission from OCHA's Regional Office in Bangkok, UN agencies have submitted project proposals to the Central Emergency Response Fund, and further applications are being prepared. Proposals include food aid, water and

sanitation, nutrition health and agriculture. The UN Resident Coordinator has discussed the establishment of donor coordination, cluster group with chair of the Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) group of the local consultative mechanism. He is expected to make an announcement on this at the next DER meeting on Thursday 22 November.

The following donors have pledged or committed to make relief contributions: Saudi Arabia (USD 100 million), European Commission (USD 9.6 million), CERF (USD 9.0 million), United Kingdom (USD 5.2 million), Canada (USD 3.4 million), Norway (USD 3.35 million), Australia (USD 2.8 million), United States (USD 2.1 million), Germany (USD 1.8 million), Netherlands (USD 1.4 million), Spain (USD 1.1 million), China (USD 1 million), India (USD 1 million), Denmark (USD 950,000), France (USD 735,000), Ireland (USD 721,000), Republic of Korea (USD 500,000), Japan (USD 317,000), Switzerland (USD 160,000), Czech Republic (USD 80,645), Estonia (USD 46,045). Reports of further pledges from Kuwait (USD 10 million), Sweden (USD 2.7 million), Belgium (USD 2 million), Libya (USD 1 million), New Zealand (USD 378,000) have not been confirmed by the UN.

In addition, the World Bank has offered to make up to USD 250 million available, depending on financing needs and what other donors will contribute.

Conclusion

The Government of Bangladesh, the UN, and other actors are taking action to aid the cyclone's victims, but the humanitarian situation remains dire. More precise data on damages and needs will be available on Thursday, as UN assessment teams report on their findings. Earlier assessments indicated that the most urgent needs concerned food, clean water supply, diarrhea treatment and shelter assistance. The longer term perspective calls for rehabilitation of livelihood, infrastructure, health and educational services and increased shelter capacity.

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