

Cyclone Sidr Bangladesh Situation Report 4 22 November 2007

Deaths (officially confirmed as of 22 November)	2928
Affected districts	Severely affected: 9 Moderately affected: 17
People affected	5.4 million
Families affected	1.3 million
Household damaged	Over one million
Displaced people	1.5 million
People injured	27,058 (+)
Missing people	2000 (+)
Government primary schools affected	496 destroyed 2110 damaged
Croplands	Destroyed 62076 hectares Damaged 665,124
Loss of livestock	352,363
Trees uprooted/felled	1.6 million
Roads	Severely damaged 538 km Partially damaged 87,948
Bridges and culverts damaged	1654
Ferries damaged	28 (out of 44) – 13 restored
Electricity lines/wires damaged	703 km

LATEST UPDATE: A SIDR-STRUCK ECONOMY

A week after the devastating Cyclone Sidr, affected people continue to struggle to rebuild their homes and lives, trying hard to find a roof to live under. The relief operations by the government, the UN and NGOs are going on full swing. Assistance has reached most parts except a few remote and inaccessible areas.

Deeper analyses of the extent of damage and losses have revealed a profound damage to the country's economy. The cyclone brought an extra burden to the country's sluggish economy, which had already been hard hit from the beginning of the fiscal year by two rounds of floods, inflation of essential items. Economists advised the government to subsidize foodstuff for the ultra poor at least for the next four months, and also to review the budget by December to prepare for the economic challenge.

The effects may imperil food security at the household - and macro-levels and compel the government to spend a greater amount of foreign exchange to import food -grain to meet the huge shortfall, it is predicted.

In the affected districts and down to villages, however, small scale economic activities are picking up as a way of recovery for people who are in need for cash.

The cyclone dealt a severe blow to the Sundarbans, one of the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO world heritage site severely damaging 25,000 -30,000 hectares i.e., 6 - 7% of the forest and partially affecting 70,000 – 80,000 hectares i.e., 17 -20% of the forest . With an estimated 1.6 million trees uprooted, the long term negative impact of the cyclone on the environment is yet to be gauged.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

The government has arranged for the relief items arriving at the International Airport in Dhaka to be shipped directly to the districts for distribution.

International Communication Cell has been made operational at the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.

The DER meeting chaired by the Secretary was held this afternoon where an assessment of the extent of losses and damages and details of the government's actions, national and international support and donor commitments were announced.

The government is administering actions and using support on the basis of the immediate/short term, medium term and long term needs identified earlier.

While the government clearly welcomes aid and relief from friendly countries and organizations and needs and assessments are regularly shared with them, the government is reluctant to declare a national disaster and send an all out appeal for aid. This position is taken in view of the government's coordination capacity and to prevent unwarranted pressure on the system and the control mechanism, as related by the Adviser for Information.

AID FLOW

Different countries and organizations are pledging humanitarian assistance to meet the emergency needs of the cyclone affected people. Major pledges and support include US\$250 million from the World Bank. The Government of Saudi Arabia indicated an aid amount of US\$100 million and additional relief items for the cyclone victims.

India has come forward with a US\$36 million aid – of which US\$10 million has been given as cash assistance. The \$22 m food assistance includes 20,000 ready -to-eat meals, 40,000 tons of rice – of which 10,000 to arrive within the next days; 10,000 tons of wheat and 1,000 tons of powdered milk. Also, 10,000 blankets, 400 tents and medicine and medical equipment.

Two C-130 aircrafts carrying relief items arrived from Pakistan, and two more are on the way one carrying facilities for a 30 -bed hospital. A ship carrying relief materials will soon leave Pakistan for Bangladesh.

Increasing number of countries and organization are taking actions and making pledges for assisting Bangladesh through the crisis.

UN RESPONSE

The Barisal offices are being turned into UN Hub for emergency coordination and response.

The joint UN technical assessment team has submitted a consolidated report from the four group's visit to the worst affected districts and recommended immediately gear up relief efforts in life saving relief food assistance, shelter, sanitation, water, medical facilities, deploying adequate human and material resources, reconstruction of infrastructure and so on. The assessment also suggests improved early warning, risk analysis and mitigation, contingency planning, capacity building, coordination and establishment of community disaster learning centres.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF will continue to support government efforts in coordination with UN agencies and NGO partners. The response is being coordinated at different levels through the internal Emergency Task Force, UN Disaster Management Group and the larger Disaster and Emergency group.

With the winter chill gradually setting in, children require urgent life -saving assistance in the form of medical supplies, food, warm clothing and shelter. As part of non -food assistance 100,000 blankets, 60,000 children's clothes, 60,000 family kits (containing 14 essential items) and 60,000 plastic sheets are being procured for use in the affected areas.

WES

There are some critical problems with water supply in the coastal areas which traditionally rely on surface water. These sources have been contaminated with saline water and debris and there is a major technical challenge in providing alternative sources. In addition there is damage to household sanitation facilities. Poor access to water and sanitation puts children especially at risk of diarrhoeal diseases which can be life-threatening. Fast action is needed, but also the response may need to continue until the surface water sources can be replenished by rains, which are not due for another 6 months.

- Paul Edwards, Chief, Water & Environmental Sanitation, UNICEF Bangladesh

- UNICEF moved two mobile water treatment plants to affected districts that are currently operational, two more are on their way to other districts.
- DPHE (Department of Public Health Engineering) is using UNICEF cash assistance to buy jerry cans from the local market and to repair water points.
- DPHE has also been using materials from the stock pre-positioned by UNICEF, mainly tubewell items to reactivate water points.

Health & Nutrition

The cyclone has predisposed thousands of children and women to increased risk of illness and death due to malnutrition. Of the estimated 4 million people affected, half are children and one eighth, 600,000 are under the age of five. The cold weather and vulnerability to cold, hunger, trauma, diarrhoea and other communicable diseases will increase many folds unless urgent life -saving assistance is provided to the children and women.

- Dr. Iyorlumun Uhaa, Chief of Health & Nutrition, UNICEF Bangladesh

- Ministry of Health made drugs available in district reserve stores and Central Medical Store Department (CMSD) for immediate needs and response , including UNICEF supplied drugs .
- 92 MT BP5 biscuits have arrived and are moving on their way to districts for distribution directly from Chittagong port.
- UNICEF will procure blended food to provide children in affected districts for three months.

Education

About one million primary school age children have been affected by the cyclone. About 600,000 children, who were enrolled in primary school, are currently not having their classes as their school buildings are destroyed.

- Nabendra Dahal, Chief of Education, UNICEF Bangladesh

- UNICEF Education has engaged in coordination with the government and partners including Save the Children Alliance, BRAC, Plan International, WFP and others to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the damage.
- The aim is to help children return to studies with minimum disruption by reestablishing teaching learning activities in temporary learning spaces.
- Academic year coincides with the calendar year in public schools, which will end in a month. Books and supplies are planned for the next academic year.
- In possible longer term assistance to refurbishing damaged schools, a building back better approach may be possible in coordination with the government and partners.

Protection

We are receiving information on children who lost one of both parents to the cyclone. The separated and unaccompanied children are living without care, security and support facilities. These children are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In other cases, it is hard for the affected families that lost everything to adequately care for children.

- Aissa Sow, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF Bangladesh

- Rapid assessment for identifying separated, unaccompanied and distressed children undertaken with NGOs. Children identified are registered with the local government.
- Ten child friendly spaces have been made operational in three worst affected districts.
- Over 1900 recreational kits are being made available of which 300 are already being utilized in the spaces.
- Psychosocial sessions will be part of the planned activities.
- Referral to specialized agencies and support to integration with families will be part of longer term intervention.

Funding

UNICEF immediately deployed regular resources in the relief and response operations, and meanwhile received US\$ 2.7 million from CERF.

Government of Japan and AusAid have confirmed support to UNICEF's cyclone response activities.

The immediate needs (pitch) document is ready to be released. A week into the emergency, the Bangladesh Country Office has taken stock of the situation and is thoroughly analyzing the main focus of programme response and estimated funding needs.

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