

**LCG Sub-group on Disaster and emergency Response (DER)**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Co-Chairs:** Masud Siddiqui, DG, DMB and Edward Kallon, Country Representative (Acting)

**Venue:** DG, DMB Conference Room (First Floor)  
Tran Bhaban, 92-93, Mohakhali, Dhaka

**Date:** 7 May 2008

**Agenda: 1**

- Monsoon preparedness and Lessons Learnt follow-up:

Four priority actions expected to significantly improve preparedness:

- i) Identify most flood prone districts/upazillas
- ii) Prepare baseline data based on key critical variables, e.g:
  - Percentage and number of the poor (total population and Rural/ urban)
  - Percentage and number of extreme poor (total population and Rural/ urban)
  - Children under 5 and under 2 (nutrition intervention)
  - Percentage and number of pregnant and nursing women
  - Female-headed households
- iii) Compile inventory on collective relief response items e.g:
  - Food: the number of Local Storage Depots (LSDs): storage capacity & stocks
  - Health: ORS and other essential medicines
  - Water: status and number of tube wells, WPU's and WPT's
  - Shelter: location, numbers, capacity and condition of flood & cyclone shelters
- iv) Revisit Rapid Assessment and Response Capacity Mechanisms: review the conditions that would trigger rapid response and critique the existing data collection instruments, Rapid Initial Report (RIR) developed by DER and the Form-D developed by GoB for assessing initial damage.

Four key questions regarding rapid response:

- i) What is crucial to be done?
- ii) Who is willing to do what?
- iii) Contents and format for a rapid response relief items (contingency stocks & pre-positioning inventory / database)
- iv) What is needed to augment capacity?

**Major concerns raised:**

- i) 2007 flood experience reveals structural failure of river embankments: as many as 75 river embankments collapsed. Experts within the hydrology community (i.e. Bangladesh Water Development Board, CEGIS and their work on modeling river bank erosion, EMIN project, etc...) should give DER a better understanding of embankments status and vulnerabilities for 2008 Monsoon flooding. Embankment status inventory would be very useful.
- ii) Disaster Management Bureau's (DMB) flood monitoring and information and situation reporting (i.e. DMIC sitreps) can further be improved through technical assistance from other members.
- iii) Transportation (particularly roads and water) along with market infrastructure (e.g. whether corrugated iron sheets, shelter materials and other relief items are available in the local market) and procurement capacity needs to be assessed to improve preparedness and response.
- iv) Damage and Needs Assessment processes (data collection, analysis, reporting) needs review and strengthening
- v) GoB and NGO staff need refresher courses / training regarding when and how to best utilize revised data collection formats for rapid assessment of damages and needs.
- vi) Preparedness at the district level needs to be strengthened after consensus on priority flood prone areas. DER members could be utilized for DMC capacity strengthening re: preparedness and response.

**Agenda: 2**

- Update on shelter situation six-months after cyclone Sidr: Shelter Working Group, UNDP

Post 'Sidr' shelter situation, shelter programming, major achievements, concerns and challenges were presented.

**Major concerns raised:**

- i) Shelter programming was planned but not completed before the monsoon. Currently, the onset of monsoon has made implementation difficult. Only 285 shelters were built against 77,228 shelters planned.
- ii) Shelter assistance plans should be feasible and implementable during an emergency situation. Contingency Plans need to better incorporate / address issues regarding shelter assistance.
- iii) Government of India soon will start building 2,685 houses as committed for the cyclone victims. The work will start before the onset of monsoon and continue during the monsoon season. Planning is at the advanced stage of approval.
- iv) Each donor agency needs to come up with a status as to where do they stand against pledges and what is to be done by GoB to facilitate.

### Agenda: 3

- DER structure for improved disaster preparedness and response
  - i) Smaller DER working groups/ clusters need to be created to improve preparedness and response.
  - ii) Re-establish working groups / clusters in initiating action for preparedness and response as follows:
    - Food
    - Shelter
    - Health
    - WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)
    - Education
    - Information Management
    - DER Operations and Co-ordination Group (cross-cluster)
  - iii) Each team would identify gaps to improve preparedness and response capacity.
  - iv) Each team will follow-up on relevant sector assessments
  - v) Permanent working groups/ clusters should exist in non-disaster periods with emphasis on preparedness and capacity building.
  - vi) Sidr working groups / clusters already exist. New permanent DER clusters should build on Sidr working group / cluster experience.

#### **Action Plan:**

- i) DER Chair with support from DER Secretariat should convene a meeting / workshop with Sidr working groups / cluster heads and GoB cluster representatives / focal points with the objective of how best to go forward with coordination, establishments of permanent DER working groups/ clusters etc.
- ii) Strong GoB leadership is crucial for each of the working groups / clusters. It is noteworthy that Bangladesh is ahead of neighbouring countries in terms of disaster preparedness and response.
- iii) The UN's OCHA office in Bangkok has offered to hold a Cluster Orientation Workshop for high level GoB officials and other stakeholders (i.e. DER/ IASC members. Comment: Needed and useful but might require weeks of preparation. In-country stakeholders should act sooner, i.e. take initiative regarding the re-establishment of DER working groups/ clusters for monsoon preparedness.

## Way Forward

- i) Action: Start working on Flood Risk Maps  
Volunteers: DMIC (GoB), WFP
- ii) Action: Baseline data using GoB BBS, WFP VAM, UNICEF etc.  
Volunteers: GoB DMIC, WFP, UNICEF, Swiss Red Cross
- iii) Action: Inventory of Relief Items  
Volunteers: WFP, UNDP, WHO, Swiss Red Cross
- iv) Action: Review of the process and capacity of Rapid Needs Assessment tools. A permanent Needs and Damage Assessment Cell in DMB is being planned with possible assistance from World Bank.  
Volunteers: WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, GoB

A cross cutting sectoral approach is required despite the agencies having their own mandates for quick response and better coordination. A positive initiative by GoB after Sidr is the list of focal points from all relevant ministries being sent to MoFDM for better coordination.

As a starting point, consensus needs to be reached on DER generic working groups / clusters regarding disaster preparedness and response.