

Emergency meeting of the DER Sub-Group

20 October 2005

Ms. Rehana Banoo, Manager, DPR section, WFP chaired the meeting. The participants introduced themselves. The attendance list is attached as Annex A.

MAIN POINTS COVERED AT THE MEETING

1. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting:

- DER Group special flood meeting (10 October 2005):

The minutes of the previous special flood meeting was circulated to all in this meeting and was adopted without any modification.

2. Information sharing and awareness:

- Update on food access situation based on RIR/agency reports (DER Secretariat)
- Inputs from the group on current situation (Participating Organisations)

Ms. Rehana Banoo informed all that the DER secretariat worked on a food focused analysis based on the available information received so far from different agencies including GoB. This shows the current food situation in the flood-affected areas in the Northern region.

Mr. Malik Kabir briefed on the current status of the food situation. DER Secretariat has summarized current information on floods in the northern part of Bangladesh found in Rapid Initial Report (RIR) forms and in different NGO reports. Based on that, they prepared a one page summary report along with a bar chart. The table mainly contains affected upazilas in affected districts along with affected population and relief assistance provided/committed by GoB and NGOs. The bar chart was prepared taking values from that table to facilitate the decision making process of whether a balancing situation exists between the number of affected population in a district and relief assistance provided by GoB and NGOs. It is observed from the report that GoB is taking the lead role in providing necessary assistance to the flood victims along with a few NGOs who have already started their relief operations.

It was summarized from the presentation that where the population is higher the food distribution is relatively higher and where it is minimum the food distribution is also minimum. John concluded the presentation by saying that DER secretariat tried to summarise what is known in terms of the numbers of the affected and the amount of food aid distribution among the affected population. He said that in general the amount of food distributed seem to be roughly in line with the numbers of people affected. This bar chart is also useful in terms of quick identification of areas where more information is needed. He also cited an example in this regard. From the bar chart it shows that in Rajshahi small number of people are being affected and a medium amount of food distributed and if this scenario is compared to Dinajpur it is seen that quite a few more people are being affected but food distribution is similar. This bar chart is meant to identify potential areas where there might be imbalance between needs and assistance. Ms. Rehana informed all that this

analysis has not considered the government VGF allocation across the country rather only considered the govt allocation in relation to flood.

Mr. Awal of UNICEF said that it was difficult to get the real picture of the overall situation as different NGOs, medias have given different pictures. Ms. Rehana also informed that for food and water/sanitation DER secretariat has received consistent information.

Mr. Anthony of RDRS seeked clarification on the term 'affected'. He questioned that if flood water is in the house for 2/3 days do we call them affected. Ms. Rehana said that the magnitude is 3 to 4 days. Mr. John mentioned that affected does not equate with 'in need of assistance'. Ms. Rehana again stressed on the point that the local coping capacity of the community should not be undermined or ignored as discussed in the last emergency meeting. Ms. Rehana also said that DER secretariat has worked on these 11 districts as these have been considered as the worst affected by the DER group.

At the end Mr. John requested all the NGOs to check if DER secretariat has missed out anything.

BRAC:

Mr. Tapan Jumar Brahma of BRAC informed that they have distributed dry food, medicines to Naogaon, Joypurhat, Gaibandha and Dinajpur. Ms. Rehana asked that if they think that these four districts are worst affected or because they are working there. He said that BRAC thinks that all these four districts are badly affected and 2 upazilas of Dinajpur are badly affected as well. And that is why they have provided assistance in these four districts.

OXFAM:

Mr. Kasier Rejve from Oxfam informed that they mainly focused on the indigenous people living in Naogaon and Rangpur and provided 7 days package, cash for work at Naogaon and in one upazila at Rangpur.

Islamic Relief:

Mr. Md. Mosatak Hussain of Islamic Relief informed that they would start their relief operation from 22/23 October to four, three and five upazilas of Jouypurhat, Naogaon and Gaibandha respectively. Ms. Rehana questioned if IR and BDRCS sat together regarding relief distribution in specific areas as discussed in the previous meeting. He said he would provide the information later.

BRAC, Oxfam and IR are to share their updated information with regard to relief operations with all the DER members through DER secretariat.

Ms. Dilruba Haider of UNDP suggested looking into the longer-term impact of this untimely flood as most of the crops have been washed away as reported by different agencies and some of these are monsoon prone areas. The survival of the people in future has to be considered rather than looking only into the immediate relief needs. John mentioned that this is a bigger issue of ongoing livelihood monitoring. He stressed on the need for ongoing monitoring and also insisted that our focus should not be limited to specific events only.

Ms. Rehana suggested that a more detailed discussion could be done on this issue in any of the next DER meetings.

Mr. Awal of UNICEF said that in the current situation people are somehow trying to cope with the situation but it will worsen in the next 2/3 weeks time and this time munga will be prolonged and the people of Naogaon who have not faced munga before will experience this as crops have been totally damaged due to this untimely flood this year.

Ms. Rehana said that probably DER as a group could mainly focus on the worst affected areas as they have many information. She also said that DER could work in a more organized way to gather more information and could be ready with their own understanding, thoughts, analysis of the current flood situation. But to expedite this process DER members have to be more supportive in information sharing process. DER could think of desk review and analysis to be done not only at Dhaka level but also at field level. DER could think of sectoral groups to sit down together to review the overall situation. This is one way of doing the review but still field level information is very important.

3. Possible further action:

- Desk review and analysis of available information
- Sectoral information needs
- Field assessment by small multi-agency teams in severely affected districts

Mr. Monzu Morshed raised two issues. One regarding the NGOs distribution of non-food items like ORS, housing, clothing etc and the second one is the overall impression of the NGOs if they should rush to the affected areas with immediate relief or they should look into the medium or long term relief assistance.

Mr. Rejve from Oxfam said that some parts need immediate food and non-food assistance. Some parts also need medium or long-term assistance in terms of their house reconstruction and others.

Dr. Rafiq of UNFPA informed that the nutritional status of the pregnant and lactating mothers would be affected. He also informed that they have contacted all the district offices to provide their support if needed but till now they have not received any response from them.

Ms. Rehana said that so far agencies have done their respective assessment. To have a comprehensive picture and better understanding of the overall situation, multi-agency field assessment can be done in small assessment teams for worst affected areas. Mr. John said that before sending out the teams to the field it would be worthwhile to know the very specific information needed. To make the assessment effective, the teams need to review all the available information including RIR, individual NGOs report etc.

Mr. Awal of UNICEF said that we can start with the response activities on the basis of the available information as time is passing fast and to him sending out teams to the fields will

be time consuming. He suggested to have consultation with the DIFPs again if there is any contradiction on any particular issue. He also said that some of the DIFPs are not sure of how to use the RIR forms and in what situations and some are also waiting for the revised version of the form. Ms. Rehana said that in the orientation sessions it was clearly mentioned that they should not wait for the revised version and if the situation warrants they should start using the form to collect information. She also informed that the latest version of the RIR form incorporating the suggestions have been circulated to all DER members.

Ms. Dilruba of UNDP asked if the reports that have been received are sitreps or assessments. Rehana said that some are sitreps and some are assessments. But she said that teams would be using the RENA form when they will visit the fields.

Ms. Wahida of AAB informed that they people at Naogaon mainly now requires food. She also informed that they would send another team to Naogaon Sadar as they could not go there last time due to transportation problems.

Ms. Rehana asked if DER is to do desk review on this including people outside the sector or would they do field assessment. The members agreed to do field assessment. After some discussion members agreed to see Gaidbandha, Naogaon and Joypurhat the three worst affected districts. Some also suggested to see partially Rangpur and Nilphamari districts.

This will be a multi-agency task to derive medium term and long term requirements in particular locations and will be done in collaboration with interested agencies like DIFPs, local NGOs etc. Who will go in which locations can be decided by e-mail. The team should start Sunday or Monday next week.

Mr. Latif of CDMP suggested including government counterparts in the assessment teams. Dilruba again reminded all to look into the medium and longer term requirements rather than short-term requirements. Ms. Wahida from AAB suggested to consider the winter season while doing the RENA exercise. The duration of the field visit will be maximum 3 days and 3 teams will be visiting the selected 3 districts.

DER secretariat would analyse the collected data/information of these teams. Ms. Rehana said that desk review can also be done simultaneously with field assessment if some agencies are interested.

4. Knowledge base and time series data bases:

Mr. John McHarris presented on the knowledge base and time series databases. His presentation mainly focused on capturing the past events using the time series databases. He presented on the issues, which requires historical perspective to better understand the current events. This will contribute to better decisions and responses and can help to monitor, prepare, and prevent the situation leading to less suffering of the affected people. For this, collective effort of the DER members is required. He also presented the EM-Dat and Dartmouth Flood observatory website and what sort of information is available there. He also informed of the other relevant sources of information, which includes, MoFDM, BMD,

FFWC, CEGIS, IWM, AFID, NGO networks, DER working group and sharing and complementing govt, DMB, CDMP etc.

The next usual DER meeting is on Wednesday, 16 November 2005 at 2 pm.

Ms. Rehana finally concluded the meeting with thanks to all DER members.

ATTENDANCE LIST
DER Emergency Meeting held on 20th October 2005

Organizations	Sl	Name	Organization
GoB	1	Mr. A Latif Khan	CDMP
Donor	2	Ms. Ailsa Gaunt	DFID
	3	Ms. Shahnaz Monir	SDC
	4	Ms. Shahnaz Zakaria	USAID
UN	5	Mr. Md. Azad	IOM
	6	Ms. Dilruba Haider	UNDP
	7	Dr. Rafiqus Sultan	UNFPA
	8	Mr. Abdul Awal	UNICEF
	9	Mr. John Mcharris	WFP
	10	Ms. Rehana Banoo	WFP
	11	Mr. Monzu Morshed	WFP
NGOs	12	Ms. Wahida Bashir Ahmed	Action Aid
	13	Mr. Sifayet Ullah	Action Aid
	14	Mr. Tapan Kumar Brahma	BRAC
	15	Mr. Rubaiyat AUMI	Christian Aid
	16	Mr. M A Wahed	Concern
	17	Mr. Bazlur Rahman	IIRD
	18	Mr. Md. Mostak Hussain	Islamic Relief
	19	Mr. Kaiser Rejve	Oxfam
DER Secretariat	20	Mr. Anthony D' Cruze	RDRS
	21	Ms. Mariko Hattori	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	22	Mr. Malik Kabir	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	23	Ms. Roushan Ara Begum	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	24	Ms. Meher Nigar Bhuiyan	DER Secretariat (WFP)

Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat