

Meeting of the DER Sub-Group

24 November 2004

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Douglas Casson Coutts, WFP Representative.

The attendance list is at Annex A.

MAIN POINTS COVERED AT THE MEETING

Minutes of Previous Meeting (08 Nov 04):

- No changes were requested to the minutes of the following previous meetings:
 - Special Meeting to brief the Flash Appeal Review Team (01 Nov 04)
 - DER Sub-Group / Workshop Organising Committee (08 Nov 04)
 - Special Meeting on 'Monga' 2004 (10 Nov 04)

Weather forecast and any new emergency situations and response:

- It is possible that a cyclone may move into the Bay of Bengal by the end of the month, around 28 November, but it is more likely to hit Orissa in India.

Overall national food security situation during the current 'monga' season, and review of the conclusions of the DER Special Meeting on 'Monga':

- The DER Secretariat and 11 other DER participants, including DRR from the GoB and the World Bank, participated in a special meeting on 'Monga'. The draft meeting report was prepared and disseminated for comments. Any additional comments must be provided immediately as the Final Report will be sent to DER members by the end of the week.
- Not enough help is currently being given to the affected region. Sand deposits across the land, low wage rates, migration of male members to urban areas leaving wives alone with children and no support, have all resulted in great hardship that needs relief. GK has been providing some support for approx. 3,000 families and has some more aid pouring in.
- No additional assessment has been carried out but the consensus decision reached at the special DER meeting was that the 'monga' is worse this year due to the impact of the flooding, and it will also last longer than usual. As few new resources can be expected, existing resources need to be reprioritised and shifted to the 'monga' affected districts.
- The Chair stated that he would share the DER 'Monga' Report with the ambassador group as well as the full LCG, as the impact of numerous repeated disasters on the hard-core poor had been so severe this year. He thanked the DER Group Members who participated in the meeting and the Secretariat for pulling together the report so quickly.

Update on progress towards the DER Flood 2004 Lesson Learning Workshop:

- The lead facilitator, Mr. Sanaul Mustafa, will distribute a revised schedule shortly.
- The venue is not the Elenga Complex, but the Jamuna Resort also in Tangail, and 70 rooms reserved for participants.

The venue has subsequently been changed to the BRAC Centre for Development Management (BCDM, formerly Training and Resource Centre – TARC) in Savar, Dhaka.

- Participating agencies will bear their own food and accommodation costs, but WFP will provide subsidies as needed so that no invited participant is unable to attend due to financial constraints. WFP also provide transportation if required, for the same reason.

With the change of venue to BCDM, WFP will be able to cover the cost of food for all.

- Participants are expected to attend the entire workshop and not just singular sessions, as attending only part of the workshop will diminish its effectiveness and detract from the desired outputs. The workshop's duration is as short as it can be to cover the agenda.
- Confirmation of attendance from agencies is expected by today. A reminder will be sent and final confirmations must be received by next week.
- If there were any other queries from members about the workshop content or organisation, then they were invited to participate in the Organising Committee meeting to follow immediately after the main DER Group meeting

The Organising Committee met immediately after the main DER meeting. The notes from this meeting are attached at Annex B.

Recap on DER thematic working groups' tasks for 2004/2005:

Mariko Hattori gave a PowerPoint presentation on: 'How we can develop and strengthen the DER through its 3 thematic working groups (WG) and its sectoral working groups'.

- ***Inter-Agency Multi-Sectoral Assessment WG:***

The DER Group has conducted three major assessments over the course of the year and built considerable capacity in the process. The challenge is now to consolidate these gains.

- ***Gender and Disasters WG:***

The Gender WG has no specific TOR, nor has it been very active. Only one meeting has taken place – the meeting minutes were shared with LCG Gender Sub-Group for information exchange and feedback. Good practices should be promoted.

- ***Earthquake Preparedness WG:***

The TOR of the Earthquake Preparedness WG may be revised.

- ***Sectoral Working Groups:***

Six Sectoral Working Groups were created to coordinate information sharing and emergency response by DER Members during the floods this year: Health & Nutrition, Water & Sanitation, Food & Agriculture, Shelter & Non-food Relief, Education & Protection, Economic Recovery & Infrastructure. These had proved their value as a coordination tool, but they were no longer meeting and the question was how to institutionalise this approach

Discussion:

- The 3 thematic WGs should continue meeting on a regular basis and look at the needs in their respective areas. However, in most cases they have not been functional since the last workshop. For example, meetings scheduled by the Earthquake WG were always cancelled as the group members could never find a time when all of them were available. Nevertheless, there are many earthquake preparedness initiatives going on out there.
- USAID had organized one meeting of the DER Gender WG, which many people attended, but that was some time ago (23 Jul 03). The LCG Gender Sub-Group are looking at incorporating a gender/disaster taskforce into their 2005 annual plan. USAID would be interested in being involved in such a WG but not as lead agency as they do not currently

have a gender adviser. There are three levels of activities; some aimed at the LCG Gender Sub-Group, some at individual agencies, and some at the DER Gender and Disasters WG. The considerable work done in this area should be collected and shared.

- The Sectoral Working Groups were created to facilitate the management of the flood response, and there was some discussion on what their role should be now. It was agreed that they should be incorporated in the DER Group's response guidelines and developed further in 2005 as a tool to prepare the groundwork for future disaster response. The DER Facilitators Group was tasked to consider how to do this, perhaps through a fourth WG.
- The Chair suggested that all the WGs and their roles should be institutionalised, but that this will have to be done slowly. The DER Secretariat will convene meetings to reinstate the different WGs inviting anyone who is interested to attend, including previous members/participants. New lead agencies can then be chosen to run them, backed-up by the DER Secretariat, which will catalyse and organise the process.

The Secretariat will convene a meeting of the Gender and Disasters WG on Wed 22 Dec 04. The next meeting of the Earthquake Preparedness WG will take place in Jan 05.

Any Other Business:

- MFDM had met recently to consider the CDMP, and how it could coordinate an update of the Standing Orders on Disasters. DER is invited to participate in the process and can add value as many issues are not currently included, for example risk reduction rather than just response. The Ministry expects that this should be completed by the end of January 2005, as the aim is to take it to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction the same month.
- DRR was asked about the Bangladesh Country Situation Report for this conference in Kobe. They expect to receive a copy soon, which they will share with the DER Group.
- People are suffering more this year because of the severe floods and then the 'monga'. They have consumed fewer casualties than usual and are in weakened state to resist the 'cold-wave' which can be expected in December and January. There is no scientific basis for believing that there will be lower temperatures than usual, but this is not the point. The 'cold-wave' is an effect at household level, and this year people will face great discomfort and be more susceptible to diseases and other threats. Planning needs to be done now or the critical time to derive maximum utility from any relief will be missed. If it is anticipated that the needs will be greater this year, are there enough resources? Some NGOs have stockpiles – but many others do not.
- Some members questioned whether the DER Group should be concerned with the 'monga' and the 'cold-wave' phenomena. The Chair emphasised the DER Group's important roles in information dissemination, advocacy, and fundraising through press interviews. Some agencies are still continuing with their post-flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. Many things other than food will be needed, such as blankets, clothing and shelter, if there is a severe 'cold-wave'. Agencies should consider expanding their existing operations, as agencies such as WFP shifted resources to 'monga'-affected districts at the request of the Government. However, NGOs pointed out that the heavy demands on their resources this year had depleted them severely and they had very little left to give.
- Effective mechanisms should be put in place to pre-empt both the 'monga' and the 'cold-wave', before they take effect, basing the response on previous experience of 20+ years of response to these phenomena. For instance WFP used to provide 'monga'/lean season training but it has not been run this year. One problem is timing. The Government fiscal year starts in July and funds are allocated for Cash-For-Work (CFW) programmes but work cannot start till the land is dry (in December), by which time the 'monga' is already over.

The interventions needs to be more coordinated in their timing and more sustainable, because similar problems recur and the same people have to be assisted year after year.

- Although integrated development programmes in these areas have had limited success, and people in rural areas do know about floods, cyclones, and cold, but they can still benefit from new knowledge to protect themselves, such as the use of the layer principle in clothing, and better insulated houses.
- The Chair asked DER Members to continue to watch the ‘cold-wave’ issue. Members agreed that they should decide for themselves how they can best address different aspects of this problem. For instance UNDP should consider implementing CFW to coincide with the worst months, ensuring that the work is not delayed by slow disbursement of funds. The Government (DRR) has already rebuilt its relief stocks in the most threatened areas, and has started providing CFW so that people can make their own choices with the cash.

Next DER Meeting:

- The DER Gender and Disasters WG will meet on Wed 22 Dec 04 at 1400 hrs, in the UN meeting room on the 17th floor of the IDB Building. All DER Members will be invited to this meeting, in order to revitalise this WG.
- The next full meeting of the DER Sub-Group will be on Wed 05 Jan 05 at 1400 hrs, in the UN meeting room on the 17th floor of the IDB Building.

DER Sub-Group Secretariat

09 December 2004

ANNEXES

A Attendance List

B Notes from DER Lesson Learning Workshop Committee Meeting, 24 Nov 04

Annex A**ATTENDANCE LIST**

Serial	Name	Organisation
1	Mr. Monzu Morshed	CARE
2	Mr. Abdul Latif Khan	CDMP
3	Mr. Md. Nojibur Rahman	CDMP
4	Mr. Ashutosh Dey	Concern
5	Mr. Sameer Abd al-Wahid	IIRD
6	Mr. Nurul Amin Bagmer	Islamic Relief
7	Mr. Sanwar Ali	Oxfam
8	Ms. Paola Siragusa	Oxfam
9	Mr. Zahid Hussain	Save the Children UK
10	Ms. Shahnaz Zakaria	USAID
11	Mr. Sadrul Ameen	USAID
12	Mr. Rafiqul Islam	HEDS
13	Mr. Maksudur Rahman	World Vision Bangladesh
14	Mr. Nawshed Ahmed	UNICEF
15	Mr. Douglas Casson Coutts	WFP [DER Chairperson]
16	Mr. Charlie Higgins	WFP [DER Secretariat]
17	Ms. Rehana Banoo	WFP [DER Secretariat]
18	Ms. Mariko Hattori	WFP [DER Secretariat]
19	Ms. Nazria Islam	WFP [DER Secretariat]
20	Mr. Malik Kabir	WFP [DER Secretariat]

Annex B

NOTES FROM DER WORKSHOP COMMITTEE MEETING, 24 NOV 04

Venue

- Ms. Rehana Banoo reported on her visit to the Jamuna Resort at Bhuapur, Tangail, and the suitability of the conference facilities and accommodation. She reported that they had quoted Tk. 1,600-2,000 per room per night, and Tk. 2,000 for food, which is expensive.
After another visit to the Jamuna Resort, Ms. Rehana Banoo searched for alternative locations and the final choice for the venue is the BRAC Centre for Development Management (BCDM, formerly Training and Resource Centre – TARC) in Savar, Dhaka.

Participation

- About 50% of those who participated in DER meetings and assessments over the summer have been invited. The Secretariat needs to receive all replies by Wed 1 Dec at the latest.

Facilitation

- Although Mr. Sanaul Mustafa had been engaged as lead facilitator for the workshop, he had not yet signed a contract with WFP. This was therefore the highest priority. He was responsible for finding a co-facilitator, but had not been successful yet.

Workshop Schedule / Content

- Mr. Charlie Higgins circulated and presented his updated version of the workshop schedule. Some useful suggestions were made but the committee endorsed the overall approach and content, including the timing of 2½ days.
- Mr. Sanwar Ali suggested that one of the outputs of the workshop should be a clear DER recommendation as to the minimum acceptable standards for relief across the different sectors, as the SPHERE Standards have set a benchmark internationally. As the ‘Code of Conduct’ was also on the agenda, members should ask themselves how far they follow it.
- Targeting is not such a vital issue as the DER Group is not an agency, but it is important for it to support DER Members to conduct their targeting, through defining ‘best practice’.
- Ms. Rehana Banoo suggested that gender should be one of the major cross-cutting issues. The needs of other groups that are particularly vulnerable in disasters, such as the disabled and the elderly, should also be considered. Governance was another cross-cutting issue.
- The committee agreed that amongst the most important functions of the DER Group were advocacy, awareness-raising and knowledge sharing, and they must be improved.
- The issue of understanding DER and its role, and the expectations placed upon it by different stakeholders, was expected to generate considerable discussion.

The third draft of the schedule would be circulated to the committee by 5 Dec 04.

Logistic Arrangements

- A note with the practical arrangements would be sent to participants by 6 Dec 04.

Next Meeting

- It was agreed that the committee did not need to meet again before the workshop, and it should be able to handle any issues immediately by e-mail.