

**LCG Sub-group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER)
Minutes of the Meeting held on August 2, 2006**

Mr. John McHarris, Adviser, DPR section, WFP chaired the meeting. The participants introduced themselves and the list of participants is attached as Annex A.

MAIN POINTS COVERED AT THE MEETING

1. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 July 2006:

The minutes were adopted without any modification.

2. Situation Monitoring and Update:

Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh: It informed about river erosion in Jamalpur. A number of 1200 persons have been displaced and taken shelter in nearby schools and other locations. Local government is providing money to the affected population. Some local political leaders are also responding. Concern has not yet started their response actions in that affected district.

Mirpur fire:

Concern further informed on the recent fire that broke out at Mirpur affecting around 2000 families. Social Enhancement and Economic Programme (SEEP), a localized NGO has done a quick assessment and immediately provided Tk.2000 per family. Some local political leaders also responded.

ICDDR,B are providing medical care including ORS and other medicines to the affected people in coordination with SEEP.

BRAC have identified 2016 affected families in Mirpur fire incident. So far, they have distributed food and pulse to the affected families. They are going to provide them with money for house reconstruction.

CDMP informed that the DC, Dhaka has identified 173 affected families in Mirpur. Government has provided Tk.1000 per affected family. They are going to distribute CI sheets to the most affected families soon.

DER Secretariat observed that although the Mirpur fire is indeed a very serious and devastating event; the magnitude and scale of this disaster is essentially localised in scale. As such there is currently no plan, nor is there likely to be a plan, for DER to jointly assess the damage from the fire, nor to coordinate assistance. Nevertheless, DER encourages the use of the DER network to share information about assessment or intervention/relief related plans.

Other situation monitoring reports and responses:

DRR: Mr. Md. Shafiullah, Director (Relief), DRR informed that the government is going to launch the VGF programme throughout the country for three months from August to October 2006 for the extreme poor and jobless people. They will distribute 75925 MT of wheat among the beneficiaries. Each union will get 1500 cards. In addition to this, 2500 cards per Union will be distributed in Monga affected districts with a view to meet the potential food crisis in vulnerable households.

WHO: It informed on the recent Dengue outbreak in the country. Since 7th June till today, 1044 cases have been detected and 2 persons have been reported dead. In response the DCC, has taken

measures like lervaside, spraying insecticides etc. As a preventive measure, DGHS is continuing with their health education message.

WHO also informed that DGHS control room does not have any information on typhoid cases.

OXFAM: It raised the issue of water logging in the low-lying areas of Khulna, Satkhira, and Jessore. It referred to the situation report prepared jointly with its partner organizations including 'Uttaran', sent to DER secretariat for wider circulation. The report shows that around 3 million people or some 60,000 families have become waterlogged and a number of 3000 people have been evacuated. The major reasons as identified are: i. incessant heavy downpour, ii. increased level of tide height in the rivers, iii. drainage congestion, and iv. the loss of navigability of rivers in the region. After the 2004 floods, a number of latrines and tube wells were constructed under the Uttaran flood rehabilitation programme. These have gone under water causing tremendous sufferings to the people of those localities. Uttaran has given 75 tents among the affected people for temporary shelter. They have installed 35 sanitary latrine and 3 tube wells and distributed 2500 water purifying tablets, 650 packets ORS, polythene sheet among 223 affected families.

DER Secretariat informed that rains have been heavier this time in this part of the country than earlier. A combination of physical flood protection structure and heavy rains resulted in floods and water logging in southwestern region of the country.

Concern questioned if DER is considering climate change issue. Mr. John McHarris answered that first we need to see if this falls within the purview of DER group. He also said that Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) could make a significant contribution to this.

Action:

1. BRAC and ICDDR,B will send brief report on their response to Mirpur fire incident to DER Secretariat for wider circulation.
2. DRR is encouraged to send their report to DER secretariat for circulation among the DER members.
3. DER secretariat will circulate the situation report of OXFAM to all the DER members.

3. MoFDM's sharing on Government Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordination:

Mr. Abdur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, MoFDM made a presentation on 'Flood 2006: Preparedness of the Government of Bangladesh'. His presentation included: inundation map of Bangladesh as of July 31, 2006, general river condition, the major contributing factor for floods in Bangladesh, progress of southwest monsoon 2006, the long range forecast of Indian Met Office and the preparedness measures undertaken by the government.

Main points are summarized below:

- The inundation map of Bangladesh prepared by FFWC and BWDB as of 31 July 2006 shows that the northern and southeastern parts of Bangladesh are experiencing flood.
- According to FFWC bulletin of 1 August 2006, 24 points out of 86 monitoring points, recorded a rise, 54 points registered fall and 4 points remained steady.
- The major contributing factor for the severity of flood in Bangladesh are rainfall and in flow of water from the upstream (Ganga-Meghna Basin).
- The first forecast of IMD issued on 24 April 2006, shows that rainfall as a whole for June-September 2006 for the country is 93% with a model error of +/- 5% of historical long range

average that is this year, the rainfall is less than long time average. The probability that the rainfall will be below 90% of Long Period Average (LPA) is only 22%.

- After reviewing the different reports from different sources (FFWC, GoB, IMD), it is expected that the country is likely not experience severe flooding this year as of 2 August 2006.
- The Government has taken some preparedness measures that include regular and close monitoring of the situation. ,
- It has held two inter-ministerial disaster management coordination committee meeting, requested all the DCs and UNOs to activate the Disaster Management Committees, open the Emergency Operations Room and send information to MoFDM regularly. To keep a reserve of bulk allocation for emergency response and to organize coordination meeting this month comprising of GoB, NGOs, development partners etc.

In the subsequent discussions following issues were raised:

- Mr. Shepherd of USAID questioned why the 86 FFWC monitoring points do not always add up to this number while adding up the points of rise, fall and steady. CDMP answered that FFWC do not always receive the required information from some of the points.
- DER Secretariat requested all to visit the FFWC website regularly because of its usefulness. They also informed that FFWC is very responsive and are eager to get feedback for their improvement.
- CDMP informed that recently FFWC organized a workshop on how to improve their web page. They provided some suggestions for improvement.
- DFID wanted to know the name of the contact person at the Ministry in times of emergencies. DRR informed that the main contact point at the Ministry is the control room that work round the clock during emergencies and is guided by a Deputy Secretary. DER Secretariat informed that apart from the Secretary, MoFDM, Mr. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Secretary MoFDM (Tel # 7162145) is another contact point at the Ministry.
- CDMP informed that the MoFDM Secretary has delegated the DG, DRR to be responsible for preparedness and coordination and shortly the DG, DRR will convene a meeting to discuss these issues.

4. UN Cluster Approach for Disaster Response Coordination:

The Chair informed the DER members on the UN Cluster Approach. A copy of the Power point presentation on ‘ IASC Humanitarian Cluster Approach’ was also circulated among the members in the meeting. Cluster approach is a renewed effort to fill identified gaps in humanitarian response, to ensure accountability with strengthened leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities and, to bolster coordination and synergy of efforts. This approach can co-exist with previously existing sectoral coordination structures. It forces the organizations to be transparent and explicit and also gives the people clearer picture of who is doing what, who to talk to before any disaster occurs. It helps both in terms of preparedness and for taking actions as well. This approach could be built up on the already existing DER sectoral approach. Different agencies have been assigned with lead responsibility for the different sectors. Such as UNICEF has the responsibility as lead for the WATSAN cluster and Nutrition clusters. UNICEF has already organized two meetings respectively. WFP, as the lead agency for Emergency Logistics Cluster has called a meeting on Wednesday, 9 August 2006 at 10 am at the same venue at IDB Bhaban, 17th floor.

Action:

1. Agencies willing to join the Emergency Logistics Cluster Meeting are requested to get in touch either with John McHarris or Rehana Banoo in WFP.
2. UNICEF suggested sharing the minutes of all these cluster meetings with the whole DER group.

5. MoFDM/CDMP presentation on the SAARC Regional Framework on Comprehensive Disaster Management and the follow-up action:

CDMP made a presentation on ‘ Disaster Management in South Asia: A Comprehensive Regional Framework for Action 2006-2015’. The presentation included: background of the SAARC Framework on Disaster Management, SAARC Comprehensive Regional Framework on Disaster Management, follow-up and way forward.

Main points are summarized below:

- The SAARC Technical Committee Meeting held on 12-13 June 2004 at Bhutan.
- As an outcome of the above meeting, India prepared and shared a Concept Note on ‘SAARC-Information Sharing on Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation’ with all the other SAARC countries for comments.
- Specific proposals included, establishment of SAARC Cell for disaster preparedness and mitigation to be hosted by India in Delhi and requested support from member countries to declare the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) as the Regional training Centre.
- Special Session of SAARC Environment Ministers meeting held in Male on 25 June 2005. The major decision was to conduct the proposed Expert Group meeting in Dhaka. The Heads of State or Government in the 13th SAARC Dhaka Summit endorsed the decisions of the meeting in Male.
- The 13th Dhaka Summit called for elaboration of a Comprehensive Framework on Early Warning and Disaster Management and also the issue of coordination among national authorities was discussed.
- SAARC Expert Group Meeting on disaster Management took place in Dhaka from 7-9 February 2006. Nepal presented their Concept note on ‘ Proposal for Satellite Centre for Earthquake Risk Reduction’.
- The draft Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management circulated by Bangladesh was adopted following detailed and useful discussions. The outline of the framework includes: context, regional objectives, expected outcomes and strategic goals, priorities for action 2006-2015, implementation and follow-up.
- As follow-up, SAARC Technical Committee meeting on Environment and Forestry, SAARC Senior Officials Meeting and SAARC Environment Ministers’ Meeting considered the Bangladesh framework and adopted it.
- As a way forward, a Regional Plan of Action was drafted and plan to hold a SAARC Expert Group meeting to adopt this plan and to strengthen the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC).

The Chair thanked CDMP for their informative and useful presentation.

In the subsequent discussions following issues were raised:

- As part of Cyclone Preparedness programme, Bangladesh government is now focusing on improving the early warning system to alert the coastal community. Government has a plan

to install high-powered sirens in 280 unions that could be activated either from Dhaka or from those unions.

- MoFDM is taking the lead to carry this forward. Technical matters are to be dealt with by CDMP and DMB.
- Mr. Tarik of UNDP questioned if it conflicts with the Government's National Framework for Action'. CDMP clarified that the national plan is for everyone, not for the Ministry only.
- DFID wished to know some of the practical achievements and benefits of this framework. CDMP said that in a number of areas Bangladesh would be benefited from this framework. Examples include: technical collaboration training, archive data, research reports etc. In terms of long term forecasting, we are largely dependent on India. If this sharing of information could be more utilized under this framework, it would bring lots of direct benefits to the farm community. Bangladesh could also benefit from getting the real water level data from India through the SAARC framework, which India is currently reluctant to share.
- One of the practical problems of this framework is that the Climate Change issue has not been focused here, as India did not want this to be included. The SAARC member countries are going towards effective and useful coordination in terms of disaster management despite all these obstacles.

Action:

1. DER Secretariat will upload the presentation in the LCG website.

6. Any Other Business:

ICDDR,B: It informed about the 'International course on Emergency Response to Cholera and Shigella Epidemics' from 26 November to 7 December 2006. Information will be sent to the DER secretariat to upload in the website.

ECHO: Mr. Abdul Awal joined ECHO as the new Program Officer replacing Mr. Anwar Hossain, who has moved to UNICEF.

CDMP: For more effective coordination between DER and the government of Bangladesh, and to have better representation of the government in the DER meetings, CDMP suggested to hold DER meetings in the DMB-DRR building at Mahakhali to ensure senior level government representation. It was also suggested if the DER meeting could be chaired by the Govt. Another suggestion was that possibly the next meeting could be held at the DMB-DRR building and Chaired by the GoB. It was also suggested to form a small committee to work on how to improve this issue of coordination.

DMB: The government is the ultimate body to take the major role in terms of emergency coordination. But they also believe that for this the government needs support from DER and CDMP. Coordination is also required between DMB and DRR.

DFID: It suggested the DER secretariat to review the ToR once again and try to capacitate the government in that direction.

DER Secretariat: The Secretariat welcomed the suggestion of holding the DER meeting at DRR building. It also proposed to have bi-lateral discussion with CDMP colleagues to move forward the idea of the GoB Chairing the DER meetings. Later this can be discussed with the larger DER group.

Revised version: 4 September 2006

NEXT DER MEETING:

The next meeting is proposed on Wednesday, 6 September 1400 hrs at IDB Bhaban 17th floor.

The following presentations/agenda may be considered for the next DER meeting:

- Accountability issues in response management
- Concern Worldwide-Bangladesh sharing their Disaster Risk Reduction activities.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair and to all participants.

ANNEX A: ATTENDANCE LIST of DER Meeting held on 2 August 2006

Organisations	Sl	Name	Organization
GoB	1	Mr. Md. Abdur Rahman	MoFDM
	2	Mr. Md. Shafiullah	DRR
	3	Mr. Md. Abu Sadeque	DMB
	4	Dr. Aslam Alam	CDMP/UNDP
	5	Ms. Shantana Halder	CDMP/UNDP
	6	Mr. Abdul Latif Khan	CDMP/UNDP
Donor	7	Mr. Johnny Sarker	DFID
	8	Mr. Peter Burgess	ECHO
	9	Mr. Abdul Awal	ECHO
	10	Ms. Nazria Islam	IFRC
	11	Mr. Walter E. Shepherd	USAID
	12	Ms. Shahnaz Zakaria	USAID
UN	13	Mr. Md. Tarik-ul-Islam	UNDP
	14	Mr. Paul Edwards	UNICEF
	15	Mr. Anwar Hossain	UNICEF
	16	Ms. Tanzeen Zaman Mozumder	UNICEF
	17	Dr. Indrani Chakma	UNICEF
	18	Mr. Md. Zulfikur Ali Khan	UNICEF
	19	Dr. Muhammad Zahidur Rahim	WHO
	20	Mr. John McHarris	WFP
	21	Ms. Rehana Banoo	WFP
	22	Mr. Tariq Awan	WFP
NGOs	23	Mr. Simson Halder	ADRA
	24	Mr. Mahmud Husain	BDRCS
	25	Mr. Tapan Kumar Brahma	BRAC
	26	Mr. Pankaj	Concern Worldwide
	27	Mr. M A Wahed	Concern Worldwide
	28	Mr. Md. Abdur Rahman	Handicap International
	29	Ms. Armana Ahmed	ICDDRDB
	30	Mr. Mizanur R Khan	IIRD
	31	Mr. Kaiser Rejve	Oxfam
	32	Mr. Suman SMA Islam	SC-UK
	33	Mr. Md. Ruhul Amin	SC-USA
DER Secretariat	34	Ms. Mariko Hattori	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	35	Ms. Raushan Ara Begum	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	36	Ms. Meher Nigar Bhuiyan	DER Secretariat (WFP)
Independent Consultant	37	Mr. Muhammad Taher	Independent Consultant

Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat