

LCG Sub-group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER)
Meeting held on April 5, 2006
Minutes

Mr. John McHarris, Adviser, DPR section, WFP chaired the meeting. Ms. Joanne Burke, Coordinator, UNDMTP, UNDP, Geneva was also present for the initial part of the meeting. The participants introduced themselves and the list is attached as Annex A.

John introduced Ms. Joanne Burke to the participants. She is one of the two-member mission who came to Bangladesh on a visit from 2 to 5 April 2006. The main objective of the mission was to assess Bangladesh's UNDMT capacity and potential training needs on disaster risk management. They also focused on the capabilities of doing a disaster-oriented simulation and to see the feasibility of a simulation exercise on the coordination role of UNDMT. She informed that the UN system in Bangladesh has excellent existing resources within the different agencies e.g. UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO and that the continuity and expertise of the local staff is a major asset. They remarked that there is a confirmed need for DER and appreciates the role it performs. It is a strong platform to support coordinated emergency response of different stakeholders. Ms. Burke noted that potentially there is a lot more synergy and opportunity for collaboration between DER and CDMP that can be explored. These two entities should work together to achieve greater success. One of their critical observations is that it seems to have minimal 'active' participation and senior level representation from the government. It appears that participation of government entities at the local level is more vibrant. DER is trying its best to invite/include government. GoB's non-active participation could be related to lack of alignment and ownership - therefore it is a big challenge for DER. It is also observed that there is lack of private sector representation in the DER group. Joanne in her concluding remarks said that the UN system plays a strategic and an important role in terms of emergency preparedness and response as well as the DER. But the synergy between these two should be more strengthened and well defined. UN should help move the government for good preparedness and good response. Ms. Burke strongly emphasized that the DER should work with the Government for different parameters for declaring emergencies. She thanked the participants for their contribution in the meeting.

MAIN POINTS COVERED AT THE MEETING

1. Adoption of the minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the last DER meeting held on 13 February 2006 were circulated in the meeting. All agreed to provide their comment/feedback on the minutes.

2. Review of current emergency situation and response by agencies:

Mr. John McHarris of WFP asked all to report on drought if they have any. FAO was not present in the meeting. John referred to a recent article published in the media, which suggests 20% less production of wheat this year (2006). He also referred to the stories published in The Daily Star on fertilizer, electricity, ground water problem etc. But he thinks it is too early to comment on how this situation will affect food availability. WFP is closely monitoring the current situation.

CDMP: Mr. Latif informed about a climatic report, which says that due to the La-Nina phenomena, Bangladesh may experience a big flood this year. Mr. Latif said that the relevant report did not say about the specific timing but most likely the flood may occur during the monsoon season. He also informed about CDMP's 'Climate Change Cell'. This Cell located at the Directorate of Environment will provide information on weather forecasting from now to next 16

months. Mr. Latif also said that someone from the Climate Change Cell could come to any of the next DER meetings to make a presentation on their particular activities.

CARE: Mr. Chitta Ranjan Biswas informed that they have started a new project on Climate Forecasting.

WFP: Mr. John McHarris said DER could do better in information sharing on climate forecasting/climate prediction. There are many internet dedicated websites that look specifically/solely on climate forecasting. In order to follow this DER secretariat can make some of the links available on the LCG DER website. He also requested CDMP to forward the reports/links to DER secretariat for wider circulation. Mr. John further informed about the technical team coming out to Bangladesh from Head Quarters in the third week of April. The team will look into the greater utilization of meteorological and hydrological data and to meet with all the most relevant partners/players in technical agencies.

DFID: Mr. Johnny Sarker said that useful objective could be to set probability of accurate forecasting for Nor'westers and requested if the technical team from HQ could consider this aspect.

USAID: Mr. Shibly questioned if DER is taking any preparedness measures for earthquake, and to see if this could be forecasted.

RDRS: Mr. Anthony D'Cruze informed all that they have developed some leaflets on Avian Influenza for use by greater mass. But they are in dilemma whether to circulate this or not. There are lots of information on Avian Influenza but he asked if DER secretariat could develop some simple leaflet on this.

WHO: Dr. Rahim informed on the initiatives taken by Bangladesh Government in consultation with WHO. He said that as Bird Flu has already been attacked the neighboring countries, the situation of Bangladesh is threatened. Though Bangladesh government has banned import of poultry from the neighboring countries, illegal trade is still going on. The government has drafted a prevention plan and has submitted this with associated budget to Planning Commission for approval. He informed that still there is no vaccine available for avian flu in Bangladesh. The UN agencies have taken some steps in this regard. WHO has already distributed masks, gumboots and other related things to the Upazilla Health Complexes. 64 civil surgeons are being trained on this. 448 computers and other accessories have been provided for collecting data. Training has been imparted to IEDCR on how to detect Avian Influenza. WHO has also developed some English and Bangla leaflets on this issue, which is still pending approval of the DGHS. A National Multi-sectoral Task Group has been formed within DGHS to formally approve the leaflets.

It was recommended that those organizations who have already developed some leaflets can coordinate with WHO as well as with GoB in terms of technical clarity. Interested organizations have been requested to contact WHO or FAO to get information on Avian Influenza. In addition update materials are being posted to LCG website for information sharing. (Please visit Avian Influenza window at www.lcgbangladesh.org)

OXFAM: Ms. Kabita requested if WHO could make a presentation in the next DER meeting on Avian Influenza. She also talked about the recent Nor'westers that hit some parts of the country and requested if DER can plan ahead to do assessment when disaster strikes. In this regard, Rehana of WFP said that we can ask member agencies to know their level of assessment, preparedness etc. and the assessment forms could be updated on a continuous basis, if need be.

UNICEF: For better information sharing, Mr. Awal requested all to send any information related to disasters to DER secretariat and then DER in turn to circulate them to all the member agencies. The respective agencies should validate the information at their end before sending them to DER secretariat.

Actions:

- i. Climate Change Cell of CDMP is to make a presentation in one of the next DER meetings on weather/climate change etc.
- ii. DER secretariat to make some links available on the LCG DER website for wider information sharing.
- iii. CDMP to forward their links/reports to DER secretariat for wider information sharing.
- iv. WHO to make a presentation on ‘ Avian Influenza’ in the next DER meeting in May 2006.
- v. Respective organizations are requested to validate and send the disaster related information to DER secretariat for wider circulation and information sharing.

3. Adoption of the revised DER Terms of Reference:

The revised draft DER Terms of Reference was circulated to all electronically as well as hand copy in the meeting. The draft ToR is an outcome of a wider level discussion, participants were given 5 to 10 minutes to quickly review this and provide feedback. Only those issues will be discussed where people have serious concerns. Simple and minor changes could be looked into later. As per the DER Strategic Planning meeting, the group consensus was that DER should not expand to policy related issues.

CDMP: Mr. Latif questioned if DER is a group for only information sharing or ‘ putting into place better operational system’.

UNICEF: Mr. Awal informed that there was a debate on this issue in the last DER Strategic Planning meeting (13 Feb06) but eventually members came to a consensus that DER is a forum consisting of different stakeholders, this group talks about better not unique operational system.

The members suggested that the overarching objective could be revised: ‘ to put in place and to contribute towards better operational systems’ -----. All agreed to this revision and with these changes the DER ToR was endorsed as final.

4. Updates from the Thematic Working Groups:**• Working Group on Gender and Diversity:**

Oxfam as the lead agency for this working group reported on the current status of the Gender and Diversity Sensitivity report and the G & D Checklist. This checklist is a tool intended for everyone working in emergency response, and it is intended to be owned and utilized by all members. Suggestions on the assessment report included clarification of some descriptions, more good practice stories, more specific recommendations, modification of ToR, among others. The suggestions are being reflected into the second draft of the assessment report. DER members were requested to send their suggestions in writing Kabita Bose of Oxfam or Mariko Hattori of WFP using the word format. The checklist was circulated to the DER members. Till now very few comments have been received. Oxfam requested all to send their valuable comments if they have any on the second draft by 15 April after which the report will be processed for printing the Gender and Diversity checklist, as agreed earlier.

Actions:

- a. Feedback/comments to be sent on the checklist and the review report by 15 April 2006.
- b. The Working Group will start work towards printing the checklist after 15 April 2006.

- **Working Group on Earthquake:**

The WG on earthquake is Chaired by the Disaster Management Bureau of the MoFDM. The meeting of the W/G held on 20 March 2006 discussed on the following probable activities of the W/G in the near future:

- a. District Disaster Management Committees to be provided with some literature on Earthquake related issues.
- b. Personnel in the Ministry of Health and other related agencies/ organizations in and outside the Govt. to be made aware of the earthquake related issues.
- c. Review and production of the earthquake related map of Dhaka city, to the extent possible, which should seek to include:
 - i. Ward based critical infra-structure location (hospitals, schools, police stations, and fire brigade and open fields) to be identified.
 - ii. Vulnerable building and fire locations to be identified.
 - iii. Mapping of evacuation pathways to be developed.
- d. Revision of 'All Hazard Map' approved by the appropriate authority in the Govt. is a priority.
- e. To complete the Earthquake Management Plan at least 10 EMP consultations to be held by DMB. DER Secretariat is requested to explore possible financial and logistical support to arrange these consultations. DMB to send the related ToR of this plan to DER secretariat soon.
- f. A plan of work for the WG will be established for the quarter April to June 2006 in the next meeting to be convened in two weeks.
- g. Suggestion came to invite PWD, LGED, BGMEA, City Corporation, Dept. of Fire Services in the working group meetings.
- h. The working group meetings to take place at 2:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month.

The next meeting of the working group will prioritize activities for the next three month quarter.

Mr. John informed that WFP VAM unit will use high-resolution satellite images for a study on Urban Food Insecurity. He said that WFP is happy to share information using these maps with people interested. These images may be used for developing earthquake related map.

- **Working Group on Standards:**

The Working Group is chaired by IFRC. The DER Secretariat organized a meeting of the WG on 3 April 2006 and discussed the draft concept note on standards prepared by Mr. William Halder of IFRC. The working group after useful discussion identified five most important issues to be incorporated in the ToR. It will be circulated to all DER members for comments, once drafted.

Action:

DER Secretariat to draft the ToR incorporating the W/G suggestions and circulate to all for comments.

- **Working Group on Multi-sector Assessment:**

WFP is the Chair of this working group. The group met on 22 March 2006. The main agenda of the meeting included: i. reviewing the existing ToR for the W/G, ii. setting up some priorities for the W/G and iii. discussing the development of triggers as to when to launch DER assessment team and when to launch emergency response. Participants finalized the objective of this W/G. and identified some of the outputs/priority actions which included: drafting the ToR, developing Emergency Needs Assessment methodology and tools, developing a common consensus of disaster triggers, conducting national capacity needs assessment, strengthening capacity on emergency needs assessment etc. The participants also discussed the issue of the Chair of the W/G. As no one from the GoB was present in the meeting it was agreed that WFP should continue chairing the W/G.

Action:

DER secretariat will summarize the discussion points along with a draft ToR for this working group and will circulate those to all members for comments and feedback.

- **Working Group on Database Development and Information Management:**

Mr. John McHarris, WFP chaired the first meeting of this new working group. Mr. Sid Tupper, International Consultant of CDMP gave a brief presentation on Disaster Management Information Centre (DMIC). The agenda of the meeting included drafting of the ToR for the working group, identifying issues of how it would be associated with national database assessment framework and developing outputs and priorities. In this meeting, the name of the Working Group has been finalized as the “ Database Development and Information Management Working Group”. Members brainstormed regarding the ‘ objective’ of the working group. The Database working group will mainly focus on to create, share, and distribute disaster related data and not to take on broader risk reduction. The resulting database is intended to contribute to a better capacity of comparing current disaster related events with past disasters. This would in turn contribute to better analysis, decision-making and (if and when appropriate) better planned interventions. The areas prone to floods or other disasters could be identified from historical records of past occurrences. It can be established initially in the DER Secretariat and eventually move to its logical home within the GoB. The members of the working group also jotted down some priority activities/outputs, which includes: historical database creation, utilization and maintained, establish and maintain internet based mapping website, share and coordinate best practices on disaster preparedness and response, hazard specific information, product (databases, maps), greater utilization of time series remotely sensed data for early warning, diarrhoea and nutritional data etc. Discussion also took place on deciding the chair of the W/G. DMB showed their interest to be the chair of this working group.

Actions:

- i. DER secretariat to rearticulate the wordings of the objective and circulate this to all for comments towards finalization.
- ii. DER Secretariat to draft the ToR and circulate to all for comments/feedback.

5. Any Other Business:

The next DER meeting will take place on Wednesday, 3 May 2006 at 14:00 hrs. at IDB Bhaban, 17th floor.

ANNEX A: ATTENDANCE LIST of DER Meeting held on 5 April 2006

Organisations	Sl	Name	Organization
GoB	1	Mr. Abdul Latif Khan	CDMP/UNDP
Donors	2	Ms. Ailsa Harper-Hennessey	DFID
	3	Mr. Johnny Sarker	DFID
	4	Mr. Anwar Hossain	ECHO
	5	Ms. Nazria Islam	IFRC
	6	Mr. Sayed Shibly	USAID
UN	7	Mr. Abdul Awal	UNICEF
	8	Dr. Muhammad Zahidur Rahim	WHO
	9	Mr. John McHarris	WFP
	10	Ms. Rehana Banoo	WFP
	11	Mr. Monzu Morshed	WFP
	12	Ms. Farhana Pinky	WFP, FC section
NGOs	13	Mr. Simson Halder	ADRA-Bangladesh
	14	Mr. Chitta Ranjan Biswas	CARE-Bangladesh
	15	Mr. Rubaiyat AUMI	Christian Aid
	16	Ms. Armana Ahmed	ICDDRБ
	17	Mr. M. Bazlur Rahman	IIRD
	18	Mr. Nurul Amin Bagmer	Islamic Relief
	19	Mr. Dhiren Das	MSF-Holland
	20	Ms. Kabita Bose	Oxfam
	21	Mr. Anthony D'Cruze	RDRS
DER Secretariat	22	Mr. Malik Kabir	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	23	Ms. Mariko Hattori	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	24	Ms. Raushan Ara Begum	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	25	Ms. Meher Nigar Bhuiyan	DER Secretariat (WFP)

Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat