

**LCG Sub-group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER)  
Minutes of the Meeting held on May 3, 2006**

Mr. John McHarris, Adviser, DPR section, WFP and to DER Secretariat 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 April 2006:**

The representative from CARE said that their new project on Climate Change, which was reported, should be incorporated in the minutes. Dr Rahim of WHO corrected that instead of 60% surgeons, it should be 64 civil surgeons trained in Avian Influenza. He also said that the ‘multi-national small Task Force should be replaced by ‘National Multi-sector Task Group’. The minutes were adopted incorporating these changes.

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

**USAID:** Mr. Walter Shepherd informed that CARE Bangladesh has signed a one million dollar agreement with Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for early warning and forecasting. The project will be funded by USAID. The main focuses of the project are: i) To bring the flood forecast technology to Bangladesh; ii) To transfer flood forecasting technology to the GoB; iii) To strengthen disaster mitigation in the agriculture sector; and iv) To forecast floods and its probable impact. For more details, interested members can contact Mr. Golam Kabir at USAID. The Chair requested to upload the project document/concept paper in the LCG DER Website.

**Action:**

Mr. Shibly of USAID will contact Mr. Kabir and will let DER Secretariat know if the above project document/concept paper could be uploaded in the LCG DER Website.

**UNDP:** Mr. Tarik Islam informed about the Climate Cell Change model of CDMP and he thinks that there is synergy between these two models of CDMP and USAID. He stressed on the fact that these two models should complement each other rather than duplicating. There is another initiative of community-based adaptation to climate change impact chaired by UNDP. This is in the preparatory stage and will be tried in four countries, including Bangladesh. The country proposal will be shared in a consultation session where DER members will also be invited. Once the project is approved Bangladesh will receive funds to support the NGOs with regards to climate monitoring and forecasting.

**Action:**

Mr Islam will follow-up the matter with the relevant USAID officials and will brief the DER members in one of the next two meetings.

**3. FAO Update on current agriculture season:**

Dr. Subash Das Gupta briefed the members on the current agriculture production. The main winter crops of Bangladesh are Boro rice, pulses, wheat, potato, maize. Maize production is gradually increasing and wheat is drastically reducing. This year the production coverage of maize is 117 thousand hectares compared to 100 thousand hectares last year. There is slight decrease in the production of pulse due to last year’s untimely sudden rainfall in November. Potato production is also going up. Last year, there was low production of potato due to untimely November rainfall. The initial investment for potato is high because of high price of seeds and also due to the lack of

storage facility. But, now a day, many NGOs are working with micro-credit schemes at field level, more storage facilities have been created resulting in an increase in the production of potatoes.

The farmers consider the Boro crop as the food security crop. According to World Bank figure, last year the Boro land coverage was 4.193 million hectares whereas this year, the GoB plan is to cover 4.225 million hectares of land and to increase the production by 15 million tons compared to 13.6 million ton last year. It is most likely that rice production this year will be above 15 million tons. But as identified by FAO there are some problems and challenges. As per the Rice Research Institute the last date for Boro sowing was 15 March 2006, but the farmers continued sowing until the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April. There is no exact calculation, as yet, of how much rice produce will be lost due to late sowing, inadequate supply of power, fertilizer etc. The assumption is that of the total estimation of 15 million tons, there could be less production of Boro rice by 2-3%. He also informed that 35% Boro rice has already been harvested and the remaining 65% will be harvested within the next ten-fifteen days, if no big natural disaster occurs. In some areas, like Joypurhat, Natore there are serious labor crisis. Labors will come to these areas from other parts of the country which might delay in harvesting.

The Chair thanked FAO for quite a detailed presentation on the current situation of the production of grain in the country and invited members present to question and comment if any.

Mr. Awal of **UNICEF** asked why maize production is increasing in Bangladesh. Dr. Subash responded that hybrid maize production started in Bangladesh after 1988 floods and per hectare 6 tons of hybrid maize is produced. As a result, the maize market in Bangladesh has increased and the import of maize has decreased. Another important reason is that the poultry farms use maize as poultry feed.

Ms. Kabita of **Oxfam** asked if the increased grain production can ensure food security for the vulnerable poor of the country. Food security and production are completely two different issues. Dr. Subash said that he only talked about the country's current production scenario and would not comment on the food security issue of the vulnerable poor.

Mr. Johnny of **DFID** wanted to know if the production of 15 million tons rice would cover the Monga affected districts. Dr. Subash said that this is the country total, it is not region specific.

#### **4. WHO Presentation on 'Avian Influenza':**

Dr. Zahidur Rahim of WHO made a brief presentation on Avian Influenza. His presentation mainly focused on issues that included the definition of Avian Influenza, how it transmits to humans, the symptoms, treatment, how to reduce the animal to human transmission of Avian Flu, the overall current global scenario, Bangladesh situation, risk factors for Bangladesh, the National preparedness and response plan of Bangladesh, Mass awareness program etc.

All appreciated the very useful ppt. presentation by Dr. Rahim. He informed that more Civil Surgeons are going to be trained on Avian Flu and the next steps are to train the Upazilla Health and Family Planning Officers (UHFPOs) and other field level health workers. Dr. Golam Kibria of MSF Holland asked if the community involved in poultry business would get the training or not. Dr. Rahim informed that they will consider the issue for providing training to these people.

Dr Subash of FAO further updated the members on joint initiatives of the GoB and FAO on Avian Flu. Dr. Subash informed that the Bangladesh Government has developed a big programme on Avian Flu worth of 15 million dollars comprising activities submitted by different Ministries. The initial estimate was much higher (123 m dollars). Later on, it was realized that as a non-affected country a big budget project is not needed for Bangladesh. As a result, the estimated programme cost was sized down to a more realistic budget of 15 million dollars. The programme has been placed at the global conference held at China by the Minister for Fisheries and Livestock. In addition to that, FAO has a big regional project on Avian Flu. FAO with USAID funding would receive huge number of preventive kits to supply to the Department of Livestock for use in their laboratories. FAO is going to start their project worth of 550 thousand US dollars within one month, with the support of USAID for the capacity building of the concerned government as well as private sectors. Under this project, some NGOs will be sub-contracted to work in the border areas.

## **5. Any Other Business:**

**IRP Mission:** The Chair welcomed the visiting four member mission from the International Recovery Platform (IRP) that came to Bangladesh on a three days visit. Introducing the Mission members hosted by UNDP, the Team Leader Professor Ian Davis of Cranfield University, UK informed the meeting of the objectives of the Mission and other IRP related issues. IRP is currently engaged in the process of developing a comprehensive Knowledge Management book titled “Learning from Recovery” which will be based on the international best practices in post-disaster recovery activities. As part of this exercise, Bangladesh as a flood prone country is being visited. The main objectives of the Mission are: i) To gain practical knowledge on the disaster recovery programs (reconstruction, water sanitation, etc); ii) To review the Tsunami and flood recovery plan and its’ application, incorporation of risk reduction issues in the plan; iii) To review the content of the book with key stakeholders for the recovery programmes; and iv) To establish Knowledge Management networking for lessons learned and best practices on disaster recovery.

### **Action:**

The DER Secretariat and the member agencies will extend their support to the IRP Mission in case they need any kind of information and consultation.

### **UNDMTP Mission:**

The Chair, John McHarris of WFP informed the meeting of the draft report of the UNDMT Mission hosted jointly by UNDP and WFP. The final report will be shared with the DER members when finalized. For the purpose of information sharing and awareness raising, John read out some of the key observations of the report with regards to DER only. One of the main observations is that the DER is mainly response oriented and they were raising the issue that how much the group could effectively coordinate all the spectrum of response issues related to monitoring, communication and training. They observed that there is potentially a lot more synergy and opportunity for collaboration between DER and CDMP. They also observed that there is need for clarification between DER’s response coordination and preparedness role and the GoB CDMP supported disaster risk reduction and it’s comprehensive nature. They also raised the whole issue of the GoB participation within the DER group and recommended that there should be stronger participation of the Government in this group. One other observation is that if the DER could do more with donors coordination during non-disaster time. The Mission also highlighted plans for future training, planned a desk top simulation exercise addressing areas, such as the UNCT/inter-agency

coordination; Operational processes with DER and the Government; and UNDP's disaster relief and recovery facility (DRRF) that DER members could potentially benefit from.

**Action:**

The DER Secretariat to share the UNDMT Mission report with the DER members once finalized.

**Early Warning and Monitoring Report:**

The meeting was informed that recently WFP has produced a very simple, brief and easy to understand two pages Early Warning and Monitoring Report initially for internal use. The objective of this report is to update WFP staff on early warning and monitoring of the agro-meteorological season and development in the monsoon period. It has been shared externally in the DER meeting basically to get feedback from the DER members and to get some indication if agencies would be interested to receive this, if it was to be circulated widely/externally. For longer-term perspective, WFP hopes to produce the report in joint collaboration with Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and then gradually produced and owned by BMD. The report consists of information on rainfall situation, vegetation situation, flood monitoring and future rainfall forecasting.

**Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) Training:**

WFP has planned to conduct series of trainings on EFSA with DFID funding under a DFID/WFP partnership programme to develop a systematic EFSA approach and to sharpen the participants EFSA skills. The first session will be conducted during 28-31 May 2006. Each batch will range between 25 to 30 participants. The primary target group will be the DER Roster members. Other participants will include the HQ and field level government officials from the Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR), Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) and the Directorate of Food etc.

**RIR and RENA:**

The first spell of RIR and RENA trainings were conducted last year for most of the District Information Focal Points (DIFPs). This year in 2006 RIR and RENA trainings have been planned to run concurrently with the EFSA trainings. The Bengali translations of RIR and RENA forms have already been completed and currently the relevant Handbooks/guidelines are being developed.

**IFRC:** Mr. William Halder suggested that reports of any disaster events should be prepared based on assessment and not rely only on the newspapers information, which might be misleading in some cases.

**DFID:** Mr. Johnny Sarker raised the issue of GoB's increased participation in the DER meetings. The Chair said that the DER Secretariat is looking into this and cited the example of DER Earthquake Working Group Chaired by DMB.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair and to all participants. The **next meeting** will be held as usual on the first Wednesday, 7 June 2006 at 1400 hrs at IDB Bhaban (17<sup>th</sup> floor).

Attendance sheet contd. on page 5

**ANNEX A: ATTENDANCE LIST of DER Meeting held on 3 May 2006**

| <b>Organisations</b> | <b>Sl</b> | <b>Name</b>                | <b>Organization</b>                  |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| GoB                  | 1         | Ms. Shantana Halder        | CDMP/UNDP                            |
| Donor                | 2         | Mr. Johnny Sarker          | DFID                                 |
|                      | 3         | Mr. Alan Riggs             | IFRC                                 |
|                      | 4         | Mr. William Halder         | IFRC                                 |
|                      | 5         | Mr. Walter Shepherd        | USAID                                |
|                      | 6         | Mr. Sayed Shibly           | USAID                                |
| UN                   | 7         | Dr. Subash Das Gupta       | FAO                                  |
|                      | 8         | Mr. Md. Azad               | IOM                                  |
|                      | 9         | Ms. Dilruba Haider         | UNDP                                 |
|                      | 10        | Mr. Tarik Islam            | UNDP                                 |
|                      | 11        | Mr. Misbahul Islam         | UNDP                                 |
|                      | 12        | Mr. Abdul Awal             | UNICEF                               |
|                      | 13        | Dr. Muhammad Zahidur Rahim | WHO                                  |
|                      | 14        | Mr. John McHarris          | WFP                                  |
|                      | 15        | Ms. Rehana Banoo           | WFP                                  |
|                      | 16        | Mr. Monzu Morshed          | WFP                                  |
|                      | 17        | Ms. Mariko Hattori         | DER Secretariat (WFP)                |
| NGOs                 | 18        | Mr. Simson Halder          | ADRA-Bangladesh                      |
|                      | 19        | Mr. Tapan Kumar Brahma     | BRAC                                 |
|                      | 20        | Mr. Chitta Ranjan Biswas   | CARE-Bangladesh                      |
|                      | 21        | Mr. Rubaiyat AUMI          | Christian Aid                        |
|                      | 22        | Mr. Maksudur Rahman        | Islamic Relief                       |
|                      | 23        | Mr. Dr. Golam Kibria       | MSF-Holland                          |
|                      | 24        | Ms. Kabita Bose            | Oxfam                                |
|                      | 25        | Mr. Golam M. Billah        | Plan Bangladesh                      |
|                      | 26        | Mr. Anthony D'Cruze        | RDRS                                 |
|                      | 27        | Mr. Md. Ruhul Amin         | SC-USA                               |
| DER Secretariat      | 28        | Mr. Malik Kabir            | DER Secretariat (WFP)                |
|                      | 29        | Ms. Raushan Ara Begum      | DER Secretariat (WFP)                |
|                      | 30        | Ms. Meher Nigar Bhuiyan    | DER Secretariat (WFP)                |
| IRP Mission members  | 31        | Mr. Ian Davis              | Consultant, Cranfield Univ., UK      |
|                      | 32        | Mr. Anil K. Sinha          | Prog. Adviser, IRP, Kobe, Japan      |
|                      | 33        | Mr. Manny de Guzman        | Consultant, ADRC, Manila             |
|                      | 34        | Mr. Sohel Khan             | Prog. Analyst, IRP/UNDP, Kobe, Japan |

*Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat*