

LCG Sub-group on Disaster and Emergency Response (DER)

Minutes of the Meeting on 24 September 2006

The meeting was held to exchange information on recent severe rains in Bay of Bengal and Coastal Region, and identify possible DER's response to the event. Mr. John McHarris, Adviser, DPR section, WFP chaired the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex A.

MAIN POINTS COVERED AT THE MEETING

1. Situation Reporting

IFRC reported that it started assessments in nine locations on coastal belt on 22nd Sept. IFRC shared preliminary finding of the assessments. It was stressed that IFRC was in the process of collecting and consolidating the information, the figures would be revised later, and therefore the tentative figures shown below should be handled with care. The preliminary findings was that there were 891 people missing, 32 people killed on land, 327 boats missing, 65 houses partially damaged and 53 houses were completely damaged. The updated information will be shared with DER members soon.

Mr. Sujit Kumar Debsarma, BMD reported BMD's response and weather forecast as follows: In the morning of 19th Sept., 1st Warning Bulletin was issued and disseminated to approx. 40 recipients including Prime Minister's Office, port authorities, other GoB agencies, and media, after low pressure in north-west Bay of Bengal was identified. On 20th Sept., a Heavy Rainfall Warning was issued as the situation worsened. On 21st Sept., it was forecasted that the situation continued to intensify until 23rd Sept, and then rainfall would start to cease. According to the latest available forecast at the time of the meeting, the weather would improve in the afternoon on 24th and onward. The storm warning signal number in coastal zone has been 3 (Stay close to the shore), and as of 24 Sept. it continues to remain 3 until further notice.

2. Future Data and Information Sharing

It was agreed that the Secretariat would take the lead on compiling the information on the situation received from member agencies /District Information Focal Points.

Action

Members are requested to send information on impact, damages, casualties/missing people, needs, and response provided/ planned to the Secretariat, in RIR form where applicable, and in other form if not applicable. The Secretariat will compile the information and circulate it among the Group.

3. Assessment

WHO reported that nine civil surgeon offices started to assess the damage and health/medical needs. The findings will be shared to DER members.

Oxfam reported that it plans to conduct a quick appraisal on 25th September.

It was agreed that the DER Group would not need a joint DER needs assessment, but instead each agency should send updated information to the Secretariat, which would be compiled and circulated to the Group.

4. Lessons Learning and DER's Possible Role in Storm Risk Reduction

The Group consensus was that although early warnings were issued as reported by BMD, the reality of the losses strongly suggests that the effectiveness of the alert system needs review, from the perspective of future disaster avoidance.

DFID proposed that the DER Group could contribute in dissemination of the learning from this incident.

The Chair mentioned that the alert system is designed to risk reduction, and that MoFDM and partners, with assistance from CDMP, are currently drafting the National Action Plan for risk reduction.

DER members expressed their interests to contribute to any future initiatives by GoB to improve the current warning /risk communication system. Potential roles/contribution of DER members to the process were highlighted and included support to 1) a research on storm alert system, 2) a review of the recent incident in the Bay to incorporate learning and improvement into future systems. It was discussed that the following areas could be the focus of a review/study:

- Awareness of the target group Effectiveness of the warning communication (accessibility to the information by the target audience, the clarity of the message, and availability of radio for small fishermen to receive the broadcast)
- Any other factors that may have affected fishermen's decision to remain in the sea after warning message was disseminated
- Availability of and accessibility to goods/equipment for protection such as life jackets and rescue tools, and the usage of such items by the intended users

IFRC pointed out that BDRCS (in partnership w/ IFRC) were key stakeholders in the process, given their CPP/Cyclone Preparedness Programme. Accordingly, BDRCS via the CPP should be involved in any new initiatives.

The Group requested the Secretariat to send a letter to the CDMP CTA expressing the interest/willingness of DER members to contribute to the review and learning process.

Action

The Secretariat will draft a letter to CDMP CTA expressing interest/willingness of DER members to contribute to initiatives to review/study storm alerting systems.

5. Water Management in Cross-Border India

DFID expressed concern regarding the possibility that India might release water downstream to Bangladesh as part of the Indian water management process. FFWC was mentioned as the likely GoB source that might know about Indian water management plans. The Chair agreed to contact FFWC in this.

6. Water Logging in South West

It was reported that the conditions in the three SW districts (Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira), which have been affected by water logging, had worsened due to the heavy rainfalls.

Islamic Relief plans to provide relief assistance to 2000 households next week in addition to the relief that had been already distributed to 3000 households earlier.

UNICEF's field visit conducted last week found that the needs for food, water, sanitation and shelter assistance had not been sufficiently met. UNICEF has been providing assistance including 100,000 WPT.

ECHO decided 1 million euro assistance to the three districts, through NGO partners. Potential partners are Islamic Relief, Concern and Oxfam.

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

Annex A: Attendance List of DER Meeting on 24 September 2006

Organisations	Sl	Name	Organization
GoB	1	Dr. Samarendra Karmakar	BMD
	2	Mr. Sujit Kumar Debsarma	BMD
Donor	3	Ms. Ailsa Harper-Hennessey	DFID
	4	Mr. Abdul Awal	ECHO
	5	Mr. William Halder	IFRC
UN	6	Mr. Md. Zulfikur Ali Khan	UNICEF
	7	Mr. Md. Tarik-ul-Islam	UNDP
	8	Dr. Kazi Akram	WHO
	9	Dr. Muhammad Zahidur Rahim	WHO
	10	Mr. John McHarris	WFP
	11	Mr. Monzu Morshed	WFP
NGOs	12	Mr. Tapan Kumar Brahma	BRAC
	13	Mr. Matiur Rahman	BDRCS
	14	Mr. M A Wahed	Concern Worldwide
	15	Mr. Charles S. Sarker	Christian Aid
	16	Ms. Armana Ahmed	ICDDR,B
	17	Mr. Md. Mostak Hossain	Islamic Relief
	18	Ms. Kabita Bose	Oxfam
	19	Mr. Anthony D'Cruze	RDRS
Secretariat	20	Ms. Mariko Hattori	DER Secretariat (WFP)
	21	Mr. Malik Kabir	DER Secretariat (WFP)

*Minutes recorded and circulated by: DER Secretariat
28 September 2006*