

Joint Bangladesh UN-DMT Situation Report

Monsoon Floods 12th August 2004

General Situation

1. Continued flood recession in most areas is moving relief focus to rehabilitation and recovery phase. However, Government, NGOs and donors alike are mindful of the ongoing monsoon and possibility of further floods given the forecasts for further downpours in the upper river catchments in India and the Himalayas.

2. The international community has responded generously in the initial relief phase, and the UN Flash Appeal was launched today with the aim of soliciting substantial contributions to meet the ongoing relief and early recovery needs of the ultra-poor – the most vulnerable victims of the recent floods. The Flash Appeal targets US\$210 million for projects across nine sectors to help kick-start lives and livelihoods of the poor across Bangladesh.

Flood Forecast

3. The major rivers continue to fall and floods continue to recede. The Ganges-Padma levels fell at all points and most rivers in the Meghna and the South Eastern Hill basins receded further. Nevertheless, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna has seen some upstream rises, and 7 of 86 monitoring stations points are still flowing above their danger levels. There are forecasts of heavy monsoon rains affecting upstream catchment areas in India suggesting that river levels will rise again and a return to flood events remains a possibility.

Assessment of the situation

4. Despite rises observed in some monitoring stations, the general flood situation slowly continues to improve. However, 25% of the country remains affected by the floods; Dhaka's surrounding rivers are still above danger level and flood waters in and around the capital are draining slowly, with many homes surrounded by stagnating water. The direct death-toll from this flood event has now risen to 716. The Control room of the Health Directorate reports that 128,091 people have been affected with acute diarrhoea and dysentery since onset of floods on July 12, and daily cases of pneumonia and skin disease are still alarming.

5. Inundated lands and a shortage of seedlings seriously threaten the Aman rice harvest across much of the country. Perversely, transplanted Aman paddy cultivation in the Southwest is reported to be significantly lower than average due to a lack of rain. This is likely to have adverse consequences not only for food security, but also for the employment of the rural labour force.

6. According to the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, more than half a million small and medium enterprises were affected by the floods. Business leaders have demanded government intervention to expedite insurance claim settlements of affected mills and factories. They have also called on the government to waive import duties on raw materials, machinery and parts for at least six months to promote rehabilitation and recovery.

7. Country needs are now a dynamic balance between relief and rehabilitation. Government, NGO and donor efforts are shifting their focus to post-flood recovery and rehabilitation with an eye on the real possibility of further flood events before the end of the monsoon.

Response to the crisis

Government

8. Latest figures from Ministry of Food and Disaster Management indicate that the Government has allocated over 47,000MT of rice, TK 24million (USD100,000) for reconstruction of housing, TK 2.4million (USD 40,700) for clothing, and TK 42 million in cash (USD 715,000). The Prime Minister has confirmed an extensive post-flood rehabilitation programme across the country beginning next month following recession of the floodwaters, as well as seeking further international assistance for the country's flood-damaged infrastructure. Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury has announced plans to introduce 'flood insurance' to safeguard the interest of the industrialists, manufacturers and traders against flood damage.

9. Government medical teams continue to provide extra treatment facilities to tackle diarrhoea-related illness via temporary treatment centres in the affected areas. Numbers in temporary emergency shelters are declining and many of the schools being used as temporary shelters will be returning to regular educational operation in the coming days.

UN, NGO and International Community

10. The UN Flash Appeal was launched today with the aim of soliciting substantial contributions to the immediate relief and early recovery needs of the ultra-poor – the most vulnerable victims of the recent floods. It consolidates existing UN agency appeals and is designed to meet rehabilitation and recovery needs over the next six months following detailed needs assessment in key sectoral areas. These include: Food; Agriculture; Health; Family Shelter and Non-food Items; Education; Protection, Human Rights and Rule of Law; Economic Recovery and Infrastructure; Water and Sanitation; and Coordination and Information Management.

11. The ultimate objective of the Appeal is to help the poorest and most vulnerable people of Bangladesh to help themselves and to recover their livelihoods. The international community has responded generously in the initial relief phase, but much more is needed to help kick-start lives and livelihoods. Accordingly, the Appeal requests US\$210 million for projects in these sectors as indicated in the table below. The UN's governmental and NGO partners will implement carefully assessed relief proposals to match needs for these sectors, supported by the Bangladesh UN Country Team, which, together with the Government, will take the lead in coordination and monitoring.

SECTOR	REQUIREMENTS in USD
Agriculture	11,853,541
Food	36,753,592
Health	34,810,000
Family Shelter and Non-food Items	30,340,000
Education	11,200,000
Protection/Human Rights/Rule of Law	1,427,600
Economic Recovery and Infrastructure	45,433,099
Water and Sanitation	35,459,170
Coordination & Information Management	182,000
GRAND TOTAL	210,373,000