



LCG Sub-Group - Disasters and Emergency Response

« Ready to Respond in Times of Need »



News Release

FLOODS VICTIMS FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Dhaka, Monday, 1 November 2004: The Post-Floods Needs Assessment Report of the Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) Group of the Bangladesh Local Consultative Group (LCG) says that three months after the July floods, many affected communities are still waiting for basic food and livelihoods support to arrive.

The report confirms that the unusually harsh series of floods experienced between July and September have pushed millions of the vulnerable poor deeper into poverty and that they will continue to feel the brunt for at least another year. The floods, the most severe in a decade, left more than 760 dead, damaged an estimated 4 millions homes and destroyed over a million hectares of crops.

The assessment was conducted to find out the impact of the floods and to get relevant information for planning a relief and recovery operation. Based on the results, the DER Group recommends the provision of targeted food assistance to stimulate early recovery, as well as agricultural employment opportunities and micro-credit opportunities among the flood victims. The report has just been made available online to the public at the DER website.

Commenting on the findings of the report, the WFP Representative and DER chairman, Douglas Casson Coutts, said, *“The report confirms our initial fears about millions requiring basic food and livelihoods support for many months to come. With the onset of Monga these needs have been greatly exacerbated. It is important for the international community to reassess their level of commitment to this emergency and do the needful before it is too late ”*

The report contends that while the immediate relief response was fair, the overall response is still not enough to meet the medium and long-term recovery needs in any sector. The report stresses that Bangladesh needs to improve disaster response and preparedness at local level through more timely response measures, more reliable emergency funding mechanisms, and better information management and contingency planning. The report concludes that Bangladesh could do more to mitigate and manage the adverse effects of floods.

The report goes on to say that food availability at the national level is not as critical as food accessibility at the local level. Food shortages and increased levels of malnutrition among poor flood-affected households have already been observed, and the current lean season will further increase the hardship caused by the floods. Hence, until the *boro* harvest next May, the overall food security situation in Bangladesh will continue to remain uncertain.

Eight multi-agency teams, comprising about 80 field staff from 17 different agencies of the DER Group, were tasked to assess the 27 worst affected districts across the country. The assessment is based on information collected in some 90 focus group discussions with communities and interviews with hundreds of officials and other key informants. The entire assessment report was coordinated by WFP. The DER Group had earlier conducted a rapid assessment of needs at the height of the floods in July.

Notes to the Editors:

1. The DER Group represents a collaborative effort on the part of the Government, NGOs, Donors and UN agencies. It was established in 2001 and meets regularly under the chairmanship of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Its main purpose is to perform timely assessments of need during times of natural disaster and to ensure a collaborative and coordinated response.
2. The full draft report is already available on the LCG web site (www.lcgbangladesh.org) and is also available in hard copy at the DER secretariat in the WFP Country Office. For the electronic copy please write to DER.
3. DER Secretariat: WFP Office, IDB Bhaban, E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh, Tel: (880-2) 8116344-48, 8119064-72, EXT: 2195 Fax: (880-2) 8113147, Email: DER.BAN@wfp.org

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