

## Humanitarian Crisis in Pakistan Pakistan Flood 2010

Almost seven months after the floods in Pakistan the humanitarian situation is still a matter of concern. The victims of the disaster are yet to get back to normal life. The worst affected are, the most vulnerable, those who are already very poor, victims of exploitation, and uneducated, in brief those having the least resilience.

This major disaster in spite of its magnitude is not getting the focus and attention it should get at the international level. The victims are still living in dire conditions and hope of a better tomorrow is still a mirage.

Pakistan Development Forum was organised by the government of Pakistan (GoP), ADB and the World Bank in Islamabad on 14-15 November 2010 and there was an elaborate presentation of the results of the Disaster Need Assessment, presentation of the government plan and above all the program for protecting the poor.

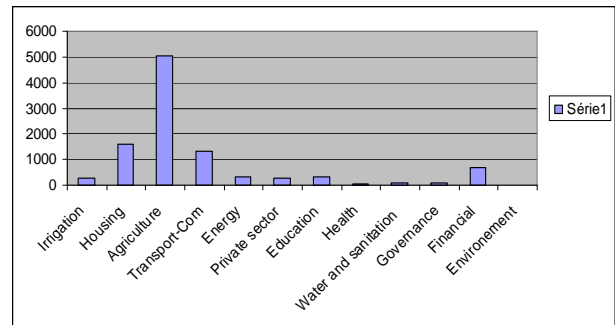
The major challenge for the Government of Pakistan and the NGO today is to be able to alleviate the sufferings of the victims and give them the basic protection from the Social, Political, Psychological and Economical point of view. This mammoth task can be taken up relevantly only if there is going to be synergy and collaboration between the GoP and the Humanitarian actors.

### Seven months after the disaster- Situation overview

The Disaster Need Assessment (DNA) undertaken by GoP, WB and ADB prior to the Development Forum aimed at giving an overview of the damage caused by the floods in July 2010 and also an overview of

the sector level programs and strategies, and policy options.

The conclusions are given in the graph below and it gives an understanding of the scope of the damage and the magnitude of the disaster. The total damage is estimated at 10,056 M \$., and the different sectors affected are given below. It is estimated that many million people are in the camps awaiting to go back to permanent settlement areas.



(Source : Pakistan Floods 2010 – Damage and Need Assessment) (Amount in Million \$)

The overall damage is estimated at 6% of 2009 -2010 GDP. Agriculture has been the most severely affected sector. It covers 50% of the estimated cost of overall damages. Housing has been affected to the extent of 15% of the total damages while transport-communications infrastructures and the third most badly affected. In the education sector about 10348 schools, 23 colleges, and 21 vocational training schools are damaged. This is going to affect the education of the rural children. These sectors by themselves will have an acute adverse impact on the national economy, and in turn it is the poor and marginalised who will be once again victims.

The loss of more than 2 millions HA of crops and the massive damage to the irrigation systems will certainly aggravate

the agricultural and economic recovery of this country which also relies on agriculture for its revenue. In this present situation not only the small land owner will have difficulties to cultivate their lands, but the agricultural workers will have more difficulty to find a job with their landlords, who have yet to start agricultural activities due to many reasons ( water logging, winter season etc.)

Food security is getting to be a major concern due to non-availability of food items. As on today, according to the government sources, the alarming issue is the per capita calorie intake which has dropped below 1650 cal/day and a quarter of the population is malnourished ( FAO data figures put the average in 2007 for least developed countries as 2157 cal/day. The food situation is also aggravated by the rising prices of essential food commodities due to the scarcity of food items in the market.

Child malnutrition is critical with thousands of children at risk. Recent surveys by the provincial government and UN children's fund revealed that malnutrition rates are 23% In northern Sind and 21% in southern Sind. These rates are above the 15% emergency malnutrition level fixed by WHO and neighbour the levels as in some poorest parts of sub Sahara.

Further, according to the DNA, these damages, will have adverse impact on the national economy which is likely to suffer deceleration. Monthly inflation are already noted as preoccupying and register highest increase in over two year ; public finances will also be affected due to large scale increase in flood related expenditures, the 2010-2011 budget will be in deficit and the balance of payment is likely to come under pressure as exports would slow down and imports accelerate.

With only about 55% of the 1,9 Bn \$ flood relief funds received and food distribution is still a need, the victims of this natural disaster are still in a crisis situation.

In this context the general poverty situation is also likely to be affected and this in turn will aggravate the condition of the victims of this disaster who are in the rehabilitation camps.

### **The way forward...**

At this present situation of protracted humanitarian crisis and before these major challenges to device a early recovery strategy (which seems to be impossible at this moment), there is an urgent need to come out with a Transitional Strategy and Plan (TSP) to give a quicker response to the victims. The TSP would imply that food aid will have to continue and the way it has to be undertaken must be reflected (Food for work or cash for work), alternative Income producing activities must be envisaged and the government has to address the land issue.

The TSP has to be undertaken in close collaboration with the NGO and INGO who are in direct contact with the victims in the affected areas and are already involved in the relief and rehabilitation activities. The Government of Pakistan expressed openness to collaborate with the NGO and INGO at the Pakistan Development Forum, when it presented its Foreign Assistance Policy Framework 2010. Yet the government has not proposed any clear policies and strategies for collaboration with the NGO and INGO nor has it expressed motivation and encouragements to the Humanitarian Organisations to come out with relevant propositions. The Government did not make any clear statement on the autonomy and security for humanitarian organisation, and yet, this will be a preliminary condition for good collaboration which is the need of the moment.

As in the case of the Asia tsunami disaster in the different affected countries, the TSP must have a three pronged approach: Livelihood, shelter and services (Watson, health and education). The government must also be in a position to propose transparent solution for the shelter for these victims. The crown land becomes a major issue and the challenge here is to what extent the GoP is ready to propose the vacant or barren crown land with the victims. The ideal solution would be a land and revenue reform to allocate lands for the poor agricultural workers and peasants. This will contribute to facilitate Humanitarian actors to give a perspective orientation to the disaster response.

The TSP must be considered as an intermediary phase, with the possibility for the victims to undertake a gradual and progressive professional integration process. They must be helped with cash for work and also given the means to start progressively IGP on a very small scale. This will contribute to make them less vulnerable and more resilient.

As it was rightly introduced in the DNA, the success of the rehabilitation process will depend on the community based approach and the capacity to bring the beneficiaries together so that there is interdependence and mutual help to get out of their situation of poverty conditions. There will be a need for massive psychosocial accompaniment, which has proven to be very useful in the last few major disasters.

The humanitarian priority of the moment is to cater to the basic needs and also to build resilience of the victims through psychosocial accompaniment and facilitate the economic recovery. The primary concern in the psychosocial field must be focussed on the youth and the children.

The GoP must also introduce governance mechanisms for transfer of competence

and means from the federal to the provincial government. These mechanisms are indispensable for ensuring transparency and aid effectiveness as well as ensuring that funds are used appropriately. To avoid any temptation of mismanagement of funds, the GoP must soon introduce an Disaster Aid Committee composed of INGO; ministries, and UN actors to ensure accountability of the international aid.

The starting point will be gaining the confidence of the international community, which will depend on the expression of good will to undertake coordinated actions and the political will to translate the good will into concrete action. If not the International donor community will certainly be hesitant to give the aid needed to this humanitarian crisis. The first step in this line will be to start cooperation with the civil society organisations both national and international.

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