

Management Comments and Recommended Actions

Evaluation of the Relief Phase of the IFRC 2010 Pakistan Monsoon Flash Floods Operation *21 November 2011*

Acknowledgment

On behalf of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC), through the British Red Cross Society, towards the PRCS/IFRC Monsoon Flash Floods Operation 2010 (MDRPK006). Specifically, PRCS/IFRC would like to thank DEC for also contributing to the undertaking and completion of a mid-term evaluation, for which this is the management response.

Rational for Management Response

The 2010 Pakistan floods response encompassed complex conditions, affecting a significant part of the country and stretching the resources of many civil society actors. This has been a challenge for all humanitarian actors. Its effects are still being felt and the operation is still ongoing, albeit in the recovery phase. The IFRC believes it is important to provide a management response to acknowledge other opinions and factors that were referenced in correspondence to the report. The report and the response should be read together to get a comprehensive picture of the findings, as well as work that is already being undertaken in addressing the issues and recommendations raised in this report. We welcome most of the evaluation report's specific recommendations. Many of them have already been implemented or are in process. Those involved in the operation were given opportunities to review this evaluation report and provide input, feedback and corrections.

General Comments to the Report

There were limitations in time and capacity for the evaluation team in going through all the materials and information, discussing with relevant persons at all levels. Tracing memory of processes that happened long ago and accessing people who may have left the organization is challenging. Institutional memory from the various parts of the organization and personnel may not be captured in the evaluation. In addition, it is our opinion that in some areas the observations and recommendations of the report may have missed some background or context information.

Due to the above limitations, though this review identifies many of the issues that arose during the course of this operation, it does not go into deeper analysis of the root causes or circumstances that have propagated these problems. As such, some of the recommendations are quite general or generic and some comments might be viewed as over-simplification of very complex issues. For instance, the report seems to be unbalanced as it does not reflect adequately the substantial achievements of PRCS/IFRC in a difficult context. Additionally, the overall context within which the relief operation was carried out does not seem to have been adequately explored and highlighted. These include such operational challenges as; the lack of a IFRC status agreement which affect effectiveness/efficiency, especially in the early days; the problems of accessibility faced by the FACT team deployed in August and September at the height of the flooding.

No	Recommendation/comments	Actions	Responsible	Time line
1	<p><u>Develop a participatory contingency plan for joint IFRC/PRCS emergency response.</u> Given the significant lack of consensus that emerged within the operations, it is recommended that the IFRC and the PRCS develop a comprehensive contingency plan for future emergencies which includes a hazard profile, possible responses in different types of emergencies, clear guidelines for levels and types of international deployments needed for different emergency responses and other key components of the response.</p>	<p>In terms of improving organizational preparedness for responding to future disasters, pre-disaster meetings are being held annually. The meeting scheduled for July 2010 was delayed due to the July floods themselves and had to be cancelled due to the ongoing operation in Pakistan. This years meeting was held in August of 2011. Of the recommended issues/challenges that came up related to contingency planning and emergency response, five key issues were prioritized and discussed in greater detail resulting in work plans for addressing these key issues. One of the priority issues was updating the National Disaster Response Plan which was completed in 2011. Furthermore, in terms of improving preparedness activities, PRCS has completed a monsoon contingency plan for 2011 based on the NDMA contingency plans and in direct coordination with NDMA. This process includes a complete movement contingency plan under the ownership of PRCS and supported by IFRC. Currently, PRCS is linked with other relevant organizations (NDMA, Meteorological Departments, Floods Commision) and the implementation will be decentralized and focused at the provincial and branch levels.</p>	DRR Coordinator	September 2011
2	<p><u>Develop clearer rationale for geographical and sectoral focus and targeting of the most vulnerable</u> The assessments that the IFRC (FACT and TPAT) and PRCS undertake could provide a clearer rationale for the relative weight of different sectors so that fund-raising can be done accordingly as well as clear guidelines for targeting the most vulnerable regions and families. The PRCS is advised to aim to focus on the 10% most vulnerable of the emergency affected people rather than any 10% of them. While it can continue to coordinate</p>	<p>Under the contingency planning of PRCS, the strategy of the PRCS is to reach 10% of the affected people. In this it follows the Movement approach which in general has responded to 10 – 12% of the effected population and therefore used as the initial planning targets. In the emergency phase, this means identifying those clearly in need (of food and water) to survive, from a vulnerable group. Beneficiaries were selected in coordination with the local authorities and PRCS counterparts. Coordination with district administration and NDMA/PDMA is an</p>	DRR Coordinator/ Recovery Coordinator	ongoing

	strongly with the district officials, it would be good to develop mechanisms for verifying the information given by them to target the most vulnerable people in the district.	essential imperative. The recovery phase has a stronger focus on vulnerable groups, operating in areas reached by fewer organisations.		
3	<u>Use cash more widely during the emergency phase</u> The use of cash can enhance the speed, cost-efficiency, relevance and appropriateness of the agency's relief-phase response. While certain sectors cannot be replaced by cash, for example health, water and sanitation, cash could be an effective substitute for significant portions of the food aid and NFI response. The mechanisms being developed for cash distributions for the early recovery phase could be adapted before the next emergency for the relief phase. While it is understood that PRCS is reluctant to engage in cash (and livelihoods) activities, the results of this evaluation clearly reveal the preferences of the communities. Thus, the PRCS is advised to review its position in light of these preferences.	Neither cash nor NFI's can substitute each other and remain to be complementary. However, the development of a conditional cash grant programme in the recovery phase has established SOPs for transfers and is demonstrating the benefits of this mechanism through implementation. So from a systems standpoint, the mechanism is being used and can be utilized in future responses, after it has been used, evaluated and reviewed. Further operational experience with cash will help IFRC and PRCS address many concerns. The current mission of the Cash Grant Delegate will provide technical support and assist PRCS develop its approach and systems to utilise cash grants in the emergency phase of a relief operation.	CT Delegate	November - December 2011
4	<u>Increase focus on livelihoods activities during emergency phase</u> The agency is advised to also focus more on livelihoods activities during the emergency phase as this helps in making communities self-reliant and leveraging the value for money from programs. There can be a special emphasis on focusing on women in such programs, for example by supporting livestock, poultry, handicraft and home gardening activities within communities.	The focus of PRCS in relief has been on food and NFIs. Livelihood activities are relatively new and applied in the recovery phase (such as seeds and fertilizers in this response). Wider livelihood activities are being supported through the use of conditional cash grants in the recovery programme, providing experience which can be applied in future disasters.	Livelihood Delegate	November - December 2011
5	<u>Enhance accountability mechanisms at community levels</u> Accountability to communities could be enhanced significantly. This will require a more concerted effort at the global level, including developing a humanitarian	The experience gained with the joint PRCS/IFRC set up of "Beneficiaries Communication and Accountability" initiated the immediate set up of Complaints Cells for the victims of the floods 2011. The system is under	Beneficiary Communications Delegate	November 2011 - February 2012

	<p>framework for the agency as well as earlier deployment of accountability delegates during the relief phase. Accountability mechanisms can focus on providing greater information to communities about the mandate of the agency, the exact goods and services to be distributed (e.g., by printing them on the back side of the tokens) and the exit strategy. These mechanisms can also focus on enhancing the involvement of communities in relevant decisions (e.g., the sectoral choices, the people to be selected for aid in a community) through participatory assessments as well as implementation (e.g., by using village committees to more actively manage the distribution). Finally, complaint mechanisms can be instituted by giving the contact information for senior staff in writing as well as verbally (e.g., by putting posters with contact information and complain procedures outside mosques).</p>	<p>development, both in the Pakistan context and globally. While it is not finalized and will be further formalized with the support of the BenCom team, progress has been made. For instance, PRCS is currently managing a complaints cell with the current Floods in Sindh province in August 2011. While the tool does need to evolve and improve, it is an important and significant positive start. IFRC Asia Pacific Zone office is also positioning a BenCom resource person for longer term support.</p>		
6	<p><u>Enhance PRCS capacity significantly, especially at the district level</u> At the national and provincial levels within the PRCS, a greater emphasis to recruit people with strong humanitarian backgrounds rather than commercial or military backgrounds would be advisable. At the district levels, there could be a focus on hiring more experienced persons as DMOs rather than immediately appointing volunteers to these positions. To reduce turnover within the volunteer base, PRCS could focus not only on young males, who are very mobile vocationally, but also other age groups and females, who may be less mobile. PRCS could also look into training its non-DM staff working in regular paid positions in disaster management work so that they can be deployed for emergency work during disasters. There could also be an attempt within the IFRC to place more Pakistanis into FACT, TPAT and RDRT so that the pool of</p>	<p>Branch development is included in the recovery phase and will strengthen the branches involved with the Integrated Recovery Program (IRP), with a focus on youth volunteers recruitment, training. Along with Volunteering & Youth programmes, IFRC Branch Development also aims at increased sustainability of service-delivery structures through local resource-mobilisation. This aspect is further integrated in the organizational development section of the country support plan for which close cooperation is looked for.</p> <p>The training of non-DM staff was raised in the pre-disaster meeting, noting the need for better integration of policies, procedures, capacity development during disaster and ‘normal’ activities in order that the transition between the two is easier. E.g. the reporting structure & capabilities established during normal time can be structured to serve</p>	OD Delegate and Branch Development Delegate	ongoing

	<p>qualified Pakistanis available to work with the IFRC and PRCS during emergencies increases. There is also a need for improved volunteer management, finance management, relationship management with IFRC and PNSs as part of a contingency planning process.</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> <i>The first part of the recommendation is more advice to the PRCS than to the IFRC. It might require a paradigm and cultural change within the organisation.</i></p>	<p>also in emergency time.</p> <p>At all training occasions Pakistanis are invited to participate. PRCS participates in the regional cooperation among National Societies on RDRT arrangements. NS and local IFRC staff continue to be made available for FACT, ERU, TPAT and RDRT.</p>		
7	<p><u>Relax logistical and financial procedures to allow faster response</u></p> <p>Most large-scale relief agencies have adopted fast-track procurement procedures for the first 2-3 months. The increased risk introduced by these procedures can be minimized by maintaining a roster of reliable suppliers as part of the contingency planning exercise. A detailed analysis of such issues and their solution is beyond the remit of this report. However, the report still adds value by showing the links between these issues and impact on field level program quality.</p>	<p>We do not currently have any special or so called 'Emergency Procurement Procedure' because by correct application the new / updated procurement manual allows for exceptional approvals.</p> <p>2.6. Exceptions to calling for bids or proposals: <i>(d)The requirements of the operation leave no time to conduct the solicitation process (e.g. in the case of goods to be purchased in response to a disaster or other type of emergency). Before awarding a contract under this exception, the procurement officer should consider the feasibility of splitting the requirement into two parts: one part being awarded on an emergency basis and the other through a competitive bidding process, if this is acceptable to the requester.</i></p> <p>2.6.2 Use of exceptions <i>Exceptions should be authorized by the head of LRMD. The procurement entity should limit the use of exceptions as far as possible and ensure best value for money is obtained. Procurement officers should exercise sound judgement and caution when applying any of the above exceptions, and when awarding a purchase order or contract without calling for bids. In case of emergency, before applying an</i></p>	Logistics Coordinator	ongoing

		<p><i>exception, the procurement entity should consider calling for bids whilst giving a short deadline for bid submissions.</i></p> <p>So basically we would reject the recommendation to relax the logistical procedures to allow for faster response arguing that by correct application of the current procedures we can be extremely fast but at the same time maintain an acceptable level of integrity / risk management. However this needs to be reinforced with greater awareness of the procedures and an explanation on how this will be achieved.</p>		
8	<p><u>Develop a stronger MIS system</u> IFRC and PRCS are advised to also develop better MIS and documentation systems. The purpose would be to have the evaluation criteria for any emergency clear right from the start so that information along those criteria can be constantly collected. This will help make key documents and information more easily available for evaluators at the end of the project. More importantly, it will also help the senior management of the IFRC and PRCS track progress towards those criteria right throughout the emergency and take remedial action in case progress is weak along some criteria.</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> It is felt the evaluation team have not looked in detail at the existing MIS system of the PRCS, which gave daily progress and management updates. It is not clear either what specific documents the evaluator was missing.</p>	<p>In terms of developing a better MIS system and documentation system, the PRCS Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) system is evolving with the support of IFRC in the recovery phase of the appeal.</p> <p>The PMER/MIS structure itself is a challenge. Although the importance of the establishment of a PMER department is recognized by the National Headquarters, a well-functioning system in all its Branches has not been established yet. However, in the provinces where the Integrated Recovery Program is implemented, PMER officers have been identified in the HR structures and recruited in Sindh, KPK, while recruitment Punjab is underway. The monitoring of the IRP will follow an accepted log frame and standard procedures and will be guided by experienced PMER delegates.</p> <p>Currently, a simple monitoring tool for the IRP exists that is updated bi-weekly from KPK, Punjab and Sindh. This is the main tool that is used to alert management of operational issues. A more appropriate tool will be introduced soon, once the NS is fully commitment in the</p>	PMER delegates	ongoing

		<p>PMER engagement.</p> <p>The experience with the monitoring of the 2010 Monsoon floods relief activities is being used to establish an improved system for the monitoring of the operations in the 2011 floods.</p>		
9	<p><u>Better systems for lessons incorporation and documentation</u></p> <p>The IFRC and PRCS are advised to develop stronger mechanisms to incorporate previous lessons into current emergencies. This can be done by having one-page bullet format summaries of previous lessons available for all staff, holding quick, one-hour lessons incorporation meetings during the early part of the emergency at various levels and sending periodic reminders from the management to all staff to keep the lessons in mind.</p>	<p>With many different ‘projects’, a systematic mechanism for review and integration of lessons learned into future plans for all PRCS activities may be more likely to result in change. This could be preferable to simply sharing lessons learned from many different evaluations (eg. each partners shares the ‘lessons learned’ from evaluations of the projects they fund, meaning there are 5 different lessons learned documents to read).</p> <p>A more systematic briefing process would be more useful, as the turnover of people during emergency response makes incorporating lessons learned harder. An update of the current briefing pack and improved introduction for incoming personnel will lead to this.</p>	HR/HoD/Program manager	continuous
10	<p><u>Undertake evaluations earlier and with greater consensus</u></p> <p>It would be advisable to have a clear plan, shared by all levels of the IFRC and PRCS, to conduct an evaluation in a timely manner close to the end of the emergency phase. The planning of the evaluation should ideally start much earlier given the complex and multi-layered nature of the agencies involved. The agency may also look to recruit a team consisting of at least one male and one female so that both types of beneficiaries can be approached during the evaluation.</p>	<p>Upcoming evaluations should be scheduled earlier and with more preparation time in order to have a wider participation.</p> <p>The evaluation could have started at the end of the relief phase when relevant (IFRC) staff would still be available. The limited size of the evaluation team (one evaluator + local assistance) does not allow a more in-depth analysis.</p> <p>The ‘lack of consensus’ was due to the intended emphasis on beneficiaries satisfaction and feedback as the core of evaluation. This was not feasible under time constraints, while a monitoring mission had been recently completed with comparable questionnaires.</p>	HoD	ongoing



11	<p><u>Review the contents of the NFI package</u> As mentioned in the report, some of the NFI items, such as knives, blankets, tarpaulins etc., were not found appropriate by field level staff or beneficiaries. It would be advisable for IFRC and PRCS to review their appropriateness.</p>	<p>The NFI items and their quality were discussed with the PRCS as part of the standardization of prepositioning of stock at national, regional and district level.</p> <p>Specifically the knife, as part of the shelter tools, was mentioned as a possible danger in a setting with displaced populations in a camp setting. While this is a valid concern, a knife is a common item in Pakistan, not legally forbidden and an appropriate part of the toolset. Of note, is that there are no reports of violent incidents involving this tool.</p>	DM department	ongoing
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