



SITUATION REPORT CYCLONE AILA

OVERALL SITUATION

The impact of Cyclone Aila has led to heavy rainfall and damages in 16 districts in West Bengal. The worst affected districts are South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, East Medinipur, West Medinipur, Howrah, Hooghly and Kolkata. On 28 May, the population affected in the state reached over 5.1 million. The damage impact assessment conducted by the Government of West Bengal and UNDP put the death toll at 96. Over 500,000 houses are damaged either fully or partially and a similar amount of cropped area is affected. Over 60,000 people rescued have been accommodated in government relief camps. However, some areas in the Sundarbans river islands remain marooned and hard to reach. A sum of 15,000,000 has been announced for the state for contingency relief.

The Inter-Agency group in West Bengal state met on 26 May to discuss initial findings and conducting rapid needs assessments. The IAG will be meeting again on 29 May (72 hours after the first meeting) to share assessment findings. The participating agencies include UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs and local community -based organizations.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

[West Bengal state IAG \(Inter-Agency Group\) meeting, 26 May 2009, 1630-1815 hrs, Association of Bengal Collaborators for Development \(ABCD\), 52-D, Radhanath Choudhury Road, Kolkata – 700 015](#)

The State IAG members in West Bengal met on a very short notice to review the immediate damage and impacts of Cyclone AILA, the cyclonic storm that swept through the state on 24-26 May 2009, and plan for unified response among partners towards Rapid Emergency Needs Assessment and Response.

Participants: The meeting was conducted within 24 hours of the Cyclone AILA. It was attended by over 30 participants from INGOs, NGOs, local organizations and UN agencies. Key stakeholders at the meeting included UNICEF, UNDP, WWF and leading NGOs like CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Lutheran World Service India (LWSI), World Vision, Oxfam India, Save the Children (SCF), Goal India, Mennonite Central Committee (MC C), Udayani, PRISM, Health Care Welfare Society (HCWS), ABCD, Sahay, Seva Kendra, Palli Unnayan Samiti(PUS), Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), Indranarayanpur Nazrul Smriti Sangha (INSS), Gana Unnayan Parishad (GUP) and representatives from Community Based Organizations.

Key discussion points

The meeting deliberated on coherence and information sharing at all levels for effective response to the disaster situation, which requires all humanitarian agencies to work together, to fill the gaps and to be in great understanding with one another, while upholding each organization's core commitment.

Damage impact assessments

- ✚ The participants discussed findings from immediate damage assessments that were undertaken by agencies. The information available from the GoWB damage impact assessment was taken as the benchmark, and then other organizations including WWF, PRISM, PUS, LWSI DRCSC, Seva Kendra, and INSS presented some more detailed information on the damages.
- ✚ Given the quantum of available information, participants unanimously agreed that so far a large amount of information is available from South 24 Parganas, while there is very little input from other affected districts like North 24 Parganas, Pachim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur; and except the GoWB report, NGOs are yet to explore damage/needs assessment in Hooghly and Howrah districts.
- ✚ PRISM mentioned that in North 24 Parganas there were plenty of tarpaulins, medical assistance, and even food items. However, there is a dire need of water supply. While there is a need for at least 200,000 water pouches, only 20,000 are available.

Pre-positioning

- ✚ Additionally, potential technical collaboration with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Indian Red Cross Society (IRC) in West Bengal was discussed on warehouse arrangements and pre-positioning.
- ✚ In order to consolidate and regularly update the Disaster Management Department, GoWB on the available pre-positioning of critical supply items, it was agreed that a centralized data base will be developed by UNICEF with information from the Disaster Management Department, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), and Department of Health of GoWB, NDRF, UNICEF, IRCS and other State IAG members.



Rapid Needs Assessment

- The agencies concluded that the initial damage reports (of 24 hours) and the first hand information were mostly general, and require to be supplemented with critical inputs for agencies to take decisions on immediate response.
- As a result, it was unanimously agreed amongst the participants to map their current presence and plan for rapid needs assessment. The geographical area of operation was mutually decided by the agencies who were to move into the field to conduct Rapid Needs Assessment within the next 72 hours.
- Based on the NGO mapping and future planning for the next 72 hours, the agencies made a collaborative effort and took a conscious decision towards optimal utilization of available resources, and not to duplicate or overlap the work of each other.
- A discussion followed on the proposed visits to various Blocks to make a quick Need Assessment in the areas. It was decided to work together in many of the blocks as cluster teams so that each team can make a proper needs assessment of the area. Accordingly, the following chart was prepared for **agency mapping**:

South 24 Parganas

BLOCKS AFFECTED	ORGANIZATION	DATE OF VISIT(will be informed by each partner for assessment)
Mathurapur-I	LWS(I),PUS,INSS	
Mathurapur-II	INSS	
Basanti	DRCSC,PUS, IRCS	Kagmari high school, Saifuddin
Kultali	WWF, SAHAY,PUS	
SAGAR	INSS	
NAMKHANA	WWF	
KAKDWIP	OXFAM/INSS	
PATHARPRATIMA	UNICEF/OXFAM/INSS/DRCSC/SCF	
GOSABA	WWF,PUS,UNICEF	
Canning-I	PUS	
Canning-II	PUS	

North 24 Parganas

BLOCKS AFFECTED	ORGANIZATION	DATES of visit(to be informed by each partner for assessment)
Hingalganj	DRCSC,	
Sandeshkhali-I	PRISM, SCF	
Sandeshkhali-II	PRISM, SCF	
Hasnabad	GUP	
Swarupnagar	SKC	
Basirhat		
Baduria	SKC	
Basirhat II		
Minakha		
Bongaon	PRISM	
Gaighata	PRISM	

Purba Medinipur

BLOCKS AFFECTED	ORGANIZATION	DATES of visit(to be informed by each partner for assessment)
Contai	Caritas India, SCF, RKM, UNICEF	
Egra	DRCSC, SKC, RKM, UNICEF (Kajla Jana Kalyan)	

Paschim Medinipur

BLOCKS AFFECTED	ORGANIZATION	DATES of visit(to be informed by each partner for assessment)
Moyna	SAHAY	



Next Steps

- ✚ Father Puthumai was unanimously nominated as the Coordinator for the State IAG during the disaster response period.
- ✚ PRISM will share the Need Assessment Format with Father Puthumai for onward mailing. The Partners may use other useful formats too, including those prepared by SPHERE India.
- ✚ It was suggested that all information be passed on to the IAG forum, so that the information can be passed on to others, before the information is circulated to others. However, organizations are free to follow their mandate in keeping their seniors informed of the developments.
- ✚ It was agreed that Father Puthumai will circulate the Contact List of all IAG – West Bengal Partners, Damage Assessment Reports consolidated from all partners, and a Format for Partners to fill in on the geographical area of disaster response.
- ✚ All the partners working in each of these blocks as mentioned above will visit the Blocks for needs assessment in the next 48 hours, while initiating relief operation in many of the affected areas.
- ✚ The next IAG meeting would be held after 72 hours where the agencies would share findings from their assessments i.e. at 1630 hrs on Friday 29 May 2009 at ABCD, 52 -D, Radhanath Choudhury Road, Kol – 15.
- ✚ The minutes of the meeting will be circulated to all IAG members, so that everybody is informed of the progress and that they can positively attend the meeting on 29 May.

Important Learnings:

- ✚ There is a great need to identify more organizations that are working in various areas and are providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of people in the affected area, for better coordination and information sharing. This needs to take place at the local level importantly so that there is no duplication of action.
- ✚ There is plenty of information available on the South 24 Parganas district. However, there is not much information on other districts. This information gap needs to be filled at the quickest time for effective response.

Assessment findings of DRCSC and other organizations in West Bengal :

Immediate Need			Rs.	Rs.
Per family	Food	100 Rs. X 7 Days	700	
	Tarpolin	1 pc X Rs. 500	500	
	Water	8 It X Rs.12 X 7 Days	672	1,872
Per Village	Bleaching	50 Kgs X Rs.20	1,000	
	Lime	200 Kgs X Rs.7	1,400	
	Geolin	4 bottles X Rs.45	180	2,580
Total				
54,000 family in 233 village in 9 blocks of 3 districts				
Rs.1,872 X 54,000 Family + Rs.2,580 X 233 Villages	Rs.101,689,140			
Travel etc	Rs.1,000,000			
After 2~3 Days				
Halogen tabs				
Disinfectants/ mosquito repellants				
Clean linen and bedding materials				
Hurricanes and lamps				
Medicines for cough, cold, fever, diarrhoea and other general ailments.				
After 1 month				
Seeds				
Construction material				
Road/river bund repair				
Water Harvesting Structure				
Fodder				



DAMAGE DETAILS

Damage details in West Bengal as of 27 May 2009: (GoWB Damage Impact Assessment Report)

S N	Item	Cooch Behar	Jalpaiguri	Darjeeling	Uttar Dinajpur	Dakshin Dinajpur	Malda	Murshidabad	Nadia	North 24 Pgs	South 24 Pgs	Kolkata	Howrah	Hooghly	Bardhaman	Birbhum	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Total	
1	Natural Disaster	Cyclone with heavy rainfall	Flood like situation, heavy rain, soil erosion	Land slide with heavy rain		Storm	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Storm	Storm	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Cyclonic Storm with low rain	Cyclonic Storm with heavy rain	Storm	Cyclonic Storm	Cyclonic Storm		
2	Date of Occurrence	25.05.09	25.05.09	26.05.09	25-26.05.09	25-26.05.09	25.05.09	25.05.09	24-25.05.09	24-25.05.09	24-25.05.09	24-25.05.09	23-25.05.09	25-26.05.09	24-25.05.09	25.05.09	24-25.05.09	24-25.05.09		
3	No. of Blocks affected	12		5		8		4	17	13	7		14	18	10	10	29	25	172	
4	No. of Municipality / ward affected	6				2			1	3					5		7	5	29	
5	No. of villages affected	1,384	133	224	1,430	305	3,501	130		600	1,270			810			6,310	2,964	19,061	
6	Population affected	275,586	16,500	15,250	321,210	21,702	270,000	18,675	308,250	266,490	891,471		47,770	600,028	200,000	200,000	628,545	1,058,534	5,140,011	
7	No. of human lives lost	1		25			1	3	4	15	21	5	9	5	4	2		1	96	
8	Crop area affected by (in ha)	12,700			43,370														56,070	
9	No. of houses Damaged	F	4,078	710	664	14,339	1,518	15,000	3,020	5,390	10,299	109,154		8,753	19,648	7,447	850	27,689	23,845	252,404
		P	11,271	1,223	1,319	20,144	2,966	35,000	4,512	8,877	18,197	95,686		11,390	45,385	24,670	1,300	56,352	48,781	387,073



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

West Bengal

Relief operations by Government of West Bengal:

- ✚ Tarpaulin distributed: 175,000
- ✚ Contingency relief fund: Rs 15,000,000
- ✚ Rice distributed: 1,450 metric tonnes
- ✚ No. of boats for rescue operations: 60 deployed by Civil Defence and the Army
- ✚ Food packets air-dropped in remote blocks: Hinglaganj and Gosaba blocks in both North and South 24 Parganas
- ✚ The Administration along with the Panchayat and UNDP-GOI Disaster Risk Management Programme volunteers and local club volunteers are making effort to rescue affected persons and reach them to safe places where they are provided with dry food, water pouches, etc.

Relief efforts in West Bengal as of 28 May 2009 (GoWB Damage Impact Assessment Report):

S N	Item	Darjeeling	Malda	Murshidabad	North Pgs 24	South 24 Pgs	Howrah	Hooghly	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Total
1	No. of Persons rescued	1,128			3,365	53,200				7,531	65,224
	No. of Relief Camps	15			28	265				85	393
2	No. of people in Relief Camps & shelters	1,128			3,365	55,000				7,531	67,924
3	No. of Medical Camps					65				10	75
4	No. of Gruel Kitchen	13									13
5	Requirement	Cont: 1,500,000, Cash GR: 800,000, Starvation GR: 500,000, T: 10,000, Clothing: 1,000,000	T: 20,000, GR Rice: 300mt. Cash GR: 200,000, RC: 500,000	Rice: 50Mt T: 10,000, Cont: 50,000	T: 20,000 GR (Rice): 1,000 Mt RC: 2,000,000		RC: 2,000,000 Rice: 200 Mt.	RC: 3,000,000 GR: 275mt. RC: 3,000,000, T: 50,000 D: 5,000, S: 5,000, CG: 4,000, L: 3,000	RC: 10,000,000 T: 40,000, Rice: 1,000Mt.		

UN & NGO RESPONSE

UNICEF:

- ✚ UNICEF's pre-positioned supplies are being distributed in the most affected areas. UNICEF has also undertaken a major part in ensuring coordination mechanisms are in place.
- ✚ A Rapid Assessment Team from UNICEF West Bengal office visited a group of islands in Gosaba block of South 24 Parganas within 72 hrs of Cyclone Aila, on 27 May 2009. The cyclone has cut off a number of villages and caused damage to over 2.1 million people. The team has made the following key observations and recommendations:
 - Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are the major issue in these cut off villages.
 - Given the current water logging and the floating carcasses, the people living in villages and intermediate camps are exposed to public health threats.
- ✚ UNICEF is in close contact with the relevant authorities, specifically the Principal Secretary, Disaster Management Department, Government of West Bengal and is ready to provide technical and other



assistance upon request by the state authorities. UNICEF also stands ready to deploy its staff and consultants, and engage its other partners in complementing government's response.

- UNICEF, through its partners, such as Ram Krishna Mission Lokshiksha Parishad (RKMLP) and 12 cluster organisations, has been moving its pre-positioned emergency supplies that include 2,000 water jerry cans, 800,000 halogen tablets, 3,134 family hygiene kits, 90,000 ORS packets to the most affected areas. UNICEF is coordinating its response with members of the state-level Inter Agency Groups and the Disaster Management Department, Government of West Bengal.
- UNICEF has mobilised the support of NGO partners to facilitate supply distribution and dissemination of critical messages especially on nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, to the affected population in the cut off areas.

SOURCES & CONTACT DETAILS

Sources:

- Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)
- Regional Meteorological Centre, Kolkata
- UNDP Orissa office
- UNICEF Briefing Note 2
- IAG meeting minutes
- DSRSC assessment

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