

## OI Situation Report (SitRep) Format

*Approved by HCMG*

**Number: 4**

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**Summary information**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>COMMON NAME OF EMERGENCY (e.g., frequently used name)</b>   | Cyclone Aila Response 2009  |
| <b>DATE (external/internal break-out)</b>  | As on 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2009   |
| <b>DURATION</b>  |   |
| <b>COUNTRY</b>   | West Bengal, India  |
| <b>SCALE (City/Regional/Country/Cross Country)</b><br><b>MAIN CLASSIFICATION (Natural Disaster, Conflict, Health/Medical, Incident, Other)</b> | Cyclone with heavy rains. (Natural Disaster) Category classification being assessed, currently Cat 3 with potential to scale up to Cat 2. |
| <b>FURTHER EXPLANATION OF CLASSIFICATION (if any)</b>  |   |
| <b>ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>   | 5 Million plus : according to the UNDP and UNDMT report   |
| <b>LEAD OXFAM</b>  | Oxfam India   |
| <b>ACTIVE Oxfam's</b>  | Oxfam GB, Oxfam Australia, HK, Novib, Intermon in India. They have all merged to become Oxfam India.                                      |
| <b>CONTRIBUTING Oxfam's</b>  | Oxfam Australia, Oxfam GB   |
| <b>Contact information of lead Oxfam</b>   | Oxfam India (East India Office; Kolkata)  |
| <b>BUDGET</b>  |   |
| <b>PARTNERS</b>  | INSS (Potential), SSDC  |
| <b>DURATION OF RESPONSE</b>  | <b>5 months</b>   |
| <b>COMMENTS</b>  | Information gathered from Media, Oxfam Staff, Assessment Reports and Partner organisations  |

### 1. Key Issues:

- Media reports and information from the affected areas indicate restlessness among the cyclone hit communities in the Sundarbans region. This has been on account of relief not reaching on time and particularly since government has taken time in distributing relief materials.
- However, it is important to note that there were no reports of such incidences in 24 South paraganas.
- The general humanitarian situation is under control, however there is a risk of further flooding and displacement of communities in the region during high tide (June 7<sup>th</sup>). It is going to be full moon on the 7<sup>th</sup> and there are predictions that the water level will rise and inundate the villages again. Most of the low lying villages are below the sea

level and were earlier protected my earth/mud embankments. The embankments have breached in many areas. The government is making an attempt to plug the breaches, but the scale of breaches in embankments is massive. There are hundreds of breaches across miles of embankments that protect these villages. And it is most unlikely that the government will be able to repair the embankments before the next flooding.

## **2. Security:**

- Flood affected communities turned hostile (hurled verbal and physical abuse) with government officials during the Chief Minister's visit to the region. Oxfam staff in the field locations are requested to remain cautious and sensitive to community issues.
- There are no security threats to Oxfam staff at the moment.

## **3. General Humanitarian Situation (in country)**

- Areas continue to remain submerged affecting nearly 2.6 million people. The human death toll in West Bengal remains at 100 (times of India). Around 152,000 houses have collapsed, and 89,000 partially damaged, while 500 meters of an embankment breached in South 24 Paragana.
- A few incidences of diarrhea have been reported from South 24 Parganas and particularly G-Plot (Block). No major outbreaks of diseases have been reported to date.
- The government is running mobile health clinics through speedboats providing medical service to the villages across the delta.
- Most affected populations have moved to higher ground (Basanti Express way) fearing further flooding on account of high tide on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June.
- Cyclone affected communities are furious on account of delayed relief provisioning from Government. The Chief Minister and government officials visited Gosaba on Sunday and hostile crowds forced them to leave in a hurry. Soon after the CM's departure, the angry crowd turned on government officials in his entourage. They were abused thrashed and chased by hostile communities.
- There is an acute shortage of clean drinking water. Drinking water is a scarce resource in the Sundarbans moreover; it is acute in certain areas where fresh water ponds are now salinated. The villagers has two sources of water. One was the fresh water pond (used for cleaning utensils, irrigation, and for livestock. The second source is the deep tube well in the village. At the moment the pressure on uncontaminated and working condition hand pump is immense. The ponds are not usable anymore due to saline water intrusion.
- The government is tankering water through boats to the remote villages. The tanker provides water to the households once every two days. There is an availability of subsistence drinking water in the villages. We witnessed delivery of water in one villages. This village was near the waterway. The scarcity of water in the interior villages are reported to be getting worse.
- Media reports also indicate that large numbers of affected populations (particularly men) are migrating to Kolkata in search of odd jobs since their livelihoods have been destroyed (Livestock have died and lands inundated with seawater). Women and

families are remaining back. People accommodated temporarily in camps and schools are also reportedly moving out.

- In many villages not a single house has been left standing. Most of the mud and thatch houses have been damaged or totally destroyed. People reside in the open, since the houses are unlivable now.

#### **4. General Political Relations/Context**

- Mamata Banerjee leader of the Trinamul Congress has accused the current West Bengal administration of lagging in the distribution of relief materials. While the Chief Minister had appealed to the centre for a 1000 Crore relief package, this was opposed by Mamata. Ms. Mamata Banerjee also stated that relief targeting would be biased towards the Cyclone affected CPM workers.
- The state government has also increased the level of response in the region following unrest and wide media coverage.

#### **5. Oxfam India Coordination.**

Actions taken

- Thapan Mohapatra and Samuel from DG-ECHO is visiting and assessing the field situation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. The Kolkata Regional Manager and India Humanitarian Manager are currently accompanying the ECHO staff.
- Oxfam India Humanitarian manager is currently in Kolkata supporting the East India Team.
- Oxfam India Humanitarian Services Coordinator is in Kolkata supporting IHM and Kolkata team. Local Coordination with INGOs and UN bodies is strengthened and on going.
- Inter Agency meetings are held at the Kolkata level and Oxfam has been actively participating and sharing relevant information.
- Humanitarian Manager has prepared concept notes and relevant budgets for the response and shared with wider Oxfam Humanitarian Teams for inputs.
- All East India Office staff is actively involved in the response and currently assessing and liaising with potential partner organisations at the field locations.
- Management arrangement Note was drawn up and will be put forward to Oxfam India SMT and OGB SMT for sign off. Oxfam GB is the lead.
- Received confirmation of Oxfam Australia support of AUD 50,000 for the initial start to the programme. Oxfam GB has also in principle committed an amount of 200,000 GBP.

#### **6. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (if relevant)**

- No cases of sexual exploitation or abuse reported over the past days from staff or partners at field locations.

#### **7. Programme Activities - Progress against Objectives**

- Oxfam conducted a rapid assessment on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and has shared this information with the Inter-Agency group.

- Oxfam India has moved contingency stock from Orissa to West Bengal for distribution. This will support the immediate needs of 500 profoundly affected families while other relief material is being procured. Distribution of these items is scheduled to start from Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June.
- Oxfam is also training and inducting field level volunteers from local NGOs to facilitate relief distribution and public health promotion activities.
- Relief items to be distributed include

| SL No. | Relief Item   | Numbers |
|--------|---|---------|
| 1      | HDPE Tarpaulin sheets for temporary shelter (one each per family) | 500     |
| 2      | Ground Sheets (one each per family)                               | 500     |
| 3      | Buckets and Lids (two each to be provided per family)             | 1000    |
| 4      | Mugs (two each to be provided per family)                         | 1000    |
| 5      | Zeoline Water purification solution (4 Pcs per family)            | 2000    |
| 6      | ORS sachets 10 Sachet   | 5000    |

- The rapid assessment report on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May indicated the key emerging needs to be 1) *Safe drinking water: Existing water sources are salinated.* 2) *Provisioning of temporary: A majority of the affected populations had mud houses and hundreds have been reported as collapsed.* 3) *Public Health promotion: The presence of water and inundation poses a specific threat to the general public health situation. Initial information also indicated that environmental sanitation was a priority as dead animal carcasses were posing a health hazard.* 4) *Food: The government has so far only provisioned minimal amounts of dry foods to communities.*
- Oxfam logistics team is in place and have been planning and establishing the minimum requirements for procurement and distribution of relief. Potential Guest House at Ram Ganga has been identified. Logistics routes have been identified and suppliers of relief materials are being contacted.
- INSS (Indra Narayan Nazrul Samriti Sangh) has been identified as a potential local partner for programme implementation in Pather Prathima. Oxfam is seeking a local partner support for operations in Namkhana.
- Oxfam is planning an initial response to 10,000 affected families in 2 severely affected blocks namely Pathapratima and Namkhana. Concept notes and planning for a scale up is underway if the situation worsens.
- A multi sectoral assessment is starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6th. The agencies involved in it are Unicef, Oxfam, Save the Children, Care, MSF. Sphere is organising the assessment. Oxfam will lead on WASH, with the support from RedR WASH specialist, who will arrive and join the assessment team on the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Kolkata.

## 8. Advocacy and lobbying:

- Oxfam is identifying key advocacy messages and liaising with the interagency group. Issues being contemplated are 1) significant increase in Medical support including the establishment of curative centres. 2) Government provisioning adequate food and 3) Government supporting communities to rebuild homes.

## 9. Beneficiary numbers:

*Information Sourced from:*

Indian meteorological department, National Institute of Disaster Management, Government of Orissa, West Bengal, UNDP situation reports, Oxfam staff in the field and Media (Times of India, The Hindu, Jainik Jagran, Hindustan Times, The Telegraph).

| Block         | Gaon Panchayat              | Villages   |                  |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------|
| Patharprotima | Brajabalabhpur              | Govindapur abade<br>Raksaskhalli   | 3000 HH          |
|               | G PLOT                      | Indrapur<br>Buraburir tat<br>Sitarampur<br>Gobardhanpur<br>Plot G0 6 section TBD<br>Plot L Southern potion TBD | 3000 HH          |
| NAMKHANA      | Haripur Gaon<br>Panchayat – | Uttar Chandanpiri<br>Dakshin Chandanpiri<br>Dakshin Chandranagar<br>Maharajaganj<br>Haripur                    | 3000 HH          |
|               | Mousumi GP                  | Mousani<br>Baliara<br>Bagdanga<br>Kusumtala  | 1000 HH          |
| <b>Total</b>  |                             |  | <b>10,000 HH</b> |

**Oxfam is planning to respond to 10,000 families across 5 Gram Panchayats above**

#### **10. New Interventions Planned/Assessment:**

- 1) Detailed proposal and funding information is being gathered.

#### **11. Logistics:**

- The logistics team has arrived and in place. Oxfam GB HSP William Parmar is on location. Shambu Nath Shaw and Suresh Ambe are also in Kolkata and supporting the logistics operations. Mitul (Logs Asst) from Ahmadabad office is joining the response programme on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Potential difficulties are envisaged in the relief distribution process as locations are remote. Target areas are not accessible by road and require transportation of relief material on boats.

#### **12. Communications:**

- Photographs and information is being shared with Oxfam India communications team from Kolkata.

#### **13. Fundraising:**

Oxfam Australia has sanctioned the support of 50,000 AUD for initial start up of the response. Oxfam GB has also in principle committed 200000 GBP towards the response. ECHO Project Officer is currently visiting affected regions. Oxfam may seek funding from ECHO if there is a call for proposals.

Oxfam Hong Kong is exploring possibilities of support to the Oxfam cyclone response programme.

#### **14. Human Resources:**

*Information Sourced from:*

Indian meteorological department, National Institute of Disaster Management, Government of Orissa, West Bengal, UNDP situation reports, Oxfam staff in the field and Media (Times of India, The Hindu, Jainik Jagran, Hindustan Times, The Telegraph).

- 9 Staff members in Kolkata including staff from Delhi are directly working on the response.
- 3 International staff has arrived on location and 1 other ( HSP PM) are expected to join.

#### **15. Finance and Administration (when appropriate and relevant to OI group)**

- Tally Budget code and cost centers developed.
- Funds have been transferred to Kolkata

#### **16. Oxfam International**

- Information not available

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