

SITUATION REPORT COLD WAVE BANGLADESH

NATURE OF HAZARD: COLD WAVE

Bangladesh is currently experiencing a severe cold wave. Northern and southwest parts of the country experienced a rapid fall in temperature on 1 January 2010. Temperatures have remained low since, with cold winds and serve fog. Poor people in the northern region of the country are the worst affected. The impact of the cold wave has resulted in a significant rise in respiratory illnesses, and in some cases death.

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has predicted that a further one or two severe cold waves (04°C - 06°C) is likely to sweep across the northern and central parts of the country during the remainder of January.

DAMAGE DETAILS

So far, the cold wave claimed 39 lives with most victims being children and the elderly. Hospitals in the affected districts have reported higher numbers of admissions with cold weather related illnesses. The weather has also caused crop and other natural resource loss, which will have a longer-term negative impact on the economic situation for the already poor communities in the worst affected areas.

Unable to buy warm clothes, poor people are struggling to ward off cold bite at night. There are widespread reports of people wrapping themselves with gunny and plastic bags, torn kantha, mosquito nets etc. In addition, the death toll for farm animals, which represents a large portion of income in the affected region, is on the increase.

ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

As the cold wave continues to severely affect the poor and homeless people, political parties, social welfare organizations and affluent individuals have initiated distribution of warm clothes in Dhaka city and other parts of the country to mitigate their sufferings. However, there is a broad feeling that the current level of assistance is inadequate given the need.

Following recent discussions between the Director General (DG), Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR) and the UNDP Assistant Country Director (Disaster Management), it appears that the Government has already placed an order with a local vender for procurement of 98,770 pieces of blanket worth BDT 29,433,460 (USD 426,881) at the rate of BDT 298 (USD 4.32) per piece.

The Government is not expecting delivery of their order (98,770 pieces) until late January 2010 due to procure process delays.

OVERALL SITUATION

The DG, DRR indicated that there is an unmet requirement for an additional 170,000 pieces of blankets in different districts (detailed below), for which he has sought UNDP's assistance and support. UNDP Assistant Country Director informed the DG, DRR that UNDP could consider supplementing GoB initiatives subject to a formal request from Government.

Accordingly, a formal request has been received from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM) seeking supply of 100,000 pieces of blankets for distribution to the cold wave affected districts. Taking into account the price at which the government is procuring the blankets, the cost involvement for procurement of 100,000 pieces of blanket comes to BDT 29,800,000 (USD 438,235).

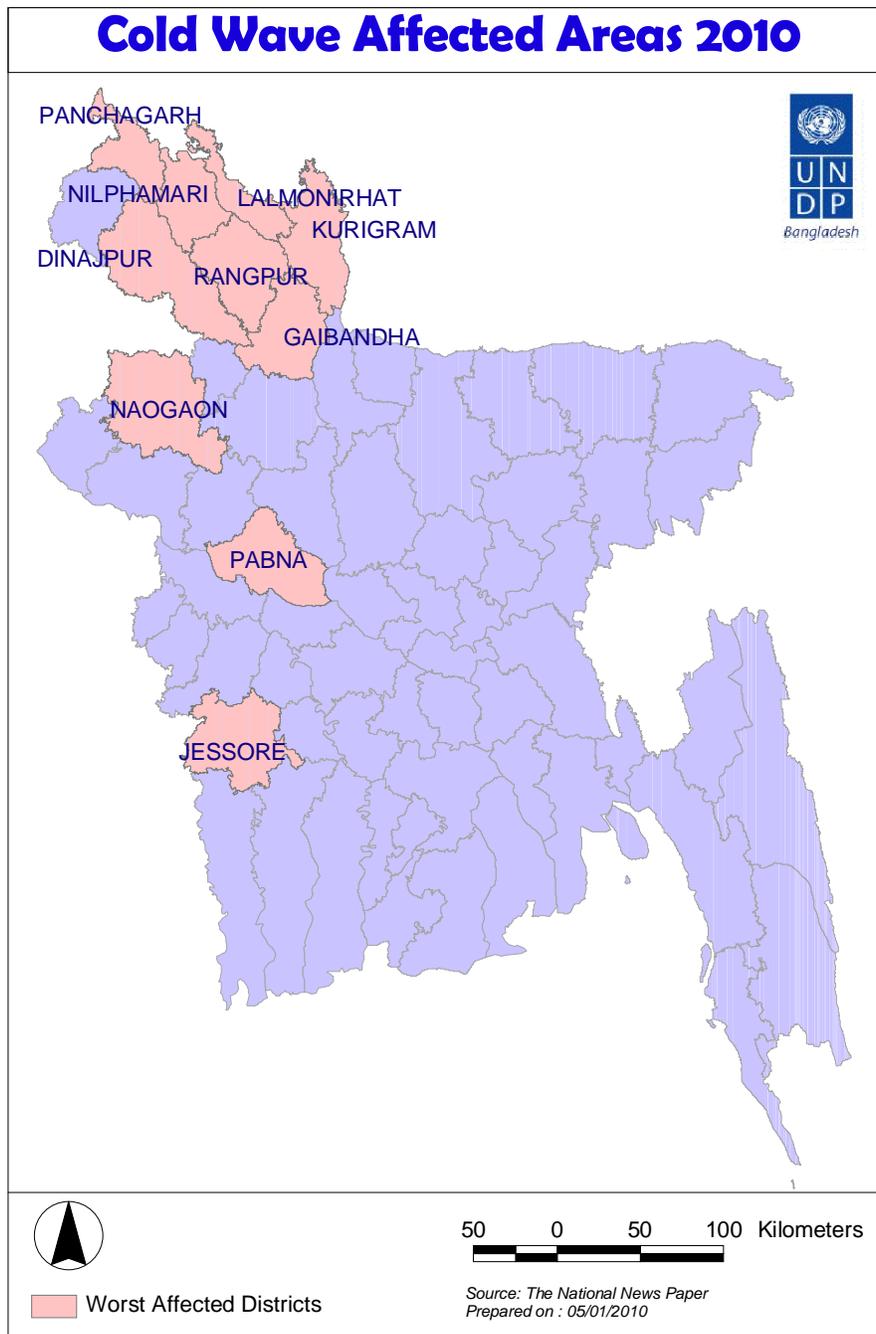
UNDP RESPONSE

UNDP Senior Management is considering providing support to the Government through the immediate procurement of approximately 25,000 blankets (USD 100,000) across the 10 most affected districts – Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Panchagarh, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Noagoan, Jessore and Pabna. Each district would receive 25,000 blankets within 7 days of the order being placed.

The DRR will be requested to select beneficiaries from amongst the most vulnerable and needy families with due regard to women headed families, people with disability, elderly and the socially excluded groups such as those living under the open sky, inhabitants of chars etc.

The DRR will be requested to involve the Bangladesh National Scouts (BNS) in the distribution and monitoring process. UNDP will field officers from the Disaster Response Facility (DRF) project to monitor delivery and to ensure that the most vulnerable are targeted.

MAP OF PROPOSED DISTRICTS TO BE COVERED THROUGH UNDP SUPPORT



Affected People

Worst affected districts by cold wave	State of sufferings	
	Number of death	Number of people hospitalized (Approximately)
Nilphamari	11	950
Kurigram	2	450
Dinajpur	3	350
Panchagarh	3	140
Rangpur	4	230
Bogra	2	60
Rajshahi	-	50
Sirajgonj	6	200
Manikgong	-	20
Meherpur	-	180
Tangail	-	70
Jessore	1	150
Rajbari	-	50
Satkhira	2	210
Khulna	-	40
Bagerhat	-	150
Sherpur	1	50
Chuadanga	6	50
Total 16 districts	41	3,400

Source: UNDP's pre-qualified NGOs, DRRO offices and media report as at 6 January 2010