

## **HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)**

### **BANGLADESH**

#### **0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP**

The HIP has been revised in all sections to include reference to Cyclone Aila crisis. Considering the new developments in that crisis (main embankments repaired leading to a return of displaced population to their home areas), conditions are now met to start the early recovery phase that would enable the affected population to re-establish themselves. EUR 10 Million is allocated to this purpose.

An additional humanitarian need - emergency shelter – (section 2 of the HIP) has been identified to help unregistered rohingyas supported by DG ECHO to cope with the forthcoming monsoon. It has no financial impact on the allocation made for that crisis.

#### **1. CONTEXT**

With a population of 162 million inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, the country ranks 146<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. While long term nutritional trends are encouraging at national level, the numbers of stunted and underweight children remain extremely high<sup>2</sup> and wasting is not only above the WHO<sup>3</sup> emergency threshold but is actually on the increase<sup>4</sup>.

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world exposed to a variety of natural disasters, including cyclones, floods and earthquakes. Being mostly low-lying and in the confluence of two of the large Asian rivers (the Ganges and the Brahmaputra) much of the country is prone to widespread seasonal flooding and is also among the most vulnerable to climate change<sup>5</sup>. The frequency and severity of these disasters could be adversely affected by global warming, population growth, environmental degradation, and ill-maintained infrastructure, all contributing to increased acute humanitarian needs. In this context, every disaster is putting an important number of extremely poor and vulnerable people in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

Cyclone Aila reflects very well how the effects of a natural disaster can significantly impact on people's food security status and exhaust their coping capacities. Cyclone Aila struck the western part of Bangladesh on 25 May 2009, directly affecting some 3.9 million people, rendering homeless some 1 million people and destroying a major part of village protection embankments. As a result, hundreds of thousands had to leave their flooded villages to spend two consecutive years displaced on roads or to take refuge on remaining sections of embankments, relying mainly on external humanitarian assistance<sup>6</sup> and negative coping mechanisms to survive. Considering the prolongation of this forced displacement, DG ECHO allocated a total of EUR 12M<sup>7</sup> to

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<sup>1</sup> Population Reference Bureau, United Nations Population Fund, Mid-2009

<sup>2</sup> 43% and 41% respectively

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation

<sup>4</sup> Source : Government of Bangladesh / IFPRI 2010

<sup>5</sup> The Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI), which calculates vulnerability of countries to the impact of climate change over the next 30 years, ranks Bangladesh at 'extreme risk'.

<sup>6</sup> DG ECHO is by far the largest single donor responding to the crisis. Government provided partial safety net programmes which contributed to control food insecurity.

<sup>7</sup> Emergency Decision ECHO/BGD/BUD/2009/03000, EUR4M; Ad Hoc Decision ECHO/SA/BUD/2009/01000, EUR 8M. Funds of this ad hoc Decision were finally almost entirely spent on emergency relief.

address people's immediate relief needs. In March 2011, the Government finally repaired the main flood protections embankments, allowing most displaced people to return to their villages. Recent needs assessments missions by DG ECHO and partners<sup>8</sup> have confirmed that the humanitarian crisis remains acute when people return to their place of origin. This situation is compounded by the 30 to 40% price hike for essential food commodities in the Aila areas.

DG ECHO is also intervening in the protracted crisis of unregistered **Rohingya refugees** from Burma/Myanmar<sup>9</sup>. The Rohingyas are an ethnic, religious and linguistic minority in Myanmar, mainly inhabiting North Rakhine State (NRS), bordering Bangladesh. The Rohingyas face exclusion and severe discrimination in Myanmar, from which many have fled since the 70's. Some 28,000 Rohingya refugees officially recognized by the Government of Bangladesh have been living in two UNHCR refugee camps since 1992. An estimated 200,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees have settled among the local population. With no process for them to seek protection they are rendered vulnerable to persecution, exploitation and arrest. Recently anti-Rohingya sentiment has increased as they are perceived locally as economic migrants putting an additional strain on Bangladesh's limited livelihood opportunities; the Government of Bangladesh would like to see them ultimately to return to Myanmar. While recognising that a regional political solution needs to be pursued to find a durable solution to this long lasting crisis, over the last two years DG ECHO has been supporting, through emergency and basic humanitarian aid, two caseloads totalling approximately 40,000 unregistered Rohingya in two unofficial settlements (Kutupalong makeshift camp and Leda site). Providing humanitarian assistance to the unregistered Rohingyas has recently been challenged by humanitarian access restrictions. DG ECHO has classified the Rohingya crisis as a 'forgotten crisis'.

## 2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

### *Cyclone Aila*

In the south-western districts of Khulna and Satkhira an estimated 210,000-233,000 people remain acutely affected<sup>10</sup>. 26% of those are still displaced and living on embankments, or outside of ring embankment with their land inundated with salt water. 74% have just returned to their homes after a prolonged period of displacement, but have lost their previous income generating activities to sustain their families. All remain in a high state of vulnerability, without adequate livelihoods, shelter and watsan.

As a result of the cyclone, continuously ebbing and flowing saline flood waters have, over a period of almost 2 years destroyed the main income generating activities - primarily agriculture and shrimp culture- as well as other forms of livelihood assets including rickshaws, boats and livestock, making it impossible for people to re-establish their livelihoods unaided. After such prolonged saline water flooding, the land has been polluted by high levels of salinity preventing the cultivation of local crops. Shrimp culture has re-started to a limited extent in some areas but can provide employment to only a few of the large number of unemployed laborers. The monsoon, which should begin in late June, will be an opportunity to restart some agriculture work on the small land holdings owned by many people, as the rains will help to reduce salinity levels. However, after 2 years of living under emergency conditions, affected people have no resources to invest in re-starting their livelihoods once conditions allow.

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<sup>8</sup> DG ECHO assessment missions (ECHO Dhaka January 2011, Desk officer mission March 2011, ECHO Dhaka and RSO mission April 2011), DG ECHO Partners joint needs assessments (31 March 2011)

<sup>9</sup> Which has lead DG ECHO to rank Bangladesh with a crisis index of 3, vulnerability of 2.

<sup>10</sup> DG ECHO Partners joint needs assessments (31 March 2011)

The majority of affected people are already adopting detrimental coping mechanisms to survive, such as reduced consumption of food, distress assets sales<sup>11</sup>. As markets are functioning, it is crucial to provide a comprehensive cash programming approach to help people to survive until the next November crop.

Based on the results of the needs assessments carried out recently, DG ECHO suggests that a package of short-term, food security support be provided: urgently needed conditional cash grants to enable them to plough their land and to then purchase the necessary inputs (fertilizer, saline tolerant paddy seeds). Such work should commence during May if they are to fully benefit from the forthcoming agricultural season, culminating in the November rice harvest. Landless beneficiaries and those incapable of manual labour would be assisted with a similar conditional cash grant to enable them to invest in livelihood enhancing assets – livestock, tools, etc. This assistance would be coupled with conditional cash grants to families for provision of food until the harvest. Cash for work (CFW) activities will be prioritised, whenever possible, based on their positive contribution to bridging the food gap, on livelihoods and/or building the communities' resilience to future disasters. In order to make a positive contribution to the outstanding needs in the water and sanitation and shelter sectors, cash for work activities will focus on essential infrastructure renewal (potable water catchment ponds/canal rehabilitation, sanitation infrastructure repair, shelter repair and construction such as raised plinths).

The above-mentioned activities need to commence without delay, before the start of the rains, to prepare for taking advantage of the desalinating effects of the monsoon and in the same time to help people cope with the lean season (land prepared and cultivated for next harvest, water sources ready to collect rain waters for drinking purposes, shelters rehabilitated before rains start, livestock and other livelihoods assets purchased for diversified income generation).

Cash for training will be the main activity to be provided during the monsoon period, as a major source of revenue for households through women. As a consequence of the food insecurity situation, many male family members are migrating for extended periods during the monsoon period to seek work outside the community, leaving behind highly vulnerable female-headed households for which cash transfers should not be made conditional upon intensive manual labour. Given the chronic malnutrition of adult women (which in itself is recognized as a key factor underlying child malnutrition) and high prevalence of anaemia, the delivery of well designed training and awareness raising programmes to women's groups on issues of nutrition and child care, health and hygiene, homestead gardening and other livelihood related trainings would provide a way to ensure cash transfer to women, while integrating crucial nutritional issues into the operation. Unconditional cash transfer to the most vulnerable (disabled, elderly) will also be contemplated.

### *Rohingyas crisis*

A roughly estimated 200,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees have settled among the local Bangladeshi population. At present, the two DG ECHO-supported caseloads amount to some 40,000 people living in the unofficial settlements of Leda and Kutupalong makeshift camp in Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilla. The population of the two unofficial settlements supported by DG ECHO remains stable and, in the case of Kutupalong makeshift camp, has even decreased over the last months. This suggests that there is no direct link between the aid provided to the settlements and the number of refugees occupying the settlements. It is rather the political situation in Myanmar and the local context that trigger population movements around the camps.

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<sup>11</sup> Livestock, labor migration, advance labor selling, loans with high interest rates, sending children to urban areas for garments industry jobs

### Protection

The absence of legal status is the main factor underlying the vulnerability of the Rohingyas, as this makes them easy targets for mistreatment, exploitation and violence, since perpetrators can act with impunity. Tensions exist with local communities, particularly those who are competing for job opportunities with Rohingyas willing to work for lower wages.

### Food security and nutrition

If the refugees are unable to engage in income generating activities and humanitarian access is challenged, food insecurity will worsen into an acute and protracted humanitarian crisis requiring extended and more substantial assistance. The latest nutritional survey of Kutupalong makeshift camp indicates a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) of over 30%<sup>12</sup>, reflecting a significant deterioration of the humanitarian situation that needs to be addressed immediately. Intensive case finding and early detection of malnutrition are needed to facilitate early treatment of malnourished children. A comprehensive therapeutic feeding program would need to be put in place, including treatment of moderate malnutrition and of under 6 months' children, to avoid a further deterioration of the current nutritional status. While acknowledging that the survey results also reflect inadequate water / sanitation / hygiene / care practices, in the event of intensification of the existing crisis targeted food assistance (cash or kind) may be needed to complement therapeutic / supplementary feeding for the most vulnerable groups.

### Water and sanitation

Provision of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is proving difficult in the Leda settlement due to scarcity of accessible water resources. Concerns remain about providing sufficient safe drinking water throughout the dry season and adequate sanitation. Shallow wells, hand-pumps, rain and spring catchments are being extended by DG ECHO partners in an attempt to further meet the needs. To ensure satisfactory sanitation, more facilities should be provided, within the space constraints of the sites, making sure that such systems will be as sustainable as possible. In the Kutupalong makeshift camp, water access is easier but space to install additional facilities is also restricted.

### Health care

Access to health services is extremely limited for Rohingyas. Health promotion is an important activity that complements the basic health care. Mental health care should be provided for continued support to distressed persons. Particular attention should also be given to the specific needs of persons with disability.

### Shelter

Shelter conditions have deteriorated significantly over the last months to the extent that many would not withstand the coming cyclone/monsoon season in that state. In order to prevent an increased vulnerability due to shelter damages, emergency repair and plastic sheeting are urgently needed before the rainy season starts.

## **3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

### (1) National / local response and involvement

GoB, through its Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, usually, but not always, responds promptly to emergency needs arising from natural disasters. The magnitude of the needs is most of the time by far greater than the GoB capacity to address the situation and assistance, is frequently scaled back long before the need for it has passed. In response to cyclone Aila, the GoB safety net programme did contribute to providing employment opportunities and food

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<sup>12</sup> Released in October 2010

rations for a number of affected people but it has now stopped despite the significant needs uncovered. The GoB grant of EUR 200 for shelter assistance to some 50,000 households has commenced. The DG ECHO support package outlined above should help ensure that the GoB grant is, indeed, committed to shelter provision and not to the purchase of food.

Government of Bangladesh's (GoB) stance appears to have hardened towards the rohingyas issue: Humanitarian access to this population has been restricted with GoB's refusal to grant formal approval to Humanitarian organizations working with this population, UN Joint Initiative development assistance programme for vulnerable populations of Cox's Bazar region has been rejected by GoB which recommended diverting funds to other regions of Bangladesh, the resettlement programme of Rohingyas to third countries has been suspended.

## (2) International Humanitarian Response

For anything other than large-scale natural disasters, international humanitarian response is frequently negligible; DG ECHO is invariably the largest donor of humanitarian aid. This applies in the case of Aila also, where the limited international assistance provided at the time of the disaster has since all but ended.

DG ECHO is the only donor responding directly to the humanitarian needs of the inhabitants of Kutupalong makeshift camp, while at Leda DG ECHO's support has been complemented in small measure by UNICEF. The Commission has made funds available for a EUR 13 million programme (support to the USD 33 million UNJI) under the Aid to Uprooted People line for 2010/11, intended to support the entire vulnerable population in the two Upazilas of Ukhia and Teknaf, including non-official refugees and local communities. This programme has not received government approval so far.. The Commission has also been supporting official refugees since 1992 in UNHCR camps.

## (3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

### i) Access/humanitarian space

In case of cyclone Aila, access is generally possible, although logistic is often challenging.

Humanitarian access is challenging in the Rohingyas crisis, which leads to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation<sup>13</sup>. Access to the sites can also be made difficult due to local tensions, which can lead to camp blockade.

### ii) Partners

In the Rohingyas crisis, particular emphasis needs to be given to humanitarian principles given the acute protection concerns that prevail.

### iii) Absorption capacity on the ground and efficiency of operations

Highly qualified staff with international experience in sensitive environments is crucial for maintaining humanitarian neutrality.

## (4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

With this last financial envelope, most of the Aila affected people should be able to re-establish their self-sufficiency upon returning to their home areas, enabling DG ECHO to exit early 2012.

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<sup>13</sup> In Kutupalong Makeshift camp for example, the nutritional situation has deteriorated significantly over 2010 with malnutrition rates beyond emergency threshold.

The proposed intervention can be considered as short-term early recovery support until the first post-Aila crop, appropriately complementing the 2 years of emergency support provided by ECHO to people sheltering on the embankments while their homes remained inundated - thus saving the most vulnerable from resorting to extreme coping mechanisms (sale of their last assets, distress migration, sale of children, forced marriage etc).

DG ECHO envisages maintaining its assistance to the two Rohingya sites for as long as is required, GOB allowing, since both populations are extremely vulnerable (no assistance other than DG ECHO's, no protection, levels of malnutrition above the international standards warranting an emergency intervention). Efforts will continue to be made by DG ECHO partners to encourage self-help strategies amongst beneficiaries with regard to site maintenance, while partners will continue to contribute to the core services of water and sanitation, health, nutrition and protection. DG ECHO will remain in close contact with partners, Commission services and other donors to foster advocacy for adequate humanitarian access, to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

DG ECHO is aware of the potential pull factor that any aid may create and therefore has adjusted its levels of assistance to the essential humanitarian minimum, including basic nutritional support for the most under-nourished, water, sanitation, and primary health care with the aim to save lives, ensure protection, avoid excessive rates of acute malnutrition and detrimental coping mechanisms (reduced food consumption, sale of productive assets, distress migration, sale of children, forced marriage etc).

Importantly, while helping the Rohingyas and facilitate their acceptance by the neighbouring communities, DG ECHO is also supporting the surrounding Bangladeshi populations through nutrition and health services. Furthermore, DG ECHO interventions aim at preventing disease outbreaks (cholera or other contagious diseases), which also constitutes an important benefit to the surrounding villages.

#### **4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION**

##### *(1) Other DG ECHO interventions*

During 2010, in addition to humanitarian support to unregistered Rohingyas and Cyclone Aila affected people, DG ECHO intervened in the following crises in Bangladesh: (a) Haor Flash Floods : EUR 10.8M; (b) Rodent infestation in the Chittagong Hill tracts: EUR 1.2M; (c) ; DIPECHO: EUR 2.4M, (d) Response to tropical storm, landslides, cold wave through DREF/IFRC totalling some EUR 0.35M, (e) Small scale response to tropical depression: EUR 0.2M.

##### *(2) Other services/donors availability*

5MEUR of Instrument for Stability funding (EU funding) is being implemented to 'Support the restoration of socio-economic stability and strengthening of community resilience in areas affected by Cyclone Aila'. Activities include repair of rural roads, support for fish culture, establishment of small business for displaced people, and provision of rickshaw-van to the distressed communities. This funding complements very well DG ECHO intervention.

A UN programme amounting to USD 33 million, with the objective of improving livelihoods, food security, basic services and governance of the region where the vast majority of Rohingyas are settled, and to which the EU intends to contribute EUR13M, is currently on hold, pending Government authorisation to start.

(3) *Exit scenarios. If none, say why.*

It is not expected that DG ECHO will allocate an additional funding to cyclone aila crisis, once the proposed envelope has been used.

A solution to this rohingyas crisis must be a regional one and hinges on respect for human rights in Myanmar. The complete exit scenario lies with Myanmar for allowing a safe and dignified return. Unfortunately, it is not anticipated that the Rohingyas will be able to return, under acceptable terms, to Myanmar in the short term. Nor is it expected that GoB will accept responsibility for them.

## **5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL DETAILS**

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2011/01000 and the general conditions of the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

### **5.1. Contacts<sup>14</sup>**

Operational Unit in charge: ECHO/A4

Contact person at HQ : Sandra Descroix (sandra.descroix@ec.europa.eu)

Contact in the field: David Hill (david.hill@ec.europa.eu)

### **5.2 Financial info**

Indicative Allocation: EUR 13 million

Forgotten crises: Hum. Aid: EUR 3 million

Total: Hum. Aid: EUR 3 million

Natural disasters : food aid EUR 10 million

Total food assistance: EUR 10 million

### **5.3 Proposal Assessment**

#### **Assessment round 1**

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to the Rohingyas crisis. (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP)
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 3 million from the humanitarian budget line.
- Costs will be eligible from 01/ 01/ 2011<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL (e-SingleForm)]

<sup>15</sup> The eligibility date of the Action is not linked to the date of receipt of the Single Form. It is either the eligibility date set in the Single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, what ever occurs latest.

- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 12 months.
- Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 10 /01/2011<sup>16</sup>.
- Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

### **Assessment round 2**

- Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: Support to the Cyclone Aila crisis (Section 2 and 3.4 of this HIP)
- Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 10 million from the Food assistance budget line
- Costs will be eligible from 16/04/ 2011<sup>17</sup>.
- The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 7 months.
- Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- Information to be provided: Single Form.
- Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 02 /05/2011<sup>18</sup>.
- Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as quality of needs assessment, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

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<sup>16</sup> The Commission reserves the right to consider Single Forms transmitted after this date, especially in case certain needs/ priorities are not covered by the received Single Forms.

<sup>17</sup> Please refer to footnote 15.

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to footnote 16.