



House of Commons  
International Development  
Committee

---

**The Humanitarian  
Response to the  
Pakistan Floods:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Seventh Report of  
Session 2010–12**

---

**Sixth Special Report of Session 2010–  
12**

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 12 July 2011*

**HC 1435**  
Published on 18 July 2011  
by authority of the House of Commons  
London: The Stationery Office Limited  
£0.00

## The Committee Name

Rt Hon. Malcolm Bruce MP (*Liberal Democrat, Gordon*) (Chairman)  
Hugh Bayley MP (*Labour, City of York*)  
Richard Burden MP (*Labour, Birmingham, Northfield*)  
Sam Gyimah MP (*Conservative, East Surrey*)  
Richard Harrington MP (*Conservative, Watford*)  
Pauline Latham MP (*Conservative, Mid Derbyshire*)  
Jeremy Lefroy MP (*Conservative, Stafford*)  
Michael McCann MP (*Labour, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow*)  
Alison McGovern MP (*Labour, Wirral South*)  
Anas Sarwar MP (*Labour, Glasgow Central*)  
Chris White MP (*Conservative, Warwick and Leamington*)

The following members were also members of the committee during the parliament:

Mr Russell Brown MP (*Labour, Dumfries, Galloway*)  
Mr James Clappison MP (*Conservative, Hertsmere*)  
Ann McKechin MP (*Labour, Glasgow North*)

## Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the internet at [www.parliament.uk/parliament.uk/indcom](http://www.parliament.uk/parliament.uk/indcom).

The Reports of the Committee, the formal minutes relating to that report, oral evidence taken and some or all written evidence are available in a printed volume.

Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

## Committee staff

The staff of the Committee are: David Harrison (Clerk), Anna Dickson (Committee Specialist), Chlöe Challender (Committee Specialist), Anita Fuki (Senior Committee Assistant), Vanessa Hallinan (Committee Assistant), Paul Hampson (Committee Support Assistant) Nicholas Davies (Media Officer),

## Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the International Development Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 1223; the Committee's email address is [indcom@parliament.uk](mailto:indcom@parliament.uk)

## Sixth Special Report

---

On 10 May 2011 the International Development Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2010-12, The Humanitarian Response to the Pakistan Floods, HC 615. On 6 July 2011 we received the Government's Response to the Report. It is reproduced as an Appendix to this Special Report.

In the Government Response, the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are in bold text. The Government's response is in plain text.

## Appendix: Government Response

---

Over the course of the 2010 monsoon season, Pakistan experienced the worst floods in its history. The UK was at the forefront of the international community's response to the disaster and the first major country to come to Pakistan's support in significant scale. Through the Department for International Development (DFID), the total humanitarian and early recovery response of £134 million is the largest ever mounted by the UK Government. Emergency relief priorities included shelter, food, health and water and sanitation. DFID is also supporting Pakistan to recover quickly from the floods in the key areas of agriculture/livelihoods and education.

The relatively slow onset and sheer scale of the disaster took both the national and international community by surprise. Heavy rainfall and flash floods combined to create a moving body of water equal to the land mass of England. Needs were complex, diverse and continually changing as people were evacuated in some areas and returned home in others. The unfolding nature of the natural disaster and its sheer scale posed severe operational difficulties for both the Government of Pakistan and humanitarian agencies. These included poor access and disrupted logistics and communications networks. The wider security situation also restricted the movement of the international humanitarian community.

The UN 2010 Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan (FERP) covers both humanitarian and early recovery needs and has a total funding requirement of US\$1.9 billion. It remains the largest humanitarian appeal launched in the history of the UN. As of 27 June, the revised FERP was 69% funded, on a par with the Haiti 2010 Flash Appeal which is 74% funded.

The forthcoming anniversary of the start of the 2010 floods on 28 July presents an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the response, the challenges faced and what remains to be done. Nearly twelve months on from the start of the disaster an estimated 98% of the 20 million people affected have returned to their areas of origin. 60 relief camps in Sindh and Balochistan still host approximately 53,000 flood affected internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>1</sup>. However, basic services remain disrupted in many flood affected rural villages and people still need support to restore their livelihoods. The 2011 monsoon is also

---

1 UNICEF early recovery fact sheet 22.05.11

imminent and even a moderate flood situation may have humanitarian consequences and the potential to reverse the gains made in some areas.

The Committee's recommendations and the UK Government's response to them is given below.

### **National and provincial Disaster response Management Agencies**

**[Paragraph 12] It is clear that the previous experience of responding to the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir significantly strengthened the ability of the Government of Pakistan to respond to the floods, demonstrating the value of local capacity and leadership. The local response fell short in those parts of the country with less experience. As a result the southern provinces, especially Sindh, have been slower to recover. As the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) noted, the more prepared a nation, the less lasting damage disaster caused and the quicker it is to recover.**

We agree. The UK Government recognises that the experience of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake helped the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), under the leadership of General Nadeem<sup>2</sup>, respond to the 2010 floods. The establishment of the Provincial Disaster Management Agency (PDMA) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2005 meant that there was strong local capacity and leadership in this Province. In contrast, the PDMAs in Sindh and Punjab were set up in 2008 and are still establishing their response and planning capacity. Many international and national humanitarian agencies were also able to respond quickly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the establishment of offices after the 2005 earthquake.

The southern provinces were slower to recover partially because of the lack of experience and capacity of the relevant PDMAs. However, they were also slower to respond because the numbers of people affected were higher; an estimated 8,200,000 million in Punjab and 7,000,000 million in Sindh compared to approximately 3,800,000 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>3</sup>. The topography of Sindh also meant that standing water was unable to drain away quickly from the flood plains.

We agree with the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) that the more prepared a nation, the less lasting damage caused and the quicker it is to recover. In its response to the HERR, the UK Government strongly endorsed the emphasis on national resilience, including by helping governments and civil society prepare and respond to disasters through training and equipping the relevant institutions<sup>4</sup>.

---

2 During his tenure as Chairman of the NDMA, General Nadeem was a civil servant (retired from the military). He resigned from the NDMA in April 2011.

3 UN 2010 FERP (September 2010)

4 UK Government Response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (2011)

## The Watan scheme

**[Paragraph 15] The Watan scheme was an innovative response to get cash to affected families. It was perhaps too complex, relying as it did on overly bureaucratic and inflexible registration system. We nevertheless commend the Government of Pakistan's efforts to innovate and experiment with best practice.**

We agree that the Government of Pakistan's Citizens Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP)<sup>5</sup> was an innovative approach. The system – using Government of Pakistan biometric identity cards for selection and the private banking system for delivery – reduced the potential for abuse but also came at the risk of inflexibility.

The first phase of CDCP reached over 1.6 million families which was a huge achievement. However, a number of technical challenges contributed to significant numbers of potential beneficiaries being excluded. The numbers of appeal cases overwhelmed the grievance system. Recognising these challenges during the first phase, DFID funded the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to provide critical information to affected people on how to access the scheme and grievance procedures through mass communication programmes.

DFID, along with the World Bank, USAID and Italy, will consider support to the second phase of the Citizens Damage Compensation Scheme, drawing on lessons from the first phase to ensure stronger communication and grievance systems are in place.

## The role of the Pakistan army

**[Paragraph 18] It is clear to us that there is a very important role for the military in helping people in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and in rebuilding damaged infrastructure quickly. The army in Pakistan was able to reach parts of the country which others were unable to and in doing so, significantly reduced the number of fatalities. However, we are concerned about claims that the Pakistan army denied humanitarian organisations access to some flood affected parts of the country. During and after a natural disaster there needs to be strong leadership and effective coordination of the relief effort by the country's government. Control needs to be exercised over the deployment of the assets which are available, including those offered by NGOs. These decisions need to be made openly, transparently and solely on humanitarian grounds.**

We agree. As in other countries and other major natural disasters, the Pakistani military played a major role in the humanitarian response. Over 60,000 troops, 600 boats and a range of aircraft, including helicopters, were deployed. Some 850,000 people were assisted to escape the floods during the initial rescue phase. The military was also active in setting up relief camps and reached over four million people with food packs during August and September 2010. Strong leadership and coordination by the host Government is vital to make the entire response effective. We recognise that the situation was particularly sensitive in the north of Pakistan given the ongoing conflict and geographical proximity to Afghanistan.

---

5 The Citizens Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP) was formerly called the WATAN scheme

As outlined in its response to the HERR, the UK Government is firmly committed to applying the core principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, including respect for international humanitarian law, and directing aid according to need.

### **DFID's response to the floods**

**[Paragraph 20] We commend the Government on its speedy and generous response. We welcome the introduction of an electronic display on DFID's website to demonstrate to the UK public how DFID's humanitarian assistance is being spent. We also commend the British public for their generosity in responding to humanitarian crisis in Pakistan despite the UK's own economic difficulties.**

We agree. The UK was at the forefront of the international community's response to the disaster and the first major country to come to Pakistan's support in significant scale. The total contribution of £134 million is the UK's largest humanitarian response to date. To underline the importance of the UK's relationship to Pakistan, the Secretary of State and Baroness Warsi visited Pakistan on 18 August 2010, three weeks after the start of the floods, to see the humanitarian situation for themselves. The Secretary of State then travelled directly to the UN Special High Level Meeting on Pakistan in New York to lobby the international community to step up the humanitarian response and encourage other donors to contribute more. The Secretary of State returned again to New York on 29 September to encourage the international community to contribute generously to the revised UN 2010 FERF. The Deputy Prime Minister also visited Pakistan on 1 September further reinforcing the importance of Pakistan to the UK.

As part of the UK Government's commitment to transparency and accountability, the electronic display 'Floods Monitor' on DFID's website demonstrates how these funds have been allocated by both organisation and sector.

We join the International Development Committee in commending the British public for its generosity in responding to the 2010 Pakistan Floods through the Disasters and Emergencies (DEC) appeal. As of 1 July 2011, total contributions have reached £71 million.

**[Paragraph 21] It is clear DFID's role as a 'network enabler' – shaping the way the UN and other multilateral organisations operate, making them more effective – is important. DFID channels the majority of its humanitarian assistance through multilateral organisations. We agree with the HERR that DFID should recognise this key role so that it can help improve the way the humanitarian system works.**

We agree. The UK Government welcomes the HERR's emphasis on the need for continued and substantial reform of the international humanitarian system. We recognise the central role of the UN and agree that there is great potential to play a catalytic role through partnerships with other donors and by supporting efforts for reform within the UN. We welcome the UN Secretary General's inclusion of emergency humanitarian response in the UN list of top priorities.

The challenges highlighted in the HERR will mean a new way of thinking and working for both DFID and the international system. In partnership with others – as a network enabler – DFID will work for change together with the multilateral system, non government organisations (NGOs), and established and new donors.

**[Paragraph 22] The UK Pakistani community makes regular contributions to the country and generously increased these in the aftermath of the floods, helping to provide much needed relief to the many millions of affected persons. As part of its assessment of the reaction to the floods we recommend that DFID investigate how much additional money was foregone, by not being registered as gift aid, because of the need to get money out quickly. We do not consider gift aid to be an additional contribution to the DFID budget – rather as standard and acceptable practice for charitable donations.**

We agree that the UK Pakistani community played an invaluable role in helping to provide relief to the millions of people affected by the floods. Money channelled through the DEC is all potentially eligible for gift aid. Private transfers to flood affected people in Pakistan by the diaspora are private transfers and therefore not eligible for gift aid. The UK Government would be happy to discuss this point further with the IDC and discuss our work with Development Initiatives on the transparency of public and private humanitarian aid flows.

### **Humanitarian principles and the role of the military**

**[Paragraph 26] We strongly support key humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality. Using military assets for the delivery of humanitarian assistance is generally an option of last resort in conflict affected areas because the intentions of such assistance could be misconstrued. Nevertheless we recognise that there are occasions when no other options are available to help those in need, and this may well have been the case with regards to the use of RAF aircraft to deliver bridges. However, we take seriously the concerns of the UN given the NATO coordinated stabilisation efforts in the north and Afghan border areas and the perception this might create.**

We agree. As outlined in its response to the HERR, The UK Government is firmly committed to applying the core principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, including respect for international humanitarian law, and directing aid according to need. Throughout the response, the Pakistan military were willing to allow aid agencies to deliver goods and transport personnel using their air assets. However, some humanitarian NGOs preferred not to use military assets to deliver humanitarian assistance, taking the stance that engagement and association with the Pakistani military would compromise humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.

The UK helped to facilitate the transportation of goods and services into Pakistan by airlift (seven civil and five military flights) including 4,500 tents and 14,600 shelter kits. As part of the early recovery effort, DFID brought forward a £10 million programme to provide bridges in the north of Pakistan. There were transported from the UK by boat to Karachi in Sindh Province and then by road to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

During the response, the UK and the US advocated for the use of (freely provided) NATO funded civilian air assets to bring large quantities of goods into Pakistan. The non binding humanitarian Oslo Guidelines suggest that the use of military assets can be used as an option of last resort. The use of civilian assets is not in question under International Humanitarian Law. We recognise that the debate was coloured by NATO's public support



of the humanitarian effort during the 2008 conflict as well as current NATO association with the conflict in Afghanistan.

## Resources

**[Paragraph 31] Although some parts of the UN worked well, for example the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), others did not. The UN has disbursed only US\$700 million of a US\$2 billion appeal. This is unacceptable given the millions of people still in need of humanitarian assistance and those living in camps.**

We agree. The UN, and other aid agencies, need to get better at disbursing funds in response to humanitarian emergencies in order to deliver assistance quicker to people in need. We are also concerned about staffing in country. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) needs to ensure that it is adequately staffed and has the leadership required to respond to challenging circumstances. OCHA also needs to be prepared to take an active coordinating role should serious flooding reoccur in 2011.

However, it is important to recognise that the situation in Pakistan was particularly complex given the scale of the disaster, the security situation and lack of implementing partners in Punjab and Sindh.

## Strategic Leadership

**[Paragraph 34] We support the recommendation of the Humanitarian and Emergency Response Review (HERR) that the UK should champion a complete overhaul of strategic and operational leadership in the UN. This should include provision to train more people to carry out the role of Humanitarian Coordinator. We also agree with the HERR that DFID should assign a Director General to champion humanitarian work within DFID.**

The UK Government agrees that reform of humanitarian leadership by the UN must continue and deliver results. However, we do not think that this requires a complete overhaul. We also do not think that the high level panel recommended by the HERR is the best mechanism for delivering this. We welcome the fact that the UN Secretary General has included emergency humanitarian reform in the UN list of top priorities. The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Baroness Amos, has put in place a process to improve humanitarian leadership and accountability through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. We will continue to work with other donors to support these efforts. We will also make our funding to multilaterals conditional on demonstrating, amongst other things, a discernable improvement in strategic and operational leadership and skills. We have agreed to designate a Director General as humanitarian champion within DFID.



## Coordination

**[Paragraph 38] The performance of the cluster system was mixed. We appreciate that NGOs want to help people in need, but there were too many NGOs and other agencies at some meetings to make clusters effective. We agree with UN OCHA that clusters should focus on providing strategic sector leadership. We recommend that only those agencies with operational experience and a proven track record should be involved in cluster meetings and that information should be shared with others in a less resource intense manner.**

We agree. The UK Government supports the need to empower the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Inter-Agency Standing Committee to strengthen leadership, enhance accountability and improve coordination. In May 2011, the Minister of State met with NGOs at a Ditchley Park event, chaired by Sir John Holmes (the former UN Emergency Relief Coordinator), to discuss how a system of NGO accreditation or certification could support an improvement in the coordination of humanitarian responses. The Minister of State highlighted the need for a system to identify which NGOs are fit for purpose and called on NGOs to identify how this might be done. DFID is willing to provide appropriate support if needed.

## Disaster preparedness and risk reduction

**[Paragraph 42] In its response to this report DFID should indicate how its increased spending in Pakistan will result in an increased focus on disaster preparedness and risk reduction.**

We agree with the importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Pakistan remains at high risk of national disasters. The UK Government is currently engaged with Government of Pakistan and UN contingency planning processes to respond to potential flooding during the 2011 monsoon season. For example, we are pushing the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), UN and NGOs to work together to produce hazard maps and identify vulnerable populations. In order to build the resilience of vulnerable communities to the threat of flooding this year, DFID is also in dialogue with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) to pre-position emergency goods in 40 national disaster management cells and train communities on how to better cope with threats and shocks. Following the Pakistan 2005 earthquake, DFID and other partners supported the NDMA to build their search and rescue team capacity and draft a national disaster risk reduction framework.

The UK Government agrees with the emphasis of the HERR report on resilience. Resilience is a new policy area for DFID, but much of DFID Pakistan's bilateral work is already likely to feature in this agenda. Practically this involves:

- economic resilience; advocating for macro-economic policy that ensures Pakistan's economy can withstand shocks;
- physical resilience: upgrading and maintaining vital infrastructure such as bridges and schools;

- environmental resilience: ensuring that our development work does not exacerbate natural hazards or reduce people's ability to cope; and
- national resilience: helping the Government of Pakistan and civil society prepare and respond to disasters.

DFID continues to support the Government of Pakistan's leadership role in disaster risk reduction and building disaster resilience. The UN also plays a critical role in terms of leading the international effort to support the Government. DFID and other donors will continue to work to ensure the UN fulfils this role. We will also maintain a dialogue with the Government of Pakistan on how DFID might play any further role in building disaster resilience.

### **Funding the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)**

**[Paragraph 44] Given the evident importance of disaster risk reduction we were surprised to learn that DFID is to withdraw from the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. We recommend DFID explain in detail how it intends to prioritise disaster risk reduction in the multilateral system in its response to this report. We also recommend that DFID sets out its proposals to work with ISDR to assist it to improve its effectiveness, and that DFID sets out clear criteria which, when met by ISDR, would permit DFID to start funding the organisation once again.**

The UK Government's response to the HERR gives a clear commitment to giving disaster risk reduction and resilience the highest priority through three key policy commitments: (a) making building resilience a core part of DFID's approach in all of the countries we work; (b) integrating resilience and disaster risk reduction into our work on climate change; and (c) improving the coherence of our development and humanitarian responses in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

The strategy to implement these policy commitments is still being developed. However DFID's Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) highlighted the good performance of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). As a result, DFID is significantly scaling up funding to GFDRR over the next four years. DFID also supports the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery to undertake work in conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction.

The MAR highlighted where ISDR was performing poorly and made clear recommendations on how to improve its effectiveness, citing the Dalberg evaluation recommendations of February 2010. After the publication of the MAR, DFID and ISDR officials met and agreed that ISDR will formally respond to the MAR through a joint donor group. The donor group is waiting for action from ISDR to improve its performance in light of the Dalberg evaluation recommendations.

## Conclusion

[Paragraph 45] **The international humanitarian system needs to be much better prepared to respond to natural disasters to reduce the risks to life and livelihoods. Predicted increases in the incidence and severity of natural disasters, coupled with demographic trends, call for a step change in the system. DFID must play a key role in promoting changes in the system and must better integrate disaster risk reduction into its own development programmes.** We agree. The UK Government will continue to work with other donors to support the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in their efforts to improve humanitarian leadership at the strategic and operational levels. We will also make our funding to multilaterals conditional on demonstrating, amongst other things, a discernable improvement in leadership and skills. We have agreed to designate a Director General as humanitarian champion within DFID.