



House of Commons
International Development
Committee

The Humanitarian response to the Pakistan Floods

Seventh Report of Session 2010–12

Volume II

Additional Written Evidence

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be published on 27 April 2011*

International Development Committee

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Written evidence

Written evidence submitted by Age UK

ABOUT HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL

1. HelpAge International is an international NGO established in 1983 by Age UK (formerly Help the Aged) with the vision of a world in which older people fulfil their potential to lead secure, healthy and dignified lives. It leads an international network of 75 affiliate organisations and over 400 partner organisations in over 50 countries; a major donor and partner is Age UK.

2. HelpAge, with Age UK is the only organisation working specifically to meet the needs, uphold the rights and recognise the capacities of older people in humanitarian crises. It is recognised in the international humanitarian community as an expert practitioner ensuring appropriate assistance to older people in emergencies and as a leading advocate for the recognition of the rights of older people. HelpAge is the Focal Point for the issue of ageing within the Global Clusters (UN-led forums for coordination and collaboration in the international humanitarian system) and it was tasked with insuring the inclusion of age in the recent revision of the Sphere Standards for disaster response. Following a progress report last month to the IASC (the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners), HelpAge has been tasked by the IASC Working Group to assist IASC agencies and Cluster Lead Agencies to mainstream appropriate assistance for older people in humanitarian needs assessments, best practice guidelines and training.

ABOUT AGE UK

3. Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged. We work closely with our sister organisation HelpAge International and our aim is a better later life for people across the world today and tomorrow. Through our partners we deliver and support services in every part of the UK and support HelpAge International to reach over 1.5 million people in low-income countries with development programmes and emergency relief. Age UK is a member of the DEC and works in partnership with HelpAge International to increase the inclusion of older people in humanitarian aid and in the UK to increase the UK public's understanding of older people's needs in times of emergency. Our influencing work is based on evidence of what works, on the views of people in later life and on our experience of direct service delivery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4. HelpAge and Age UK estimate that there are at least 1.2 million older people out of the 20 million people affected by the Pakistan floods. Evidence from disasters around the world shows that older people are particularly vulnerable in emergencies. They have specific needs in terms of healthcare and nutrition, shelter and protection and, as a vulnerable group, they need targeted support. During the course of its emergency response to the floods in Pakistan, HelpAge has found that whilst some steps were taken by UN agencies to ensure the needs of older people are included in response plans and actions in general, the necessary steps were not taken to properly assess and respond to older people's needs. This is a failure to uphold the fundamental principle of impartiality, ensuring humanitarian response is undertaken according to need. Specific measures, such as including disaggregated data by sex and age in assessments, distribution mechanisms that recognise mobility impairment and relief supplies that are age-appropriate, will enable humanitarian responses to better meet the needs of this vulnerable group.

The performance of the "cluster system" and other donor coordination mechanisms

5. About 6% of the disaster-affected population in Pakistan are older people.¹ They are particularly vulnerable and have specific needs in disaster situations due to factors which are often age related, like for example health needs. The cluster system is designed to ensure a coherent and coordinated response to needs in accordance with humanitarian principles. In the Pakistan flood response, HelpAge found that some agencies endeavoured to ensure proper inclusion of vulnerable groups such as older people (in particular, the Protection Cluster). In general, however, the Clusters failed to take essential steps to ensure that older people's needs were properly understood, assessed and responded to.

6. Through commitments made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC),² the Cluster lead agencies are expected to ensure the collection of age disaggregated data in sector and multi-sector assessments and to use this information to inform and guide programming to ensure it addresses the needs of all age groups appropriately. Without disaggregated data, it is difficult to identify the needs of older people without additional targeted assessments and it makes it easy to ignore the fact that they have specific needs. In many cases this information was not collected in Pakistan.

¹ HelpAge International (2010) A Study of Humanitarian Financing for older people: Country case studies.

² Comprising the key UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations, this is the primary mechanism for the coordination of international humanitarian assistance.

7. The Health Cluster (led by WHO) continues to use age 49 as its cut-off point for data collection. This makes it impossible to assess properly the health situation of older age groups and to identify and address age-specific health concerns. The lack of health data documenting the specific health needs of older people is of particular concern in light of HelpAge International's assessments in Sindh (one of the worst affected flood areas). HelpAge conducted interviews with 358 beneficiaries 58% of whom said their health had deteriorated and that they were increasingly physically weak and immobile; 72% had lost their assistive devices such as mobility aids, hearing aids, glasses and dentures; 46% had lost their medicines and had no money to replace them.³

8. In the initial Flash Appeal for the Pakistan floods (11 August 2010), the response plan of the Protection Cluster (led by UNHCR) notes that the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data will be a prerequisite in the response (p 28). However, in protection rapid assessments, reference to older persons and persons with disability was inconsistent and often absent. Questions to elicit important information on the situation of older people following the floods were not included in the assessments.

9. Under an agreement with UNHCR, HelpAge seconded an age and disability specialist into the Protection Cluster to provide technical support to the cluster and other disaster response actors. The impact of advocacy to include older people's needs in assessments and programmes is reflected in the revised Flash Appeal (5 November 2010). In the revised Flash Appeal, 20% of the projects submitted mention older people as a vulnerable group; 6.2% of all the projects submitted included an activity that addressed older people's needs (eg registration, building age and disability appropriate latrines, psychosocial activity, protection). This contrasts with the first Flash appeal in Pakistan in which 12.8% of projects mentioned older people as a vulnerable group, and 1.2% had a specific activity that addressed their needs.

Whether the provision of humanitarian assistance to those displaced by the recent floods and longer term internally displaced persons is sufficient, efficient, effective and cost effective

10. The scale of the disaster and displacement in Pakistan means the general response is not sufficient. More specifically, there were and continue to be serious gaps in the response in relation to the needs of vulnerable groups such as older people. These are undermining the effectiveness and principled and equitable nature of the humanitarian response.

11. The fundamental principle of impartiality requires humanitarian actors to ensure they undertake an analysis of the needs of all vulnerable groups in an affected population and that levels of assistance provided to them is commensurate with this analysis. The relationship between assessment and response to the most vulnerable should be at the centre of analysis of cost effectiveness and efficiency.

12. Relief distribution methods in Pakistan limited older people's access to essential supplies, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the response. HelpAge International's assessments in Nowshera, Muzaffargarh and Sakhar indicate the extent of the problem.⁴ Older people report the demeaning nature of distributions, with food being thrown from helicopters. These modes of distribution affected older people, especially older women who do not have the strength to carry the relief supplies or get to the front of crowds. Data from the Multi-cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM) further shows that three-quarters of older people found distribution points for non-food items inaccessible. Experience from other emergencies shows the importance of age-appropriate distribution methods to ensure the most vulnerable are supported. These include specific distribution points or times for older people, identifying and targeting the most vulnerable for instance by direct delivery of relief goods to immobile beneficiaries.

13. HelpAge International's assessments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa found that almost 73% of older people were at risk of malnutrition,⁵ yet systems for measuring and responding to malnutrition in older people were inadequate because data was not disaggregated for older age groups. Emergency food rations, where available, were generally the same as for younger adults, with no allowance made for the difficulty older people might have in chewing, digesting and absorbing sufficient micronutrients. Furthermore, agencies often do not give sufficient thought to the ability of older people to collect water and fuel to prepare the food. Such access issues can be addressed by providing support to older people who are unable to carry relief assets, or ensuring direct delivery of goods where necessary.

14. While general distributions to families will in some cases ensure the delivery of relief items to older people, this does not address the needs of older people living alone who can represent a significant proportion of the population. HelpAge International's assessments in Sindh, for example, found that older people living alone accounted for 26% of the population.⁶ In such cases special arrangements are needed ensure equitable access for the most vulnerable through direct delivery of relief assets or support to ensure older people are able to collect and transport goods.

³ HelpAge International (2010). Rapid needs assessment report of older people affected by the floods in Muzaffargarh District, Punjab, Pakistan.

⁴ HelpAge International (2010). Rapid needs assessment report of older people affected by the floods in Swat, Buner, Charsadda and Nowshera districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

⁵ HelpAge International (2010). Rapid needs assessment report of older people affected by the floods in Swat, Buner, Charsadda and Nowshera districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

⁶ HelpAge International (2010). Rapid needs assessment report of older people affected by the floods in Shikarpur and Jacobabad Districts, Sindh, Pakistan.

How quickly livelihoods can be restored, assets protected and food security provided

15. Long term food security must be achieved through restoration of agricultural livelihoods. Food security for older people will only be achieved by ensuring those still capable of working are included in livelihoods programmes. Early recovery programmes often exclude older people from agriculture recovery activities, overlooking the contribution they can make to household subsistence through small-scale agriculture. Furthermore, older people's experience and understanding of traditional coping mechanisms and agricultural techniques should be harnessed to support recovery through inclusion of older people in consultation processes surrounding livelihoods recovery programming.

Written evidence submitted by BBC World Service

1. ABOUT BBC WORLD SERVICE AND BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

1.1 BBC World Service is the world's foremost provider of independent and authoritative news, offering radio, web and mobile services in 32 languages and two flagship television channels in Arabic and Persian. Broadcasts are funded through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by a Parliamentary Grant-in-Aid. It has a weekly audience of 180 million—the highest of all international broadcasters, larger than all the US state-funded international broadcasting services combined at less than half the cost per user and has had a presence in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region for nearly seventy years. It has had a historic role as the de facto national broadcaster and is a lifeline service when no independent media existed there. There has since been an explosion in local media in Pakistan, but BBC World Service leads as the most trusted source of news, information and analysis on TV or radio in the region.

1.2 BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST) is a leading, long standing specialist in providing information to disaster-affected populations in humanitarian emergencies. It partners with the BBC, relief agencies, and domestic media actors. Initiatives have ranged from Lifeline radio programming (providing information to disaster affected communities that enables them to survive and cope) to repairing transmission facilities to disaster risk reduction activities. As part of the BBC, BBC WST has the unique potential to reach millions of people at risk of crisis with information and guidance at the outset of an emergency—the most crucial time for saving lives. The BBC has established broadcast capacity working in 32 languages which BBC WST can mobilise to deliver immediate response to disaster.

2. THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

2.1 Reporting on the experiences of over 60,000 poor women and men, the World Bank's Voices of the Poor wrote that: "Poor people often feel powerless ... frequently describing problems with accessing information about government, market and civic activities, particularly outside their communities ... Lack of information about planned government actions often leaves people angry, further deprived or confused ..."⁷ Similarly, a study on the Indonesian tsunami response also reported that "Poor information flow is undoubtedly the biggest source of dissatisfaction, anger and frustration among affected people". Following humanitarian crises, these information needs are at their most acute—and mass media has a key role to play in meeting them with speed and scale in times of crisis.

2.2 BBC humanitarian responses have covered many countries over the years. Most recently before Pakistan's floods, BBC World Service launched a lifeline service within four days of the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, initially in French, Spanish and English, then in Creole, to provide information about the rescue and reconstruction efforts as a key source of information to Haitians, including rescue and aid teams on the ground. It relayed updates, such as the location of a temporary hospital, water supplies and food drops. It also relied on interaction with the audience on a daily basis via emails and text messages. *Koneksyon Ayiti* (Connexion Haiti) was available on satellite, online and via social media, as well as being transmitted on FM through Radio France. The earthquake had a major impact on traditional forms of communication, meaning that new and emerging media filled a crucial gap, breaking news direct from devastated areas. Much information available came via Skype and Twitter, and BBC World Service used the same tools to inform people about its lifeline programming.

2.3 Means through which provision of reliable, relevant information can help address immediate challenges include:

- Informing affected communities how to get help, how to best respond, how to find their families and friends and how to communicate their own needs to humanitarian agencies. Over time other equally critical information needs emerge. People want to know the availability of medical assistance, sources of food or fresh water supplies, how to prevent disease and sometimes advice to building basic shelters. Later still, people begin to want to know how they can start understanding what relief and services are available to them and what they are entitled to. As policies by local authorities are implemented they create the need to share with and explain these policies to survivors so they know how to access and demand what they are entitled to.

⁷ Voices of the Poor, World Bank 2000.

- Aiding the performance of governments and aid organisations through enabling better accountability, more effective management of expectations, better informed policy and ultimately improved humanitarian response. Building these relationships helps prevent the risk of ineffective communication, that can create false expectations and misunderstandings about what information is forthcoming, and the role of the agency in question.
- Technology is allowing populations to become more proactive in collecting data regarding impact and needs. After the Yogyakarta earthquake, Java, in 2006, for example, some survivors set up websites detailing who in their communities had been affected in what ways, and what different groups needed, within a week of the disaster.
- Psychosocial studies increasingly note that information deprivation actually causes stress and exacerbates trauma. Leaving a community of internally displaced persons in tents or transitional shelter with no explanation of if or when they will get houses, how to apply or where to complain, inflicts additional suffering. Empowering people through media and communications can educate and lift spirits, both crucial to galvanising people to help themselves. Hearing others share similar experiences of hardships and recovery can play a critical role in improving the mental wellbeing of those affected by disasters. Learning how to trace missing family members, discussing loss, and exploring practical steps to recovery can encourage those affected to move forward after the crisis.
- Survivors also regularly cite the need for entertainment and distraction from the long days and boredom inherent to camp situations and displacement. Airing a regular radio programme and holding “listening groups” around the topics can break monotony, build solidarity, and help people explore answers to common problems.
- The increased relevance and potential of delivering these services has been driven in recent years by a massive expansion in the means and ways of accessing information. The internet is used by 1.5 billion, with availability set to rise by 50% in the next five years and with over 4.5 billion mobile phone users worldwide; mobile services are becoming the primary means of access to online news and information for many people in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. TV has established itself over 20 years as the main platform for news consumption in many parts of the world.
- The ability to integrate these different platforms carries huge potential for media to develop as an interactive, participatory network that can inform both policy makers and humanitarian respondents on the one hand and victims of a crisis who are in great need of information on the other. The impact that this can have was demonstrated for example following the 2009 election in Iran, BBC Persian received huge amounts of user-generated content—up to eight videos per minute at one point—as well as eye-witness accounts via email and over the phone. This formed a powerful means of creating informed coverage when journalists were not allowed into the country and were barred from accessing areas of protest. Another example is in northern Nigeria, where BBC Hausa is using mobile phones it has provided to villages. In each village there is one person who is known as “the keeper of the mobile”. This was a way BBC Hausa learnt about a government confrontation with a village about land rights.

3. THE BBC'S POSITION IN PAKISTAN AND ITS ROLE DURING THE FLOODS

3.1 Today, BBC World Service has a weekly audience of over nine million in Pakistan weekly. Its importance in Pakistan however is most significant in the rural areas where reliance on radio is much greater. For example, a survey in early 2009 interviewed a sample of 4,000 adults in the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan. Radio was rated as the most valuable source of information by 30% of interviewees, followed by television (13%). Mobile subscriptions have been growing rapidly in the country, from less than one million in 2001 to 95 million in June 2006.

3.2 The value and the level of trust that the population places in the World Service gave it a strong position to be a reliable source of information to turn to when the floods hit the region. From this platform, the BBC Urdu Service, in partnership with the BBC World Service Trust launched lifeline programming in the early days of the 2010 flooding. Three daily bulletins in Urdu and in Pashto provide those affected with basic humanitarian information on shortwave and through FM partners. The programme provides a free phone number for listeners to ring and leave messages, and aims to help mitigate the immediate and medium-term impact of flooding by delivering up-to-date, accurate, and impartial lifeline information to affected people, host communities, and humanitarian actors.

3.3 In the early days, when the flooding was still spreading and affecting new populations on a daily basis, the programme provided frequent updates and evacuation notices. In many instances, officials conceded that they came to know about the gravity of the situation in a particular area from our broadcasts. As the flooding subsided and the humanitarian crisis unfolded, the programme shifted to provide ongoing information to address the physical and psychosocial needs of the audiences.

3.4 An important element of this service is its interactivity with listeners able to call and leave messages. A total of 13,790 calls were counted between 12 August and 16 November 2010. Throughout *Lifeline*, some message leavers have spoken of one concern whilst others have a number of concerns they wish to share with programme makers. The most common message has been for help, followed by food, infrastructure, health, aid, corruption and shelter. Water and psychosocial issues have also been consistently raised.

3.5 The normal audience for these services is more than nine million people per week. BBC WST is currently conducting research in Pakistan to better determine the impact of the programme. However, the value of this service has in part been demonstrated from firsthand callers voicing their appreciation and indicates the relationship formed:

“Thanks BBC for updating us with news from the flood. And SOSing us in the problems.”

“Thanks, we really trust BBC news.”

“We are getting updates from BBC. Thanks.”

“Thanks for giving us the toll free number.”

3.6 These comments about the programme show that people feel a real connection with the *Lifeline* programme and believe they are able to talk with the programme makers and get their views across. Creating that dialogue between service providers and audiences is essential to building an informed two-way partnership following humanitarian crises.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 This submission argues that the potential for mass media to engage in humanitarian response can only grow in the coming years—the massive expansion of communications technologies is at its most virile in areas at highest risk from climate change, and the diversification of media platforms available allows the flexibility and interactivity urgently required in crises.

4.2 Professor Paul Collier’s view is that building an informed society is an essential requirement to effective development. This is never more important than in humanitarian crises, where relations between populations and humanitarian response actors can be at high risk of becoming strained and where information needs are most acute. Access to information enables citizens to hold governments to account and helps establish an informed partnership between government, humanitarian agencies and society. By providing lifeline services to populations swiftly from platforms that have built trust over time, the BBC has strong experience and capacity to facilitate and enhance the networks essential to humanitarian response.

4.3 The humanitarian community has increasingly recognised the importance of communicating with disaster-affected populations over the past several years. However, it is not yet an established part of responses. We would recommend that information and communication with disaster-affected populations be recognised as an equally important element of humanitarian responses and that funding mechanisms reflect this. As such, preparedness efforts should be supported to ensure that aid agencies have the knowledge, skills and capacity to meet the information and communication needs of the affected populations they are serving. Media development agencies should also be prepared with the resources necessary to help agencies reach those populations and meet their information needs.

12 January 2011

Written evidence submitted by Interact Worldwide and Plan UK

1. BACKGROUND

Founded over 70 years ago, Plan works in 48 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas. Plan has been operating in Pakistan since 1997, helping marginalised children to access their rights to health, education, livelihoods and protection. Through long-term programmes we work with around 100 communities across the country, benefiting about 21,000 children. Since the floods, Plan has provided emergency assistance to thousands of families in Punjab and Sindh.

Interact Worldwide is a specialist sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) organisation currently working in seven countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In October 2009 Interact Worldwide partially merged with Plan International (UK), to become a member of the Plan family.

Both Interact and Plan have particular concerns about the affects of the 2010 floods on the status and wellbeing of adolescent girls. Since 2007 Plan has commissioned extensive research into the state of the world’s girls and young women, published in our *Because I Am A Girl* series of reports. Interact Worldwide also has a particular focus on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and is part of a global inter-agency working group on adolescent sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian settings.

2. The performance of the “Cluster System” and other donor coordination mechanisms

Participation of local organisations

Interact Worldwide and Plan UK recognise there is a balance to be struck in the immediate post emergency phase between an immediate response and the full involvement of local organisations. Nonetheless, the value of local organisations should not be underestimated. Whilst in some cases local organisations may be unfamiliar with humanitarian assistance, this is certainly not always the case. In fact, their knowledge, insight and contacts with local networks can be essential in developing the most locally appropriate, effective, and sustainable post emergency response.

Findings from Interact Worldwide and Plan UK’s rapid assessment in Pakistan suggest that the involvement of local organisations was greater than that achieved in during the disaster in Haiti. Nonetheless, local organisations still faced barriers in accessing funding, due to the limited circulation of calls for proposals, and the short timescale for responses. Conversations with local organisations in Pakistan revealed that some felt unable to attend cluster meetings as the default language was English. Local organisations also stated that whilst they were aware of the cluster meetings, they felt that it had not been made clear that they were invited, or that they had not felt listened to or involved. To capitalise on the value of local and international joint planning and programming, cluster meetings should demonstrate steps that they have taken to ensure the active inclusion of local organisations.

3. Whether the provision of humanitarian assistance to those displaced by the recent floods and longer term internally displaced persons is sufficient, efficient, effective and cost effective

Perceptions on the humanitarian assistance provided varied across the affected areas. While for some help came quickly, for others assistance was felt to be slow to arrive, undignified in delivery, and disorganised. Geographically remote areas felt disproportionately “left behind”, and many people named their neighbouring communities as the biggest factor in mitigating further disaster.

Overall, staff on the ground found that the needs of women and girls did not receive sufficient attention. This was confirmed by UNIFEM in their Rapid Gender Needs Assessment which found that women and girls were unable to access aid equally, for example where women had to physically compete with men for relief goods at distribution centres. Children and women, especially adolescent girls, are disproportionately affected during disasters. Their age, gender and the traditional roles entrusted to them affect their vulnerability and shape their ability to cope and survive. Aside from physical threats to life, experiences of fear, violence, and separation from parents and caregivers, exploitation and abuse are threats to their well-being and development.

Both Plan and Interact staff found that issues such as basic hygiene were complicated for girls and women by the need for sex segregation. Where boys and men were able to use communal washing facilities, girls and women were prevented from washing, a situation that was complicated in turn for those that were menstruating. In many parts of Pakistan there are also strong codes dictating women and men’s interaction, including restrictions on sharing latrines with non-family members of the opposite sex. Pakistani women interviewed by Interact Worldwide named as priorities the provision of separate latrines for women, as well as space for women to wash sanitary cloths in private.

Lack of attention to the particular cultural context in communities affected by disasters can lead agencies to overlook affects of disasters that seriously impact on girls’ futures. Plan and Interact research suggests a rise in early marriage following disasters. Girls who have, for the first time, been forced to mix freely with young men in mixed accommodation, where boys and girls have to sleep in the same room, at times next to each other, may be viewed by their families as having reduced marriage prospects and needing to be married as soon as possible. In rural Pakistan, the conservative cultural and religious context also led to extremely limited SRH services, including information available for non-married adolescents prior to the floods. For young married girls, this means that they enter into marriage without the framework of information and skills that can help them to stay healthy, and retain control over their sexual and reproductive health.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the 2010 floods provide valuable lessons for how responses to future disasters can better mitigate impacts on women and adolescent girls. Girl friendly interventions are cost effective, provide excellent returns on investment and contribute to the recovery and prosperity of girls, their families and their communities.

We recommend that, in future, DFID prioritise gender sensitive interventions in the following areas:

Sexual Health

During conflict and emergency situations women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and more likely to engage in sexual risk taking; yet reproductive health needs including maternal and newborn health services are often overlooked. Women who were using contraception prior to the onset of an emergency, or whose family planning needs change as a result of new circumstances are often unable to access family planning commodities.

It is essential that SRH services are prioritised alongside other key needs in emergency situations. The UK can enable this by working with the Global Health Cluster to ensure that SRHR is given the level of priority it deserves in relief coordination efforts, and by using the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health⁸ to guide programming. Adolescents' SRH needs can be addressed through the lens of the UNFPA's recent Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Toolkit for Humanitarian Settings.⁹ As part of this process, DFID can support the transition to comprehensive health services by offering technical assistance for capacity building, and adequate and predictable funding to enable planning and implantation in the recovery phase.

Health system strengthening is a vital long term solution to challenges in access to reproductive, maternal and newborn health. In the shorter term, and with the MDG deadline approaching, NGO and private providers play an important role in ensuring access to essential services, particularly in the field of reproductive and maternal health. The UK should support ways to harmonise and co-ordinate these services within the broader health system while also ensuring quality, regulation and accountability. In some cases this may mean considering service delivery strategies such as contracting out, which have proved effective in some fragile state environments.

Interact Worldwide and Plan UK conducted a rapid assessment on the sexual and reproductive health and rights situation in Pakistan in October 2010, with the goal of devising recommendations for Plan on how best to integrate adolescent sexual and reproductive health into their programming. The assessment drew on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) and UNFPA and Save the Children (US) "Adolescent sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian settings" toolkit, as well as the Inter-Agency Field Manual for sexual and reproductive health in emergencies. Key findings included that:

- Addressing menstrual hygiene is an important part of supporting women and girls during and post disaster and displacement. In many parts of Pakistan there are strong codes dictating women and men's interaction, including restrictions on sharing latrines with non-family members of the opposite sex. Pakistani women interviewed by Interact Worldwide named as priorities the provision of separate latrines for women, as well as space for women to wash sanitary cloths in private.
- Post emergencies can provide an entry point for introducing or scaling up health interventions. In parts of Pakistan, the period after the floods saw an increase in the availability and uptake of information and services related to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning.
- Participation of local organisations and community groups in less affected areas can significantly contribute disaster relief efforts with respect to sexual and reproductive health, as the success of interventions relies on culturally acceptable service delivery.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Pakistan's geo-physical profile and climatic conditions expose its young and growing population to a variety of hazards, many of which have resulted in disasters of considerable magnitude in the past (including the 2005 Earthquake) and with climate change new disasters are expect to recur in the future. The socio-economic conditions, environmental degradation, poor governance, absence of land use planning and management controls, as well as the political and power structures prevailing in Pakistan compound the vulnerability of the country to disaster risks.

While the need for children's participation in the development process is recognized, the recognition of children's participation in disaster risk reduction is still very limited. Although much attention is given to the needs of children in emergencies, it is mostly from the point of view of adults acting on behalf of and in the best interest of children. There is less focus on working with boys and girls in reducing their vulnerabilities and disaster risks. Approximately half of Pakistan's population is under the age of 18 years. Boys and girls have specific capabilities and strengths to offer in disaster preparedness and mitigation; they have a role to play before, during and after disasters. By working with boys and girls, both within and outside schools, Plan Pakistan is attempting to ensure that a new generation of citizens can be better prepared to deal with disasters and also influence the way the root causes of the communities' vulnerability to disaster risks are addressed at all levels.

The Pakistan floods demonstrate once again the crucial value of investing in local disaster risk reduction strategies. Many cost benefit studies confirm this and Plan staff witnessed that people in areas where preparedness strategies were in place to monitor water levels were better able to manage staged evacuations which helped save lives. Initiated by local people two years ago (with the support of Plan and NGO partners including Doaba Foundation who have formed the Indus Consortium), the Early Warning committee in Mahmud Kat Rangpur district involves young people in monitoring river conditions to safeguard the wellbeing of over 160,000 people in 80 communities. 15 year old Minawar, Secretary of the committee reported that, "We would put a stick in the water and three times a day for eight days measured the height of the water and used a mobile phone to report back to the head works".

Their DRR plans that were already in place, included the role and responsibility of local boatmen to support the evacuation of villagers—covering three households per boat—and transferring them to higher grounds and designated evacuation sites, prioritising the evacuation of pregnant women. In contrast to families in

⁸ <http://www.iawg.net/resources/MISP%20Advocacy%20Sheet%20-%20IAWG%20FINAL%20Nov09.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.unfpa.org/public/publications/pid/4169>

neighbouring villages, due to their awareness of preparedness measures, Minawar's family has managed to save more of their household's possessions. In addition, their community school, built on bricks on a high platform reopened in a short timeframe, ensuring children affected by the disaster are back to the school routine to facilitate getting their lives back to normal and overcoming trauma. Furthermore, due to advance planning, in response to the floods's Early Warning System, the children of Mahmud Kat took all their school books with them as they fled.

With further support to local child centred DRR work in Pakistan, more children and their families can gain skills and knowledge to adapt to and mitigate their increased exposure to climate and geological risks. Plan UK recommends that DFID prioritises investment in risk reduction education in Pakistan and encourages the government's disaster management and education management agencies both at national and provincial levels to work together on this. Investing in risk reduction education ensures a safer future.

Girls' Education

Girls that drop out of school during disasters are less likely than their male counterparts to return, particularly where school infrastructure is destroyed and there is increased competition for places. In Pakistan, nationwide nearly 10,000 schools have been damaged, and over 5,000 are currently in use as shelters. Often, school materials and furniture have simply been washed away. This is a severe blow to areas such as Muzzafargah, where only 12% of girls complete their education, leaving levels of literacy as low as 15% among women and children.

DFID has rightly identified girls' education as a vital component of its work through its new Business Plan. We would argue that it should view all disasters and emergencies as key opportunities to realise this commitment and to build back better—taking the opportunity to reform educational systems as well as setting and implementing standards for the safety of school buildings. Education authorities can be strengthened or created, new teacher training models established, transparency and pro-poor focus of education financing can be ensured and social rifts and challenges can be addressed.

Education can also be an important element in ensuring young people return to an approximation of their normal routine as quickly as possible, acting as a psychosocial support mechanism and reducing the level of trauma young people experience. DFID should devise post-disaster strategies to ensure that girls' education suffers as little disruption as possible through the provision of short-term immediate interventions.

12 January 2011

Written evidence submitted by Merlin

1. Merlin is pleased to submit this response to the International Development Select Committee's inquiry on the 2010 Pakistan Floods.

2. Merlin is the only UK specialist agency, which responds worldwide with vital healthcare and medical relief for vulnerable people caught up in natural disasters, conflict and disease and health system collapse. Merlin's aim is to ensure that vulnerable people who are excluded from exercising their right to health have equitable access to appropriate and effective healthcare.

3. Key Points highlighted by this submission:

- **Effective leadership is fundamental to the efficacy of humanitarian responses but requires investment.** Investment is needed to support Cluster Coordinators at national level and co-leads at sub-national level. Continued DFID support to the cluster system is critical.
- **A consistent decision-making approach to Civil-Military coordination in humanitarian responses is required.** The newly-developed risk assessment matrix (attached) formulated by the Global Health Cluster offers a model to support decision-making in this area.
- **Investment in Disaster Risk Reduction at community level is vital.** A longer term approach is needed to build up the resilience of communities and health systems to cope with and respond to future hazards.
- **New solutions are needed to help scaling up disaster response capacity.** Innovative solutions to strengthening surge capacity should be sought by the World Health Organisation and supported where appropriate by international donors.
- **Flexible and timely funding is essential.** In light of the severe challenges currently facing the humanitarian community—brought about by the increasing incidence of *mega crises*—timely and predictable funding is critical to delivering effective humanitarian responses.

ABOUT MERLIN PAKISTAN

4. Merlin has been working in Pakistan since 2005, and responded to the devastating earthquake in Pakistan Administered Kashmir within a few days to assist in humanitarian relief efforts. Merlin expanded its vital services in late 2007 to Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and parts of then North West Frontier Province, current Khyber Pakhtookhwa (KPK). In 2009, Merlin expanded activities to the conflict-affected

areas in KPK in response to the IDP crisis (in the camp and/or IDPs living in host communities and then in their areas of return). In addition to these emergency programmes Merlin has focused on support to the district health system through activities including the rehabilitation of health facilities and infrastructure, support to disease surveillance mechanisms, strengthening Health Management Information Systems and support to malaria control in endemic areas of North West Frontier Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Baluchistan covering a population of more than five million in 14 districts.

5. In the wake of the devastating floods, Merlin scaled up its operation in KPK (responding to the health and nutrition needs in the four worst affected districts) and also expanded its integrated health and nutrition assistance to one district in Punjab and two districts in Sindh. Merlin implements its health and nutrition care projects in strong partnership with district health authorities and the intervention package is in line with the “initial essential services package” defined by the global health and nutrition clusters. The intervention package has been adapted by the Pakistan health and nutrition clusters in close consultation and agreement with the Ministry of Health and the cluster members. Currently Merlin caters for the health needs of more than two million people through its emergency response in three Provinces.

Merlin’s response broadly covers five areas: the leadership role played by the Government of Pakistan; the quality of DFID’s response; performance of the cluster system; the humanitarian response; and, disaster risk reduction.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN’S LEADERSHIP ROLE

6. In Merlin’s view, the Government of Pakistan’s response to the floods was undermined by human resources and financial constraints. The Pakistan military played a pivotal role in the response across the country in rescuing the stranded population and providing the basic services.

7. The health and nutrition response was more organised in KPK, as the health and nutrition cluster mechanisms were in place prior to the floods and thus the cluster members were on the ground to respond immediately and scale up their program interventions. However where this prior experience and knowledge was lacking such as in Punjab and Sindh Provinces there were significant gaps in the Government’s leadership capacities and the government was slow to scale up its response capacity, resulting in a lack of coordination between the Government, NGOs, agencies and local authorities.

8. Although it was not possible to predict the timing or nature of the flooding in July, Pakistan is vulnerable to, and has experience of, responding to natural disasters within its borders (2005 Kashmir earthquake; 2007 Yemyin Cyclone in Baluchistan Province, conflict and not to mention the on-going IDP crisis in KPK). It is critical that where lessons are learned from previous national emergency responses, they are shared at Province level along with the capacity mapping for timely response to future disaster threats.

Coordination between the military and civilian humanitarian actors

9. From Merlin’s perspective DFID and the Government of Pakistan could have worked more effectively to secure neutral assets for use by humanitarian NGOs as early as possible. Merlin adopts a pragmatic approach to the use of military assets in acute humanitarian situations based on the organisation’s previous experiences in a range of contexts. In the case of Pakistan given the scale, scope, geographical remoteness of affected populations and extensive damage to the infrastructure, Merlin took the exceptional decision to make use of military assets due to no other civilian or UN option being available to the organisation at the time.

10. Merlin’s experience of civil-military coordination in past responses fed into the development of a risk assessment matrix led by the Global Health Cluster (GHC). The purpose of this matrix is to assess the risk to humanitarian health agencies and military actors by scenario (from peacetime to combat operations) and typology of task (direct and indirect provision of health assistance) and determine the likely impact of civil-military coordination on humanitarian principles. This paper is in the process of being finalised and will be circulated by the GHC to all stakeholders, including DFID in due course. Merlin is happy to share this paper with the Committee (enclosed). During our response to the Pakistan floods, Merlin used this risk matrix to assess civil-military coordination risks and shared the matrix with health cluster partners in Pakistan.

Politicisation of Aid

11. If the Government of Pakistan is to strengthen its leadership role in emergencies it must address the increasing “politicisation of aid”. This politicisation refers to the role that local political parties play in influencing the disbursement and delivery of aid (a “gatekeepers approach”). In Merlin’s experience it is not uncommon for political parties to directly restrict or pre-select beneficiaries eligible to access to health care and to (indirectly) control the recruitment of local staff and contracting of services during the response. Indirectly this also impacts on access to health care by influencing people’s perceptions of the services available to them. UN OCHA is currently monitoring this situation through access monitoring and reporting framework.

Actions of the Government of Pakistan

12. In conclusion, of grave concern are media reports of the Government’s actions with respect to the diversion of flood waters from agricultural or military areas to populated areas—in effect deliberately flooding

these areas (for example Jaccababd in Sindh Province), which even today, according to our Merlin team, means that the waters in some areas of Sindh are not receding and acute humanitarian needs remain.

13. In the current situation people's coping capacities are already stretched; at best these actions severely impede their capacity to cope with the flooding and at worst these actions lead to increased levels of morbidity and mortality. It is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan to protect the people's right to health; where extreme measures must be taken to protect essential infrastructure, populations must be protected accordingly and the decision-making process open and transparent.

THE QUALITY OF DFID'S RESPONSE

14. During the response DFID channelled funds to NGOs via the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) which was helpful in the initial setting up of the response. However the unavailability of any setting up costs through this vital funding window remained the limiting factor which delayed the timeliness of response significantly. In light of the severe challenges facing the humanitarian community—brought about by the increasing incidence of mega crises, timely, flexible and predictable funding is critical to delivering effective humanitarian responses.

Transparency and Accountability

15. Merlin welcomes the Coalition government's intention to strengthen transparency of aid and accountability.

16. In pursuing value-for-money for the taxpayer (DFID, 2010) the government must not be deflected from the primary purpose of humanitarian aid—to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. At present, there is no published guidance or criteria on what constitutes value-for-money (cost per beneficiary; or lives saved?), and as such it is widely interpreted by different actors in different ways. Does value-for-money extend to the recipients of aid for example? In Pakistan Merlin worked to strengthen accountability by implementing patient's charters and conducting focus group discussions, this "giving a voice" (even within the framework of a humanitarian response) to affected populations. It is Merlin's concern that the emphasis on value-for-money over simplifies the complexities of providing humanitarian assistance.

17. In terms of achieving cost effectiveness, during the flood response significant emphasis was placed by DFID on the need to build alliances between NGOs in order to reduce transaction costs—while this may be of demonstrable value in the recovery phase of an emergency, it is not implementable in the response phase. Merlin's team in Pakistan reported that this emphasis on building alliances drew away valuable operational capacity from many NGOs who would have responded in a timely fashion.

18. DFID's tendency during the response was to fund UN bodies and the ICRC, owing to a lack of staff who could have dealt with individual agencies. Consequently, only 18% of the funds allocated to the Pakistan flood response in July 2010 were channelled through NGOs. This did facilitate DFID in terms of grant management however it diminished DFID's traditional emphasis on the diversity of implementing partners particularly when smaller agencies working for specialist sectors were excluded as the focus remained on "bigger players" of the aid system to reduce administrative time.

DFID funding for Health

19. Prior to the emergency, DFID had taken the strategic decision to scale back its engagement in health in Pakistan and at the same time had reduced the number of staff in its Pakistan office. While DFID could not have foreseen the scale and scope of the flooding (although Pakistan is at significant risk of natural disasters) following the on-set of the emergency DFID failed to ensure it had the relevant level of health expertise in country—proposals submitted by Merlin at this time could not be effectively scrutinised owing to lack of technical expertise.

20. Separately DFID has indicated its intention to support livelihoods, community restoration and agricultural recovery in the next phase of the recovery but not health systems recovery. Merlin would welcome greater transparency around DFID's decision concerning the prioritisation of sectors for implementation. It has been the position of DFID colleagues that, due to economic recession and continuous pressure on foreign aid investment, DFID has had to focus on more tangible and visible programming in the field. Merlin believes that there are potential other options that could be adopted in such circumstances, such as lobbying for support for international assistance among UK taxpayers rather than changing intervention sectors in the field. Does this decision reflect a change in the prioritisation of health or an agreement with other donors who have comparative advantage in the health sector and are willing to continue funding health?

PERFORMANCE OF THE CLUSTER SYSTEM

21. In Merlin's view, weak leadership challenged the effective performance of the health cluster (and separately WATSAN and shelter clusters) in Pakistan. Prior to the floods in July, the Health Cluster had been in operation in Pakistan in response to the IDP crisis in KPK Province. Following the floods the Health Cluster coordinator (HCC) was after some delay deployed but without the robust support necessary to support the HCC—for example the cluster co-lead and health management information systems. It is widely recognised,

by DFID and other humanitarian actors, that a team is required to support the HCC and the absence of substantive support in this case led to weak overall leadership and coordination.

22. In addition, it is increasingly clear that the health cluster needs a co-leadership at sub-national level. As the Committee may be aware, the purpose of the cluster co-lead is to facilitate and coordinate a coherent and strategic response in health; ensuring that national partners are included in the process, coordinating mechanisms are effective and information is shared amongst partners. However two problems persistently arise:

- I. The role is resource intensive. In the past there has been an over-reliance on international NGOs to take on cluster co-lead responsibilities; although many NGOs including Merlin are happy to take on responsibility as co-lead, in practise it means that highly experienced staff are required and the time acting as co-lead draws them away from other existing organisational responsibilities. Merlin is calling on DFID to mobilise financial resources to support both the work of the HCC sub-national co-lead.
- II. To date, national partners (local NGOs) have not had the opportunity to take on the cluster co-lead. In the face of human resources challenges and restrictive security setting where international staff are limited or unable to deploy, the health cluster should consider the deployment of appropriately qualified national staff in the co-lead role at sub-national level.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Timeliness of humanitarian Assistance

23. Although surge capacity mechanisms such as cluster rosters are in place to enable humanitarian agencies and NGOs to scale up and respond quickly to crises, these have not always proved to be effective—in Pakistan the Water and Sanitation cluster was also slow to respond and lacked essential technical capacity. However innovative solutions exist; during the Haiti response, PAHO mobilised regional medical and technical expertise to strengthen surge capacities. Other innovative solutions—such as seconding water and sanitation experts from UK-based Water Companies (eg Thames Water or Southern Water) are worthy of serious consideration. At its most basic effective surge capacity is about better emergency preparedness and response (Disaster Risk Reduction). Merlin is investing time and resource to disaster risk reduction, but in our view investment in international and national level remains weak.

24. The timeliness of Needs Assessments—to aid decision-making and provide health data and information was a key challenge; in Sindh, the nutrition Needs Assessment was only completed at the beginning of December 2010. It is widely recognised that Needs Assessment practices need to be better coordinated if humanitarian responses are to be more effective for all actors: formed by a consortium of Merlin, HelpAge International and the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPs) is working to develop tools and methodologies and provide training in Needs Assessments (This process supports the Needs Assessment Task Force (under the auspices of the Inter Agency Standing Committee)). DFID currently provides support to the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPs) and their continued support for this process is both welcome and vital.

IMPROVING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

25. We know that the health impact of disasters can be substantially reduced if authorities and communities in high risk areas are better prepared and able to respond to the range of risks they face. From Merlin's perspective this means investing in strengthening the links between planning at national and local level and the experience of national NGOs in risk mitigation, emergency preparedness and response (Merlin, 2009). DFID's current policy focus on support to civil society has the potential to be critical in strengthening disaster risk reduction at local level.

26. At national level, the Government of Pakistan has a strong disaster management authority led by the military with strong technical expertise and experience; however risk reduction strategies must be better integrated into their response capacity. There is also a need of strengthening the capacities of DMA structures at provincial and district level for timely and effective disaster responses.

27. In terms of DFID's approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR), while departmental policy is fully committed to risk reduction during humanitarian response, in practice effective DRR strategies were not evident in Pakistan. While there is a strong commitment to DRR "in people's email boxes" this is not translated in practice.

Written evidence submitted by The British Red Cross

1. The British Red Cross helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. We are part of a global network that responds to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies. We enable vulnerable people in the UK and abroad to prepare for and withstand emergencies in their own communities, and when the crisis is over we help them to recover and move on with their lives.

2. The British Red Cross is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which comprises:

- 2.1 The International Committee of the Red Cross;
- 2.2 The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and
- 2.3 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide.

3. As a member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the British Red Cross is committed to, and bound by, its Fundamental Principles. These are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

4. The British Red Cross has an officially recognised role and status in the UK as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

RESPONSE OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS TO THE INQUIRY

Overview

The British Red Cross (BRC) response to the Pakistan floods disaster has been through the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (RC RC). This includes the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and more than 35 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

By 10 December, the RC RC Movement has reached a total of 2.1 million people affected by the floods with food (rice, wheat flour, tea, salt, sugar, ghee, chick peas, beans etc), and non-food relief items, including items for emergency shelter (tents, tarpaulins, shelter repair kits, as well as blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene parcels, jerry cans, buckets and stoves). In addition, 197,000 people have been reached with health services, and more than 550,000 people with water and sanitation services.

To date, BRC has raised over £13 million for the Pakistan floods disaster. The majority of funds have been used in the emergency response phase, and support for recovery is starting, with a focus on shelter and livelihoods.

The Committee invites written submissions from interested organisations and individuals, especially those from developing countries on the following points:

QUESTION 1

The Government of Pakistan's leadership in responding to the floods, including needs assessment and response management; as well as coordination between the Government, the military, donors, NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector

The Government of Pakistan (GoP) is a strong and capable actor with experience in disaster response. During the floods, its response has provided relief to very large numbers of people which was particularly critical in the early stages of the emergency.

Due to the scale of the flooding the response across Pakistan has inevitably been varied. In Punjab, the provincial government has provided strong direction of relief operations as well as leadership in the "cluster system". In other provinces it has proved more difficult to establish the international coordination mechanisms with the GoP.

Similarly, information management has been a huge challenge. It is still not possible to determine specific humanitarian need at the union council (village) level, even for relief or emergency shelter.

The RC RC Movement has built a strong coordinated relationship with the GoP. The PRCS set up a number of 24-hour operations control rooms in Islamabad to organise and coordinate the relief effort. It liaised closely with the national authorities, in particular the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA).

Working alongside the PRCS, and coordinated by the IFRC, more than 35 national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies have provided aid in response to the Pakistan floods.

QUESTION 2

The management, quantity and quality of DFID's response to the emergency, both through multilateral channels and bilaterally including:

(a) *Whether the right balance was struck between bilateral and multilateral response:*

We are not aware of any DFID funds allocated to respond to the Pakistan floods that were given directly to the Government of Pakistan. This is consistent with DFID's general policy of only disbursing humanitarian funds through third parties. This position is also affirmed by the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (GHD).

(b) *The performance of the "cluster system" and other donor coordination mechanisms*

The "cluster system", while existing in Islamabad since the beginning of the emergency, has been slow to roll out to the field. However, now that they do have a field presence, the clusters are gathering momentum. This includes a strong performance strategically in mapping recovery needs across the country.

The performance of the "cluster system" in Islamabad has been variable. The shelter cluster is particularly good, while the cluster for food assistance suffers from a lack of WFP presence and is not useful generally.

QUESTION 3

The response of UK-based charities and philanthropic organisations to the emergency

According to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) real time evaluation, the response of UK-based charities has been generally good. Agencies with established local partners were able to respond faster and plan for recovery needs earlier. Such agencies were also able to implement stronger systems of accountability. Due to the concentration of most agency activity in Khyber Pakhtun-Khwa (KPK) due to the conflict IDP crisis, agencies were slow to move from KPK to other affected provinces such as Sindh and Punjab.

The British Red Cross has deployed emergency logistics and sanitation teams and has helped provide food and other aid to hundreds of thousands of people. The logistics team is helping speed the delivery of aid to those in need, working in Punjab and Sindh running an aid pipeline into some of the worst affected areas in southern Pakistan. The sanitation team has been working in Sindh province to meet the sanitation needs of up to 20,000 people.

British Red Cross delegates have also been deployed as part of a Transitional Planning Assistance Team (TPAT), working with affected communities to establish how best we can help people rebuild their lives.

QUESTION 4

Whether the provision of humanitarian assistance to those displaced by the recent floods and longer term internally displaced persons is sufficient, efficient, effective and cost effective

The humanitarian response is not sufficient considering the scale of need.

There will be a need in some areas to provide emergency assistance well into 2011. Given the scale and complexity of the situation, the Red Cross/Red Crescent (as has been common amongst all agencies) has been, in effect responding to several disasters, as the situation varies in different geographic areas, and there are still significant pockets of populations which have not received any emergency assistance, such as hundreds of thousands of people in Sindh.

The level of efficiency and cost effectiveness could have been greatly enhanced if more agencies had chosen to use direct cash support to affected populations, particularly given the strength of local markets. However, it is important that cash programmes are tightly targeted, have high levels of transparency and are equipped with robust monitoring and evaluation systems.

The experience of the watan card, for example, has been mixed. This card, to be used in ATMs, allows the beneficiary to withdraw Pkrs 20,000 as an unconditional cash grant to aid them in recovering from the effects of the floods. Whilst most of the cards the Government said it would issue have now been distributed, there have been widespread accusations that the cards have been allocated based on political affiliations. Secondly, the quality of information and level of communications provided to the beneficiaries as to what their entitlements are have been widely criticised.

QUESTION 5

How quickly livelihoods can be restored, assets protected and food security provided

The answer to this question varies considerably by province. In general, the recovery of livelihoods in Pakistan is a long-term process, and is as much about good governance and economic development as it is about recovery assistance. These issues go far beyond the humanitarian mandate to protect life and dignity in the aftermath of disaster, but there are contributions that humanitarian assistance can make towards these larger issues, particularly through early recovery programming.

Early recovery activities are already being planned in KPK, as many agencies already had a strong presence there, however the needs there are compounded by conflict. Assuming no significant deterioration of the security situation, recovery should occur faster given the number of actors responding.

In Sindh, opportunities for recovery work are limited. It is the major cotton, rice and sugarcane-producing area of the country, where more than 3.7 million acres of farmland were damaged or destroyed. Thousands of acres of farmland remain under water and farmers estimate it will be two or three years before they will be able to plant again. Food security in Sindh, particularly in the northwest is likely to be precarious for at least the next 6 months without the provision of food aid.

The Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement is starting to help some of the most vulnerable in rebuilding their lives. For example 266,000 people have received agricultural assistance material in KPK and Sindh so that families can plant crops to ensure they have adequate food for the winter.

The success of longer-term recovery work will depend on the ability to target the most vulnerable in a context of almost unlimited vulnerability. Any sustainable livelihoods recovery depends on a significant wider scaling up of support to provide initial capital to low and middle income people in the flood affected areas. Without this, livelihoods cannot be restored. As with many major emergencies, the funding for recovery work is lower than the funding for emergency response, and limits the ability of agencies to address enormous recovery needs.

QUESTION 6

How to improve disaster risk reduction strategies with the Government of Pakistan and with local communities

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities in Pakistan require closer community engagement that ensures needs are identified and solid planning is done at the beginning of DRR programmes. All activities of the GoP and of humanitarian agencies should incorporate commonly known DRR best-practice. Most importantly, strategies must be community based and build local capacity and resilience to respond independently.

The PRCS has some 130,000 volunteers countrywide. It is important that there is acknowledgment of the role that volunteers can play in responding to emergencies and in building resilience within communities. DRR will be an important part of PRCS's recovery programme, supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

QUESTION 7

Lessons for future disasters, both for DFID, the UN and affected governments, paying particular attention to the likely impacts of climate change

It is evident from our work that in many emergencies, local actors and institutions provide the bulk of aid to affected populations. The importance of local response and its tendency to produce more timely, appropriate and targeted interventions have been repeatedly highlighted. In Pakistan and around the world, all possible efforts should be made to build local disaster response capacity. In Pakistan, as in many disasters, the global response to a large humanitarian crisis was slow off the ground and suffered from duplication and poor coordination. There is a need for complementary operational planning among different agencies, the UN, and the affected government.

An important issue in the context of Pakistan and of future natural disasters occurring in conflict affected and politically fragile contexts is the importance of ensuring that humanitarian needs are addressed in accordance with humanitarian principles. As the Coalition government's international agenda is increasingly "integrated" with development, diplomacy and defence combined, it is of vital importance to vulnerable populations and aid organisations that this does not affect how, where and to what extent humanitarian assistance is funded or supported. The RC/RC Movement has seen once again in Pakistan the benefits of neutral, impartial and independent assistance for facilitating safe and secure access to those communities which are most in need. Under the increasingly "integrated" rubric of international assistance, DFID may have other agendas, such as stabilising insecure regions, at the same time as humanitarian response. It is important that DFID does not combine these different agendas and makes every effort to safeguard humanitarian action from these political efforts.

Direct cash support to affected populations should be a programming option that is utilised more in the future, particularly in countries like Pakistan where there exist strong and resilient markets. If the appropriate measures were put in place to protect against fraud, cash programming would greatly improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of humanitarian response.

Affected populations are aware of their needs. We need to find more efficient and innovative ways of ensuring they have the resources to meet them.

Written evidence submitted by Save The Children

1. Save the Children is the world's leading independent children's rights organisation. We're outraged that millions of children are still denied proper healthcare, food, education and protection and we're determined to change that. Save the Children UK is a member of Save the Children International, working to change children's lives in more than 120 countries.

2. The monsoon floods which devastated Pakistan in the summer of 2010 presented an enormous challenge to the international humanitarian system. At the height of the emergency, 21 million Pakistanis were affected by the floods—a figure amounting to more people than were affected by the Haiti earthquake, Indian Ocean Tsunami and 2005 Pakistan earthquake combined. The scale of humanitarian need has been unprecedented, as demonstrated by the \$2bn Pakistan Floods Emergency Relief Plan—the largest humanitarian appeal in UN history. DFID's contribution of £134m to emergency relief in Pakistan is also the largest amount provided to a humanitarian emergency in the Department's history. The emergency tested not only the capacity of the Government of Pakistan, but also the international humanitarian system, including donors, UN agencies and NGOs.

INTRODUCTION

3. Save the Children, which has been working in Pakistan since 1979, has mobilised its largest ever emergency relief operation in response to the crisis with large scale projects in health, nutrition and shelter, amongst other activities. By December 2010 we had reached 2.2 million flood-affected people with aid to save lives and safeguard livelihoods. With a long-standing presence in the country and as a partner of choice of DFID and other donors, Save the Children was well-placed to respond to the urgent needs of children and their families. The submission that follows sets out key lessons learned from our operational experience.

THE MANAGEMENT, QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF DFID'S RESPONSE TO THE EMERGENCY

4. The assessment of DFID's response to the Pakistan Monsoon Floods by both SCUK HQ and its Pakistan country team has been broadly positive. DFID was one of the first donors to allocate humanitarian funds to Pakistan as the scale of the floods became apparent.

5. Having pledged £134 million to the emergency, DFID has proved to be one of the most generous donors. It has also demonstrated international humanitarian leadership in pressing other donors to contribute their share to the emergency and conducted high-level humanitarian diplomacy.

6. DFID rapidly scaled up the size of its Pakistan country office in the wake of the floods, and deployed an appropriate number of advocacy staff. In seeking to replace recovery staff with development personnel as soon as is feasible, DFID must also demonstrate an appropriate appreciation of transition needs, and ensure that civil society is engaged in the development as well as relief and recovery phase.

7. DFID's emphasis on transparent and accountable aid is an important facet of both its humanitarian diplomacy with the Government of Pakistan and its own programming. DFID's online "Floods Monitor" has been a successful innovation which has increased transparency and accountability to both beneficiaries and the UK taxpayer. However, more translations of the monitor into local languages and outreach (ie beyond those with internet access) could facilitate even better accountability and communication to beneficiaries in Pakistan.

8. HMG and DFID have demonstrated global humanitarian leadership in response to this crisis. Visits by senior ministers including the Secretary of State Andrew Mitchell, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, and Baroness Warsi, have demonstrated the government's commitment, as has the attendance by the Secretary of State at high-level fora such as the UN donor conference and Pakistan Development Forum. This leadership has enabled DFID to wield significant influence with donors and the Government of Pakistan. DFID should now use this recognised leadership to do more to advocate for a diversity of funding mechanisms, and to put pressure on non-traditional donors (eg the Gulf States) to incorporate principles of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD) into their approach.

9. The understandable prioritisation of "value for money" in DFID's humanitarian response should not lead to a distortion of choices on the ground for humanitarian practitioners. "Value for money" cannot be assured simply by prioritising measurable "outputs". Instead, it should be ensured that "outcomes" represent the best possible value.

10. Despite looking very closely at a "unit cost per beneficiary" approach in Pakistan, DFID demonstrated flexibility in acknowledging that simple cost-benefit comparisons cannot be made across sectors and geographic areas. There was recognition, for example, that the proportion of material to non-material costs is a flawed method for comparing projects with radically different overheads (eg protection vs water and sanitation).

Funding bilateral and multilateral response

11. DFID's coordination with NGOs has been good. DFID has engaged meaningfully with the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, and shown a willingness to adapt and take evidence-based decisions (as the decision to start funding NGOs bilaterally has shown).

12. The response rates of UN agencies and NGOs in Pakistan have added further credence to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principle that donors should support diverse funding mechanisms, including bilateral funding of operational NGOs. Although DFID was quick to identify the need to respond urgently to the floods, its initial reliance on UN funding mechanisms impeded a timely response. Instead of being provided to operational NGOs in the first days of the crisis, most funds were delayed as they were processed by UN agencies. DFID acknowledged this reality three weeks into the emergency and began to fund NGOs bilaterally. This is to be welcomed; it is important that DFID applies the lessons learnt from this case and funds NGOs bilaterally from the onset of any comparable future emergency.

13. The Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) has proved to be a timely response mechanism. The ability of the CBHA's Emergency Response Fund to deploy funds as soon as the emergency began demonstrated the benefit of pre-positioning funds with trusted partners, and of funding operational NGOs in the early stages of a crisis. In the first 30 days after the floods, an initial £750,000 distributed to partners through the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) had already been disbursed and accounted for, while UN agencies, who had access to far more funding in the initial phase, were not able to spend the funds they had. In response, DFID increased its support to the CHBA by another £1 million, and again to £20 million in December. It is vital that DFID continues to support operational NGOs as the "third pillar" of humanitarian response, and invest in preparedness through innovative mechanisms like the CBHA.

The performance of the "cluster system" and other donor coordination mechanisms

14. In response to the emergency, the UN launched a \$1.9 billion appeal—the Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan (PFERP). It was widely remarked that general donor response was too slow; the appeal remains only 49% funded with key gaps in clusters such as shelter, health, education and protection.

15. The view of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), that a slowdown in funding had been caused by the decision of some donors to await the outcome of the World Bank/ADB Disaster and Needs Assessment (DNA), is of particular concern. Humanitarian and early recovery funding must be delivered immediately and should not be dependent on the details of the DNA being finalised. It is important that influential donors such as DFID should engage with other donors to ensure that the urgently-needed humanitarian funds are supplied immediately.

16. DFID is one of the main supporters of the OCHA-managed Emergency Response Fund (ERF). Despite an increase of the cap on grants from the ERF to \$500 000, this pooled fund remains too inflexible and its allocations too small to effectively respond to an emergency of this size. Moreover, the regulations governing funds available in ERF grants do not take into account the realities of international programme costs (for instance, with regard to overheads and international staff costs).

17. The operation of the clusters could be substantially improved. Above all, DFID should do more to use its influencing position with OCHA to support NGOs serving as co-leads for clusters. DFID should press for donor coordination on this issue.

Funding relief and reconstruction

18. The Preliminary Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) conducted by the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has not been sufficiently transparent, and failed to incorporate meaningful consultation with NGOs and civil society. A meeting of the WB-ADB PDNA team presented the findings of the assessment as a *fait accompli*. Previous experience with Disaster Needs Assessment teaches that where civil society is not consulted, gaps are left in the reconstruction effort, and projects can be implemented with harmful consequences for communities.¹⁰ By not seeking the expertise of civil society in the reconstruction effort, the PDNA did not pay sufficient attention to governance issues, which are a key factor if Pakistan is to "build back better".

19. The avowed intention of the Government of Pakistan to fund reconstruction efforts itself will undermine transparency and accountability to flood-affected populations, especially the most vulnerable. Suggestions that reconstruction should be solely funded through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund will hamper effective funding of operational NGOs.

20. Donor attempts to maximise "value for money" in humanitarian response will also not be realised if the Government of Pakistan depends on NGOs in the emergency phase of the response and then disengages with NGOs in recovery and development programming stages. The provincial administrations do not have the capacity to respond to the ongoing recovery needs, transition and future development needs without the expertise of CSOs/NGOs.

¹⁰ The track record of IFI needs assessments in Pakistan has not been good. For example, in response to a 2005 community complaint, the World Bank's own Inspection Panel found that the Left Bank Outfall Drain project (1984) had heightened risk of loss of life, livelihoods and flooding and reduced and contaminated water supplies.

An equitable response?

21. The UN's willingness to operate from registration lists prepared by the Government of Pakistan has led to vulnerable groups being omitted from the response. There have been concerns, for example, that female-headed households have missed out on the "*watan*" compensation scheme. Moreover, reports that a portions of the compensation owed to sharecroppers are recuperated by landlords should be an issue of particular concern for donors funding the scheme.

22. Save the Children has conducted its own assessments but has at times been restricted—when working as a UN implementing partner—by the willingness of UN agencies to make concessions on independent registrations. The UN must reaffirm its prerogative to conduct independent assessments based on need. Donors must also offer strong support for this principle in order to ensure that their allocations reach the most vulnerable.

Civil-military relations

23. Underlying political and military tensions in Pakistan have complicated the humanitarian operating environment. The support of the Government of Pakistan and some donors for a significant role for the military in response to the floods emergency has presented significant challenges to an independent humanitarian response based on need. For instance, NATO's offer of an air-bridge of relief items—ultimately accepted by the Government of Pakistan—was deemed unnecessary by the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

24. The HCT concluded that the use of the NATO air-bridge did not represent an "option of last resort" given that most supplies are procured from within Pakistan and that agencies have pre-existing logistics contracts. The HCT also concluded that the support of NATO, a party to the conflict in neighbouring Afghanistan, would increase the risk of attack on humanitarian actors. The pressure applied by DFID on the HCT to accept the NATO offer was therefore inappropriate. DFID should reaffirm its support for the humanitarian principles and for the principles of military assets only being used as an option of last resort.¹¹

25. Nevertheless, DFID has also demonstrated sensitivity to the restrictive security environment in Pakistan and has implemented appropriate approaches to branding, in contrast to the approach taken by the US Government through OFDA. This has been appreciated by the humanitarian community.

VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN PAKISTAN

26. This is an extreme event in the middle of a summer of extreme climate events, including record-breaking heat waves. The devastating floods in Pakistan in 2010 provide strong evidence of climate change and its possibly catastrophic impacts. They demonstrate what can happen if steps are not taken to help enable poor populations and vulnerable groups such as children to adapt and enhance their resilience to climate change induced disasters. According to a report released by the Government of Pakistan in February 2010, "climate change will increase the variability of monsoon rains, and enhance the frequency and severity of extreme events such as floods and droughts".¹²

27. A major contributor to the disaster in Pakistan was the extreme and intense rainfall. One region recorded 180% of the rainfall usually expected in the whole monsoon cycle in a 36 hour period, and the Indus River reached its highest level since records began. This is consistent with predictions of climate change impacts.

28. In addition, the chairman of the Pakistan Federal Flood Commission has said that widespread settlement build-up and construction along the river banks and even on dried-up riverbeds across the country blocked the natural course of the rivers. This is corroborated by the UN's Director of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, who argued that the scale of the disaster would have been less had there been no human settlements on the river banks.¹³ According to the UNDP, the net loss in total forest cover in the flood affected areas is estimated at 23%; the destruction of forest cover will make Pakistan susceptible to flooding in the future.

29. The new Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI), released by global risks advisory firm Maplecroft, also puts Pakistan at extreme risk of climate change, and attributes the country's vulnerability to its high exposure to climate-related events, high levels of poverty and dense population, among other factors.¹⁴ The fact that a high percentage of Pakistan's population lives in the drainage basin of the Himalayan rivers, which are prone to flooding, means there is a high likelihood that Pakistan may face more disasters of the magnitude of the 2010 floods, and that these may be followed by periods of drought.¹⁵

30. Such climate-induced vulnerabilities have underpinned Pakistan's strong position at the Cancun Climate Summit to appeal for its inclusion within the UNFCCC definition of a "particularly vulnerable" country to climate change related disasters, and to highlight the urgent need for access to adaptation funding.¹⁶ DFID

¹¹ Guidelines On The Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets In Disaster Relief—"Oslo Guidelines".

¹² Planning Commission Government of Pakistan, "Executive Summary and Salient Recommendations of Final Report," in Task Force on ClimateChange, Feb. 2010, p 2.

¹³ http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/news/extremeweathersequence_en.html

¹⁴ <http://www.maplecroft.com/about/news/ccvi.html>

¹⁵ WWF, September 2010.

¹⁶ Background Note on Climate Change: Pakistan's increasing vulnerability to Climate Change, 10 November 2010 (www.cdkn.org)

should take Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change as a significant factor in decision-making about disaster risk reduction funding and emergency preparedness.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

31. DFID has a commitment to spend the equivalent of 10% of response funds to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and has programmed £55 million for early recovery with DRR as a core component of any programme. DFID should press other donors to match this 10% commitment.

32. We welcome the prioritisation of education and livelihoods as priority sectors for DRR, and would support the integration of DRR into all sectors and activities. This presents a unique opportunity to galvanise support around DRR and ensure the links between relief and development are strong and sustainable.

33. DFID must ensure that gaps are not left in the transition between early recovery and development. As the impact of climate change intensifies, the frequency of events like this is rising, and will continue to do so in the future. DFID has a vital role to play in support disaster risk reduction, including community-based disaster risk management which can reduce such climate change induced vulnerabilities. Save the Children is advocating for DRR and social protection to be recognised as part of climate change adaptation, to reach the poorest and most vulnerable people.

LESSONS FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

Speed and effectiveness of donor response

34. UN funding mechanisms have proved ineffective as a means for rapidly channelling funds to emergency programmes. DFID acknowledged this reality three weeks into the emergency and began to fund NGOs bilaterally. This is to be welcomed and should continue. It is important, however, that this lesson is fully learnt and that the practice of bilateral NGO funding is implemented from day one of any future comparable emergency. DFID's emphasis on value for money will be undermined if funding is bottlenecked within the UN system to the detriment of operational NGOs.

35. DFID and other donors had experienced the same problems when responding to the 2009 IDP crisis in Pakistan. In 2010, DFID was quick to amend its strategy when confronted with the evidence; the lesson that value is added by funding NGOs bilaterally should be applied from the outset of any future comparable emergency.

12 January 2011

Written evidence submitted by UNHCR

UNHCR'S LONGSTANDING PRESENCE IN PAKISTAN

1. UNHCR has been present in Pakistan for some 30 years working on the Afghan refugee programme. The Office enjoys a long-standing partnership with the Government of Pakistan and has demonstrated its ability to deliver in emergencies in the country. For this reason, UNHCR felt it necessary to fully engage in the response to the floods.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE AND KEY CHALLENGES

2. To date, the Office has reached over seven million persons with the distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and 1.6 million persons with emergency shelter across the four affected provinces.

3. The magnitude and nature of the disaster has been a massive challenge in itself. The term "slow moving tsunami" has been used to coin the evolving nature of the floods and how it continues to present contrasting realities from one affected province to another. An example of the dynamic nature of the situation can be seen in how returns and recovery are currently take place in northern parts of the country while large parts of Sindh still have standing waters causing continued and secondary displacement among the population.

4. Access by the humanitarian community to affected populations was one of the main challenges in the initial response to the floods. High water levels and the security situation in certain areas played equal roles in humanitarian agencies' inability to reach many affected locations. Many geographical areas remained isolated for weeks due to destroyed and washed away roads and bridges. The military was, however, to a certain extent, able to fill this gap by accessing isolated locations by helicopter and boats.

5. The security situation in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Balochistan also meant that even once water levels had receded, some areas remained no go areas. Teams composed of UN national staff, as opposed to international staff members, enjoyed freer movement and thus, to some extent, were able to fill this gap.

6. The identification of the growing humanitarian needs was another major challenge and included the inability to quickly determine planning figures and to define comprehensive strategies entailing the way forward. Given the evolving nature of the disaster, the challenge was two-fold as there was a steady growth in

the number of affected people as well as a growth in affected provinces (as the floods had first been confined to Balochistan and KPK and then Sindh and Punjab).

COORDINATION: THE CLUSTER SYSTEM AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH NGOS

7. UNHCR is the lead in the Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) clusters in the Pakistan flood emergency response across all four affected provinces. As per IASC arrangements, IFRC is the lead in the Shelter/NFI cluster in natural disasters. In response to the floods, however, IOM was designated cluster lead. Furthermore, given UNHCR's strong existing presence, the Office has been leading the cluster in Balochistan and KPK and is extending its support to IOM, cluster members and the Government in Punjab and Sindh. UNHCR is the lead of the Humanitarian Coordinator Group in Balochistan.

8. Responding to a natural disaster of this magnitude, parts of the humanitarian community have called for a review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) arrangements, which are believed to be better fitted for responding to medium sized disasters as opposed to large and complex ones such as the Pakistan floods.

9. In Pakistan, challenges regarding the cluster system have been province specific. At the outset of the emergency the clusters served as forums in bringing relevant actors together to better understand the dynamic environment and situation. Additionally, in locations where presence of the humanitarian community and Government authorities was consolidated, easier coordination and partnerships existed.

10. The system has areas that need to be strengthened in order to ascertain better coordination in a future emergency of this scale. This includes inter and intra cluster arrangements as clusters have been criticised for falling into "silo like" and compartmentalised structures. In this respect, by strengthening inter-cluster mechanisms, clusters should be challenged to approach their activities in a more comprehensive and integrated manner. The need to build awareness of coordination mechanisms as opposed to information sharing mechanisms among cluster members is also vital and by doing so can help in changing the dynamics of meetings and collaboration between agencies. The need to refrain from creating parallel systems of coordination and adding layers to the already cumbersome system has also been flagged.

LIMITED CAPACITY

11. The initial response by the humanitarian community in the South was considerably weakened by a limited existing presence there unlike in KPK, and to a lesser extent Balochistan, where UNHCR and the humanitarian community have well-established partnerships and knowledge of the provinces. As a result, the ability for international humanitarian organisations to quickly expand their presence to Sindh and parts of Punjab as the floods moved south was challenging. Months on and given the sheer scale of the crisis, the number of international NGOs present in the province remains insufficient. Perceptions of the security situation in the South, may also have led to the reluctance of more international NGOs from moving into the province at a quicker pace.

12. Furthermore, with the province having been oriented more towards development programmes prior to the floods, there was a general lack of experience and knowledge in responding to emergencies. In this light, the Office feels that building the capacity of local NGOs not only in Sindh but also in other areas of the country is vital to ensure their comprehensive participation in this response and in other future emergencies.

13. The Office has also identified the need to extend capacity building to the National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA and PDMA), thus creating better coordination and partnership between the Office and these entities.

12 January 2011

Written evidence submitted by World Vision

World Vision is a child focused Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, their families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. We are the world's biggest local charity, working in 100 countries and to improve the lives of 100 million people worldwide. We have three million supporters and employ 40,000 locally based staff, 97% of whom are nationals of the country in which they work.

World Vision believes the best way to change the life of a child is to change the world in which they live. We see children and their communities as active participants in shaping a better future, empowering them to find sustainable solutions to poverty.

World Vision welcomes this opportunity to provide written evidence to the International Development Select Committee on the Humanitarian Response to the Pakistan Floods. World Vision has worked in Pakistan since 1992 and was actively engaged in responding to the flooding in August. For more information, please see Annex 1.

1. DFID BILATERAL FUNDING

1.1 The UK Government was one of the fastest to respond to the relief effort of any Government and demonstrated immediate and lasting commitment to the relief and the people of Pakistan. The UK is the third largest government donor to the flood response and were one of the first donors to announce new funds in the immediate aftermath of the flooding. DFID also gave significant funds through NGOs, which enabled them to respond quickly to the crisis. In the early stages of the response, DFID staff engaged with NGOs, UN agencies and the cluster system and this level of accountability was welcomed.

1.2 Despite the speed of the response, there were some instances where agencies struggled to meet short turnaround time imposed by DFID and faced difficulties with the less than transparent process.

1.2.1 Firstly, DFID did not give sufficient time to NGOs to respond to requests for funding proposals. On 25 August 2010, DFID announced £15 million of bilateral funding and gave NGOs 41 hours to respond; again, on 5 October 2010, NGOs were given 46 hours to respond, with preference given to joint bids. Under this excessive time pressure, World Vision staff prepared a funding proposal, but this proposal was rejected without any feedback or reason given. World Vision subsequently discovered that it was never eligible for the funding on the basis of criteria that were not communicated at the outset.

1.2.2 Secondly, the process for selecting and communicating NGOs was not transparent and in some instances calls for funding were restricted to select NGOs. This seemed at times random, when NGOs who were established with the capacity to quickly bring in global expertise and scale up rapidly, were not even invited to apply. This affected many NGOs. Transparent application and funding calls are central to the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, as it is central to ensuring funding is allocated on the basis of need and recommend that **DFID review their process for calls for funding proposals from NGOs and ensure greater transparency**

1.3 In the humanitarian relief effort, DFID placed a high emphasis on value for money. World Vision believes it is important for DFID to demonstrate the impact UK aid has in humanitarian emergencies and it is a welcome attempt by DFID to deal with excessive overcharging and standardise prices. However, it is more effective when value is attributed to impact and outcomes, rather than simple outputs. In Pakistan, DFID evaluated value for money based on “unit cost” of inputs, such as buckets or tents, and highlighted the quantity material assistance over quality and actual impact on lives. This approach did not take into consideration core, but non-nfi, humanitarian responses, such as creating child friendly spaces, hygiene education and protection, which cannot be measured by unit cost. Further, responses in harder to reach communities, work in community mobilisation and work with vulnerable segments of society is both more expensive and difficult to measure. Humanitarian responses can be unduly influenced by a simplistic value for money approach that prioritises unit cost and material intervention over effectiveness and impact. **DFID should provide clearer guidance on value for money, and ensure that a simplistic, input led understanding of this important concept does not undermine humanitarian agencies’ ability to provide appropriate and flexible responses to those in the greatest need. To ensure a transparent and needs focussed process, this guidance should also be made available to humanitarian relief agencies.**

2. THE CONSORTIUM OF BRITISH HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES

2.1 The Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA), of which World Vision is one of fifteen members, was able to implement £750,000 of DFID funding within 72 hours of the funding being released. This rapid and efficient mechanism for funding operational agencies enabled CBHA members to respond in a timely manner to the humanitarian crisis. On 19 August, DFID also allocated a further £1m to seven of the members of CBHA.

2.2 The rapid disbursement of funds through the CBHA enabled operational NGOs to quickly establish response mechanisms in some of the hardest to reach areas. World Vision was able to establish humanitarian operations in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (KPK), expand our geographical reach and provide rapid relief to those affected by the flooding and make assessments of additional needs before larger funding was available. This not only informed World Vision’s response, but the information was used to feed back to donors, funding mechanisms and other NGOs. Further, the speed at which funds were released enabled World Vision to procure necessary goods before markets were unable to meet the demands placed upon them.

2.3 We welcome DFID’s continued support for the CBHA, and recommend that this partnership is strengthened further. Due to the success of the initial disbursement of funds through the CBHA, World Vision believes that greater quantities of funding should be made available in the first days and weeks of a humanitarian crisis in order to assist a more effective response.

3. UN-LED CLUSTERS FUNDING SYSTEM

3.1 DFID channelled a significant proportion of funding through the UN-led cluster system. It is important that responsible donors continue to fund through this system, in order to ensure coordinated activity. However, DFID should similarly continue to seek reform in the cluster process to ensure it is more able to respond in a timely, effective and transparent manner.

3.2 The cluster system lacks consistent and strong leadership. The lack of existing leadership made the cluster system unwieldy in the early relief phase and the system of revolving leadership and lack of staff continuity meant that there was little consistency in funding criteria and decision making processes. Humanitarian agencies used significant capacity coping with these vagaries, and this affected capacity to operate effectively.

3.3 The efficacy of the clusters varied depending on sector and region. In some instances, such as the Shelter Cluster, there was consistent leadership, coordination and information management throughout the response. This cluster was able to effectively transition from relief to recovery, as well as having strong engagement with donors. Further, the Health, WASH and Nutrition clusters were able to work effectively together in order to deal potential concerns, such as a cholera outbreak.

3.4 Regionally, in KPK, where NGOs had worked with the clusters during the 2009 IDP crisis, the clusters were more effective than in Punjab and Sindh provinces. Initially clusters were not well staffed, and there was a large burden placed on a small number of people. Whilst capacity to respond rapidly increased, the initial lack of capacity impacted upon the crucial first days of the humanitarian response. Further, many of the staff in Punjab and Sindh provinces were not well acquainted with the system of humanitarian funding and as a result unable to appropriately, rapidly and consistently disburse funds—resulting in money which was given by the UK and other donors not being spent on much needed relief.

3.5 Funding through the cluster system was available for national and local NGOs, and they were keen to apply for funding. However, the complexity of the application and proposal process was difficult for local NGOs, with little to no administrative capacity, to deal with. **DFID should look to support national and local NGOs to better enable them to have access to cluster funding.**

3.6 There were significant bureaucratic impediments in the decision making process. Once a cluster lead had received funding proposals they were presented to the country team, once they had approved a funding proposal it would have to be forwarded to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and only once they had approved the proposal for funding would they be sent to donors for approval. This lengthy and bureaucratic process meant that funding was not disbursed as effectively or quickly as needed. **World Vision recommends that DFID work with the UN to ensure that decision making processes are streamlined, so that funding and assistance can be rapidly disbursed to where it is needed.**

3.7 Whilst DFID provided substantial funding to the cluster system, they were keen to ensure that this money was used effectively. In open meetings between UN-led clusters, NGOs and donors, DFID were clearly pushing for improved structures and decision making processes. **World Vision commends DFID for challenging the systemic issues and believes it is crucial for donors to pressurise the UN to reform the cluster funding system. DFID should go further in pressing for improvement to the system.**

3.8 The UK should continue to direct humanitarian funding through the UN cluster system, but it is essential that this funding is strategic and cost effective. As discussed above the UN system needs to be more transparent, less bureaucratic, effective and timely. In the flood response, DFID could have achieved a better balance between bilateral and multilateral funding, and therefore the UK contribution to the flood response was not as cost effective and timely as it otherwise could have been. In the future, **DFID should work to ensure that the UN cluster have higher standards of transparency, accountability and clearer funding criteria. In future, DFID should have a better balance between bilateral and multilateral funding.**

3.9 Pakistan has suffered from a high number of humanitarian crises, and since the cluster funding mechanism was established there have been numerous evaluations. World Vision is concerned that the many of the lessons learnt have not been implemented. Following the IDP crisis in 2009, an Inter-Cluster Diagnostic Mission presented a series of findings.¹⁷ Having been involved in both humanitarian responses, World Vision believes that many of the lessons from 2009 have been learnt, but progress towards a streamlined and effective cluster system has not been fast enough. It is crucial that lessons are learnt and reforms are made before there is another humanitarian crisis. We recommend that the committee reviews previous diagnostic missions and identifies where lessons have been identified, but not implemented. **We also recommend that DFID is actively involved in reviewing the efficacy of the cluster funding system and the system of disbursement in Pakistan flood response.**

3.10 It is important that the clusters are accountable to donors for high administrative charges and donors do not use the cluster system to reduce their reported administration costs. High administrative charges, high levels of bureaucracy and slow decision making means that money does not get to where it is needed in a timely fashion. While there is always a cost to administration, this should be kept at a minimum. In Pakistan too much aid money was spent on administering the clusters, despite their ineffectiveness. DFID needs to ensure there is greater accountability in future clusters and that the process is streamlined to deliver more effective relief. As a world leading donor, **DFID should use the Multilateral Aid Review and**

¹⁷ This group was composed of team members representing the Global Cluster Leads and included Cluster representatives from Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Nutrition, Education, Early Recovery, Agriculture, Protection, Emergency Shelter, Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM), NGO consortia (InterAction & ICVA), and the Humanitarian Coordination Support Section of OCHA. <http://www.unhcr.org/4ae5aa8e9.html>

Humanitarian and Emergency Response Review to push for low administrative costs and a shorter time frame between pledges and project implementation. Further, DFID should not use the cluster funding system as a way to limit their administrative costs.

4. RESPONSE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

4.1 Initially the Government of Pakistan's response to the flooding started slowly. However, once the scale of the disaster became apparent, after one or two weeks, the response increased pace, although the efficacy of the response was varied. For practical and political reasons, the Government response was stronger in some regions, mainly in Punjab and Sindh, and weaker in others, especially in KPK.

4.2 Running through the flood response was a lack of clarity about who was responsible for decision making. This was especially evident in areas that were not seen as safe by the Government, primarily in KPK, which is destabilised and large areas are controlled by feudal landlords. Government presence in these areas was extremely limited and their political control was negligible, and as a result the Government were unable to effectively coordinate the relief effort in these areas.

4.3 The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) became part of all the UN cluster system discussions in Islamabad, whilst the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) were involved in local cluster systems. This provided a clear coordination mechanism, which was crucial in facilitating humanitarian agencies. The Government introduced a waiver on the No Objections Certificate (NOC) in certain geographic areas and in other areas where NOCs were necessary they encouraged the relevant line ministries to be efficient and transparent in the process. The Government also waived custom/duties taxes on imported relief goods, whilst visa applications on arrival for foreign nationals enabled NGOs to deploy international staff rapidly.

4.3.1 However, this level of Government engagement added bureaucratic load to the decision making and financial disbursement mechanisms, for example NGOs were required to provide weekly expenditure reports, which was not possible to provide as NGOs generally reconcile monthly. Further, the NDMA sought involvement in the technicality of funding proposals, which is excessive in the midst of a response. These discussions were quantitative and not qualitative, and whilst World Vision supports local and government ownership of humanitarian responses and welcomes robust accountability mechanisms, this has to be done effectively and there has to be a balance between the burden of bureaucracy and delivery of humanitarian support.

4.4 In certain areas, the response to the flood appeared to be unduly influenced by the desire to gain and increase political control. The perceived politicisation of the response damaged NGOs capacity to operate. Using aid to increase political support, especially in insecure areas, can damage the credibility of operating agencies, government coordination and international donor response and exacerbate existing instability. Further, it means that vulnerability is not the sole criteria for decisions on the disbursement of aid; as a result some of the most needy and vulnerable are not able to access relief. **DFID should continue to work to mitigate against political and financial uncertainty in humanitarian responses, by utilising a mixture of context appropriate aid instruments and by depoliticising aid. World Vision underscores the need for context specific engagement, as stated in the OECD "Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations".**¹⁸

5. FINANCIAL DISBURSEMENTS THROUGH THE "WATAN" CARD SYSTEM

5.1 Financially empowering the IDPs and affectees is an important part of humanitarian responses, especially as it moves from relief to recovery. The initiative to provide Watan cards to those affected by the flooding was an important way to empower the affectees.

5.2 However, access to Watan cards was not equitable, especially as eligibility was linked to identification documentation. Many affectees were not registered and did not possess ID cards; further many had lost their documentation during the flooding. Access to health and education facilities were also dependant on possessing ID cards. The information needed to issue Watan cards was compiled by the Government of Pakistan; however in order to qualify for financial compensation affectees required ID cards. World Vision was concerned of reports that this information was being used politically. Many in affected areas did not have ID cards, whilst some who were not affected used their ID cards to access financial compensation that they were not eligible for. World Vision heard that access to registration, and therefore aid was allegedly being used as a mechanism for bolstering political support.

5.2.1 World Vision worked with the national registration, in order to assist affectees to get ID cards. In one camp, of 2,500 Internally Displaced People (IDPs), only 600 were in possession of ID cards and therefore eligible for financial compensation. World Vision worked with the National Registration to facilitate mobile registration vans in four IDP camps. These vans were able to register 1,440 people, half of whom were from households headed by the elderly or children.

¹⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf>

5.3 However, the perceived politicisation of the Watan card financial compensation disbursement meant that we were only able to operate this programme in Sindh province, where the Government of Pakistan had no substantial political interest in controlling the registration process. In other areas the registration outlets were inaccessible and there is anecdotal evidence of affectees travelling for days to get access to documentation. Humanitarian principles state that basic humanitarian assistance should not be linked to government registration; this should have been clearly articulated and should be a mandatory of the release of funding. **World Vision recommends that the UK government work with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that all their citizens realise their right to ID documentation. Further, whilst the similar systems of financial disbursement should be looked at in future humanitarian crises, DFID should look to support registration processes and put pressure on authorities to ensure all those affected have access.**

6. MILITARY

6.1 The Pakistan Army played an important role in the flood response. The first phase of response and evacuation would not have been possible without the assistance of the military infrastructure. World Vision feels that the role played by the military was appropriate and proportionate. Military helicopters and C-130s were able to operate in otherwise inaccessible services, and this was crucial in saving lives and providing relief.

6.2 Once the initial relief phase and evacuation were complete, it appeared military were quick to hand control of the relief effort to the regional governors.

7. TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO RECOVERY

7.1 World Vision is a member of the executive committee of the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), and we have included a copy of the PHF Pakistan Floods Framework for Action, which comprehensively represents World Vision's perspective on the future challenges for Pakistan as it transitions from relief to recovery.

8. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

8.1 Issues of children's rights were not prioritised in the flood response. There was no support, coordination or funding for work on child protection, and there was significant danger of child trafficking and child abuse. There was a significant number of child-headed households and large financial vulnerability within IDP camps. World Vision worked in IDP camps to raise awareness of the dangers, which include the separation of families, child labour, child trafficking and trauma. Further, the displacement meant that large numbers of children were able to flee bonded service and World Vision was able to work with them, identify them and ensure their freedom. **It is crucial that, that there is more attention given to addressing child protection issues that are typical in humanitarian crises as children are often most vulnerable and hardest hit by crises. DFID should look to give greater funds, push for greater coordination and give more support to child rights work in humanitarian disasters.**

9. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DFID review their process for calls for bilateral funding proposals from NGOs.
2. DFID should provide clearer guidance on value for money, and ensure that a simplistic, input led understanding of this important concept does not undermine humanitarian agencies' ability to provide appropriate and flexible responses to the greatest need. To ensure a transparent and needs focussed process, this guidance should also be made available to humanitarian relief agencies.
3. We recommend that the partnership between DFID and the CBHA is strengthened further. Due to the success of the initial disbursement of funds through the CBHA, World Vision believes that greater quantities of funding should be made available in the first days and weeks of a humanitarian crisis in order to assist UK charities to more effectively respond.
4. DFID should look to support national and local NGOs to better enable them to have access to cluster funding.
5. DFID should work with the UN to ensure that decision making processes are streamlined, so that funding and assistance can be rapidly disbursed to where it is needed.
6. DFID should continue to challenge the UN to reform the cluster funding system.
7. DFID should work to ensure that the UN cluster have higher standards of transparency, accountability and clearer funding criteria.
8. In future, DFID should have a better balance between bilateral and multilateral funding.
9. DFID should be actively involved in reviewing the efficacy of the cluster funding system and the system of disbursement in Pakistan flood response.
10. DFID should use the Multilateral Aid Review and Humanitarian and Emergency Response Review to push for low administrative costs and a shorter time frame between pledges and project implementation.

11. DFID should not use the cluster funding system as a way to limit their administrative costs.

12. DFID should work to mitigate against political and financial uncertainty in humanitarian responses, by utilising a mixture of context appropriate aid instruments and by depoliticising aid.

13. The UK Government should work with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that all their citizens realise their right to ID documentation.

14. Similar systems of financial disbursement to the watan cards should be considered at in future humanitarian crises; however, DFID should look to support registration processes and put pressure on authorities to ensure all those affected have access.

15. It is crucial that, that there is more attention given to addressing children protection issues that are typical in humanitarian crises. DFID should look to give greater funds, push for greater coordination and give more support to child rights work in humanitarian disasters.

Annex 1

WORLD VISION IN PAKISTAN

1.1 World Vision has been working in Pakistan since 1992, focusing on emergency relief and response, child protection, HIV and AIDS awareness, sustainable economic development through programmes such as organic farming, health and hygiene, and empowering women through vocational training and literacy. World Vision implemented a large-scale relief and recovery operation for people of the North West Frontier Province (now known as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, or KPK) immediately after the October 2005 earthquake, as well as responding to the August 2007 floods in Balochistan and Sindh and the IDP crisis in 2009–10, and we have extensive experience of emergency response at the grassroots level in Pakistan.

1.1.1 Over the past three months, in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Sindh and Punjab provinces, World Vision has assisted more than 650,000 people with food, clean drinking water, sanitation, hygiene kits, tents, kitchen utensils, health posts, child-friendly spaces, women and infant-friendly spaces and agricultural early recovery initiatives.

1.2 Children are the most vulnerable in any disaster and the lack of adequate shelter, food, water and healthcare places them at extreme risk. Levels of child labour and trafficking in Pakistan were already worryingly high before the flooding and World Vision is working to help families restore and revive their livelihoods in an effort to prevent this from increasing, because of the floods. World Vision is also working with local authorities to see to it that children return to school and have options other than heading out to work. In addition to this, we have established Child Friendly Spaces in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps to provide safe spaces for children to recover from trauma, play and learn.

December 2010
