

Achieving Effective Balance in Coordination:

Disaster Risk Reduction Through Preparedness & Response

Report on Behalf of the UNDP ERF for the Disaster Emergency Response Local Consultative Group

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This report presents the findings of a review of stakeholder understanding of present humanitarian coordination arrangements and challenges in Bangladesh. The review was undertaken from August to November 2011.

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Acronyms:

ADB	Asia Development Bank
BDPC	Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme
DER	Disaster & Emergency Response/Relief (Group of the LCG)
DMB	Disaster Management Bureau
DMRD	Disaster Management Relief Division
DoRR	Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building Project
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office (Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection)
ERF	Early Recovery Facility
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HoA	Head of Agency
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	Inter Cluster Coordination
ICCM	Inter-cluster coordination mechanism
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non-governmental organization
LCG	Local Consultative Group
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NGOCC	NGO Coordination Committee (on Disaster Management)
NPDM	National Plan for Disaster Management

OCHA	(United Nations) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SODs	Standing Orders on Disaster
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDMT	United Nations Disaster Management Team
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
WASH	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (cluster)
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary:

Effective humanitarian coordination aims to ensure the best use of resources to achieve the most appropriate and relevant response to the needs of people affected by a crisis. Increasingly in Bangladesh, as in other contexts, there is recognition not only that preparedness for a coordinated response is important, but also that specific preparedness for a coordinated response needs to take place embedded in a disaster risk reduction context and within the overall development framework for the country as a whole. This should aim to ensure appropriateness at the country context and linkages between the key components of the overall disaster management framework.

Achieving constructive linkages between disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, response when a disaster occurs and then a smooth transition to recovery involves balancing multiple, complex factors. For the Bangladesh context, factors include the nature of disasters in terms of scope, scale and onset; many different stakeholders that are government and non-government, national and international as well as linkages that need to be made between actors traditionally seen as focused on “humanitarian response” with those seen traditionally as “development focused”.

Although the modalities of working together and of coordination are different before and after a crisis, mapping out how coordination will work in response during preparedness increases clarity & predictability and active preparedness for a coordinated response provides the opportunity to ensure that the functional roles and responsibilities outlined in global humanitarian architecture can be addressed utilizing and building on existing structures.

In a context of high risk to natural disasters and a firmly established and successful disaster risk reduction culture, this review aims to highlight some of the areas whereby coordination of the response to natural disasters could be enhanced within the existing disaster management framework. Stakeholders agree that this particular element of the disaster management cycle needs strengthening. Momentum and willingness to engage in this is evident and has been shown by recent developments in the LCG-DER group¹, a key forum for disaster management that brings together the government

¹ Over the last 12 months with secretariat support from UNDP the LCG-DER has embarked on a series of measures designed at strengthening its utility including; inviting INGO/ NGO participation, revision of an outdated ToR, drafting of an action plan and the instigation of the UNRC as co-chair along with the Secretary MoFDM.

and non-government actors and in changes that have taken place even in the course of this review (i.e. since August 2011). Based on the review, It is considered that the following principles are central to strengthening efforts toward better humanitarian coordination and linkages to DRR:

- Set realistic and achievable goals for improved coordination
- Build on existing structures and minimize the creation of new or parallel structures
- Align with national systems
- Build trust

A model for locating preparedness for coordinated response and a humanitarian architecture for Bangladesh within the LCG-DER is suggested in this review. This model proposes the creation of a sub-group of the DER to focus on coordination linked to cluster/sector groups that could be sub-groups of other thematic LCGs (where appropriate) and suggests more use of sub-groups of the LCG-DER for specific purposes including better coordination within the international humanitarian community. Enhancing preparedness for coordinated response within the overall national disaster management framework needs to be seen as an ongoing and iterative process. This review should be seen as a working document to provide impetus to the efforts that have already begun with success dependant on broad buy-in and ownership from all stakeholders.

Introduction: The context of humanitarian coordination in Bangladesh

Bangladesh presents a context that is very different from many of the countries usually associated with “humanitarian coordination”. It is a country with a democratically elected government and institutional capacity in disaster risk reduction (DRR)², disaster preparedness and response. In recent years the Government of Bangladesh, with support of development partners, has placed a strong emphasis on disaster risk reduction. This has included protecting household and community assets against flooding, advances in early warning, community level preparedness and the construction of cyclone shelters. One of the contributions of these efforts has been the significant reduction in the numbers of lives lost as a result of cyclones. In spite of these achievements, Bangladesh remains a priority country for the OCHA Global Focus Model³; it is ranked fourth in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of risk factors indicating that international humanitarian response may be necessary in medium- or large-scale emergencies. Around a third of the population (57 million people) live in chronic poverty with limited resilience to disasters (including poor nutrition and insecure livelihoods). This presents serious challenges in regard to systems that need to adequately address both the short term relief needs and the longer term recovery needs of the affected populations.⁴

Bangladesh has been identified as one of the countries most at risk from the impacts of climate change.⁵ The disaster risks faced by the country include severe cyclones (of which category 4 cyclone Sidr which occurred in 2007 claiming around 4,000 lives is the most recent example) and earthquakes as well as a range of less sudden onset events such as flooding, tidal surges, sea level rise, water-logging and saline intrusion. Many of these disasters are slow or creeping in their onset thus garnering limited attention but still affecting significant numbers of people with cumulative long lasting impacts. Events such as cyclone Aila in 2009, flash flooding in the Haor areas in 2010 and water-logging in the south west in 2011 are examples of these kinds of disasters.

² The ISDR defines DRR: “The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.” See <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

³ OCHA Regional Office for Asia Pacific developed the OCHA Global Focus Model in 2007 to identify risk in the region. The model has expanded to other regions and is now updated annually as part of OCHA’s work planning cycle. ROAP currently focuses on 13 countries that combine high exposure to hazards, high vulnerability and low capacity where an international humanitarian response may be necessary in medium- or large-scale emergencies. Bangladesh ranks 22nd globally and 4th in the Asia-Pacific region. It is considered one of OCHA ROAP’s 13 ‘focus countries’ for the region, see <http://www.unocha.org/where-we-work/regional-office-asia-and-pacific-roap>

⁴ UNCT Bangladesh SOPs for natural Disasters, March 2010 Revision.

⁵ UNCT Bangladesh SOPs for natural Disasters, March 2010 Revision.

Globally, the humanitarian reform process began in 2005 with the aim of improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response through ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. The key elements of the reform are: (1) the Cluster Approach; (2) a strengthened Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) system; (3) more adequate, timely, flexible and effective humanitarian financing; and (4) the development of strong partnerships between UN and non-UN actors.⁶

The principles of the reform were initially designed to guide the response in emergencies however a growing numbers of countries are now utilizing them for mapping out and planning emergency preparedness.⁷ In contexts that are known to be disaster prone, there are clear benefits to mapping out the key humanitarian response structures and relationships as part of an emergency preparedness process. The structures outlined in the humanitarian reform guidance documents provide well thought out coordination guidance that has been tested and reviewed in many field contexts. *Using humanitarian reform guidance documents during preparedness provides country teams (including government, UN agencies and the broader international community) an opportunity to adapt these principles to the country context - taking advantage of both global learning and local systems.*

Examples of use of the humanitarian architecture for emergency preparedness

Nepal: Select clusters are in place for ongoing activities and contingency planning. Other clusters have been identified that would be established for new emergencies.⁸

Mongolia: HCT and sectoral leadership established in January 2011 in order to facilitate a harmonized and effective approach to disaster preparedness and response.⁹

Pacific Humanitarian Team: A regional coordination mechanism has been developed to facilitate wide collaboration in emergency preparedness and response. This includes an inter-cluster coordination group.¹⁰

Myanmar: Cluster/sector leadership is identified (each cluster having a non-government lead and a government co-lead) in a detailed contingency plan.¹¹

The aim of this review was:

- to identify the key structures that the international humanitarian community in Bangladesh viewed as key to coordinating response and recovery in support of the government,
- to present the views of stakeholders on the current state of preparedness for a coordinated response
- to establish the degree to which the existing coordination mechanisms in Bangladesh align with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the global humanitarian architecture,
- to identify issues that need to be addressed and the opportunities for enhancing the system of coordination within existing structures.

One of the challenges in understanding humanitarian coordination in Bangladesh is a lack of clarity about the humanitarian community itself. For the purpose of this review, the international humanitarian community in Bangladesh is considered to be the agencies which intend to play a role in responding to disasters; this includes the agencies of the United Nations, INGOs, the IFRC/ICRC and the donor community.

⁶ <http://ochaonline.un.org/roap/WhatWeDo/HumanitarianReform/tabid/4487/Default.aspx>

⁷ As stated in the Hyogo Framework for Action, Priority 5, "At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals and communities in hazard-prone areas are well prepared and ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management", see <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>

⁸ <http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/Pages/Nepal.aspx>

⁹ See Mongolia Humanitarian country Team and Cluster Arrangement.

¹⁰ Terms of Reference, Pacific Humanitarian Team, Inter Cluster Coordination Group.

¹¹ See Inter-agency Contingency Plan, Myanmar, Version 1.1, December 2009.

A review of the key guidance documents that relate to the global humanitarian architecture reveal limited direction on how to include government actors in the key aspects of the architecture (such as the clusters, inter-cluster coordination and humanitarian country teams). This implies that there is considerable flexibility within the guidance notes to adapt these defined structures to the country context. Adequately undertaking this process of adapting the global guidance to the country context should be part of a preparedness process with broad stakeholder ownership.

The Bangladesh context is complex because of the number of stakeholders, the prevalence of existing forums at different levels coordinating different aspects of development and a complex system of government committees that relate to disaster management.¹² *Wherever possible this review has attempted to look at the existing structures and mechanisms to see how the roles and responsibilities implied by the global humanitarian architecture are, or could be, covered without the need for creating new bodies and parallel structures.* Particular emphasis has been placed on the Disaster Emergency Response (DER) Working Group of the Local Consultative Group (LCG) Mechanism¹³, because this is the key body that brings the GoB and the international community together on disaster related issues. The overall purpose of the LCG Mechanism is to “...review progress on development issues, including national development strategies.” In order to achieve “... more in-depth dialogue and collaboration on specific sectors or thematic areas, 18 Government of Bangladesh –Development Partner LCG Working Groups are in operation, the DER is one of these groups.

Further discussion is required between the key international humanitarian stakeholders (UN, INGOs, IFRC and donors) and the government on improving humanitarian coordination. It is recommended that this discussion should consider limitations that may constrain the DER in an active coordination role because of its location within the LCG Mechanism and also if there is a need for a forum that resembles a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) that is separate from or as an adjunct to present structures from the present structures.¹⁴ This would be to foster a more coordinated, open and trust building approach within the international community in order to better support the government and is discussed later in the report.

A note on Methodology

This review was undertaken from August to November 2011. It presents the views of 27 stakeholders from the GoB, the UN, I/NGOs, the IFRC and donors in Bangladesh who participated in semi-structured interviews¹⁵. The review also used available documents including key government publications (The Standing Orders on Disasters and National Plan for Disaster Management), reviews of the responses to past disasters and documents on the global humanitarian architecture and the cluster approach.

¹² See the flow-chart on p 43 of the NPDM and also the committees as outlined in the SODs.

¹³ Referred to generally as the DER-LCG. <http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/default.php>. Some of the History of the DER group can be found on the LCG-DER website, <http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/derweb/about.php#history> however some of the developments from recent years (since WFP ceased chairing the DER) are not clearly documented on the webpage. These more recent developments are included in the DER ToRs (Draft 25.07.2011) available on the LCG-DER website.

¹⁴ Some stakeholders are not be convinced that the roles and responsibilities of a HCT can be met within the existing DER and LCG frame work or that the DER provides a forum for open discussion.

¹⁵ For a list of the stakeholders consulted see appendix ii.

Humanitarian Coordination in Bangladesh: addressing lessons learned, questions asked, key concerns

While coordination of the response to cyclone Sidr in 2007 was considered functional, in the subsequent years there is some concern that the preparedness for a coordinated response has not been maintained. It is also true that in spite of generally positive views on the coordination after cyclone Sidr, some reviews did highlight gaps in the coordination system. Some reviews of the response found that a “clearly identifiable, inclusive, interagency co-ordination forum” was absent and that this resulted in missed opportunities in terms of joint planning and policy discussions.¹⁶ It was also claimed that “neither the government nor the UN coordinated international support effectively” and that “[l]eading NGOs felt their voices were not being heard.”¹⁷ The UN’s workshop on Lessons Learned from the 2007 floods and cyclone Sidr response found that “a unified understanding of the cluster roll out process was absent among the UN agencies.”¹⁸ These lessons should inform the coordination structures for future responses.

Stakeholders have some confidence that, in a massive, sudden onset event the government coordination mechanisms would be activated (as would international coordination structures) resulting in efficient coordination of the response. Concern does exist in relation to the government’s reluctance to declare an emergency and the implications this has on coordination and resources¹⁹. *Although greater clarity and predictability for large scale events is seen as necessary there is even greater concern for medium scale, “creeping” disasters.* Such disasters affect significant numbers of people at more frequent intervals, having a lasting impact and are being addressed within what several stakeholders describe as a “coordination vacuum”. Although both state and non-state actors do respond to these events, in the absence of a clear coordination framework the responses are seen as *ad hoc* and challenged in terms of the overall effectiveness. Stakeholders clearly expressed a need for greater clarity on how coordination will take place in “undeclared disasters” and agreement on the potential triggers for coordination within the international community. The response to Aila in 2009 is cited as an example of this.

Cyclone Aila was a less dramatic event than 2007’s cyclone Sidr, however the water from Aila did not recede quickly and the government was cautious in their approach for international assistance, preferring to ask for assistance in the longer term project of rebuilding damaged embankments than for the immediate relief. The nature of the disaster presented by Aila combined with the limited pool of resources for response resulted in a much longer recovery for the affected communities. More than 12 months after the cyclone 150,000 people remained marooned on embankments.²⁰ There is concern by some stakeholders that the frequent nature of disaster events effecting hundreds of thousands of people in Bangladesh has created a context where these events are seen as “normal” and not attracting the attention they warrant.

The DER is seen as the coordination body for the Government and Development Partners on disaster management and disaster risk reduction as well as for response and recovery. Although beyond the scope of this study, it is important to establish how DRR and long-term development coordination can be linked to the coordination of humanitarian response.

¹⁶ Oxfam Briefing Note, After the cyclone: lessons from a disaster, 15 February 2008, p3-4. The same absence was noted in the June 2011 Inter-Agency Simulation Exercise.

¹⁷ Steve Jones, Disaster Response Mechanism Scoping Mission Report, 8th December 2008, DFID Bangladesh.

¹⁸ UN Flood and Cyclone Lesson Learned Workshop Report and Working group Output, 10th March 2008, p21.

¹⁹ This position of the government was reinforced during the DER meeting on 1st November, 2011.

²⁰ UNICEF and the IFRC estimated that 4 million people were affected by cyclone Aila as compared to 9 million by cyclone Sidr. See, http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/4926_6202.htm, <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=85396> and also, Report on Joint Advocacy Campaign on Cyclone Aila: Ensuring Entitlement for the Disaster Affected People For Emergency Capacity Building Project, Bangladesh Consortium MAY, 2010 Prepared by NIRAPAD.

The ultimate goal of improved coordination in humanitarian response is to direct limited available resources to meet needs in the most effective way. In practice, coordination requirements

In *preparing for a response* should include:

- Policy dialogue on best approaches to DRR, response and recovery; culminating in agreed best practices.
- Joint contingency planning.

During a response should include:

- Identification and prioritization of needs within specific sectors and across sectors (through a coordinated approach to assessment).
- Information sharing and data management on who's doing what where during a response (which should also identify gaps and prevent overlaps).
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- A balance between having a range of groups for different needs (at national, district and local levels), but not too many (i.e. as streamlined as possible).

What is the goal of coordination in humanitarian response?

To direct available resources to meet needs effectively

Coordination requirements include:

DRR

- Policy dialogue on best approaches to DRR, response and recovery; agreed best practice

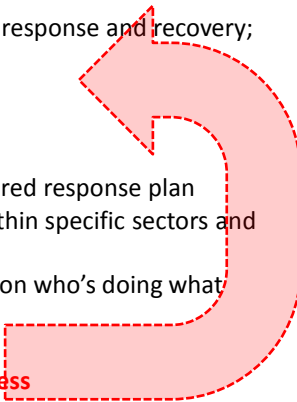
Preparedness

- Joint contingency planning

Response and Recovery

- Shared understanding of the situation = shared response plan
- Identification and prioritization of needs within specific sectors and across sectors
- Information sharing and data management on who's doing what where during a response
- Monitoring and evaluation

Feedback loop to improved DRR and preparedness



Stakeholders views on coordination in Bangladesh

Coordination should:

- work irrespective of scale of an event
 - small emergencies are an ideal testing ground for large emergencies
- be effective at all levels
 - Local self recovery
 - Union Parashad
 - Upazila
 - District
 - National/international response
- ensure that the government response is complimented by the non-government response

The lack of clarity on how coordination is intended to function in Bangladesh is manifest in:

- Lack of clarity on the DER role
- Lack of clarity on the linkages between key stakeholders including departments, directorates and bureaus of the government, the UN, the NGOs and others
- An absence of clear, simple guidelines that map out the key structures, roles and linkages between key stakeholders

This lack of clarity considered by stakeholders to impede:

- Information sharing
- Coordination of assessments
- Coordination of coherent and consistent response/s (including the use of standards and standardized approaches in relief items as well as efforts to avoid duplication and reduce gaps)
- Policy coherence and common approaches
- Effective preparedness planning between stakeholder groups.

Where coordination does take place efforts are generally limited to the sharing of information on who is doing what and where. While this can be employed to reduce overlaps and gaps in response, it does not promote a shared understanding of the situation or promote the development of a joint response strategy.

Coordination is a concern at national as well as sub-national levels.

- At the **national level**, concern is centered on the perception that mechanisms involving the government (including the DER) do not become fully active except in the case of large scale disasters (thus resulting in a “coordination vacuum”).
- At the **sub national levels**, concern is centered on the capacity, rather than the will, of government officials to coordinate and the willingness and practical implications of NGOs to be coordinated by the government.²¹

Resourcing is a serious concern of stakeholders because they are not able to mobilize adequate funds quickly enough to address the magnitude of the needs if a formal, consolidated appeal is not launched.²² With limited resources there is arguably an even greater need for coordination to identify priorities in terms of the nature and location of greatest need. Stakeholders suggest that the efforts to address needs created by small to medium scale disasters draw-down their existing resources to such an extent that they are not able to meet the case-load of people in actual need of assistance.

For I/NGOs an FD-6 project approval processes through the INGO bureau is required before funding can be released. In the case of a non-emergency application approval takes place within 45 days; for a declared emergency, the commitment from the GoB is to turn it around within 48 hours. This implies that if a disaster is not declared, INGOs response is based on their ability to use existing resources in the period until funding can be approved, taking up to 45 days.²³

The particular context of Bangladesh requires the close alignment of ongoing development with emergency response. Programmes need to be able to change rapidly from development to relief and then to recovery. There is concern

²¹ This is complicated by the existing relationships that NGOs have with their beneficiaries and their micro-finance clients which can obscure the humanitarian imperative of prioritizing those in the greatest need.

²² This concern is not limited to Bangladesh. Particularly in the Asia Pacific region there is a growing reluctance on the part of governments for formal appeals. This challenges donors' traditional modes of addressing funding requirements.

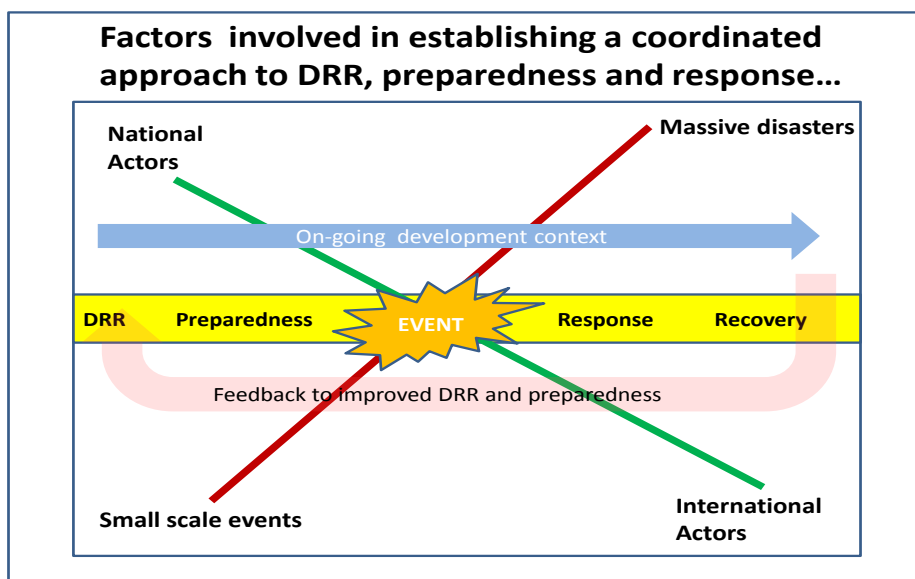
²³ The FD-6/7 process is not elaborated in the SODs section on the NGO Affairs Bureau on p 53. According to INGOs because there has not been a large scale disaster since 2007 there is a lack of clarity on how the emergency funding channel would function. For responses since 2007 INGOs rely on being able to divert existing resources to their response activities until the regular FD-6 approval is made.

however that the strong development focus can dilute the humanitarian imperative under which an emergency response should operate. Stakeholders noted that the international system in Bangladesh needs to provide independent and impartial humanitarian leadership and be in a position to advocate on the basis of humanitarian principles when required.²⁴ Moreover, while the primary role of the international community is to support the government both in terms of preparedness and response, there is a perception among some stakeholders that this support will not be optimal unless the international community better coordinates itself and is prepared to question the government on areas of particular need within Bangladesh.²⁵

The strong and highly appropriate focus in Bangladesh on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has seen many concrete achievements in terms of early warning, cyclone preparedness and the reduction in loss of life as a result of disasters. However, the interpretation of DRR that has been the focus has left out the critical element of response preparedness. One of the elements of the ongoing work of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP) is to ensure that the broader meaning of DRR is applied to the Bangladesh context and ensure that preparedness is embedded within the disaster management cycle. Achieving the most appropriate response in a timely way involves balancing a number of complex factors and relationships that concern:

- The nature of the disaster itself (size, scale as well as onset which could be rapid, slow or somewhere in between.)
- The actors or stakeholders involved; national and international, government and non-government, central level, district and sub-district.
- Linking response to the DRR activities and the specific preparedness activities that are in place and the need to move from response to a recovery mode of operations as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that lessons are learned about the impact of the disaster, the scenarios that unfold from it and the appropriateness of the response so that these contribute to improved DRR and preparedness.

The complexity of these relationships is shown in the following diagram.



²⁴ Criticism was leveled in this regard to the response to cyclone Sidr. See Oxfam Briefing Note; After the cyclone: lessons from a disaster, 15 February 2008, p4.

²⁵ A recent letter from the RC to the humanitarian community and the government that acknowledged pockets of humanitarian needs within Bangladesh was welcomed by INGOs and donors.

Existing Structures for Humanitarian Coordination in Bangladesh

There are a number of structures that play a key role in humanitarian coordination in Bangladesh, but there is currently no clearly articulated or comprehensive vision for how these fit together. There are many parts of the system, this implies that each part, each set of actors (Government, UN, donors, local NGOs, international NGOs, sector groups/clusters) need to be internally well coordinated, and also that strong mechanisms that bring those parts of the system together for policy dialogue, information sharing and to coordinate plans and responses to disasters are needed. The mechanisms to achieve each of these purposes need to be strengthened as do the linkages that bring them together. There is currently confusion about the key structures that would be active in relation to the coordination of the international response to disasters and where actors should be investing their time in regard to coordination.

The **Disaster Emergency Response (LCG-DER) Group** has played a central coordinating role for disaster response in the past and was the group most often cited as the key mechanism stakeholders would look to in terms of coordination. Even though it was clearly considered as the key mechanism by stakeholders, there was not a consistent understanding of precisely the role it would have or should have in terms of the coordination of response. This stems in part from the recent changes to the DER bringing it more in line with the LCG-Mechanism. . Latest versions of the Terms of Reference for the group (still in draft form), for example, have been discussed in DER meetings but not more widely circulated and only recently made available on the DER website. There is a perception from some stakeholders that the DER is not a forum designed for humanitarian response coordination, rather it is for policy dialogue related to DRR and that as such it would be challenged to encompass both policy and active coordination. At the same time, there is a strong imperative to keep the numbers of groups and forums concerned with the “disaster sector”²⁶ to a minimum and, wherever possible, utilize existing structures. While there is concern from some stakeholders that the LCG mechanism may not afford the flexibility required for the DER to be the active coordination forum it is desired to be it is recommended that strengthening the DER to take on this role in consultation with the government should be attempted and that the creation of any new forum for coordination should only be suggested if it becomes clear that the DER cannot fulfill this role. These recent changes to the DER provide an opportunity to clarify the role the group would play.

The recently revised ToRs for the LCG-DER (July 2011) are available on the DER website. Although these have been only recently approved it is recommended that the DER Group again examine the section of the ToRs related to response (excerpt below) to ensure clarity among members. Some of the language in the ToRs implies that the DER has a role in **ensuring** that coordination takes place but would not necessarily be the body to coordinate.

Except from the LCG-DER Terms of Reference, 25 July, 2011, p 2

Scope of Work

- a) Conduct a periodical collective dialogue on disaster management policy and programme in the context of the country's overall sustainable development strategy and programmes
- b) Develop Joint Cooperation Strategy Action Plan on Disaster Management emphasizing risk reduction, preparedness, recovery and response needs of those vulnerable to or those living with disaster risks
- c) **Put in place operational arrangements** for mutual accountability in risk reduction, preparedness, emergency **response**, and recovery activities with GoB, Development Partners (DPs) and civil society organizations
- d) **Establish coordination joint mechanisms** to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate disaster management including but not limited to
 - i. sustained engagement in disaster risk reduction and preparedness
 - ii. **coordinated preparedness and rapid response**
 - iii. sustained recovery²⁷

²⁶“Disaster sector” is used loosely here to mean all of the groups, structures, and forums that are concerned with DRR, preparedness and response.

²⁷ DER draft ToRs Draft Terms of Reference, Ver. Rev. 6 March 2011

Although seen as generally appropriate in terms of the agencies represented at the DER²⁸ with only a few minor changes suggested, membership was a key consideration for many stakeholders in terms of its overall utility as a coordination mechanism. Clarifying the expected role and objectives of the DER and how it links to other mechanisms will provide clarity over the most appropriate attendees at the meeting. Some practical clarification could be achieved if the DER remained a high level policy forum (inclusive of senior decision makers) but where there was also an operational level sub-group clearly defined for specific preparedness activities and to be activated for actual response coordination (this option is presented later in the document).

While generally it was agreed that the LCG- DER should be a small, manageable group with clear constituencies, some stakeholders pointed to the importance for the opportunity to be able to bring all agencies represented by these constituencies around the table when required such as in the case of a large disaster. This kind of a meeting would differentiate from the usual DER format but could be appropriate at the early stages of a disaster where the government and the Resident Coordinator may want to share an overview of an event with the broad humanitarian community to galvanize support for a coordinated response.

DER Membership Key Points

- DER membership should be clearly documented
- Generally the right development partners; consider broadening donor membership²⁹ Consider which UN agencies are/should be included
- Important to encourage participation of all agencies present in Bangladesh with a global cluster role
- Inclusion of a representative from the IFIs (WB, ADB)³⁰
- Clarify, share and strengthen how NGO/INGO representation functions
- Consider level of representation (HoA or designate with decision making power for the strategic level DER group, operational level sub-group)
- Consistent participation (focal person) is strongly desirable
(This might depend on what's being discussed – DER has a broad mandate covering all aspects of disaster management).
- It should be a small, manageable group with clear constituencies however at some key times it may be important to bring everyone around the table in a very large forum

Many stakeholders are keen to ensure that I/NGOs have a voice on the DER. Presently the INGO and the NGO communities are represented by one member each.³¹ This is a relatively recent development and how this representation works is not clear to all stakeholders. It is generally accepted that in order for the DER to be a manageable forum there should be a system by which the group of INGOs and the group of NGOs are represented (it would be impractical to have all of the members around the table at once) however this representation should entail a way of conveying the messages between the DER and the constituents. It is up to the NGOs and the INGOs to ensure their own systems for this to take place. Advocacy for this from the LCG-DER is seen as a positive contribution in establishing mechanisms to enable effective input, transparent representation and accountability. I/NGO mechanisms

²⁸ Changes suggested were to include the IFRC/ICRC, bi-lateral donors, broaden the donor membership (to include less traditional donor nations such as Saudi Arabia and also smaller donors), and review UN agency membership to ensure agencies with a cluster lead role were included.

²⁹ See note above.

³⁰ ADB and WB are official members of the DER. They should be informed of the changes in the group and their active participation sought.

³¹ Oxfam represents the International NGOs and BDPC represented the National NGOs.

for representing their constituencies should be made available to the DER group.³² The coordination involving I/NGOs is discussed in more detail below.

While the DER group was clearly the primary place where stakeholders looked for coordination between the government and international community, other groups mentioned related to coordination were:

- **Disaster management Bureau (DMB)**
- **Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DoRR)**
- **United National Disaster Management Team (UNDMT)**
- **Sector coordination/ “clusters”**
- **GoB NGO coordination meeting (NGOCC)**
- **2 NGO forums (politically aligned with the 2 major political parties)³³**
- **INGO forum**
- **INGO consortia**

There is a significant lack of clarity among the international community about the roles and responsibilities of the DMB and the DoRR in terms of the role they would take in coordinating response and also early recovery and in the linkages these government bodies would have with the international community. The National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) in Bangladesh represents the link between the NGOCC to the DMB however there is no explanation on what this level of coordination entails and it appears to exist only at the national level.³⁴

NGOs and INGOs in Bangladesh³⁵

International and national non-government organizations play a significant role in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh. A financial analysis of the contribution made by I/NGOs estimated that 20% of the overall response to cyclone Sidr delivered in 2008 was through I/NGOs and for the less high profile cyclone Aila in 2009 37% of the response can be attributed to INGOs. The size of this contribution highlights the need for a coordination framework that includes I/NGOs along with other international stakeholders (such as the UN, IF/ICRC and donors) within government structures. In Bangladesh the number of actors that this should include makes the exercise of coordination extremely challenging. Present membership of the INGO forum (discussed below) is 72 agencies operating through over 500 local NGO partners. National NGOs are coordinated through two separate coordination groups but represented by one agency in the DER.

In contrast to the equal partnership role I/NGOs are viewed with in the cluster approach and humanitarian reform, in Bangladesh some stakeholders continue to see I/NGOs in a role as more as delivery agents and implementing partners, albeit with some important knowledge about humanitarian delivery to bring to the table. This is a reality not unique to Bangladesh however a realignment of the way I/NGO membership is viewed on forums such as the DER and more active coordination among INGOs can contribute to changing this perception. The section that follows summarizes some of the key existing activities around coordination of INGOs and NGOs.

The **GoB NGO Coordination Committee on Disaster Management (NGOCC)³⁶** is coordinated by the DMB. Although stakeholders expect these meetings would be called in the case of a disaster, as well as at other times, meetings of this group have only recently been re-instated and what I/NGOs can expect to get out of these meetings is unclear.

³² This discussion has already taken place in the DER group meeting on 1st November with the INGO rep (Oxfam) sharing information about the representation through and to the INGO forum. The NGO rep (BDPC) will share how NGOs are represented during the next DER meeting.

³³ The scope of this review did not explore the relationship with national non-government actors to humanitarian coordination in detail. A presentation on the way NGOs are represented in the DER has been requested.

³⁴ See NPDM, page 43. While recently the NGOCC has been meeting more frequently than in the past, at the time of stakeholder interviews neither the government (DMB or DoRR) or the I/NGOs were clear on the modalities of expectations of this forum in regard to coordination. The SODs provides very limited instruction or guidance.

³⁵ For a note explaining the contribution that INGOs make to humanitarian response in Bangladesh including more detail on the coordination forums see appendix XXX provided by Gareth Price-Jones, Oxfam.

Some of the lack of clarity relates to the fact that the expectation is that, in terms of actual response coordination, these meetings will only be called for disasters of significant magnitude. In addition these meetings focus only on coordination between the GoB and the I/NGOs; other international actors such as the UN or donors are not included so broader, inclusive coordination is not fostered. There is also concern over the nature of coordination that these meetings focus on; largely a sharing of information about who is doing what where, but with limited actions based on this information sharing and without a focus on the bigger picture in terms of the nature of the problem (a shared understanding of the situation) and the development of a shared response strategy/plan.

I/NGOs and the DER

Seeing the LCG-DER as the central hub for coordination between the GoB and international actors, and understanding that the DER, in order to be effective and to fit within the LCG structure, needs to be a forum of a manageable size with clear membership; there are two main ways that I/NGOs can be represented.

- Participation in sectoral coordination (where sector groups or clusters are represented in the DER through lead agencies e.g. UNICEF representing WASH cluster as well as representing UNICEF the agency)
- As constituents of a representative forum

There are opportunities to ensure that I/NGOs are included in coordination structures through their involvement in **sectoral coordination**, or in the language of the Humanitarian Reform, through clusters. The principle of partnership; partnership between governments and the humanitarian community was one of the key elements humanitarian reform sought to address. Clusters were utilized in Bangladesh during the response to cyclone Sidr in 2007 and some clusters formed for this response have persisted and been utilized for ongoing preparedness as well as responses of different sizes. The clusters that have been established have linkages to government counterparts and include membership of non-government sector actors. The UNICEF led WASH cluster is the most firmly established with a membership of approximately 50 agencies, meeting regularly on a quarterly basis to ensure preparedness and meeting more regularly as required for coordinated response. Other groups meeting regularly are the Education Cluster, the Child Protection sub-cluster. A Shelter Working group under the leadership of UNDP has met in the past on issues of preparedness. These groups are of varying “strength”, including their relationships to the government counterparts and the breadth of their membership. There is no mechanism for coordination between them (the DER is not currently set up to capture this function). With an absence of a clear link to the DER, many stakeholders are not clear which clusters are active.

An **INGO forum** exists in Bangladesh; with 72 agencies presently as members. Presently the INGO forum does not have a specific humanitarian function but rather encompasses all INGOs operating in Bangladesh. It is a platform where information can and currently is shared (e.g., from the DER to the wider INGO community) but in its current form it doesn’t appear to be an optimum coordination mechanism. For a summary of the contribution INGOs have made to recent disaster responses in Bangladesh and on the various coordination arrangements between them see appendix IV.

In addition to the INGO forum, a number of INGO consortia operate in Bangladesh. Although in most cases formed because of a desire for better coordination in response between partners³⁷, some stakeholders consider that these potentially confuse the picture in regard to overarching coordination because of their limited membership. These include the ECHO partners group, the ECB³⁸ consortium and the NARRI³⁹ consortium. One of the issues with these limited membership groups is that agencies who are in them potentially invest their coordination energies there rather than in broader coordination mechanisms.

³⁶ It is unclear if this is a “committee” meaning a small group or a wider meeting. See also previous note 33.

³⁷ This is not true for the ECB consortium which is a globally lead initiative.

³⁸ Emergency capacity Building Project, see www.ecbproject.org ECB is a global initiative funded by ECHO and Gates foundation that bring INGOs together around issues that enhance emergency capacity in 5 focus countries of which Bangladesh is one.

³⁹ NARRI is an operational consortium of 8 INGOs presently delivering a joint program to those affected by Aila and the Shatkira water-logging.

International Humanitarian Community Linkages to Government

There was a strong consensus among stakeholders that the linkages between the international community and the government structures are not clear or well defined. This is in part due to the fact that the system is genuinely complicated in terms of interface. While roles and responsibilities are identified in the SODs, the relationships between various entities are not. This is also true in terms of the activities of the INGOs which relate in different ways to the a range of government entities including Department of Social Affairs, the NGO Coordination Bureau, the Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation (DoRR) as well as the NGOCC with the DMB.

There was a particular confusion among stakeholders about the roles they should expect from the DoRR, DMB and CDMP. Generally there is an expectation that these entities exist and they should be engaged in coordination, but a lack of understanding of exactly what this implied.

The DMB was formed to undertake the paradigm shift from response/relief oriented to risk reduction. Most of the coordination and technical tasks listed in the SOD and National Plan on Disaster Management are entrusted to the DMB. But, this entity has only the status of a "Bureau" with no staff beyond the central level and limited access to resources and authority. CDMP supports the DMB but the nature of the relationship implies the need for DMB endorsement or triggers for initiatives. CDMP is also supporting other aspects of the DMRD. The DoRR does have staff in district and upazila level and opportunity exists to strengthen the link between the international community and the DoRR in terms of response coordination.⁴⁰

Relations management is seen as one of the big challenges in Bangladesh; while stakeholders relate well within their area of operations, overarching coordination remains a challenge. Relations within sectors (and clusters where they exist) are sometimes good but how this fits in to a coherent system more generally is less clear.

How the international community links to the government: Key Points

- General consensus that the linkages are not clear
- In terms of defined linkages between the international community and the government on emergency response (as well as DRR and generally disaster management) the LCG-DER is the key forum. Apart from the DER there is no other forum that brings together the government, the UN and the INGO community.
- A light document that maps out most important groups and linkages would be beneficial
- The system is genuinely complicated in terms of the interface between international actors and the government. SODs define roles and responsibilities but not linkages and relationships
- The activities of the INGOs relate in different ways to different government entities.
- The DMB is tasked with most of the coordination and technical tasks listed in the SOD and National Plan on Disaster Management but with no staff beyond the central level. CDMP **supports** the DMB.
- Opportunity exists to strengthen the links to the DoRR.

⁴⁰ This could be via the Early Recovery Facility (ERF)

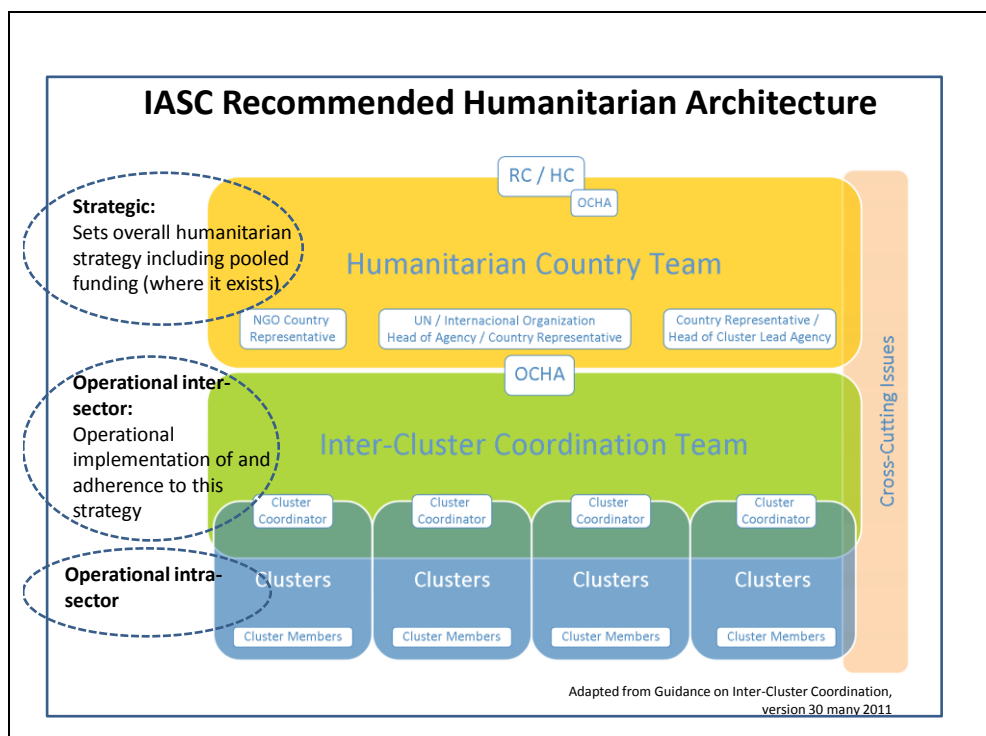
Global Humanitarian Architecture and the Cluster Approach

Effective humanitarian coordination seeks to identify needs, meet gaps and reduce duplication. With the endorsement of the Cluster Approach in 2005, the IASC introduced a framework for strengthening coordination and enhancing the delivery of humanitarian assistance through improved leadership, predictability, accountability and partnership.⁴¹

The global guidance documents emphasize stakeholders agreeing on country specific Terms of Reference and membership of key groups (including clusters). Dialogue about this is intended to be had among partners and the authorities at the country, operational level, rather than prescribed at the headquarters level. The guidance pays limited attention to the role of national government authorities and provides only limited direction for *how* the structures can be adapted at the country level and utilized during preparedness. Communication with OCHA over this confirms that this is the case and that the system provides the flexibility to adapt the guidance to the country context to ensure the appropriate involvement of the national government. Globally, one of the ongoing challenges with the cluster approach has been how it relates to national government authorities; the *need to engage* with government is both implicit and explicit in the approach, the absence of specific direction on *how to engage* is because a different approach will be required in each country context. Overall the cluster approach supports collaboration between national and international actors to better align strategies for improved humanitarian response.⁴²

Key features of the Global Humanitarian Architecture:

- Humanitarian Country Team
- Inter-cluster Coordination
- The Cluster Approach



⁴¹ Guidance on Inter-cluster Coordination, Draft 30 May 2011

⁴² Guidance on Inter-Cluster Coordination, Draft 30 May 2011

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), is one of the key features of the global humanitarian architecture.

The key features of the HCT in terms of the objectives it sets out to meet, its responsibilities and composition provide a guide for important roles and responsibilities that should be able to be addressed at the country level (irrespective of if a body is called a HCT).

HCT: key Points⁴³

- Can be established to steer preparedness activities, *if no other adequate coordination mechanism exists*
- Mechanisms should be designed and implemented at the local level to achieve adequate coordination, *wherever possible in support of government*
- In absence of a HC the decision to establish an HCT is taken by the RC in consultation and with government, UN agencies, I/ NGOs and the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement.
- The HCT (together with the RC/HC), is responsible for *adapting coordination structures to reflect the capacities of government structures and the engagement of development partners*

Objectives:

- Agree on a strategic plan for meeting humanitarian needs
- To ensure that activities are coordinated
- To ensure that humanitarian action in-country is principled, timely, effective and efficient,
- To ensure that it contributes to longer-term recovery

Responsibilities:

- Agreeing on common strategic issues related to humanitarian action in-country, including:
 - Setting common objectives and priorities,
 - Developing strategic plans,
 - Agreeing on the establishment of clusters, designation of cluster leads

Composition:

- Organizations that undertake humanitarian action in-country and that commit to participate in coordination arrangements. These may include UN agencies, the IOM, NGOs, ICRC/IFRC.
- Heads of Cluster Lead Agencies (representing both the Cluster and the agency)
- The size of the HCT is limited, to allow for effective decision-making.
- Membership criteria need to be clear, generally accepted and well-known.
- The main criterion is operational relevance.
- Members are represented at the highest level (Country Representative or equivalent), i.e. this is a policy level and decision making body rather than an operational one implying the need for the ICCM in addition to the HCT at the working cluster/sector level.
- The HCT and the UN Country Team coexist and do not replace each-other.
- The HC or RC is responsible for ensuring complementarity between them.
- Where a UN Disaster Management Team (DMT) exists at Country Representative level, the HC or, in the absence of an HC position, the RC is responsible for avoiding duplication with the HCT.
- The HCT complements government-led coordination structures.
- The IASC Principles of Partnership apply

In the light of these functional roles and responsibilities, in Bangladesh the DER meets, or could meet with minor changes, almost all of them. The key difference between the DER and a HCT, as outlined in the global guidance, is the role of the government and the relationship of the government to the international humanitarian community. As outlined in the guidance, whenever possible the HCT complements government-led coordination structures however the guidance is clear that the leadership and indeed the responsibility for instigating a HCT lies with the HC/RC. This contrasts with the DER group in the sense that, as part of the LCG structure, the DER is firmly a body owned by the GoB. The DER is co-chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management and the UN Resident Coordinator, giving equal leadership responsibilities. In terms of humanitarian coordination this relationship has the potential to bring value because it very firmly engages the international community with the government; thus addressing one of the

⁴³ [IASC Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator, endorsed May 2009, IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams, 2009.](#)

ongoing challenges of implanting the humanitarian architecture at the country level where often engagement with host government has been weak. The relationship however also has the potential to be problematic if the only opportunity for the international humanitarian community to come together is through the DER and if the DER does not provide a forum where all stakeholders can communicate freely and openly including, where appropriate, to question the government in regard to its humanitarian approach. This currently appears to be a weakness of the DER and of coordination within the international community.

Some stakeholders have suggested the need for a forum where the international humanitarian community could meet to discuss issues of preparedness for coordinated response. This would provide an opportunity for better coordination within the international community that would better support government efforts, and could also provide an opportunity for the international community to identify key issues that did need to be raised with the government. Such a forum should not exclude the government however, while government presence should be welcomed, government leadership would be counter-productive because the specific role of the group would be to ensure better coordination between the international actors.

The present ToRs for the DER group give either co-chair the opportunity to call “ad-hoc stakeholder or thematic meetings as required and meetings can be held separately”. This could be seen to imply that the RC already has the scope to call meetings of the international community under present DER arrangements. Through this option, if possible, it is recommended that an international forum with a composition equivalent to a HCT is be established (possibly for a limited time frame)⁴⁴ in order to clarify coordination between international stakeholders, build trust and establish key priorities.

Inter Cluster Coordination (ICC)

Another key feature of the global humanitarian architecture is having a forum for coordination across sectors/clusters. Effective inter-cluster coordination brings together analyses, assessments, plans, and programmes to foster linkages between clusters. This should contribute to better collective results, minimizing duplication and enhancing complementarities. Ensuring the systematic mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (including gender, age, environment and HIV-AIDS) is a crucial function of an inter-cluster coordination mechanism.

ICC requires the collaboration of operational cluster representatives (normally cluster coordinators) to work together to achieve the collective goal of response as defined by the strategic level decision makers (determining the strategic direction of response would happen through a forum that resembles the HCT discussed above). Inter-cluster coordination should be able to incorporate an over-arching strategic vision for response together with s field level information for how a response is progressing.⁴⁵ An ICCM is like a “college” of Cluster Leads or Cluster coordinators. As a senior, working body that discusses technical issues under the (co)-chairmanship of the RC/HC or Inter-Cluster Coordinator an ICCM is a working forum which also informs strategic (higher level) discussions and makes recommendations to the strategic body (usually called the HCT) for endorsement and approval.

In Bangladesh there is currently no forum designed for humanitarian inter-cluster/sector coordination that involves the international community. A sub-group of the DER dedicated to preparedness for coordinated response is an option for addressing the “coordination gap” within the existing structure. Further discussion is needed to establish the practicality of this and if this will provide a sufficient forum to meet the needs of the international humanitarian community. The government bodies with roles related to cross-sector coordination are the Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management

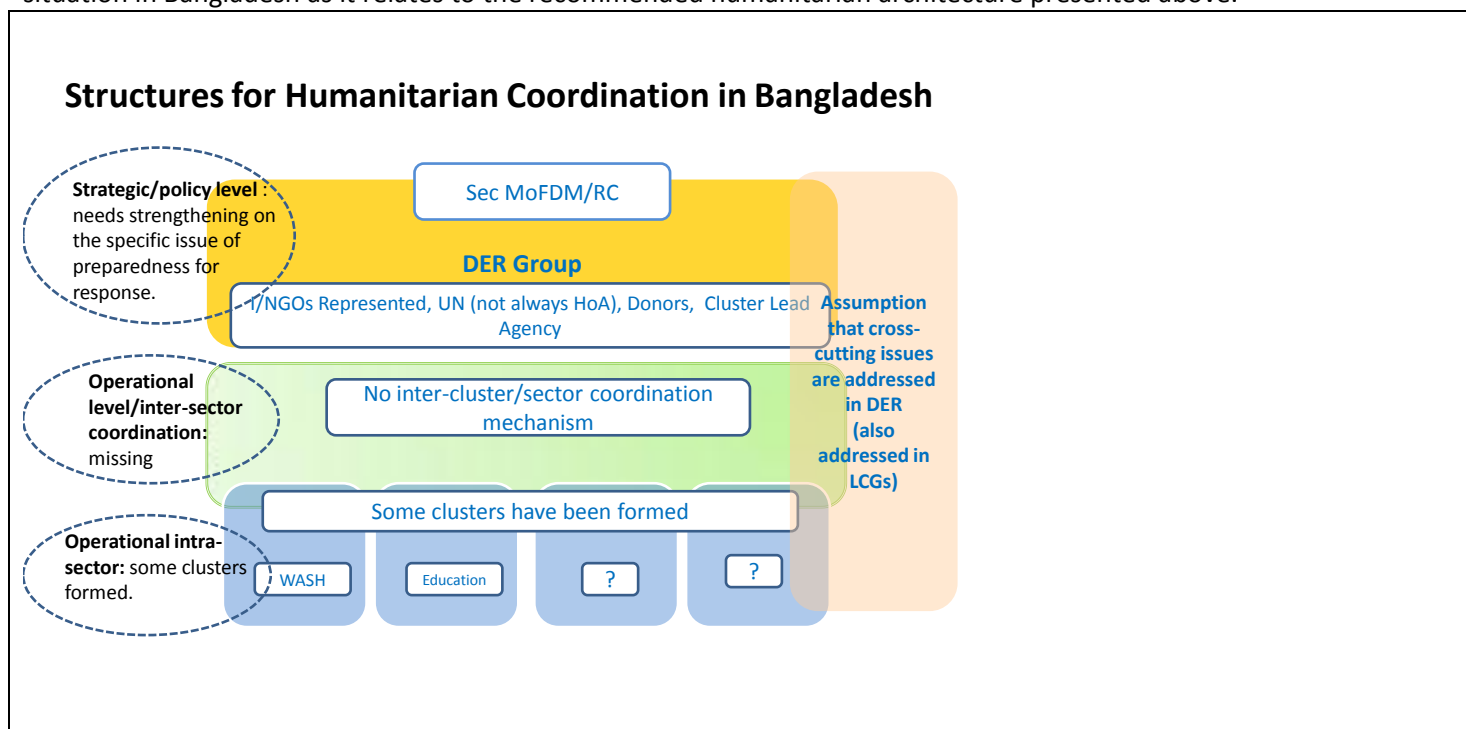
⁴⁴ Some stakeholders see this as a “temporary” measure that would aim to phase out and merge into the DER over time highlighting the international community’s role in supporting the government. Other stakeholders are less confident about this and see the need for an ongoing HCT-like forum.

⁴⁵ Guidance on Inter-Cluster Coordination, Draft 30 May 2011.

Coordination Committee (IMDCC), and the National Disaster Response Coordination Group (NDRCG) both chaired by the Minister, MoFDM.⁴⁶

Bangladesh and Alignment to the Global Humanitarian Architecture

The existing system in Bangladesh presents very limited alignment with the global humanitarian architecture. This is not surprising because, apart from use of the cluster approaching response to cyclone Sidr, which was only partially successful, there have not been systematic efforts to align.⁴⁷ As discussed in the introductory sections, there could be considerable benefits from engaging in a preparedness process that ensures the roles and responsibilities outlined in the global architecture are addressed by utilizing existing country level structures. This was also recommended in the report on the Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation carried out in June 2011.⁴⁸ The following diagram indicates the current situation in Bangladesh as it relates to the recommended humanitarian architecture presented above.⁴⁹



Preparedness of this nature may not involve adopting the standard nomenclature (or even the same clusters that are defined globally) of key mechanisms but should involve a clearly articulated short documentation of how the country level structures relate functionally to those prescribed globally and which clusters are considered key for response in the Bangladesh context.⁵⁰ Benefits in facilitating response preparedness would include;

For large scale disasters: that a well defined country contextualized system would already be in place from the earliest in the case of a large scale disaster. This would mean that, while the cluster approach would be formally “activated” in

⁴⁶ See SODs p9-16.

⁴⁷ The UN Flood and Cyclone Lessons Learned Report p11 says, “non-formal activation [of the clusters] not well understood, information did not reach all relevant partners, GoB not well aware of cluster system.”

⁴⁸ Report on the Bangladesh Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Exercise, 21-22 June, 2011. Report prepared by OCHA, UNICEF, WFP Regional Office Team.

⁴⁹ The specific clusters mentioned here are examples only. There are and have been other clusters besides WASH and Education.

⁵⁰ See for example the clusters identified by the GoB for the National Earthquake Contingency Plan, NPDM, p54.

the case of a large scale disaster, also initiating the HCT and the designation of the RC as a HC⁵¹, the actual structural representation of these key structures would be unchanged. Even if the scope of the disaster resulted in an influx of international support, there would be a robust system in place that would relate to the government structures and incorporate the assistance within a framework that was designed with and to complement government.

For smaller scale or “undeclared” disasters: the system at the country level would take advantage of the globally articulated roles and responsibilities that are recommended to ensure a well coordinated response including lessons learned from other contexts, and the thorough adaption of these to Bangladesh. Irrespective of a formal appeal process, a declaration of a national disaster or assistance from outside the country, responses of difference scales would benefit from a more coordinated approach.

Stakeholder discussions revealed an appetite for greater understanding on multiple levels (decision making and operational) and for both GoB and non-government actors, of the global humanitarian architecture. This would help ensure that discussions about the utility of this for the Bangladesh context would take place in an environment where “everyone is on the same page”. This would also ensure that agencies with responsibilities outlined at the global level are clear about the implications at the country level of adapting to the global architecture and how they would step up to these responsibilities in Bangladesh should the need arise. Basically the overarching objective of a dialogue between key stakeholders would be to identify, agree and commit organizations to key roles and responsibilities in a voluntary and conscious manner – hence building trust and ownership of the architecture in a deeper and more sustainable way.

Preparedness provides the opportunity to adapt and contextualize this (the ideas that have come out of humanitarian reform) to the specific Bangladesh context. This would include looking at the global mandates for cluster leadership and analyzing stakeholders present in the country in terms of capacity, past experience and commitment to fulfill roles. It should also involve looking at relevant lessons learned from cluster implementation after Sidr and in other contexts.⁵² This should be an activity carried out collectively, potentially through the LCG-DER or a specifically tasked sup-group of the DER such as the group dedicated to preparedness for coordinated response mentioned above.

A standing cluster mechanism has been agreed upon in the DER⁵³ but as yet only a few clusters are in place and this decision is not well known among membership.⁵⁴ This points to the need for more active and consistent participation in the DER and familiarization with key decisions, and especially more discussion on the roles clusters will play in both response preparedness and response. This would include decisions on the key “clusters” that are required for Bangladesh, defining cluster leads (government and development partner leadership) for the Bangladesh context, cluster membership, instigating an inter-cluster coordination mechanism and clarifying linkages within the system including to the regional and sub regional level.⁵⁵

⁵¹ In the Bangladesh context it was the view of many stakeholders unlikely that a separate HC would be installed because of the reluctance of a declared emergency.

⁵² For example, one valid lesson learned from clusters in Myanmar cyclone Nargis was the utility of NGO cluster co-leads where NGO seconded co-chairs to support the UN cluster coordinator: one often focused on capital city or national level processes, while the other one focused on support to the field clusters and roamed between the hub offices providing valuable support, guidance and capacity to the field. Or, these roles were alternated. This approach may be relevant in Bangladesh where coordination is critical at both central and local levels. This also addresses the concern from some stakeholders that the cluster system is potentially too UN-centric or dominated.

⁵³ Recorded in the draft ToRs of 6 March 2011 and also in the minutes of the DER from 3rd May 2009.

⁵⁴ Presently the three clusters that have been established are WASH (led by UNICEF with DPHE), Education (led by UNICEF and Save the Children) and the Child Protection sub-cluster (led by UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs). These clusters were constituted in 2007 and have been utilized for preparedness and response since that time with presence at a national and regional level (ref: UNICEF).

⁵⁵ See also recommendations from the Bangladesh Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Exercise, 21-22 June 2011.

Expectations of the United Nations System in Bangladesh

Stakeholder interviews and reviews of the response to cyclone Sidr reveal that, even with strong government capacity, donors and the international community look to the UN for leadership in coordinating international efforts. Stakeholders for this review defined the following areas where they expect the UN system to play a key role in terms of coordinating response:

- Be the link between the international community and GoB
- Convene an inclusive coordination platform of international stakeholders who work specifically in the humanitarian response and preparedness arena
- Be coordinated *within* the UN family
- Ensure sectoral/cluster leadership (that links in a streamlined way to government)
- Inform government of the resources and support available both internally and internationally (in preparedness)
- Coordinate appropriate phases of damage and needs assessments (utilize experience and capacity, generate buy in from stakeholders)
- Provide information on the scope and severity of the situation
- Based on evidence lead on the prioritization of resource allocation
- Mobilize resources
- Support coordination of the international response to a disaster (in line with government structures) at central as well as local levels
- Support in the identification of gaps in response (through coordinated and phased assessments)
- Ensure that assistance is provided to affected populations according to need
- Make sure capacity is available within the UN

Strengthening the System: Recommendations

Stakeholder meetings identified specific opportunities and suggestions for strengthening the existing system of coordination. Most of these ideas build on what is already in place with a focus on increased relevance to the current country context while at the same time fostering a closer functional alignment with the roles and responsibilities defined in the humanitarian reform.

Leadership

While the government legitimately leads the overall response, strong, impartial leadership of the international humanitarian community in support of Government efforts is required and this needs to come from the RC. If the system is not seen as being beneficial to all and inclusive it will not generate buy in and will remain fragmented. In order to provide leadership, the RCO will need to have the capacity to support the RC in providing this leadership. An OCHA presence in country⁵⁶ dedicated to supporting humanitarian coordination is seen by many stakeholders as a way for increasing humanitarian preparedness and response coordination capacity.

The Role of the DER

Over recent months there have been significant changes to the LCG-DER; membership has been reviewed, a ToR has been drafted and consulted on, and an action plan produced. These efforts have provided a renewed momentum to the DER and they should be viewed as the foundation for creating appropriate avenues within the DER structure (as part of

⁵⁶ In this case the “OCHA presence” that is applicable is seen as a dedicated humanitarian officer placed by OCHA within the RCO.

the LCG Mechanism) for dedicated preparedness for coordinated response and for well understood coordination platform that will be active disasters of differing scales. While there is a need for further clarification of the DER (including membership, ToRs, working groups, its potential to be an active coordination forum, and how it should link to other mechanisms at national and local levels) this should be seen as part of a process already begun. The DER has only recently been revived and only recently has the RC taken on the role of co-chair; caution should be taken not to “re-invent the wheel”. It is important that this ongoing work should be reviewed thoroughly by all DER members in order to ensure ownership and take advantage of the opportunity to re-shape the group into a functional entity for strategic planning and to identify its potential to be an active coordination forum in the time of disaster.⁵⁷ This discussion should include an open consideration of any outstanding coordination gaps and needs that the DER cannot or should not fill.

Key Questions for the DER Group

- Could the DER, with some minor adjustment of present membership and ToRs meet the roles and responsibilities of a HCT?
- How will the DER adjust itself immediately in case of a major disaster to ensure effective response?
- How DER and concerned stakeholders should address slow onset/medium scale disasters?
- What complementary coordination mechanisms would strengthen our collective capacity?

A recent evaluation of the Cluster Approach⁵⁸ found that linking the clusters with existing coordination mechanisms to be one of the weaknesses of the cluster experience. Stronger links are recommended in the report because they strengthen ownership among national actors, strengthen national capacity, improve connectedness to longer term development and help avoid multiplication on coordination mechanisms.⁵⁹

Embedding the key roles and responsibilities that can be distilled from the global humanitarian architecture within the nationally owned LCG structure could be away to address this challenge. Embedding the functions of a HCT **within** the LCG structure addresses:

- The capacity of the government of Bangladesh
- The ownership of the LCG system
- The disaster profile of the country (the prominence of frequent small to medium and sometimes large scale weather related events, often creeping in their onset with a greater impact on livelihoods than on loss of life).⁶⁰

If the LCG-DER is not found to be able to accommodate “HCT-like functions” an alternative option is to consider a converging 2 track system in the short term (one track being an international stakeholder forum, effectively a HCT), the other being the present LCG-DER, with the tracks planning to converge and merge in the future in the government led LCG-DER. Any discussion around this should include the Secretary MoFDM to ensure that it does not become a permanent parallel system and that any concerns of the government can be openly addressed.

The DER requires build and strengthening. DER in its present form is new. This will need time to mature and establish. If the DER is going to be the key forum that many stakeholders expect it will need commitment; this should include:

- Regular DER meetings

⁵⁷ It should be noted that not all stakeholders are convinced of the potential of the DER to adequately fulfill this role.

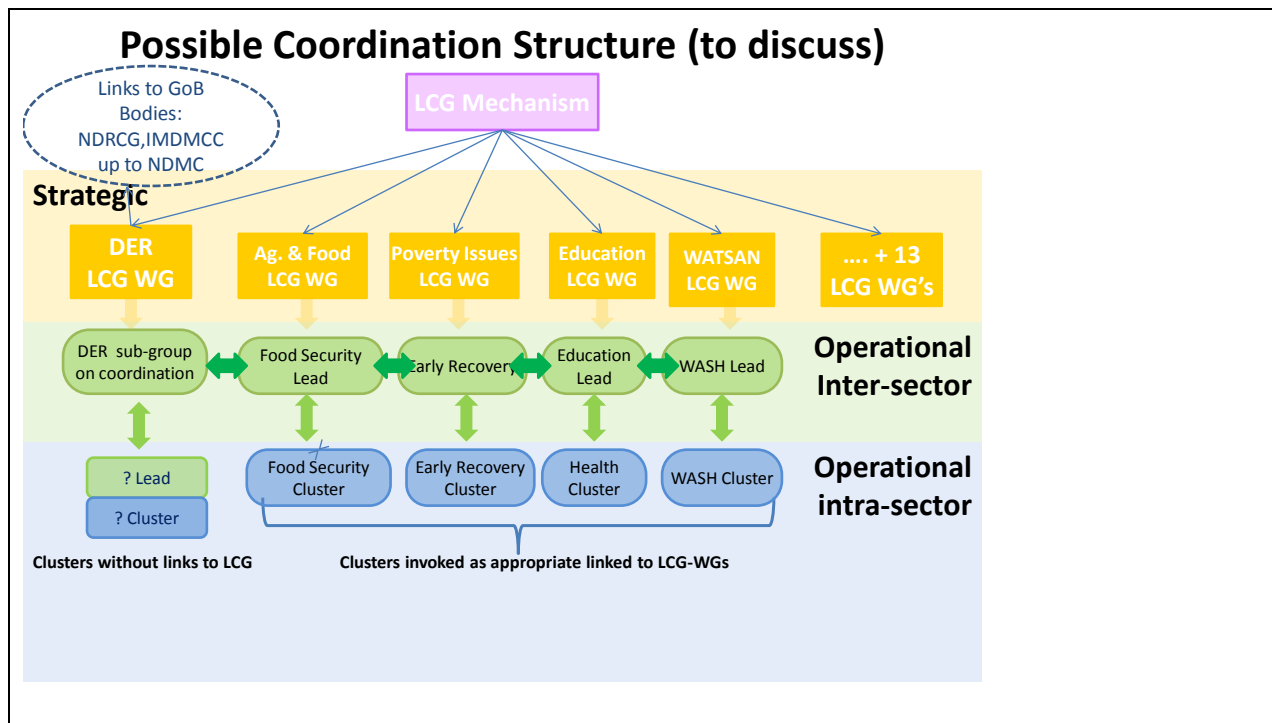
⁵⁸ *The Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 (April 2010 GPPI)*

⁵⁹ *The Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 (April 2010 GPPI)*, p37.

⁶⁰ In many countries (whether they’ve had a cluster-based response or not) they have a cluster architecture which they have created and defined, in a preparedness context, and which they resurrect for contingency planning processes, simulation exercises and similar preparedness contexts. For other times or when there is not an emergency, the clusters are folded in to a state of dormancy and only periodically brought into the open for the purposes of updating cluster plans or similar processes.

- An efficient and effective secretariat
- Finalization and “operationalization” of the ToRs
- Clarity on an committed membership
- Definition of active working groups
- Consideration of resourcing requirements

Within the LCG-Mechanism, the following diagram is presented as a suggestion for how the DER group could be enhanced in order to address strategic and coordination dimensions related to humanitarian response; see the points below the diagram for more detail. The clusters mentioned here (as humanitarian sub-groups explained below) are given as examples only.



This structure is put forward as a starting point for discussion. It is considered that:

- The DER-LCG would address the strategic elements of planning a coordinated response when required and would continue in its role as a policy discussion forum linked to national development strategies (such as the Sixth Five Year Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy) and aim to ensure aid effectiveness through operational arrangements of mutual accountability in making concrete and measureable progress in the field of disaster management.
- A sub group of the DER focused on preparedness for coordinated response (in the diagram “DER sub-group on coordination”) would be the group assigned with the task of strengthening preparedness by undertaking tasks associated with decisions on the appropriate clusters required in Bangladesh and cluster leadership roles and responsibilities.
- This group would also be tasked with clarifying linkages between the international community, the DER and key government bodies including (but not limited to) the National Disaster Response Coordination Group (NDRCG), the Inter-ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee (IMDMCC), the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) and the NGO Coordination Committee (NGOCC)
- This group would become the active inter-cluster coordination mechanism during response.

- The group should be comprised of DER members with an interest in humanitarian response, cluster lead agencies (as agreed at the country level by the DER-LGG) and be jointly chaired by a representative of the MoFDM (such as the DG DM&RD) and the RCO.
- Clusters that are defined as appropriate to the country context should be formed as “humanitarian sub-groups” or clusters of existing LCG-WGs, (that is members of the LCG-WGs who have an interest in humanitarian response would voluntarily be part of the cluster while members of agencies with a development agenda not directly linked to response would not). The critical link between the LCG-WG and the cluster/sub-group is that of leadership; the cluster lead should be a member of the LCG. Other members will be those agencies who participate in humanitarian response in the particular sector and may not necessarily be members of the LCG-WG (such as I/NGOs).
- The leadership link to the LCG-WGs is important because it aims to ensure the connection between humanitarian response, recovery and the longer term development agenda.
- The key operational coordination link is between the clusters and the DER sub-group on coordination.
- The DER sub-group will meet as required to establish preparedness plans, it will include the participation of cluster leads as required.
- Where clusters are determined as necessary and they do not have a clear place within an existing LCG-WG, leadership should be agreed within the DER and these clusters should be connected to the DER sub-group on coordination.
- Clusters already operational (e.g. WASH, Education and Child Protection) should be located within this structure (where possible) without a change of leadership or membership.
- In addition to the DER sub-group on coordination, other sub groups could be created for specific purposes. One such group could be an international humanitarian stakeholders group led by the RC in his role as co-chair of the LCG-DER.

Ongoing engagement with the government

There is a need to work with the government on establishing good quality information on “disaster events” in order to establish their scope quickly, and any gaps in the government’s capacity to respond. This should include strong advocacy on the importance of sharing information promptly (regardless of the need for assistance) and on the provision of a forum where information generated by non-government actors can be shared broadly.⁶¹

To address the significant concern over the “coordination vacuum” that presently exists in responding to undeclared emergencies of various scales, effort should be made to consider the legitimacy of initiating coordination by mapping out how to trigger a coordinated approach to an event (when there is not, and is unlikely to be, a declaration of a disaster). It is recommended that this takes place with the government through the LCG-DER. This is important because these “undeclared disasters” are the events often faced in Bangladesh, and are the ones for which coordination is the most challenging. This would include clear triggers for initiating “emergency meetings” of the LCG-DER and the sub-group on coordination.⁶²

Key agenda items for these “emergency meetings” should be mapped out and agreed. They could include:

- A review of the information available in terms of scope and severity of the event
- Based on this review, a decision about the need for a coordinated assessment
- A review of existing response and planned response by government and non-government actors
- A decision on invoking a coordinated approach (at the most appropriate level/s; national, district, upazila, union, sub-union) to the response

⁶¹ Currently the Disaster Management Information Centre does not always share information provided by I/NGOs.

⁶² For example a trigger statement could be; “when a minimum of x members of the LCG-DER express their concern to one of the co-chairs a meeting of the DER sub group on coordinated response will be called within x days”. Other triggers may relate to the geographic scope of an event (e.g. Affects across more than x districts), or related to local government (UP or Upazila officials) combined estimates of number of people affected. This would be up to the LCG-DER to define.

Preparedness activities of the DER sub-group on coordinated response could include⁶³:

- A light mapping of coordination structures at union parishad, upazila, district and national level
- Identification of baseline information requirements and sources (to assist in initial assessments of disasters)
- The practice of cluster and local level coordination (through joint activities such as simulation exercises) and then allow clusters to stay in a state of dormancy.⁶⁴
- Definition of the clusters appropriate for the Bangladesh context.
- Agreeing on minimum cluster preparedness and maintenance (e.g. 2 times yearly for flood preparedness and cyclone preparedness).

Engagement within the International Community

The international humanitarian community is currently not well connected and activities that relate directly to preparedness for coordinated response are generally not well coordinated, however there is growing momentum and efforts to address this situation coming from the UN system, the INGOs and the donor community. An alignment of these efforts is needed. If coordinated support is going to be provided to the government there needs to be stronger coordination and collaboration between international stakeholders. This includes:

- The need to advocate for stronger coordination within the INGOs forum
- The need for increased transparency and open communication within the whole international community
- A way of operating among international actors (UN, INGOs, IFRC, donors) that shares and understands the activities and capacities and mandates of different stakeholders
- Partnerships based on openness and transparency

Articulating roles, responsibilities and linkages; maintaining capacity

A clear, light articulation of the way the system is supposed to operate is missing. An exercise that maps out and clarifies as simply as possible the key roles of the different bodies and groups, a clear short guideline on emergency response that includes the roles and responsibilities of international organizations and how they fit together in a flow chart should be commissioned through the LCG-DER. It is important to emphasize that this would initially be defining what presently exists NOT changing the structure. Gaps or inadequacies can then be highlighted and addressed.⁶⁵ Related to this is a need to review the draft UN SOP put together by the UNRC office, ensure it considers the relationship to other actors, this should be shared widely.

In strengthening the system overall and the components within it effort should be made to put in place a system that maintains capacity (rather than one off efforts at capacity building). This will include practicing coordination and assessments through simulations but also utilizing the capacity in real small to medium scale, geographic specific disasters. Effort should be made to avoid processes that involve long series of meetings with not productive and practical output.⁶⁶

Relevant alignment with the global humanitarian architecture

Utilizing the global humanitarian architecture in Bangladesh should be based around learning from experiences of other contexts but also ensuring that efforts are not a rote package from the global level placed in Bangladesh. Rather they

⁶³ This would not mean the sub-group would need to complete these tasks itself, rather ensure or advocate that they are completed within the broad humanitarian system and shared.

⁶⁴ Clusters should have the freedom to be as dormant or as active as they chose during non-emergency times as long as a minimum level of preparedness is maintained.

⁶⁵ The key diagrammatic representation of the government structures is found on p 43 of the National Plan for Disaster Management, 2010-2015. The only non-government entity for which a link is shown is the NGOCC.

⁶⁶ This can be supported by an OCHA preparedness process for emergency response.

should be genuinely adapted to the country context. This will include a reflection of the role and capacity of government as well as the nature of the disaster events that the country faces.

Strengthening the System: Key recommendations for follow-up

Based on the stakeholder meetings and the review of documents relating to recent disaster responses in Bangladesh it is suggested that the following points become the basis for discussion at the DER in order to develop concrete recommendations:

- Ensure leadership is capacitated
- Advocate for stronger coordination with INGOs
- Support local level coordination
- Review DER (membership, function, linkages)
- Define a mechanism for inter-cluster coordination (the DER sub-group on coordination)
- Map out how the DER sub-group will coordinate for disasters of differing scales
- Agree on the key clusters required for Bangladesh and consider forming these as humanitarian focused sub-groups of the LCG-WGs wherever appropriate
- Map out key linkages between the DER and key GoB, UN and INGO bodies
- Utilize “sub groups” for DER functions (such as coordination of the international humanitarian community)

APPENDIX I

Global “cluster leads”

(As agreed by the IASC Principals in December 2005)

Sector or Global Cluster Lead

Area of Activity

Technical areas:

1. Nutrition UNICEF
2. Health WHO
3. Water/Sanitation UNICEF
4. Emergency Shelter: *IDPs (from conflict)* UNHCR

*Disaster situations IFRC (Convener)**

Cross-cutting areas:

5. Camp Coord/Management: *IDPs (from conflict)* UNHCR; *Disaster situations IOM*
6. Protection: *IDPs (from conflict)* UNHCR; *Disasters/civilians affected by conflict (other than IDPs)*** UNHCR/OHCHR/UNICEF
7. Early Recovery UNDP

Common service areas:

8. Logistics WFP
9. Emerg. Telecommunications OCHA/UNICEF/WFP

* IFRC has made a commitment to provide leadership to the broader humanitarian community in Emergency Shelter in disaster situations, to consolidate best practice, map capacity and gaps, and lead coordinated response. IFRC has committed to being a ‘convener’ rather than a ‘cluster lead’. In an MOU between IFRC and OCHA it was agreed that IFRC would not accept accountability obligations beyond those defined in its Constitutions and own policies and that its responsibilities would leave no room for open-ended or unlimited obligations. It has therefore not committed to being ‘provider of last resort’ nor is it accountable to any part of the UN system.

** UNHCR is the lead of the global Protection Cluster. However, at the country level in disaster situations or in complex emergencies without significant displacement, the three core protection mandated agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF and OHCHR) will consult closely and, under the overall leadership of the HC/RC, agree which of the three will assume the role of Lead for protection.

***Initial cluster arrangements did not include a Food Security cluster. In May 2011 the global Food Security Cluster was officially launched by WFP and FAO.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Foodsecuritycluster.org

APPENDIX II

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

	Name	Designation	Organization	Contact details
Government				
1.	Dr. M Aslam Alam	Secretary	Disaster Management & Relief Division, MoFDM	secretary@bttb.net.bd
2.	Mr. MA Wazed	Joint Secretary	Disaster Management & Relief Division, MoFDM	wazed_73@ymail.com
3.	Mr. Ahsan Zakir	Director General & Additional Secretary	Disaster Management Bureau	dmb@bttb.net.bd
4.	Mr. Md. Zahirul Haque	Director General & Additional Secretary	Directorate of Relief & Rehabilitation	drd@bttb.net.bd
UN Agencies				
5.	Mr. Neal Walker	UN Resident Coordinator	UNRC	neal.walker@undp.org
6.	Mr. Stefan Priesner	Country Director	UNDP	stefan.priesner@undp.org
7.	Mr. Carel De Rooy	Representative	UNICEF	cderooy@unicef.org
8.	Mr. Miachel Dunford	Deputy Country Representative	WFP	crista.rader@wfp.org
9.	Ms. Rabab Fatema	Regional Representative	IOM	rfatima@iom.int
10.	Mr. Arthur Erken	Representative	UNFPA	erken@unfpa.org
11.	Mr. Dominique Burgeon	Representative	FAO	Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org
12.	Dr. M Aminul Islam	Assistant Country Director	UNDP	aminul.islam@undp.org
13.	Mr. Sifayet Ullah	Programme Analyst	UNDP	sifayet.ullah@undp.org
14.	Mr. Denis Nguyen	Coordination Specialist	UNRC	denis.nguyen@undp.org
15.	Mr. Craig Sanders		UNHCR	
Development Partners				
16.	Ms. Amanda Jennings	Second Secretary	AusAID	Amanda.Jennings@dfat.gov.au
17.	Ms. Helen Bryer	Head of Cooperate Business	DFID	H-Bryer@dfid.gov.uk
18.	Ms. Diana Dalton	Deputy Country Director	DFID	
19.	Mr. Matthias Anderegg	Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Coordinator	SDC	matthias.anderegg@sdrc.net
20.	Mr. David Hill	Head of Mission	ECHO	David.HILL@ec.europa.eu
21.	Chattopadhyay-Dutt, Purnima Doris		GIZ	olaf.handloegten@giz.de
Others				
22.	Mr. Puji Pujiono	Project Manager	CDMP-II	puji.pujiono@cdmp.org.bd
23.	Mr. Saidur Rahman	Director	BDPC	saidur1943@gmail.com
24.	Mr. Gareth Price Jones	Country Director	OXFAM	Gjones@oxfam.org.uk
25.	Mr. Abu Bakar	Secretary General	IFRC	info@bdrccs.org.bd
26.	Ms. Alex Maclean	Ass. Country Director	CARE Bangladesh	
27.	Ms. Isabelle ROBIN	Head of Mission	ACF (Action Against Hunger)	

APPENDIX III

Documents Consulted

Government of Bangladesh
Standing Orders on Disaster, Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, April 2010
National Plan for Disaster Management, 2010-2015, Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, April 2010
United Nations Bangladesh
UNCT Bangladesh Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Natural Disasters, March 2011 Revision
UN Flood and Cyclone Lesson Learned Workshop Report and Working group Output, 10 th March 2008
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE, SIDR TRANSITIONAL WORKING-GROUPS, BANGLADESH, Updated on 01/06/2008
Report Bangladesh Inter-Agency Emergency Simulation Exercise, 21-22 June 2011, Prepared by OCHA-UNICEF-WFP Regional Office Team, Bangkok, Thailand, 22 June 2011
Global Guidance
Guidance on Inter-cluster Coordination, Draft 30 May 2011
<i>IASC Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator</i> , endorsed May 2009
<i>IASC Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams</i> , 2009
INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC), Guidance note on using the cluster approach to Strengthen humanitarian response, 24 November 2006
IASC Working Group 5-7 November 2007, Rome Statement on Cluster Roll-Out
IASC Interim Self-Assessment of Implementation of the Cluster Approach in the Field, <i>Circulated 23 NOVEMBER 2006</i>
<i>Operational Guidance on Designating Sector/Cluster Leads in Major New Emergencies</i>
<i>Operational Guidance on Designating Sector/Cluster Leads in Ongoing Emergencies</i>
<i>IASC Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance</i>
<i>UNDP Policy on Early Recovery</i> , Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, February 2008
Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response, IASC, 2010.
Strengthening the HC System: the Unfinished Agenda, 2009
DER group
Local Consultative Group, Disaster Management Working Group, Draft Terms of Reference, Ver. Rev. 6 March, 2011
Disaster and Emergency Response (DER), Action Plan: July 2011 – June 2013
Other
Oxfam Briefing Note, After the cyclone: lessons from a disaster, 15 February 2008
Steve Jones, Disaster Response Mechanism Scoping Mission Report, 8 th December 2008, DFID Bangladesh

The Cluster Approach Evaluation 2, April 2010, GPPI

Mongolia Humanitarian country Team and Cluster Arrangement

IASC Contingency Plan for Myanmar

Letters between the HC (Nepal) and the ERC regarding the use of clusters for contingency planning

IFRC, A Review of the IFRC-led Shelter Coordination Group, Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr Response 2007-2008

APPENDIX IV

Summary of INGO Humanitarian Coordination in Bangladesh

Why do INGOs need to coordinate?

In financial terms INGOs deliver about a third of international humanitarian aid globally⁶⁸, compared to 46% through the UN and 9% through the Red Cross/Red Crescent⁶⁹.

In 2008⁷⁰ this totalled around US\$5.7bn of assistance delivered by INGOs in emergencies around the world. The majority of this is separate and additional to government and UN assistance, and comes from a number of sources including institutional donors and direct fundraising from the general public⁷¹.

This major humanitarian role at the global level is reflected in a financial analysis of recent responses in Bangladesh:

Humanitarian Actor	Role in Sidr response (2008)		Role in Aila response (2009)	
	%	US\$	%	US\$
Government	41%	78.4m	52%	43.5m
INGOs ⁷²	20%	37.8m	37%	31m
UN ⁷³	35%	66.9m	8.9%	7.5m
Red Cross/others	4%	7.3m	1.7%	1.4m
Total Response	100%	183.1m	100%	83.3m

INGOs also mostly operate through local partners, which enables them to build capacity prior to disasters and during response gives them substantial advantages in terms of accountability to affected populations and local government. A recent exercise by the INGO forum identified over 500 local partners that receive funding from INGOs.

Given the scale of their role, it is essential that the assistance provided through INGOs is coherently coordinated with government and other actors.

How do INGOs currently coordinate?

There are a number of mechanisms currently operational. These mechanisms have a variety of primary objectives, and there is no one forum specifically mandated to coordinate all aspects of INGO work⁷⁴. The most active among these include:

1. The INGO Forum

⁶⁸ Source: <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/workstream/workstreams/delivery>

⁶⁹ This includes delivery by the Federation, ICRC and local Red cross/Red Crescents.

⁷⁰ Most recent figures available

⁷¹ As an example, Oxfam's US\$6.7m Sidr response was funded 7.7% by UN agencies, 23.7% by institutional donors (DFID and ECHO) and 68.5% through Oxfam funds.

⁷² For Aila numbers, this includes BRAC. BRAC delivered around 9% (US\$7m) of the Aila response.

⁷³ Note that this analysis may under-represent the delivery through NGOs and over-represent the UN's role, given that DFID funding for Aila is recorded as being delivered by UNICEF, UNDP and WFP, but in reality these agencies usually work through INGO partners to deliver on the ground.

⁷⁴ Note that there are also two separate National NGO coordination groups.

This is an inclusive Country Director level group that covers development as well as humanitarian coordination. Currently it has 72 members of which just over half are active (regularly attend meetings, contribute financially to joint events etc). The forum has an active communications system and regular meetings, but information doesn't always get passed on within member organisations from CD's to humanitarian and program teams. See appendix 1 for members.

2. ECHO Partners Meetings

This is a group of agencies that receive ECHO funding, and exists specifically to coordinate ECHO funded responses by NGOs, such as the 2011 Shatkira waterlogging or the Haor flooding of 2010.

3. Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB)

This is a seven-member global consortium that was established to build capacity to respond to disasters, and has recently taken a lead on coordinating joint assessments among a wider group, drawing on the support of its global partner, ACAPS. See appendix 2 for members.

4. WASH Cluster

This is currently the most effective operational cluster. It has around 50 members, of whom 15-20 attend quarterly meetings under the leadership of UNICEF, most recently in September 2011.

5. NGO Coordination Committee on Disaster Management (NGOCC)

This is a new structure led by the DG DMB under the National Plan for Disaster Management, and replaces the earlier, larger DER meeting which included at least 20 INGOs. Its second meeting is due on November 10th 2011.

6. Local and National Government coordination

Although somewhat variable in effectiveness, local governments coordinate responses in their areas which are in turn coordinated with the NGOAB in Dhaka which (with review from the MoFDM) approves all INGO emergency responses. To get such approval INGOs have to demonstrate that responses will be complementary, usually through a presentation to Ministry department heads.

7. NARRI and other operational consortia

NARRI is a persistent operational consortium of 8 INGOs that is currently delivering a joint program of \$18m of assistance to those affected by Aila and the Shatkira waterlogging. As such it does not have a wider coordination mandate beyond its members, but ensures that its member's response is closely coordinated. Other operational consortia are being developed (such as the one between Muslim Aid, Christian Aid and Dan Church Aid), but none are as developed in identity or ways of working.

8. Other potential forums

There are a number of other coordination structures that exist globally and which are important in other countries, such as OCHA, CBHA, ARCA, BOND, persistent sectoral clusters (which meet and coordinate regularly even when not 'activated'), InterAction and the DEC which have members in Bangladesh but which are not currently active structures here.

How does Oxfam currently link the LCG-DER to these forums?

Oxfam considers improved Humanitarian Coordination a high priority in Bangladesh, and has therefore been an active member of all of the coordination mechanisms outlined above, either at CD level or through senior managers, and through direct dialogues with key actors.

The main link between the wider INGO community and the LCG-DER is through the INGO forum, as this is the most inclusive of the mechanisms outlined above. Gareth Price-Jones (Oxfam CD) regularly briefs the INGO forum on LCG-DER discussions both in person at meetings and through written updates, and brings views, ideas and concerns raised back to the LCG-DER on behalf of the INGO humanitarian community.

Future possibilities:

Members of the INGO forum have proposed creating a Humanitarian sub-Committee, which would appoint a member to represent them on the LCG-DER. This may or may not be Oxfam. The sub-committee would further formalise feedback and communication processes, providing a clear access point for other agencies to coordinate with emergency-focused

INGOs. The Humanitarian sub-Committee would invite all Humanitarian INGOs to join, and would also engage directly with government through the NGOCC meetings. It is possible that ECB could resource and support the sub-Committee.

Several engaged humanitarian INGOs have expressed interest in being part of a Humanitarian Country Team if one were to be established including: Care, ACF, Solidarities International, Save the Children, Oxfam, and Concern Worldwide.

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Appendix A - INGO forum member organisations

AGA Khan Foundation	LEPRA
ActionAid Bangladesh	Marie Stopes Clinic Society
Action Contre la Faim (ACF)	Medicins Sans Frontieres - Holland
Action on Disability & Development (ADD)	Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
ADRA-Bangladesh	Micro Nutrient Initiative (MI)
Academy For Educational Development (AED)	Muslim Aid
AIDA	NETZ Germany
The Asia Foundation Bangladesh	Oasis
BBC World Service Trust	ORBIS International
CARE Bangladesh	Oxfam
CARITAS BANGLADESH	Pathfinder International
Christian Blind Mission (CBM)	Plan International
Christian Aid	Population Council
Concern Universal	Practical Action Bangladesh
CONCERN-Worldwide	Relief International
CRWRC-Bangladesh	Room to Read Bangladesh
Damien Foundation	Save the Children International
DAN CHURCH AID	SIL Bangladesh
Engender Health	Shapla Nir
FHI360	Sight Savers International
Fred Hollows Foundation	SNV Netherlands Development Organization
Food for the Hungry (FH)	Solidarities-France
Helen Keller International	Stromme Foundation
Habitat for Humanity International - Bangladesh	Swiss Red Cross
HEKS	TDH Italy
Handicap International	TDH Foundation Lausanne
HelpAge International (HAI)	Traidcraft Exchange
Hunger Free World	Transparency International Bangladesh
The Hunger Project	USC Canada Bangladesh
IDE-Bangladesh	Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

INTER COOPERATION	WaterAid Bangladesh
International Union for Conservation of Nature(IUCN)	World Fish Center
International Voluntary Service	WORLD VISION
INTER-VIDA	
Islamic Relief	
Lamp Hospital	
Leprosy Mission	

Appendix B - ECB member organisations

Care	Oxfam
Concern Worldwide	Save the Children
CRS	World Vision
Mercy Corps (Not present in Bangladesh)	

Appendix V

Local Consultative Group Mechanism Organogram 2011 (from <http://www.lcgbangladesh.org>)

