

Ready or Not

Pakistan's resilience to disasters one year on from the floods

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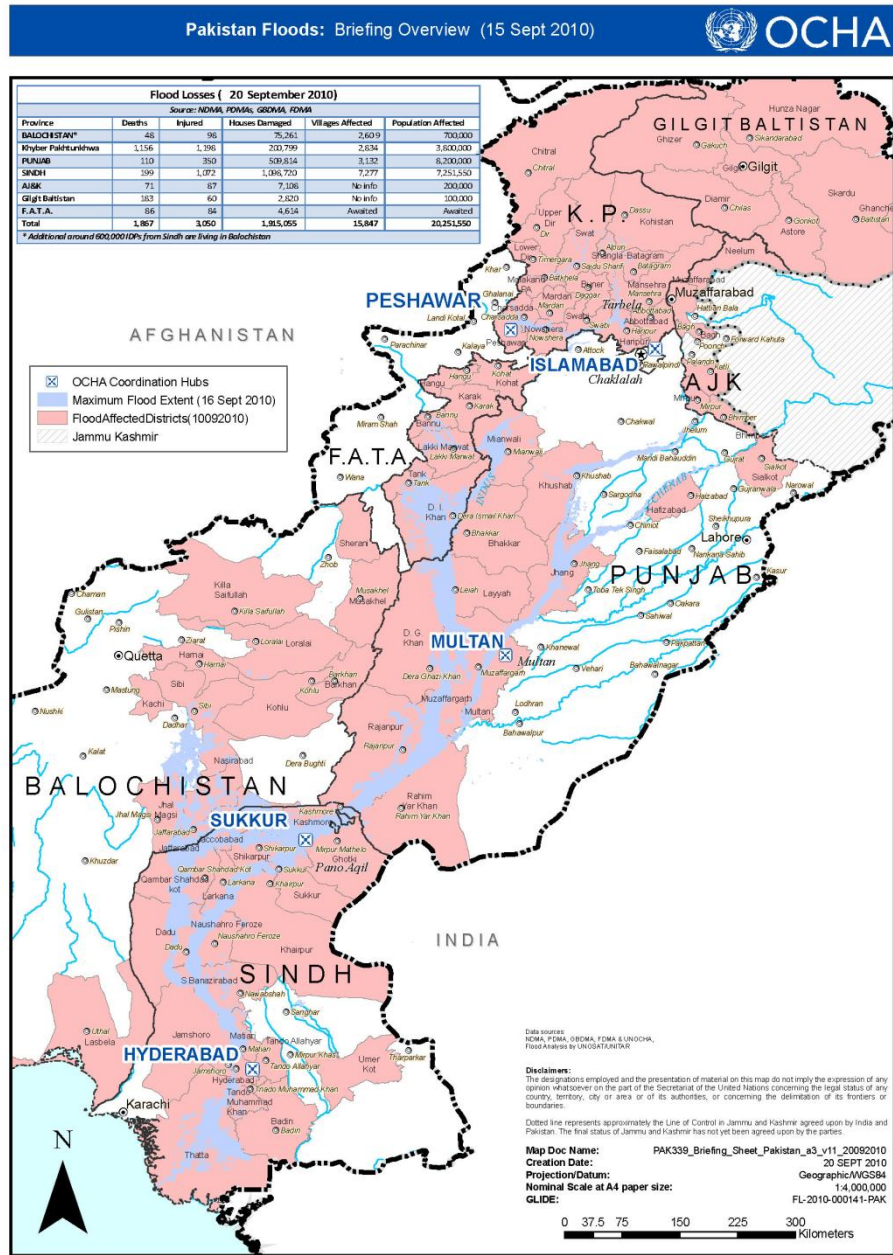
Farzana Bibi puts furniture on a platform as she is worried floods will soon reach her village, Khan Chandi, Southern Punjab.

©Caroline Gluck, June 2011

The floods that hit Pakistan in 2010 were the worst in the country's history. The humanitarian response achieved remarkable successes in minimising the immediate loss of life and providing relief to millions of people. However, it could have been better: more than 800,000 families remain without permanent shelter and more than a million people remain in need of food assistance. These unmet needs must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

As Pakistan endures another monsoon season and the likelihood of more disasters, the country is not prepared. Many factors which have hampered the relief and reconstruction effort are still present, such as an inadequate disaster management system, and a lack of emergency relief co-ordination and leadership. These institutional challenges must be resolved as soon as possible. The government and donors need to invest heavily in measures to reduce disaster risks such as better early warning systems, flood control, and more resilient housing. They should also tackle the underlying social inequalities which leave people vulnerable to disasters through a pro-poor national development plan. Spending on risk reduction and preparedness not only saves lives and livelihoods but hugely reduces the economic impact of disasters.

Extent of the 2010 floods



PAK339

Source: OCHA

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBDRM	Community-based disaster risk management
CCI	Council of Common Interests
CNIC	Computerised National Identity Card
DCO	District Co-ordination Officer
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO (a programme of the European Commission's humanitarian aid department)
DNA	'Pakistan Floods 2010: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment' (report by the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Government of Pakistan)
DRM	disaster risk management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority
ERWG	Early Recovery Working Group
FATA	Federally Administrated Tribal Areas
FFC	Federal Flood Commission
GAM	global acute malnutrition
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFI	International Financial Institution
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NDRMF	National Disaster Risk Management Framework
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PDMC	Provincial Disaster Management Commission
PKR	Pakistani rupees
PMD	Pakistan Meteorological Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

'Clusters' Refers to the co-ordination mechanism for delivering humanitarian aid. This is arranged around sectors such as 'food' or 'water and sanitation' which are called 'clusters'.

Currency equivalent: \$1 = 85.89 PKR (www.xe.com as of 12th July 2011)

Summary

The floods that hit Pakistan in 2010 were the worst ever in the country's history. An estimated 20 million people were affected, with 1,985 killed and another 2,964 injured. Some 1.6 million houses were damaged or destroyed, and more than 5 million jobs were lost. Damage to agricultural crops, irrigation systems, and infrastructure was massive. Economic growth was stunted by 2 per cent over the past year.¹

Responding to an emergency of this magnitude would have stretched any government. However, much was achieved by Pakistani officials, civil society organisations, the international aid community, private and institutional donors, military actors, and private individuals to minimise the loss of life, to provide food, water, shelter, and cash to millions of flood-affected people, and to prevent major outbreaks of disease. The ongoing socio-political, environmental, and economic volatility in Pakistan increased the challenges of delivering a response of this scale.

One year on from the floods, there are huge gaps in the post-flood recovery needs and hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis remain without permanent shelter. Millions are estimated to be food insecure. Many who did not have seeds and tools, or couldn't access land, missed the chance to plant and harvest crops. With little work available and rising food prices, their ability to sustain themselves through the recovery is in question. Women have struggled to access assistance and continue to be disproportionately affected. Thousands have not returned to their villages and remain in pseudo camps in urban areas with no assistance, nor provision for their integration into society. The UN Appeal has a shortfall of \$600m intended to support early recovery activities, and funds are required in critical areas, such as housing and agriculture, to get people back on their feet.

Resilient communities struggling to recover are now facing another monsoon season and the likelihood of yet more disasters in the future as climate change increases the prevalence of extreme weather conditions. Pakistan is simply not sufficiently prepared to cope. Much of the country is still not covered by early warning systems and flood protection infrastructure, such as river embankments, protection walls, and water-courses, was crippled by last year's disaster and remains unrepaired. Even with less rainfall this year, the risk of flooding remains high and many villages are already under water. Minimising the potential impact of floods before they strike and delivering an effective, adequate, impartial, and timely humanitarian response have been hampered by long-term neglect of social inequities, insufficient preparation by the Government for disasters, an inadequate disaster management system, a lack of emergency relief co-ordination and leadership, and the overlapping mandates of different actors.

The floods have demonstrated a vital need to re-examine the underlying drivers of vulnerability that turn natural hazards into human disasters and hamper swift recovery.² These include widespread malnutrition, deep levels of poverty, inadequate access to education, landlessness, discrimination against women and minorities, and conflict dynamics that hinder humanitarian access to certain populations. Unless these factors are

addressed through a nationally co-ordinated, pro-poor reconstruction and development plan, they will continue to undermine efforts to improve Pakistan's resilience to future disasters and its ability to develop. Attention to supporting the resilience of the most vulnerable communities is critical to success in reconstruction efforts.

Significant and sustained investments must be made by the Government of Pakistan (GoP), and supported by donors, if this situation is to change. Agreed international targets for disaster risk reduction (DRR) include allocating a minimum of 10 per cent of all humanitarian funding, post-disaster reconstruction, and recovery projects to DRR and 1 per cent within broader development budgets. All public development polices should now systematically integrate DRR and climate adaptation principles to adequately meet the challenges of the changing environment. This should be done in line with the country's commitments under the Hyogo Framework for Action.³

In recent years the Pakistani authorities have taken positive steps in creating a disaster management framework and institutions - but much more needs to be done. Pakistan already has policies; now it is critically important to translate these into effective disaster management systems, particularly at the community level, that minimise risks and help people to help themselves when faced by crisis. This requires sustained investment. Domestic resources must be mobilised through urgent widening of the tax base (currently only 2 per cent of the population pay income tax) without disproportionately impacting on the poorest.⁴

Improved measures to reduce the risk of disasters occurring not only prevent avoidable deaths, damage, and distress; they also represent immense value for money. In the period 2005-2009, disasters are estimated to have cost Pakistan at least \$5bn.⁵ Reconstruction after the floods is predicated to cost up to \$10.9bn, almost one-quarter of the national budget.⁶ However, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank estimate that an initial investment of just \$27m by the Government would greatly reduce losses from future disasters. Pakistan has allocated more than this sum to pay for National Assembly expenses in the last two years alone.⁷ This initial investment, followed by sustained allocation of resources, could include reorganising the existing parallel disaster management bodies, providing them assistance and hardware support in the 30 most vulnerable districts and longer-term flood risk mapping.⁸

Ahead of future crises, clarity is urgently required on the roles and responsibilities of government actors at the district, provincial, and federal levels, particularly in light of the devolution of responsibilities mandated by the 18th Amendment to the constitution.⁹ However, disasters and emergencies do not respect local boundaries. Pakistan needs to be able to respond in a nationally-led and co-ordinated manner when large-scale disasters occur.

Strong donor leadership is also required to ensure that progress is made in strengthening DRR and climate change adaptation measures in post-flood reconstruction. Sustained, multi-year funding should be made available to help develop Pakistan's domestic disaster preparedness. At the same time, the evolving demands of a rapidly growing population, whose development needs are not being met, must be acknowledged, and development assistance should continue.

Relations among the UN agencies and between the UN and the GoP have also been put under stress by the swift transition from one co-ordination system to another over the course of the response. This transition led to a change in who was in charge overall, and in key sectors such as housing. UN agencies need to address the future of humanitarian co-ordination in Pakistan by re-orientating themselves to take a much more integrated approach in partnership with GoP structures.

This report does not offer a comprehensive evaluation of the response to the floods to date but it examines their impact, particularly on the most vulnerable communities, and the role of the country's institutional structures for disaster management, before presenting suggestions on what steps are necessary to make the people of Pakistan safer during future disasters.

Recommendations

The Pakistan Federal Government should:

- **Ensure that the unmet early recovery needs of flood-affected people are addressed by investing adequate resources**, particularly for housing and agriculture support.
- **Save lives and money by investing the initial \$27m needed in DRR measures**, including reorganising and strengthening disaster management authorities, and mapping future flood hazards. This would avoid incurring the repeated costs of far more expensive emergency responses. This should be followed by sustained long-term investment to reduce risks including at least 1 per cent of all national development funding allocated to DRR, which could be drawn from increased tax revenues.
- **Define the mandates, roles, and responsibilities of government bodies responsible for preparedness, disaster management, and reconstruction at the federal, provincial, and district levels.** This should ensure effective co-ordination between GoP institutions and with international actors throughout the response, recovery, and reconstruction phases.
- **Update the National Floods Management Plan, simplify and improve early warning systems, designate safe breaching locations, and mitigate risks by repairing flood protection systems urgently.**
- **Reduce vulnerability to crises.** The GoP should urgently co-ordinate a pro-poor reconstruction and development plan that is transparent and accountable and that includes reforms necessary to address underlying vulnerabilities of women, landless people, hard-to-reach communities, and minorities. This must be based on DRR and climate change adaptation principles.
- **Listen to the concerns of the Pakistani people** by ensuring that affected communities and civil society, particularly women, are consulted on preparedness, response, and longer-term reconstruction.

Provincial governments should demonstrate commitment to disaster management and reconstruction by:

- **Championing the new roles and responsibilities of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs).** Provincial governments should invest resources to provide permanent staff who are well trained and clear on their roles and responsibilities.

- **Prioritising disaster preparedness**, ensuring that realistic contingency plans are in place and that key flood protection infrastructure is adequately repaired and maintained.
- **Investing at the community level** by initiating community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) programming that results in greater participation and local ownership of CBDRM initiatives.
- **Holding local Government elections** to ensure representation and improve accountability to local communities
- **Showing long-term vision by ensuring that reconstruction and development plans prioritise DRR and climate change adaptation**, and by putting the needs of the most vulnerable communities, particularly those of women, at the heart of these. Investment in sustainable livelihoods and local economies will help achieve this goal.

International donors should enhance the cost-effectiveness of aid by:

- **Consolidating existing relief expenditure by meeting current gaps in the early recovery and reconstruction phases in all areas of the country, based on need.**
- **Placing DRR and climate change adaptation principles at the heart of their country strategies** for both relief and development, in line with the Global Platform on Risk Reduction including allocating at least 10 per cent of all humanitarian and recovery spending to DRR.
- **Supporting the GoP to fulfil its obligations under the Hyogo Framework for Action by building domestic capacity and supporting increased investment in CBDRM.** To ensure sustainability, donors should make longer-term commitments with multi-year funding.
- **Supporting the GoP's leadership in humanitarian and early recovery response**, while encouraging accountability to affected people and the need for great improvements in co-ordination, particularly at district level.

The UN should demonstrate its ability to learn lessons and look ahead by:

- **Re-orientating its approach** to ensure greater integration, flexibility, and co-ordination between the cluster system and the GoP in future responses, outside of conflict situations.
- **Ensuring that all staff are aware of and understand DRR**, as well as core humanitarian principles and standards.
- **Ensuring effective co-ordination with federal-, provincial-, and district-level disaster management structures** and committing to strengthen and institutionalise these structures with resources and technical help.

NGOs should help build Pakistan's long-term resilience by:

- **Reducing vulnerability through mainstreaming DRR principles** into projects and building capacity on DRR within local organisations
- **Strengthening the links between emergency and reconstruction**, response and preparedness programming, and developing accountability mechanisms to ensure that they are demonstrating best practice.
- **Committing to full transparency** and accountability in their operations by publishing their financial reports.

Pakistani media can support efforts to reduce the impacts of future disasters by:

- **Raising awareness** of the importance of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery by making this part of their regular coverage, particularly on television.

Notes

¹ Federal Finance Minister, budget speech, June 2011.

² Pakistan's National Flood Reconstruction Plan acknowledges the setback but states 'Pakistan remains firmly committed to achieve MDGs by 2015' (1.2). Government of Pakistan Planning Commission, Flood Reconstruction Unit (2011) 'National Flood Reconstruction Plan 2010', 23 February 2011.

³ In 2005, 168 governments adopted a ten-year plan known as the Hyogo Framework for Action. This is based on five 'priorities for action' by 2015 that aim to make countries better prepared and more resilient in relation to environmental shocks.

⁴ In the past four years, Pakistan has missed every tax and spending target. Total tax revenues declined to 9.8 per cent of GDP in FY2011 from 10.2 per cent in FY2010, and the country has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world. The reform agenda outlined by the Government of Pakistan (GoP) in its 2012 budget aims to simplify the tax structure and broaden the tax base, in line with the recommendations of the World Bank's tax policy report. 'Pakistan's FY12 budget – Resource constraints bite', analysis by Standard Chartered Bank, 7 June 2011.

⁵ Figure is taken from the ADB Post Earthquake Damage Needs Assessment 12 November 2005 which estimated reconstruction at \$5.2b, and the ADB Post Cyclone and Floods Damage Needs Assessment in Baluchistan and Sindh 2007 which estimated a further \$674m. Although not a natural disaster, also note the financial burden of reconstruction from conflict outlined in the ADB Post Conflict Damage Needs Assessment December 2009 was \$1.08b.

⁶ This figure is taken from 'Pakistan Floods 2010: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment' by the Government of Pakistan, the World Bank, and Asian Development Bank, November 2010. The new budget for FY2011/12 is \$43bn, as announced by the Federal Finance Minister in June 2011.

⁷ National Assembly expenses allocated for 432 MPs amounts to \$36m in the 2009/10 and 2010/11 budgets.

⁸ 'Pakistan Floods 2010: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment' by the Government of Pakistan, the World Bank, and Asian Development Bank, November 2010 (Annex 2 on DRM)

⁹ Described as 'a historical consensus with far reaching impact on the way relations between the Federal Government and Provinces are conducted'. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) briefing paper No.36: 'Impact of the 18th Constitutional Amendment on the Federation Province Relations', July 2010.

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