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**Minutes of the Consultation Meeting held on “Issues and Solutions on WES for the Flood Affected Areas”**

Meeting Held on: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2007(2.00pm to 5.00pm)  
Office, New Delhi

Venue: Plan International's

***Present:***

1. Dr.Pranoy Dutta, WHO
2. Arumugam Kalimuthu, Plan International
3. Vibuthi Pandey, Plan International
4. Arjun Khajuria, Sphere India-URS
5. Indrajit, CRS
6. Sarah Cashore, CRS
7. S.C.Jain, AFPRO
8. Emily Scott, OXFAM
9. Nupur Pande, SCF (UK)
10. Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok
11. Anshu Sharma, SEEDS
12. A.Sumitra, CARE India
13. Parveen Bhandari, UNICEF
14. Amit Nair, UNICEF
15. Ramesh Sakthivel, WES-Net India
16. Vikrant, Sphere India
17. Representative of ActAid

Mr.Arumugam Kalimuthu welcomed the gathering and the need for organising this consultative meeting. He expressed that WATSAN being a critical component in the flood affected areas, the consultation would help various stakeholders involved in the relief and rehabilitation process to arrive at effective and appropriate solutions to be taken up. The following are the outcomes of the meeting which was attended by representatives of various agencies working in the flood affected areas.

**Presentations:**

**By Dr.Pranoy Dutta, WHO**

1. In his presentation, Dr.Dutta brought about various water and sanitation issues that are to be addressed in the emergency situation. In presentation included some of the key aspects such as water quality, potential diseases, hygiene and sanitation to be addressed.
2. He stressed the need for establishing disease surveillance mechanisms and following proper reporting systems to effectively monitor the situations in the affected areas.

3. He pointed out that the involvement of media, especially in the affected areas, can have very positive impact. They can effectively report critical areas that need immediate interventions as well as help in creating awareness among the affected people.
4. Water quality monitoring is an important aspect that needs to be given priority, according to him. Use of Hydrogen sulphide vials for testing bacteriological contamination is essential. The need for administering proper chlorine dose and also use of chloroscope was also stressed by him in his presentation. He mentioned that conducting tests at the household level for ensuring proper chlorination is very important as people may not be following the routines even though chlorine tablets are distributed.

**By Mr.Arumugam Kalimuthu, Plan (India)**

1. Mr.Kalimuthu presented the situation in the flood affected areas in Bihar based on his recent visit to the area. His presentation was focussed on the current situation in the flood affected areas and potential areas of interventions related to water and sanitation needed.
2. He maintained that apart from inundation of houses, severe damages to the water and sanitation components have in most of the villages visited. People are forced to consume contaminated water from these sources as a result.
3. He mentioned that the possibilities for outbreak of diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria and filaria are very high if preventive actions are not initiated.
4. He pointed out that since the affected areas have shallow table, it may not be appropriate to promote leach pit toilets in the relief and rehabilitation activities. Promotion of ECOSAN toilets in the area would prevent contamination of ground water as well as reduce the risk of contamination during the future floods.
5. On water quality, he mentioned that the at least hydrogen sulphide vials can be used on an urgent basis to assess bacteriological contamination of the water sources. Also, simple test kits to conduct water quality tests may be distributed to analyse water quality.
6. Promotion of hygiene messages to create awareness on the precautions to be adopted is also very important. He mentioned that chlorination, water handling, safe sanitation practices, personnel hygiene, preparation of ORS, etc, are some important aspects to be included in the hygiene promotion programs.
7. He requested members to look into the maintenance and management aspects if hi-tech filters are being introduced for treatment of drinking water in the flood affected areas. He cautioned that they may not be maintained once the support for maintenance is withdrawn after the interventions based on the past experiences in disaster response.
8. He also mentioned that WES-Net, through its members, can offer assistance to the agencies planning to undertake the water and sanitation interventions.

**Discussions**

1. After the presentations, discussions on the presentations and critical areas of interventions needed were taken up.

2. Mr.Ansu, raised the point that developing guidelines on water and sanitation focussed on each affected state would help the agencies involved in relief and rehabilitation works. Mr.Ansu informed the group that guidelines on shelter is being prepared for assisting agencies who are taking up shelter improvement activities in the affected areas.
3. Mr.Kalimuthu expressed that apart from developing a guideline on WATSAN activities; a data base of agencies and suppliers who can be contacted for assistance can be prepared and circulated.
4. Ms.Sarah expressed that CRS response includes distribution of various WATSAN related supplies in the affected areas. However, she felt that with the assistance of agencies which have the capacities on WATSAN aspects, the interventions could be made effective, especially on aspects such as water quality, etc.,
5. The group also felt that information on suitable water testing kits could help the agencies to procure these for effectively addressing the water quality issues in the affected areas.
6. Mr.Amit informed the gathering that UNICEF field offices in the flood affected states have already started distributing materials such as tarpaulins, halogen tablets, ORS packets, etc., and sufficient stocks are available with them for distribution. He informed that members can contact the representatives of field offices to collect these materials for distribution.
7. Discussions on the need for developing IEC materials with a special focus on the current situation were raised by the group. It was felt that the IEC messages must include precautions to be taken towards chlorine over dose which is not promoted in the regular IEC campaigns. The IEC messages also should be simple and as far as possible be in the pictorial form to make the communities understand these easily. Mr.Kalimuthu informed that IEC materials already developed by Plan International could be used in the area and he offered that some copies which are in Hindi could be supplied to interested members by Plan.
8. Mr.Ansu expressed that the guideline developed by WES-Net on WATSAN issues could be incorporated in the guideline being developed on shelter for making it comprehensive. He also mentioned that there is no need for building permanent houses in the affected areas as damages to the existing houses are not very significant. He informed that there is need for providing temporary shelters and undertaking improvements to the damaged houses in the affected areas.
9. Ms.Sarah expressed that CRS and other agencies could seek WES-Net's recommendations on WATSAN issues for the rehabilitation phase after the relief phase.
10. Members expressed that involvement of WES-Net representatives in the IAG coordination meetings (the next one in Patna on 31<sup>st</sup>) could be of immense help.

### **Sphere URS**

1. Mr.Arjun briefed on the extension and restructuring plans of Sphere India/URS. He mentioned that the budget and activities towards this is being developed and these would be presented in the Sphere management committee meeting tentatively scheduled on the 1<sup>st</sup> week of September (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>).
2. Mr.Ansu informed that Sphere secretariat and Sphere URS secretariat are currently operating from OXFAM and SEEDS respectively. He mentioned that under the restructuring plan,

possibilities of merging these under one unit, and also hosting the secretariat in one location on a rotational basis will also be explored. He mentioned that already agencies like SCF, CARE, etc., have shown interest to support the proposed activities.

3. Finally, members present in the meeting were requested to provide details of the proposed interventions in the affected states to map out the interventions being planned. These details will also be collected from other agencies not present in the meeting to come up with comprehensive information on the proposed response.

### **Summary of Discussions**

The following are some of the action points were arrived at the end of the meeting;

- **Sectoral strategy on WATSAN and Shelter** will be circulated among the members by the **24<sup>th</sup> of August** (Next Friday).
- The strategy papers will briefly suggest the **best technical and practical options (models)** available to member organization while planning interventions in specific environments.
- **IEC material on health and hygiene practices** will be shared with the member organizations for further use and dissemination.
- WES-Net will also share list of technical people, organizations and suppliers based in the various flood affected states.
- WES-Net representatives will also join the **IAG coordination meetings in Patna** (31 August ) ,and explore opportunities of **working from the Unified Response Control Room** (URCR) in Patna.
- UNICEF has sort INGO/NGO help in the **distribution process** of its relief stocks in the state of Bihar.
- **SPHERE India and URS extension/ restructuring plans** were also shared at the meeting .( see attached file: Sphere and URS extension.doc)
- **The SPHERE Management Committee (MC) meeting** is planned for the 1st week of September 2007. The likely dates are **5<sup>th</sup>** or **6<sup>th</sup>** of September. Please do indicate your convenience.
- Sphere and URS coordinators will be meeting member agencies to discuss extension/restructuring plans prior to the SPHERE MC meeting.