

**Minutes of HAP & Care International Teleconference on Pakistan Floods
Friday, August 20, 2010**

On **Friday 20th of August** CARE International hosted a New Emergencies teleconference to discuss the current crisis in Pakistan and the potential for interagency collaboration in accountability. This teleconference was organised due to a number of HAP member requests, and aimed to complement efforts being led by Church World Services Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS P/A) in Pakistan.

CWS P/A organized a meeting on the 12th August in Islamabad to discuss challenges and opportunities to bridge the gap between the theory and practice in adhering to humanitarian standards and principles, at organisational and national levels. During the meeting three main points were agreed; that there is a need for lessons from past experiences to be learnt, that Q&A needs to be mainstreamed from head office to the field and needs to be a long-term initiative, and that issues of accountability need to be overcome collectively.

Agencies that had one or more representatives at the teleconference:

Seewa Pak, CWS P/A, Merlin, Save the Children UK, Full Gospel Assemblies, Redr, CAFOD, CDA, CRS, Tearfund, Act for Peace, Care International & Pakistan, Oxfam GB, NCA, Alnap, Concern, Mercy Corps and SUNGI.

Apologies were received from:

OCHA, Danida, ACT Alliance, Medair, People in Aid, PMU Interlife, Diakonia Sweden, WVI, Mercy Malaysia, CWS NZ

Overview of Emergency

- CWS P/A provided a brief overview of the emergency with the following main points:
the emergency is non-abating with the numbers being affected continuously rising;
- the flooding has caused huge destruction to livestock, crops and infrastructure with particular concern for schools and hospitals;
- there is major concern for children with an estimated 3 to 6 million having been affected
- the floods could have a significant negative long-term effect on development.

Key Challenges

CWS P/A also drew attention to key challenges related to the enormous scale of the emergency. They emphasised the importance of ensuring participation, in particular for women. They suggested engaging local leaders and using radio to reach out to a larger number of flood affected populations. Radio announcements could be used to spread information on humanitarian organisations and their Q & A mechanisms in addition it could also be used for advocacy purposes. Scaling up the response has been difficult as the government has beneficiary lists, which directly challenge the impartiality of the response. Finally, there is major concern of UN agencies not using Q & A mechanisms.

Brief overview of organisational activities and accountability initiatives in response to the flooding as reported during the teleconference

Seewa Pak is trying to ensure participation by distributing information with relief supplies and has set up a complaint box at the organisations offices. The provision of relief is being hampered by damaged roads and looting is an increasing risk.

CWS P/A has taken the lead in promoting the HAP Standard in Pakistan. In addition to the meeting held on the 12th August, CWS P/A has planned 10 introductory workshops on Sphere's Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief and the HAP 2007 Standard for humanitarian organisations operating in the region. CWS P/A accountability initiatives are part of a wider five year Q & A plan. They had previously established a Q & A department, which is currently being reinforced with more staff members. CWS has been orientating organisations in Q & A mechanisms and has been establishing complaint handling mechanisms in several locations. The promotion of Sphere and HAP Standard is integral aspect of their work.

Merlin has been present in Pakistan since 2005 implementing static health facilities. It enjoys a long standing relationship with the Ministry of Health. Merlin will be partnering with HelpAge to look at the needs of the elderly. They are currently assessing accountability needs.

Save the children UK is deploying to Pakistan next week. They are currently training staff and have stringent monitoring and evaluation strategy which incorporates issues of accountability.

Full Gospel Assemblies are partners with **PMU Interlife** and **Seewa Pak**. They are currently carrying out needs assessments with their partners and a phone number for complaints has been made available.

RedR has ongoing capacity building programmes. These include training in, 'Do No Harm' principles, and needs assessment. Several organizations have already expressed an interest in the training programmes. RedR has received funds specifically for training and is its offering its expertise to all interested parties.

CAFOD is supporting network partners and is awaiting requests from them.

CDA is not present in Pakistan but is offering support.

CRS senior management has expressed interest in furthering their accountability mechanisms but there are no practical mechanisms on the ground.

Tearfund has produced learning paper on humanitarian accountability in the last two weeks. Its activities are being coordinated through partners through which, it is trying to ensure accountability.

Act for Peace is not operational but is supporting CWS P/A

CARE Pakistan said that response is too small for the scale of the disaster. Impartiality is being challenged because aid distribution is being given along political lines. Security and access is a serious issue. Care Pakistan is operating through partners and has appointed a HAP focal person.

Oxfam GB is working with partners on Q & A mechanisms. Oxfam drew attention to the difficulties potentially created by a significant increase of new staff.

NCA has been present in Pakistan since 1981. It is currently providing relief through partners and is following HAP Standards.

ALNAP is not an operational agency.

Concern is working with partners. Complaint & response mechanisms have been established and several workshops on the HAP Standard have been held. Also, Concern has M & E systems in place. The key challenge is to ensure that everyone is aware of the impartiality, neutrality and independence of relief aid.

Mercy Corps is currently scaling up. Their activities include water testing. They are ensuring that M & E is an integral part of their budgeting.

SUNGI has Q & A mechanisms and complaint & response mechanisms in place. SUNGI attended a meeting of the National Humanitarian Network. The network is a collective of 60-70 local NGO's. During the meeting Q & A mechanisms were discussed and a demand was made for basic documents on accountability in a range of languages. SUNGI is struggling with access to certain areas for the provision of relief. Aid is currently politically driven with political parties and the media taking sides.

Mercy Malaysia were unable to attend the telecom, but forwarded the following update via email:

- 1) MERCY Malaysia is working with a local partner, Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA), to run two static clinics and two mobile clinics, in Charsadda and Nowshera
- 2) We have signed a Letter of Understanding with them, attaching our HAF and informing that we are member of HAP.
- 3) MERCY Malaysia assigns a Malaysian volunteer doctor in each district while PIMA assigns local doctors to run the clinic. For now, we have left the screening of the local doctors to PIMA.
- 4) We have done a briefing on the Code of Conduct for our volunteers from the Peshawar Medical College who will be assisting us to distribute Hygiene Kits in Nowshera.
- 5) We have signs at our clinics stating that MERCY Malaysia is in collaboration with PIMA and our doctors wear our MERCY t-shirts as identification.

We have limited capacity – We can only send two officers and for Peshawar our partners advised us not to send in too many volunteers because of the security situation. This is made more difficult by the fact that we are limited to sending males because of the cultural situation. Our officers are on the move constantly as right now there are plans to have a clinic in Punjab since the needs are quite high in the northern area too - so currently there is difficulty in monitoring accountability measures.

Our mission members have also informed us that the level of illiteracy was quite high in Peshawar, so this creates some issues for displaying our HAF and HAP principles, despite being translated into local language. Even then most translations are in Urdu, whereas there is a need to translate in Pashto.

HAP International is looking at options for the deployment of HAP staff to support the work of CWS P/A in assuring an accountable and quality response in Pakistan. A HAP member of staff will travel to Pakistan for a period of two weeks in September to make an assessment with CWS P/A of support and capacity needed, including holding further discussions with partner organisations and other stakeholders. There was support expressed during the teleconference for further collective action to augment the current Q&A response. This will be explored further between CWS P/A and HAP, and a proposal will be circulated once this has been agreed upon.

HAP International would like to thank all agencies that participated and or responded and Care International for hosting the teleconference.
