

Devastation By Sidr

Early recovery action plan by Mar

Staff Correspondent

The caretaker government with the help of the donor agencies will finalise an 'Early Recovery Action Plan for Sidr-affected Areas ' by March next with view to going ahead with its long-term assistance programmes for the affected people.

The plan will include projects for restoring food security, agricultural rehabilitation, transitional shelter, ecological balance, re-establishing health and nutrition services, repairing educational infrastructures and aiding the students for buying educational equipment, hygienic water supply and sanitation.

At present the government in association with donor agencies and donor countries has been implementing a programme titled 'Bangladesh's Emergency Response to Sidr' since the cyclone Sidr devastated 12 south-western districts in November last year.

"All emergency response programmes in Sidr-hit areas are expected to be successfully completed by the middle of next month," said Abu Sadeque, director of the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) at a national seminar in the city yesterday.

The seminar titled 'Cyclone Sidr 2007: Early Recovery Action Plan' was organised jointly by DMB and UNDP at Brac Centre in the capital.

The draft paper on the early recovery action plan prepared by the ministry and UNDP was presented at the seminar, which was attended by top officials of various ministries and departments and representatives of various donor agencies.

While presenting the draft of the Action Plan, Abu Sadeque said 2.6 million poor families will get 15 kg rice weekly as of May next in Sidr-affected areas.

"A total of 500,000 houses have been damaged. Of them 20,000 houses will be built with the assistance of the government of Saudi Arabia," he pointed out.

He said the government of Japan will help construct houses for 10,000 families while the Indian government will complete reconstruction of 10 villages in Bagerhat district.

Food and Disaster Management Secretary Dr Mohammad Ayub Miah said the unprecedented cyclone Sidr wrought havoc across the 12 south-western districts, including the four worst-affected districts of Bagerhat, Barguna, Patuakhali and Pirojpur, causing a colossal loss of US \$ 2.3 billion.

" The UN Rapid Initial Assessment (RIA Nov 2007) highlighted the large-scale loss of standing crops, family food stocks and livestock, and estimated that the cyclone severely affected over 4.7 million people in nine out of 12 districts. Of these, 2.6 million people were found to be in need of lifesaving assistance, including 2.2 million in need of immediate food assistance," he said while addressing the seminar as chief guest.

The representatives of development partners said the caretaker government will have to provide authentic and specific data and figures regarding the losses caused by Sidr, otherwise it will be difficult for them to assess the extent of aids and other supports in this regard.

The early recovery action plan is meant for preparing a solid ground for mid- and long-term rehabilitation.

The World Bank and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are working for formulating the long-term rehabilitation projects in the Sidr-affected areas.

UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Renata Lok Dessallien, Tariq ul Islam, Disaster Management Coordinator of UNDP, and Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman also addressed the seminar.



Early recovery action plan for Sidr victims to be finalised in March

As it wants to move towards an 'early recovery action plan from the 'emergency response phase' in the Sidr-affected districts, the government hopes to finalise its action plan in this regard by March 12, reports UNB.

The government with the help of donor agencies and donor countries has been implementing the 'Bangladesh Emergency Response to Sidr' programmes since the Cyclone Sidr devastated the country's 12 southwestern districts in November last year.

All the emergency response programmes in the Sidr-hit areas are expected to be successfully completed by mid-March, said a senior official of the Disaster Management Bureau on the sidelines of a national seminar in the city Thursday.

The Food and Disaster Management Ministry arranged the seminar on 'Cyclone Sidr-2007, Early Recovery Action Plan', at the city's BRAC Centre in the morning.

UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Renata Lok Dessallien, Director General of Disaster Management Bureau Abu Sadeque, and consultant Dr Mizan R Khan, among others, addressed the seminar with Food and Disaster Management secretary Dr Mohammad Ayub Miah in the chair.

The paper on the early recovery action plan prepared by the ministry and the UNDP was presented at the seminar, which was attended by top officials of various ministries and departments, and representatives of various donor agencies.

Speaking at the seminar, representatives of the development partners said the Bangladesh government will have to provide authentic and specific data and figures regarding the losses caused

by the Sidr, or else, it will be difficult for them to assess the extent of aid and other support in this regard.

The early recovery action plan is meant for preparing a solid ground for rehabilitation and mid- and long-term reconstruction plans. The World Bank and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are working for formulating the long-term rehabilitation projects in the Sidr-affected areas.

According to another report, foreign donors have so far pledged US\$ 650 million (65 crore) for the reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the floods and Sidr-affected areas of Bangladesh, out of the estimated US\$ 4 billion (400 crore) required for the purpose in 15 years.

The pledged amount includes US\$ 120 million from the Asian Development Bank and US\$ 60 million from each of Japan and the UK.

In accordance with the agreements signed Thursday, US\$ 70 million would be reallocated from four ongoing World Bank-financed projects for the purpose of reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and losses caused by the recent floods.