



Pakistan Humanitarian Forum

The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum was formed in 2003 to coordinate and strengthen the efforts of International NGOs working in disaster management. The forum comprises 35 of the largest international NGOs operational in Pakistan.

www.pakhumanitarianforum.com.pk

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Pakistan's Humanitarian Forum calls for urgent international support

Having described the floods as the most debilitating natural disaster in the country's history, Pakistan's government has requested international support. The government has suspended expenditures from its already meager development budget, and shifted its limited resources to the relief effort. The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) urges the international community to play its part in meeting the immediate needs of millions of Pakistanis, as well as tens of thousands of Afghan refugees, and also warns that without long-term funding, rebuilding this devastated country will prove virtually impossible.

Tammy Hasselfeldt, Country Director of the International Rescue Committee, which currently chairs the PHF, says: "the international response to the disaster has been too small to even begin to effectively address the needs of survivors. The most urgent priority is to ensure that safe water as well as medicines are available, food supplies are restored and transportation networks fixed to accelerate the delivery of desperately needed aid."

Over 14 million people have been affected by the disaster.

Looming health crisis

With water sources in many areas completely devastated, already vulnerable men, women and children are being forced to drink contaminated floodwater and risk life-threatening diseases. The incidence of acute watery diarrhoea has escalated with frightening speed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, the Punjab and Baluchistan, and if not contained swiftly, could lead to outbreaks of disease and acute malnutrition. An already weak health system was also hard hit by the crisis. More than 100 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed by the floods, and those that are functional are inaccessible to many due to the extensive damage to roads and bridges.

Education in jeopardy

Over 2000 schools have been damaged by the floods, and several hundred are being used as shelters. The education of Pakistan's children is in jeopardy. Opening temporary schools and reconstructing those that have been damaged is of utmost importance to avoid a serious interruption in the education of Pakistani children.

Economy at risk

The disaster has compounded Pakistan's food security crisis, as families throughout the country have lost food supplies, homes, livestock, crops and livelihoods. The Government of Pakistan will need substantial donor support to enable food security for millions. The damage to major crops including cotton, sugarcane and rice could result in lower textile exports and higher sugar and rice prices. With 45% of the country's labour force employed in agriculture, losses in this sector will likely have a spill-over effect on the entire country.

Long-term rebuilding must go hand-in-hand with immediate action

The initial damage assessment estimates the cost of relief and early recovery at around \$3.5 billion. Substantial funding for reconstruction of homes, schools, health facilities and infrastructure will be required in the coming weeks and months as Pakistan comes to terms with this colossal disaster. The reconstruction of bridges, roads and other economic infrastructure could take years.

Experience from the 2005 earthquake shows that rehabilitation mechanisms must be established in parallel to the relief effort. The national economy was able to quickly recover from the earthquake, but the devastation caused by the floods could be much more difficult for the economy to absorb. There is a need for a faster and more substantial relief effort, together with a serious commitment towards rehabilitation and recovery.

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Notes to editors:

1. For more information or to arrange interviews please contact PHF on phf.policy@gmail.com or +92 300 856 872.
2. The Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan (PIFERP), launched on 11 August, estimates the cost of humanitarian relief and recovery at \$460 million for three months. As of 16 August, just over \$150m had been received. Water, sanitation and hygiene needs are currently just 10% funded. The health sector is just 7% funded. With the exception of the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Australia, Italy and Norway, no government donor has pledged more than \$5m. Kuwait and India have committed/pledged \$5m each, the Netherlands has pledged \$3.9m, and the UAE, Switzerland, Finland, China and France have committed/pledged between \$1m and \$2m each. Spain, Belgium and Thailand have committed/pledged less than \$1m each. Many other large donors are yet to pledge anything in response to the appeal.
3. This release has been signed off by a majority of the members of the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum. PHF members include: ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development; Action Against Hunger (ACF) Pakistan; Action Aid Pakistan; American Refugee Committee; Catholic Relief Services; CARE International; CESVI Pakistan; Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan; Concern Worldwide; Cordaid Pakistan; Emergency Resource Centre; Focus Humanitarian Assistance Pakistan; Handicap International; HAP International; Helping Hand for Relief And Development; International Catholic Migration Commission; The International Rescue Committee; International Relief and Development; Islamic Relief; Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin); Malteser International; Mediciens du Monde Pakistan; Mercy Corps; MSF Holland; Muslim Hands International; Norwegian Church Aid; Norwegian Refugee Council; Oxfam Novib; Oxfam GB; Plan Pakistan; Qatar Charity; Relief International; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Save the Children; Shelter for Life; Tearfund; Trocaire; World Vision Pakistan.