



## Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Emergency humanitarian aid for the people affected by the floods in Bangladesh and north-east India

Location of operation: SOUTH ASIA

Amount of Decision: Euro 4,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-SA/BUD/2004/02000

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### **Explanatory Memorandum**

#### **1 - Rationale, needs and target population.**

##### **1.1. - Rationale:**

The monsoon commenced in South Asia in the middle of June and started to have catastrophic impact on the population of Bangladesh and northern India around mid July even though the rainy season is far from over. This year's floods are unprecedented and arrived around one month early and spread to new areas in addition to the usual flood-affected areas.

The overall trend continues to indicate deterioration in the flooding situation, which is particularly alarming in the areas around the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins. The forecast is that the floods will continue to increase, at least until early August when there will be a full moon. This could lead to a prolonged flooding season, causing extensive damage to crops and livestock, as well as longer displacement of people<sup>1</sup>.

The flooding in Bangladesh, the northern Indian states of Assam and Bihar has now claimed approximately 400 lives and affected over 34 million people<sup>2</sup>. The situation has deteriorated in Bangladesh and northern India in the past week where river levels have continued to rise at alarming rates, sometimes at more than two metres above the danger level. According to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), this disaster is now assuming the proportions of the worst flooding seen in these areas in the past decade.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Situation Report No. 4, 22/07/2004

<sup>2</sup> Source: International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Monsoon floods information bulletin n°2, 21/07/2004.

Low-lying Bangladesh, where over 50% of the population of 130 million lives below the poverty line, is criss-crossed by a network of 230 rivers including several major arteries carrying melting ice from the Himalayas. Flooding affecting at least 20% of the country takes place every year. The situation is now becoming grave and is expected to deteriorate further, with flooding comparable to 1998 levels which are considered the highest in 15 years. On 22 July 2004, 36 out of 64 districts had been affected. Torrential monsoon rains over the past week have further swollen rivers already at dangerously high levels. The flooding in the upstream Indian states of Assam and Bihar comes down in the Bangladeshi delta and adds to the floods in Bangladesh that are caused by unusually heavy rain.

More than four million people in northern and central Bangladesh are marooned and displaced from their homes, forced to take refuge on public buildings and road embankments. Many others are stranded on small hamlets surrounded by water. Monsoon rain swept the capital Dhaka on 19/07/2004, forcing thousands of city residents to retreat to rooftops as neighbourhoods submerged. The situation in the Dhaka district may deteriorate further<sup>3</sup>. Road and rail links are disrupted and the Dhaka airport is submerged. To date, 50% of the country is inundated. On 20/07/2004, the death toll in Bangladesh stood at 93.

The Bangladesh Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) expects that the rain-driven floods could assume even more serious dimensions if the water levels in the Brahmaputra, Ganges and Meghna continue to swell at the same time. The flood situation in the country's central region is worsening. By the end of July, 60% of the country may be inundated.

In India, the worst affected states have been in the north and north-east, with a total of about 30 million people affected in Assam and Bihar. The death toll in these two states is now approaching 300. In *Assam*, there have been incessant rains since the end of June and the rise in water level of the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries is causing widespread damage to property, crops and flood control embankments and disrupts road and rail communications. All 27 districts suffer from the floods which affect 10.1 million people living in 9,500 villages and 7.7 million hectares of cultivable land. 112 persons lost their life so far. Heavy rain continues and raises the level of the Brahmaputra River<sup>4</sup>. The situation is equally serious in *Bihar* where 20.1 million people living in 7,200 villages are affected. The 18 affected districts (out of 38) are located on the northern side of the Ganga River. 1.3 million hectares of crops have already been affected by the floods. The death toll is 179 people so far. The situation is likely to become critical with the forecast of more rain<sup>5</sup>.

The governments of India and Bangladesh do not appeal for international assistance at this moment, but continue to welcome any assistance that aid agencies on the ground may be willing to provide.

## 1.2. - Identified needs:

Incessant rain and the suddenly occurring flash floods and river erosions have left a trail of devastation that seriously impact people on the short and longer term.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, meteorological bulletin, 22/07/2004.

<sup>4</sup> Source: UNDP India, Assam flood situation report, 23/07/2004.

<sup>5</sup> Source: ECHO South Asia Office, Bihar flood situation report, 23/07/2004.

### **Food and fodder**

The scarce food stocks that the deprived population might have had before the floods, have been swept away. According to Red Cross volunteers' assessment reports, food is mentioned as the top priority by most of the affected population interviewed.

No proper information could be collected on loss of livestock due to drowning. The losses are estimated to be low except in villages that have been hit by embankment breaches. The risk of foot and mouth disease is a serious threat. Fodder availability is poor and goats and cattle are surviving on very little available grass and wet paddy straw. Many cattle are grazing in areas recently inundated by floodwater thereby increasing the risk of contracting diseases (rotten grass). Few families are able to purchase wheat bran for the cattle<sup>6</sup>.

### **Shelter**

Because of the large scale damage to villages, people are taking refuge in makeshift shelters, but in many cases there is hardly any covered area for them to take refuge. Temporary shelters and housing repair are therefore needed. The state government in Assam has established 1625 relief camps for the displaced population and in Bihar, 124 relief centres and 94 health centres have been set up.

### **Water, sanitation and healthcare**

The water and sanitation system has been seriously affected by the floods. Primary healthcare and promotion of hygiene is necessary as precautionary measures against possible epidemics.

The flash floods contaminated a number of water sources and the provision of water purification tablets is of utmost importance in order to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases in the affected districts. In Assam, there is a shortage of safe drinking water in some of the temporary settlement camps. The majority of the water sources (mainly hand pumps) has been inundated by the floodwater and many have been buried by sand deposits. There is a growing concern of an increase of water and sanitation related diseases<sup>7</sup>.

### **Food security**

The floods have damaged millions of hectares of crops and seed beds exacerbating the vulnerability of the affected population. As the water level is high and it has come earlier than usual, most of the crops are now submerged and it is feared that all of it will be damaged. Many families have lost their saved grains and therefore will be forced to purchase seeds for next year's cultivation. Farming is the worst affected means of livelihood and daily wage labourers will also be affected as more than 70% of the labourers are employed on farmlands. As a result there will be a long term shortage of food and fodder. Farmers are already thinking of selling their cattle which will put them in an even more precarious situation after the flood.

The floods do not only have immediate emergency effects but also some mid-term effects unless assistance to rehabilitation after the floods is provided. The agriculture and medium term food security situation is at risk in most of the severely affected areas because of the loss of crops and the threat of sand casting of the agriculture fields.

At the end of the monsoon season, once the floodwater recedes and the conditions are established for the affected population to return to their homes and re-establish their life, basic agricultural support including seeds (paddy and vegetables) would need to

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<sup>6</sup> OXFAM UK, Rapid assessment report Assam, 14-18/07/2004.

<sup>7</sup> OXFAM UK, Rapid assessment report Assam, 14-18/07/2004.

be provided so that the potential beneficiaries can plant their crops at the suitable time of the year.

**1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:**

The present Decision will benefit the rural population living in the most flood affected districts of central and northern Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Bihar. The target groups of the Decision are the most vulnerable women, men, children and disabled persons affected by the floods.

**1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:**

The most worrying information is that the monsoon season is far from over and the worsening weather, particularly in Bangladesh, could constrain humanitarian aid and destabilise the situation again.

In previous years, the lack of or the absence of co-ordination between humanitarian agencies have lead to duplication, overlapping and victims being left aside from relief assistance. This year the coordination between the INGOs, thanks to ECHO initiatives, is much better. The ECHO Office in New Delhi has taken steps to avoid geographical and sectoral duplication in Bangladesh, Assam and Bihar. These initiatives are working as expected and there is little chance of duplication among partners and other stakeholders.

**2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed.**

**2.1. - Objectives:**

Principal objective: To provide support and assistance to approximately 800,000 people living in the rural areas of Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Bihar affected by the heavy floods of the 2004 monsoon.

Specific objectives:

- To assist approximately 600,000 rural victims of the floods in Bangladesh with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.
- To assist approximately 200,000 rural victims of the floods in the Indian states of Assam and Bihar with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.
- To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

**2.2. - Components:**

Based on the assessments made by the ECHO experts in Bangladesh, Assam and Bihar between 12 and 22 July 2004, and the response strategy elaborated with potential partners, ECHO support will allow an integrated approach focusing on immediate relief (distribution of food, non-food relief items, medicines, provision of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) and sanitation facilities) but with a rehabilitation component, including food security.

**Immediate relief activities**

Food rations (including rice, pulse, edible oil and salt) and fodder rations for cattle will be immediately provided. Also the support envisages the distribution of family kits of non-food relief items (clothes, tarpaulins, blankets). The support will include also the distribution of water purifying tablets, ORS, soap, sanitary napkins and mosquito nets. Mobile medical teams will provide emergency medical services for

two months in order to prevent/contain possible outbreaks of waterborne diseases among the affected population. Latrines and tube wells will be installed as well and the provision of water storage facilities is also foreseen.

#### Rehabilitation

Community level water sources will be cleaned and rehabilitated with the active participation of the community and hygiene awareness sessions will be conducted. The most flood-affected and vulnerable families will have their houses repaired. Good quality seeds for paddy and vegetables and basic agricultural tools will be distributed to farmer families and fishing nets will be distributed to fishermen.

In order to maximise the impact of the humanitarian aid for the victims, the Commission will maintain an ECHO support office located in New Delhi. This office will appraise project proposals and co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations financed by the Commission. The office will provide technical assistance capacity and the necessary logistics for the achievement of these tasks.

### **3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision.**

The duration of humanitarian aid operations shall be 6 months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 22 July 2004.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure*, or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. The procedure established in the Framework Partnership Agreement in this respect will be applied.

#### 4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis.

List of previous ECHO operations in BANGLADESH/INDIA				
Decision number	Decision type	2002 EUR	2003 EUR	2004 EUR
ECHO/BGD/BUD/2004/01000	Non Emergency			808,000
ECHO/IND/210/2002/01000	Non Emergency	2,000,000		
ECHO/IND/210/2002/02000	Emergency	3,000,000		
ECHO/IND/210/2003/01000	Non Emergency		1,950,000	
Subtotal		5,000,000	1,950,000	808,000
Total 2002-2004		5,000,000	1,950,000	808,000

Dated : 21/07/2004  
Source : HOPE

Some of the new operations foreseen under the DIPECHO South Asia Programme 2003-2005 have helped to respond to the first needs: In Bangladesh (Feni and Noakhali districts, south of Dhaka) trained staff of an IFRC-managed operation (€220,000) have reacted to the crisis. Also Terre des Hommes Italy managed to provide temporary shelter and food rations to 10,000 people during a week through their €158,495 DIPECHO operation.

## 5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

Donors in BANGLADESH/INDIA the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	3,523,000		
Belgium	0	Other services			
Denmark	59,026				
Finland	0				
France	0				
Germany	624,000				
Greece	0				
Ireland	200,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	0				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	27,000				
United Kingdom	0				
Subtotal	910,026	Subtotal	3,523,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	4,433,026		

Dated : 21/07/2004

(\*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>  
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

The Netherlands has announced that it will allocate €1.2 million towards rehabilitation and preparedness for Bangladesh floods and €1 million for rehabilitation projects in Assam and Bihar.

The Danish embassy in India has pledged € 41,644 to 1 district in Assam.

The ECHO South Asia office in New Delhi as well as its antenna in Dhaka has participated actively in donor and aid agencies coordination. Careful attention has been paid by ECHO to avoid any duplication in the support proposed under this Decision which intends to complement the Bangladeshi and Indian authorities' response to the floods.

## 6 - Amount of Decision and distribution of funding by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: Euro 4,000,000

## 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective</b> <i>To provide support and assistance to approximately 800,000 people living in the rural areas of Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Bihar affected by the heavy floods of the 2004 monsoon.</i>			
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (Euro)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>8</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To assist approximately 600,000 rural victims of the floods in Bangladesh with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.	2,910,000	Bangladesh	- ACTIONAID - CROIX-ROUGE - FICR-IFCR-CH - OXFAM - UK
Specific objective 2: To assist approximately 200,000 rural victims of the floods in the Indian states of Assam and Bihar with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.	1,000,000	Assam and Bihar states in India	- CROIX-ROUGE - FICR-IFCR-CH - ACTIONAID - OXFAM - UK
Specific objective 3: To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.	90,000	Office in New Delhi and antenna in Dhaka	
TOTAL: 4,000,000			

<sup>8</sup> ACTIONAID (GBR), FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIETES DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT ROUGE, OXFAM (GBR)



## 7 –Budget Impact article 23 02 01

	CE (in Euro)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2004	472.000.000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers	-
<b>Total Available Credits</b>	<b>472.000.000</b>
Total executed to date (as on 22/7/2004)	368.930.368
Available remaining	103.069.632
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	<b>4.000.000</b>

## COMMISSION DECISION

of

**on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in SOUTH ASIA**

### THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>9</sup>, and in particular Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The flooding in Bangladesh and the northern Indian states of Assam and Bihar since June 2004 has so far claimed approximately 400 lives and affected over 34 million people as on 22 July 2004.
- (2) The situation has deteriorated in Bangladesh and northern India since the middle of July 2004. River levels have continued to rise at alarming rates, covering 50% of Bangladeshi land and affecting nearly all the districts of Assam and half the districts of Bihar.
- (3) The overall trend indicates that the floods will continue to increase, at least until early August when there will be a full moon. This could lead to a prolonged flooding season, causing extensive damage to crops and livestock, as well as longer displacement of people, and raising the risk of diseases, water and sanitation problems and food scarcity.
- (4) In order to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid for the victims, it is necessary to maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field.
- (5) Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of 6 months.
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of 4,000,000 Euro from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to approximately 800,000 rural people affected by the floods in South Asia, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

#### *Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of 4,000,000 Euro for emergency humanitarian aid operations to provide the necessary assistance and relief to

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<sup>9</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

approximately 800,000 victims of the floods in SOUTH ASIA by using line 23 02 01 of the 2004 budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) and 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

- To assist approximately 600,000 rural victims of the floods in Bangladesh with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.
- To assist approximately 200,000 rural victims of the floods in the Indian states of Assam and Bihar with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.
- To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

The amounts allocated to each of these objectives are listed in the annex to this Decision.

#### *Article 2*

The Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the specific objectives set out in Article 1(2) to another objective mentioned therein, provided that the re-allocated amount represents less than 20% of the global amount covered by this Decision.

#### *Article 3*

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of 6 months from their starting date.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 22 July 2004.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

#### *Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*

*Member of the Commission*

## Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> To provide support and assistance to approximately 800,000 people living in the rural areas of Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam and Bihar affected by the heavy floods of the 2004 monsoon.	
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Amount per specific objective (Euro)</b>
To assist approximately 600,000 rural victims of the floods in Bangladesh with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.	2,910,000
To assist approximately 200,000 rural victims of the floods in the Indian states of Assam and Bihar with integrated relief and rehabilitation support.	1,000,000
To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.	90,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>