

Alert

India

Flooding in Orissa

Geneva, 15 September 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

Fresh rains triggered by a low pressure have compounded the plight of marooned people in flood-hit parts of Orissa. The flood affected people taking shelter under makeshift structures on highways were further affected as heavy rains lashed several areas of Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Khurda districts, official sources reported. Though water has receded from most places, some areas remain cut off from the rest of the state, a senior official said. The meteorological department has forecast more rain in coastal areas of Orissa and fishermen have been advised to be cautious while venturing out to sea.

2. Impact

So far the devastating floods have claimed at least 22 lives, affecting over 2.2 million people in around 4,000 villages spread over 19 districts in the state. Around 80,720 hectares of cultivated land is totally submerged. Food stocks, possessions and livelihoods have been destroyed. Around 160,000 people have been evacuated from low-lying areas and moved to 275 relief camps. Officials have been directed to undertake field visits to ensure that potable water, road connections, power supplies and other facilities are in place as soon as possible. Officials said emergency health care services were being provided in the affected areas and around 400 medical relief centres had started operating. About 110 mobile health units have also been deployed. Over 12,000 people have been treated for common ailments, and anti-venom injections have also been made available to deal with snake bites. (Sources: ZeeNews).

3. National and international response

The Central and State Governments are involved in evacuation of people to safer places and airdropping of food supplies in the villages that are cut off. Orissa Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) teams have been engaged in the evacuation and rescue operations. Relief camps with free kitchens have been opened in the affected areas. The state government has pressed into service 1,400 boats including 200 mechanized vessels.

- Schools and colleges in the most affected areas have been closed and are being used as shelter for the affected people.
- The navy and army are assisting local authorities in evacuation of the people to safer places and dropping of food supplies. Helicopters are being mobilized to deliver food and potable water.
- Orissa Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) teams have been engaged for evacuation and rescue operations.
- 450 tons of Chudda (pressed rice) has already been provided to Cuttack, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts.

4. ACT Alliance response

ACT Alliance India members Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) and Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) are planning to respond to the emergency situation. CASA has already started a feeding programme and will also provide family relief kits to 500 families as an initial response using its own resources.

LWSIT has been requested by the Inter Agency Group of Orissa and District Administration of Orissa State to respond to the disaster in the affected region. LWSIT, operational in some of the flood affected districts, is monitoring the situation and encouraging the community based organizations to respond as best as possible. Community Based Disaster Management Teams (DMT) have been taking proactive measures right from the beginning by providing a warning system following forecasts from the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and Water Resource Department. Some of the communities had previously received training from LWSIT on disaster risk reduction, which is now being tested.

Rapid assessment teams will be deployed within the next few days to assess the extent of the damage and what is most needed.

India ACT forum members, CASA, LLWSIT and the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELICI) are in contact with each other to discuss the flood situation and the way forward. A preliminary appeal is currently being processed for CASA and LWSIT.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer (Jean_Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

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