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## Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group Experience and Lessons Sharing from Pakistan and Aceh 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015

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### Introduction

- Through the support of the World Bank, USAID, and IOM, General Nadeem, the retired Director of the Pakistan Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Authority (ERRA), and Dr. Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, the former director of the Aceh-Nias Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Agency (BRR), conducted a short mission to Nepal in early October to provide support to the Government of Nepal (GoN), and other key stakeholders, by sharing their experiences and lessons learned from setting up and managing reconstruction authorities following major natural disasters in their own countries.

### Aceh Experience and Lessons Learned

- Dr. Kuntoro informed that in his experience I/NGOs were some of his closest collaborators and were there to support the reconstruction authority and that it was very important to work together
- I/NGOs tend to know the areas where they are working very well due to their strong field presence and links with the community
- Dr. Kuntoro highlighted the high level of support that I/NGOs were able to provide across a wide range of sectors, and explained that all were requested to submit concept notes for their plans to the reconstruction authority and then given permission to proceed, or not, or requested to wait
- There were conflicts over working areas with I/NGOs staking claim to particular areas, and Dr. Kuntoro urged I/NGOs not to get into such conflicts in the Nepal response
- Dr. Kuntoro expressed his surprise that expatriates will only be allocated tourist visas for five months of each year, and suggested that in the long run this would end up increasing the overheads of the I/NGOs supporting the reconstruction. Dr. Kuntoro recommended that longer term visas for expatriates working on the reconstruction should be introduced
- Dr. Kuntoro recommended that I/NGOs support with information sharing and mapping given their strong field presence and knowledge of the areas where they are working. Feeding this information back to central level is extremely important as the development of strong policy must be based on the facts on the ground.

### Pakistan Experience and Lessons Learned

- General Nadeem stressed that the Shelter Cluster has the biggest chunk of reconstruction and therefore the biggest responsibility on the shoulders of the cluster and cluster partners. The quality of the housing reconstruction will determine how the overall reconstruction is viewed, if the housing reconstruction is well managed and effective then the reconstruction programme will be considered a success
- General Nadeem provided a recap of the key messages that both he and Dr. Kuntoro had been conveying to the GoN, donors, and UN agencies during their mission:
  - The scale of the disaster is huge, and the funds required reflect this (estimated at 6.7 billion USD), but it is doable, provided that some key components are put in place

- Recommended getting an authority for reconstruction established as soon as possible, different institutional arrangements have been tried in different contexts but it is felt that this is the best option
- Recommended that as an interim measure, while the authority for reconstruction is being established, a central planning and coordination cell be established within the National Planning Commission (NPC)
- The GoN were urged not to take for granted the 4.4 billion USD that has been pledged for the reconstruction to date, this may be lost if the reconstruction does not move forward efficiently and effectively
- The GoN were also urged to ensure that the reconstruction programme is well implemented as if donors see the 4.4 billion USD that has already been pledged being well spent then there is a high chance that the 2 billion USD deficit will be funded
- It was also recommended that politics be removed from the reconstruction process, if exclusion or inclusion happens based on political influences it will be disastrous for the reconstruction process
- Suggested establishing a dedicated donor group for reconstruction, to ensure that there is a collective message from donors, and to make best use of the high level of leverage that such a group has
- All partners involved in the reconstruction were urged to not engage in turf wars but to have a visibly connected, collective, and joined up approach, mapping activities is important for this
- General Nadeem highlighted the differences between the phases of the response; relief is fast paced and duplication of effort is not necessarily a major issue, moving into early recovery the activities and coordination needs to be more focused, and reconstruction is regulated, Partner Organisations (POs) cannot do whatever they want to do, the Government is in the driving seat and they must provide the overall direction and guidance
- General Nadeem highlighted the key role that the National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal (NSET) and UN Habitat played in the reconstruction in Pakistan, and in Nepal these two organisations will also play a lead role
- General Nadeem suggested that providing standard designs that can be adopted by households in the reconstruction of their homes is very useful
- General Nadeem also urged POs to be patient, the preparatory work to get ready for the reconstruction is extremely important and once the reconstruction starts it will be at scale very quickly. Once the GoN assessment is complete there will be 100,000s of homes under construction at once. General Nadeem recalled flying over the earthquake affected areas in Pakistan and seeing foundations being constructed everywhere.
- The two main priorities for households are the reconstruction of their homes, and re-establishing / expanding their livelihoods.
- Foreign solutions, experiences cannot be imposed in Nepal, important to learn from, and share experiences from other contexts, but most important is to carry out the reconstruction in a way that is appropriate for, and tailored to the Nepali context
- General Nadeem explained that in Pakistan the Government initially focused on confined masonry for reconstruction but then realised that the vernacular typologies used by many of the earthquake communities were more appropriate in many areas, and could be constructed in an earthquake resilient manner so this was then included in the programme. It's important to be flexible and adapt to the context as it changes
- In Pakistan, the Government requested that I/NGOs not construct households for people because this would have created a duplication of efforts and potential conflicts, with the Government distributing a subsidy for reconstruction and some households then receiving further support from I/NGOs. I/NGOs were instead requested to focus on providing training and technical assistance through 'Housing Reconstruction Centres' and where I/NGOs insisted on constructing homes this was only for the most vulnerable households and these households were selected by the Government through a targeted vulnerability assessment
- General Nadeem highlighted the tendency of I/NGOs to carry out surveys, each of which raises expectations. In Pakistan they conducted one survey for all sectors and then the information was made available online in the information clearing house.

## Update from National Planning Commission

- Dr. Pokharel, Vice-Chairperson of the NPC, provided an update from a planning meeting on the rural housing design catalogue which had been held that morning where it was agreed that
  - DUDBC will print the first volume of the rural house design catalogue prior to the festivals and begin distribution of the catalogue immediately after the festivals. This volume will cover stone in mud masonry, brick in mud masonry, stone in cement masonry, and brick in cement masonry. Further volumes of the design catalogue for other typologies will be developed as necessary.
  - DUDBC and CTEVT will work together to develop a uniform curricula and ensure coordination amongst partners who wish to conduct training. Partners are encouraged to work with DUDBC and CTEVT to provide ideas and learnings based on experience conducting masons training. Dr. Pokharel emphasised the need to avoid duplication of effort, highlighting the story of one lady in Jumla who was reported to have completed 24 training courses in one year!
  - The Shelter Cluster will support with the development of manuals to support the design catalogue
- The NPC will begin to share information with communities in advance of the festivals and in particular will be communicating that people should not start building houses right now
- The building permit process was approved by cabinet last week and now even one story homes in rural areas will require approval at VDC through the building permit process
- Many I/NGOs are visiting the NPC to request permission to construction 100 houses, 200 houses, 1,000 houses and the response from NPC is to ask who will build the other 499,000 houses? Partners are requested by the NPC to take a more innovative approach and look to support households, through the owner driven reconstruction process, to reconstruct their homes using the Government subsidy
- The NPC have also requested that I/NGOs that have a particular capacity in one of the other 21 sectors identified in the PDNA focus on this with particular sectors such livelihoods of particular importance. It was highlighted that the construction sector is often operational for only 5 months of the year in remote parts of Nepal so jobs in this sector alone will not keep people living in these areas. Support is required for other livelihood opportunities also
- Dr. Pokharel informed that a group of Non Resident Nepalese have been granted permission by MoUD to build 1,000 households at a cost of 3,500 USD per house. Dr. Pokharel strongly urged MoUD to retract this permission and suggested that were such permission to be granted it could be considered another disaster as this would create conflict and is outside of the policy for reconstruction
- Dr. Pokharel urged all Shelter Cluster partners to be patient and adopt a practical approach to supporting the reconstruction
- Dr. Pokharel highlighted that in one generation Nepal has moved to urban areas feeding rural areas with rural areas reliant on importing goods from urban centres. It was suggested that this is due to the lack of entrepreneurs in rural areas, as many who might otherwise have become entrepreneurs, had become NGO workers instead leaving a gap. Though Dr. Pokharel acknowledged that this had been because of the lack of access to many rural areas for either business or the government during the conflict, and also noted the benefits of the NGO presence upon the development of civil society in rural areas, nevertheless he strongly hoped for more rural entrepreneurs from now onwards.

## Questions and Answers

- At the end of the tsunami operation, Bill Clinton stated that we can save billions of dollars by sharing experiences from other operations. Dr. Kuntoro was very involved in the preparation of the [‘The Tsunami Legacy: Innovation, Breakthroughs, and Change’](#), one of the most interesting parts of the document is the one on ‘breakthrough initiatives’ which can speed up reconstruction and ensure effective spending of reconstruction funds. Can Dr. Kuntoro provide some more information on what a ‘breakthrough initiative’ is?
  - Dr. Kuntoro informed that when he started his role with the reconstruction authority in Aceh he assumed that he didn’t know anything. Having moved with his wife to live in Banda Aceh, every day he saw new things that he had not anticipated. Dr. Kuntoro highlighted that mistakes were made every day but they

worked to rectify these mistakes and improve based on what they had learned, these are the breakthroughs, and he recommended that you plan as you proceed. He emphasised the need to live where the reconstruction is focused, as policy cannot be developed without understanding the situation in the affected areas. He stressed the need to listen at all times and follow and adapt to the process which will continue to change throughout the reconstruction. He recalled that in Aceh in the first year he changed the structure of the reconstruction authority 6 times until he found the model that worked. It is not possible to assume at the beginning that you know what will happen and how you will solve everything. For example the initial estimates for houses requiring reconstruction in Aceh was 90,000 and in the end 179,000 houses were rebuilt. The initial estimates for schools requiring reconstruction was 20,000, and in the end 13,000 schools were rebuilt. He informed that he attended cluster meetings regularly in order to hear what the sectors were doing, what was planned and that innovation and breakthrough can only happen when you are in the reconstruction and will come from people working on the ground, facing new challenges and finding ways to address these.

- In Pakistan, many people wanted to get back to normal, what happens as we go through the reconstruction process and how do we get back to normal afterwards?
  - General Nadeem informed that in his opinion God made man resilient by nature. He highlighted that such adversity can, and should be converted into opportunity. He provided an example of water supply in the very mountainous villages affected by the earthquake. Women and girls in this villages often had to spend 5/6 hours per day making trips up and down the valley to the river to collect water. The communities prioritised improved water supply and so the Government policy was that clusters of houses should not be more than 75m from a water tap. Gravity water sources were identified and water systems were installed. The impact was notable; the number of patients attending the health post dropped dramatically, women had more time and took micro-loans to establish small businesses, livelihood projects and started to earn money, and the number of girls enrolled in school went up. This is an example of not getting back to normal but getting back to a better standard. Another example was the combination of vaccination, family planning, general medicine services at Village Health Units. This meant that families coming to the health units from remote villages did not have to go to a variety of places to access different services. The infrastructure had to be Built Back Better both in accordance with the current needs but also in accordance with future needs. Infrastructure also requires budget for operation and maintenance. In Pakistan this was a challenge initially for the Government because infrastructure was being reconstructed on such a large scale and the Government could not manage the O&M costs. The Government went back to the donors and asked them to cover the O&M costs for two years which they agreed to and this gave the Government time to plan and prepare for covering these costs.
  - Dr. Kuntoro informed that in Aceh normal is not normal due to long term conflict. Initial efforts to design homes were challenging and then women were included in the process and it was greatly improved as women are in the house more than men and knew how they wanted their house to be. Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that follows Sharia law and since the reconstruction it is also the only province in Indonesia where the certificate of ownership of a house is in both the husband and wife's name.
- Dr. Kuntoro informed that there are three major enemies of reconstruction; corruption, bureaucracy, and politics and that these are not the monopoly of the Government, I/NGOs also face these too. The I/NGOs were urged to not try to put their flag higher than others, and to work to avoid these three major enemies of reconstruction.

**The next meeting of the RRWG will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> October, at 11am, in Entrance Café, Bakhundol.**