

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
GOVERNMENT, NGO, CORPORATES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
UTTARKASHI DISTRICT, UTTARAKHAND**

Date: 10 Sept 2013

Time : 11.00 – 13.30 hrs.

Total Participants : **42 Persons** (Government / District Administration : 10 persons; NGOs : 28; Corporate representatives : 4)

Objective the Meeting:

- Thank all the NGOs /Corporate agencies / INGOs, Business Groups and Individuals who have tirelessly and sincerely contributed to the humanitarian response in the district.
- Discuss about Recovery Phase – Social Sector Plans for improving the health, nutrition, food security, livelihood, shelter needs and education of the district, so that it can be reached it to a level of normalcy and put it back on a trajectory of growth.
- Clarify issues relating to recovery plans, understand the scope of programming required and to work towards better coordinated plan on rehabilitation and reconstruction, with DRR in perspective.

Schedule of the Meeting:

Time	Particulars
11.15 to 11.25	Welcome Address by Mr. B.K. Mishra, Addl. District Magistrate, Uttarkashi
11.25 to 11.50	Key Issues and Focus Areas in Recovery Planning for the District: Dr. Pankaj Kumar Pandey, the District Magistrate, Uttarkashi
11.50 to 12.30	Presentation on Social Sector Needs by Mr. Devendra Singh Patwal, DDMO, Uttarkashi & Ms. Rashmi Painuly, UNDMT Dist. Coordinator
12.30 to 13.00	Question & Answer Session on Technical Issues
13.00 to 13.20	Planning Session based on Sectoral Needs by NGO/Corporate group –UNDMT Coordinator
13.20 to 13.30	Summing up of Organizational Commitment on Early Recovery
13.30 to 13.35	Vote of Thanks

Key Points from the Meeting:

- The Addl. District Magistrate Mr.B.K.Mishra began the session by thanking all the NGOs and Corporate representatives present, and appraised them about the objectives of the day's meeting. He mentioned that although there were few other meetings with the NGOs, this meeting is specifically towards improving coordination with a specific objective of speeding up the recovery process.

- Then the District Magistrate Dr. Pankaj Kumar Pandey addressed the representatives from NGOs and Corporates and brought out the following key points:
 - He thanked all the humanitarian agencies, business houses, corporate and whole lot of people whose outpouring of compassion and help helped to reach out to the affected people in the initial days.
 - He mentioned that he had been deputed in Rudraprayag prior to his arrival here for the rescue and relief operations, and then it was on 09 July.2013 he was deputed as the District Collector of Uttarkashi.
 - Initially, there was so much of support coming that, many humanitarian agencies were just dumping materials at places where they could reach to. Not many of them took the effort to reach out to the unreached. Even after appropriate guidance was given, still they did not reach to the most needy. This led to lot of resentment in the unreached community and that the District Administration had to take a stronger step in asking NGOs and other agencies not to distribute relief materials unless they have sought the permission from the government to do so, and have chalked out a plan with the district administration.
 - Coordination in initial days is vital to success of emergency response. Later couple of meetings were held with the NGOs for initiating coordination. But, since a lot of overlap and damage had already been done, we could only contain the damage after these meetings.
 - This is time to pay attention to the social sectors. The needs of these sectors are enormous. The administration can take care of roads and power (electricity supply), but other areas of education, health, nutrition and livelihood, and shelter related issues are so big that not all the needs can be addressed by the government. For example, there are more than 70 schools totally damaged. There are only two Lady Medical doctors in the whole district. So concentrating on health, education, shelter and livelihood is a key factor for quicker recovery in which NGOs and corporate agencies can support.
 - We need to plan together for **early recovery** and **risk reduction in the communities**.
 - We want communities to rebuild their dwelling or at least have a safe shelter to protect the most vulnerable in the family from extreme weather condition and to restart the livelihood. The district administration will shortly be providing about 200 pre-fab houses as a transitional measure to those who are still in the camps, and have no place to go.
 - "Criteria based approach" in our target selection and "focused multi-sectoral intervention" with risk reduction approach are important for a good recovery program. In this aspect, if NGOs / Corporates would like to have more information about villages, damages, beneficiaries etc, a lot of information is regularly updated in the district website. And if anything more is required, or if agencies find it difficult to get the correct or updated information, they may contact the DDMO at any time.
 - Any agency wanting to work in the district can get all types of support from the district for planning. They may come out with their proposal. But they should finalize the geographical area of operation, with the DDMO along with the UNDMT helping him. The District Administration then will be able to guide appropriately. "You tell us what you have and what your capabilities are. Tell us by when you want to start and complete the activities. Let us discuss the area in which you would like to work. Once the geographical area is finalized, the NGOs and Corporates must work in a time bound manner, so that all activities are completed on time to benefit the community", he said.

- Critical **infrastructural services** including road connectivity, electricity and telecommunication are expected to be fully functional across the district in another 7 – 10 days. Electricity and telecommunication have been restored nearly 100 % Road connectivity to Gangotri will be completed in about 10 days time.
- NGOs and Corporate houses, must help in strengthening people's existing coping mechanisms as we work on the recovery of people. Participation of community in choices, in decision making, in designing, with a focus on gender specific and children specific needs is
- Resilience building, risk prevention and disaster risk reduction must be key aspects of our effort to rebuild the community in the Himalayan region, specially in affected places like Uttarkashi. Community's capacity to withstand the shocks of a natural disaster as big or as worse as what happened on June 16 & 17 must be enhanced through participatory programming and community participation in the disaster risk reduction activities. Communities and humanitarian agencies may not be able to do very big things. But smaller efforts can save lives and livelihoods.
- Mitigation measures taken up by Governmental and Non Governmental Organizations need to be strengthened with qualitative measure of long lasting, sustainable, permanent measures. Transparency needs to be ensured in this recovery process appropriate monitoring tools and accountability to people whom we serve.
- **Livelihood recovery** is another key component of development. Where as the district is largely dependent on seasonal income, the natural resources available in this region opens up several opportunities which can both strengthen the environment while ensuring livelihood throughout the year. Consequential vulnerability, that is, vulnerability arising as a consequence of the disaster needs to be studied further and its long term impact on people must be understood correctly to plan long term recovery and rehabilitation plans. "I wish some NGOs and technical agencies undertake study at micro level on these to come out with appropriate needs.
- Institutional vulnerabilities need to be also reduced. One of the biggest challenges is the human resources for the health services. There is a huge gap in availability of Lady Medical Officers, Gynecologists and Pediatricians. The district would give all support if humanitarian agencies can come out with human resource support for the health sector, besides several other needs.
- The district administration is glad that many agencies have come forward to join hands with the government in this rebuilding process. The NGOs and Corporate agencies are encouraged to execute activities that are qualitatively of high standards, transparent at all levels, and collaborative with the government and other actors who would be engaged in the recovery program.
- The district will continue to engage all agencies through regular meetings so that geographical coordination and recovery of most affected in far-off villages can be achieved.
- After this the District Disaster Management Officer Mr. Devendra Singh Patwal announced a minute of silence in memory of those whose lives were lost in the recent disaster.
- Then he proceeded to say that some information keep changing with every rainfall. For example, it is very difficult to mention the exact number of families affected at a point of time. Or rather, it is possible to say "as of today so many families are affected". But the number may change within a week as the rainy season is continuing and fresh landslides keep happening in some areas.

- Along with Ms. Rashmi Painuly, UNDMT Coordinator he proceeded with a presentation on the damages and specific needs for the district. The presentation summarized the key damages mainly relating to social sectors, and key support areas where the district administration seeks support. The presentation is available as *Annexure – 2*. All the participants were given a detailed draft needs (available as *Annexure – 3*) so that they can follow and understand most of the needs mentioned under each sector. As the presentation proceeded, at the end of every slide, discussions took place to understand the issues at hand.
- Several of these discussion points have been clubbed along with the Question & Answer session followed, as it came in the form of questions by the participants and clarifications given by relevant department heads. All the important Questions and Answers are given in *Annexure – 4*.
- At the end of the presentation, the District Magistrate mentioned that we need to focus on the planning. So, agencies may pick from the needs expressed herein, or they may also propose any other need that they would like to respond to. He specified that the district administration would welcome support for any of these needs mentioned, and also if there are any valid points for which intervention is required. Drawing of attention of the district administration on issues that might have been missed out by planning for the same from humanitarian sector is good and welcome, he proceeded to say.
- This was followed by filling up of the Planning Sheet (attached as *Annexure – 5*) so that all agencies can mention where and what type of activities they would like to undertake. The Planning Sheet sought information from the representatives about their specific proposal with information as per village. Since many of them sought time for filling the details, it was agreed that all agencies would submit their proposals by **16 Sept 2013**, so that initial allocation of areas and sectors can start from the next week. All plans may be forwarded by email to: ddmouuttarkashi@gmail.com with copy to undmtuttarkashi@gmail.com. A copy may also be provided to ambika@spreindia.org.in
- At the end of the meeting, the District Magistrate thanked all the representatives for their participation and insisted that any type of information required for decision making may be available from relevant departments, with DDMO functioning as the focal point. The UNDMT will continue to support the DDMO in getting all efforts coordinated over the week. More meetings will take place to finalize the recovery plans. And once agreed upon all agencies must work according to the accepted plan between the agency and district administration.
- With sharing of pleasantries the meeting came to an end.

Key Decisions Made:

- All NGO / Corporate / Institutional Plans are expected to be submitted with details positively by 16 Sept 2013, Monday to the District Disaster Management Officer Mr. Devendra Singh Patwal (Contact at : ddmouuttarkashi@gmail.com and +91- 9410350338) with copy to the UNDMT Coordinator [Contact at: undmtuttarkashi@gmail.com and +91 9412046917 (Rashmi) and 9412084736 (P.D.Mathur)].

- Allotment of geographical areas will depend on the plans submitted by the NGOs / Corporates / Agencies and other institutions. The discussions will start from 16 September onwards, with initial discussions immediately after receiving proposals. Preparation of Expression of Interest and an MoU will be done after that. The UNDMT Coordinator will help in the process.
- All agencies must finalize their geographical area of work in consultation with the district administration only so that all affected villages can be covered.
- Agencies must keep in mind the availability of funds, available human resource, sectoral expertise and the time it may take to execute their plans – so that activities are executed in a time bound manner.
- While the work is in progress, all agencies are required to keep the district administration informed of activities completed and those in progress on a monthly basis, so that accountability on part of all stakeholders is ensured.

Points for Follow Up Action :

- Disseminate Minutes of the Meeting with all representatives and other INGOs/NGOs / Corporate Representatives and other agencies latest by 12 Sept.
- Collect all plans and continue to update the plans, match it against the needs, re-visit existing needs if some suggestions come from the NGOs / Corporate / other institutions.
- Identify unmet needs and over laps in the planning, and discuss with relevant agencies for avoiding duplication.
- Monthly meeting with all agencies for the next three months, and other appropriate meetings may be held based on needs of each sector.

Contacts for Coordination:

- Mr. Devendra Singh Patwal, District Disaster Management Officer : (Email: ddmouuttarkashi@gmail.com ; Phone: +91- 9410350338)
- Ms. Divya Gupta and Mr. P.D. Mathur, UNDMT Coordinators (Contact at: undmtuttarkashi@gmail.com; Phone numbers : 8126352261 and 9412084736)

Minutes Prepared by:

Rashmi

Mr. P.D. Mathur & Ms. Rashmi Painuly

District Coordinator, UNDMT

Minutes Approved by:

Y.K.P.

Dr. Pankaj Kumar Pandey, IAS

District Magistrate, Uttarkashi