Introduction and purpose

Shongjog (the multi-stakeholder platform on Communication with Communities in Bangladesh) is working to collect and collate feedback from communities affected by floods in Bangladesh. This report includes a summary of community feedback from a range of sources, including:

- Feedback captured by ICCO Cooperation’s mobile-enabled community engagement activity, in Gaibandha district
- Calls to Bangladesh Betar, Rangpur, as part of a special daily program that provided space for affected communities to call directly to seek help on issues including drinking water, sanitation and road repairs.
- Calls and SMS messages received by community radio stations in affected areas
- Comments left on Facebook pages where flood-related information is being disseminated (BBC Media Action’s Amrai Pari page, IFRC and UNICEF)
- Face-to-face engagement with communities as part of ongoing relief efforts from several agencies.

The intention of this summary is to provide a snapshot of feedback received from affected communities, in order to assist clusters to better plan and implement relief activities with communities’ needs and preferences in mind.

Flood situation and needs

Based on community reports, the physical flood situation in many northern areas is getting better as the water level starts to decrease. Many people have returned to their homes, but there are exceptions in Naogaon, where most affected people are reported to still be living in shelters or under the open sky, with limited food and water to cope with the situation; and in Bogra, where there are reports of a worsening situation with many families marooned by the flood.

In general, key problems that communities report facing at present are:

- Scarcity of pure drinking water
- Poor water and sanitation
- High price of food and related items
- Outbreaks of water-borne diseases
- Many crop lands are still submerged in flood water (this appears to be a particular issue in Sariakandi).
There are also a number of areas where communities have expressed worries or concerns related to relief and/or shelter provision:

- Some people in temporary shelters have been told that they must leave the shelter by October, and are worried about where they will go.
- Some of those living in temporary shelters report that they are not able to enlist as beneficiaries for relief, because people living in the shelters are not eligible – they feel this is unfair.
- A few people who feel that their situation (as a widow or a person with disabilities, for example) means that they should be a priority for relief, report difficulties in accessing their entitlement. Some also report difficulties in accessing regular social allowances following the flood.
- Reports from people living in char areas suggest that there are several char communities who have not yet received any government or NGO relief – particular pockets of need appear to be Char Konicharitabar and Char Kharjani. Others report ongoing difficulty in communication in those areas, and lack of provision of temporary shelters on chars.

**Information and support requests**

Communities raised a number of issues where they require additional information or support in order to meet their current needs. Information needs related to drinking water and the wellbeing of livestock are prominent – suggesting that more attention needs to be paid to disseminating information to communities on these topics in particular.
Part of Bangladesh Betar’s response involved seeking expert opinion on some of the questions raised on these topics; as well as providing other information relevant to affected populations. Some included answers to these information needs, as follows:

- After flood, it is not safe to feed the cattle from submerged areas. The grass and straw might be contaminated from flood water. It is advised to feed cattle from other sources like packaged food.
- Upazila offices of the Department of Livestock are providing free medicines for livestock in all the affected areas. The farmers are advised to go there to collect the medicines.
- The government officials from the LGRD department requested the locals, if possible, to work to temporarily repair the roads and bridges to establish primary communication. It will take 3-6 months for the department to make sustainable repairs.

**Positive stories**

Aside from problems, some communities also reported good examples of early warning successes and resilient, forward-looking activities:

- Some people are planning to plant sweetcorn (maize) to try to recover from the paddy loss, with loan support from local NGOs.
- A few people report receiving early warnings about the flood, which meant they were able to move to shelter appropriately. In one example, a family were able to safely relocate from a vulnerable char land to a relatives’ village several days in advance, after an early warning signal was raised – the family attribute their successful move to DRR training they had received from BDRCS.
- Some people commented that an earlier warning (2-3 months) would be more helpful in terms of planning their crops for the year.

**Inputs for future summaries**

By its nature, this summary is not comprehensive, as feedback mechanisms are not yet active in all affected areas. To improve the usefulness of future summaries, humanitarian agencies are encouraged to include community engagement and feedback mechanisms within their sectoral responses. All CwC activities can be registered with Shongjog and inputs into the next Community Feedback summary are welcome. Please send inputs to Fuad Ur Rabbi (fuadur.rabbi@bd.bbcmediaaction.org)

Shongjog is also available to assist agencies with the design and implementation of CwC and community engagement activities within sectoral responses. Please contact Richard Lace (richard.lace@bd.bbcmediaaction.org)