

## **Sindh People's Commission on Disaster Prevention and Management (SPCDPM)**

### **Statement on the second anniversary of the 2010 floods**

**Two years after the floods of 2010, the affectees are still struggling to pick the pieces of a shattered life. A compromised rehabilitation, an elite-based development and policy order, and a national security driven distribution of resources continue to ensure social and economic marginalization of the affectees**

The 2010 super floods of 2010 affected over 20 million people across Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> The ADB-World Bank estimated total damage of the floods in Pakistan to the tune of PKR 855 billion or US\$ 10 billion (including direct damages at PKR 552 billion (US\$ 6.5 billion) and indirect losses at PKR 303 billion (US\$ 3.6 billion)).<sup>2</sup>

Sindh was worst-hit because of two major breaches in the protective embankments (dykes) at Tori, in Kandhkot district, and Molchand Surjani Bund, in Thatta district. In Sindh alone the ADB-WB report estimated the losses at PKR 372 billion (US\$ 4.4 billion).<sup>3</sup> A large section of the local population was evacuated and shifted to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in safer areas of major cities including Hyderabad and Karachi.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Government of Sindh, a total of 414 people lost their lives, where as 7.25 million people were affected and 876,249 houses were damaged in the province. Over 1.821 million people took shelter in 4,632 relief camps set up by the government in different cities.<sup>4</sup>

A year later (2011), another round of heavy monsoon heavy rains, causing floods in lower Sindh districts of Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Tharparkar, Sanghar and Benazirabad affected more population in the rest of the province.

When passing through the main Super Highway from Hyderabad to Karachi in South East of Pakistan, one can see hundreds of dirty tents and thatched hutments on the left side of this important thoroughfare right from Sabzi Mandi (fruits-vegetable wholesale market) to Gulshan-e-Maymar. All these dwellers are flood affectees. Most of them had shifted from upper Sindh districts of Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Qamber-Shahdaktot, Kandhkot-Kashmor, Larkana and Dadu and few from Thatta district after breaches in dykes along the River Indus during the super floods in 2010.

When passing through the main thoroughfares of Karachi, Hyderabad or Sukkur, one can see hundreds of dirty tents and thatched hutments on either side. All these dwellers are flood affectees. Most of them had shifted from upper Sindh districts of Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Qamber-Shahdaktot, Kandhkot-Kashmor, Larkana and Dadu and few from Thatta district after breaches in dykes along the River Indus during the super floods in 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Floods 2010 Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment, ADB, World Bank, Nov 2010

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Government of Sindh website:  
<http://www.pdma.pk/dn/Home/Flood2010/tabid/120/Default.aspxn>

After the passage of almost two years of the 2010 flood, a large section of the displaced persons is still living in tents or temporary abodes in Karachi at various places. They are reluctant to return to their native villages, where the flood water had receded long ago. They argue that they see no point in returning to a life of forced labour that is at the mercy of landlords. In Sindh, a majority of the agriculture workers don't own lands for cultivation and work on sharecropping basis or as wage workers on farms belonging to big landlords

According to a report by Social Policy Development Centre Sindh has the highest incidence of absolute landlessness, with 26 percent or two million households have no land, while 26 percent of 700,000 household possess the lowest share in land.<sup>5</sup> This was also indicated in the survey, conducted by PILER in 2010 in three IDPs camps – Labour Square, Northern Bypass Karachi and Sabzi Mandi Hyderabad. Only 37 percent of IDPs reported that they owned a piece of land while 62 percent did not own land. Of the landless IDPs, 21 percent worked as haris with different landlords while 30.6 percent reported to be engaged in casual labour in different farms.<sup>6</sup>

As share croppers, these peasants often take loans or advances from the landlords and after the crop's harvesting they get the proceeds adjusted against the advances. A large number of such agriculture workers lost their crops in 2010, but the landlords have not closed their account registers and are still demanding the repayment of the loans. These influential landlords are putting pressure on the peasants to work additional hours as a repayment of the loan. This is tantamount to bonded labour.

Many affectees also belong to the low-caste Hindu communities. These non-Muslims also faced discrimination at the IDP camps especially during the distribution of relief goods. Majority of the low-caste Hindus (scheduled caste) remained deprived of the cash compensation "Watan Cards", according to the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network. In 2011 rains/floods, the scheduled caste communities also faced the same situation and President Zardari had to seek a report from the provincial Sindh government into the news reports that scheduled caste Hindus affected by floods were being denied humanitarian assistance.<sup>7</sup> So far no such report has been published or disclosed by Sindh government.

Most of the male members of the flood affectees families living in Karachi are now working as daily wage workers earning PKR 400 to 500 (\$4-5) after a day's labour. Some are engaged in industries in F. B. Area and New Karachi industrial zones; others are employed as manual labour at development construction sites. Life in these temporary hutments is quite miserable as there is no access to basic civic facilities otherwise available in the metropolis. There are no water, sanitation arrangements and schools or health facilities in these settlements. Lack of basic facilities is a permanent issue in the lives of these people as back home they faced the similar situation of deprivation. In the cities they are also living under a constant threat of evacuation by the state law enforcement agencies or private construction companies that have been eyeing the land for commercial purposes.

The floods in 2010 or 2011 exposed the marginalization of a very large section of the rural population that has been ignored and excluded from the mainstream policy-making and development agenda for long. This population has been living under the dominance of political and social elites. The denial of

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<sup>5</sup> Report 'Social Development in Pakistan; Annual Review 2004', SPDC

<sup>6</sup> The Flood Affected Population in Sindh – Rebuilding Lives and Livelihoods "The Case for Structural Reforms"; PILER; March 2011

<sup>7</sup> Daily Express Tribune, September 24, 2011

access to education, health facilities, decent livelihoods and opportunities for a progressive future ensures their marginalized status for generations.

The plight of the flood affected people has strengthened the argument that a new social contract between the state and society needs to be crafted as the state has failed miserably in the delivery of its basic constitutional obligations towards the citizens.

The apathy and indifference of the state institutions was exposed during rescue and relief work after the floods in 2010. In Sindh the provincial government encouraged the flood affectees to come in cities and the Chief Minister as well as cabinet members had promised to provide residential plots to IDPs, who want to live in Karachi.<sup>8</sup> Even the provincial government had reportedly identified lands in big cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Mirpurkhas for provision to IDPs.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, those promised were never fulfilled.

Similar was the attitude of government in rehabilitation of the damaged public infrastructure like school buildings, dispensaries, roads etc. According to estimates 10,000 schools in Pakistan were damaged or destroyed in 2010 flood.<sup>10</sup> Most of these facilities have so far not been restored even after the passage of two years. Some non-governmental organizations, with the support of foreign donors, have restored a few of these facilities in certain districts. However, a majority of these public buildings still need restorations.

The government of Pakistan had announced a compensatory cash grant of PKR 100,000 for each flood affected family in 2010. The first installment of PKR 20,000 was released immediately through a special electronically operated ATM card called "Watan Card." Every head of the flood-affected family with a valid computerized national identity card was eligible for a Watan Card.

A sizeable section of the flood affectees reportedly either did not possess computerized ID cards or they were not registered as family heads in the computerized records of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). Although efforts were made to make computerized ID cards of many affectees, still a majority of such cases remained deprived of this facility. The criteria also excluded many female head of the family, and also did not take into account the affectees who lived in the disaster-hit areas at the time of floods but had their identity cards issued from districts outside the flood affected areas. While disbursing the second installment of the Watan Cards in 2011, the government has revised the criteria to cover only those whose houses were damaged during the floods, excluding more families from the compensation exercise. All this is based on a survey conducted by revenue department.

The payments under the second phase has started in Punjab and Sindh only. The Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces have yet to initiate the payment process.

Interestingly, both Punjab and Sindh have cut the number of the beneficiaries to almost half in the payment under the second phase of the Citizen's Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP). According to Punjab Government in the Phase I, a total of 609,788 beneficiaries received Watan Card cash grant of Rs. 20,000 each. In the Phase II, a total of 320,551 beneficiary's data was received by district administrations of 11 flood affected districts, out of which 311,358 beneficiaries have started getting

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<sup>8</sup> SAMAA TV news ' Flood victims to get plots in Karachi: Shah': Website <http://www.samaa.tv/newsdetail.aspx?ID=25181> (accessed on July 27, 2012)

<sup>9</sup> News item "Land identified for flood victims' resettlement" daily Dawn, October 29, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> News item: Over 10,000 schools damaged: UNESCO; Daily Express Tribune dated September 22, 2010. Web source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/53255/more-than-10000-schools-damaged-in-floods-un/>

Watan card after NADRA's verification.<sup>11</sup> According to the government sources 1,643,349 eligible people have received an amount of PKR 29.8 billion through Watan Cards.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the passage of two years, the flood affectees in all four provinces are still waiting to be rehabilitated. Due to climate change the pattern of monsoon rains has altered and almost all areas of Pakistan are facing threats of natural disasters including water shortage or heavy flooding. The country's resource distribution order is still tilted heavily towards national security priorities and this remains the root cause of underdevelopment in the country. The state must demonstrate a serious commitment to the wellbeing of the people. There is need for an overhaul in the existing economic and social policy order on an urgent basis to factor in the realities of the rural population of Pakistan and pursue a development direction that is inclusive, consultative and pro-people.

***This statement was released by the Sindh People's Commission on Disaster Prevention and Management (SPCDPM) at a press conference held at Karachi Press Club on Thursday, July 26, 2012.***

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<sup>11</sup> Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Government of Punjab. Web source: [http://pdma.punjab.gov.pk/wc\\_p2.aspx](http://pdma.punjab.gov.pk/wc_p2.aspx)

<sup>12</sup> Pakistan Floods website: Web Source: <http://www.pakistanfloods.pk/watan-card>