

CMIREPORT



Review of Norwegian Earthquake Assistance to Pakistan 2005 and 2006

Arne Strand and Kaja Borchgrevink

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Contents

ACRONYMS.....	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE EARTHQUAKE AND THE RESPONSE	2
A. TIME AND SCALE OF THE EARTHQUAKE.....	2
B. AREAS AFFECTED, DISPLACEMENT AND NUMBER OF CASUALTIES	2
C. CHALLENGES TO THE RELIEF OPERATION	4
D. THE EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES	4
E. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE	5
F. NORWEGIAN ASSISTANCE, POLICY AND RESPONSE	8
G. CONCLUSION.....	9
3. GENERAL ASSISTANCE ASSESSMENT.....	10
A. THE PAKISTANI MOBILISATION	10
B. THE ROLE OF THE ARMY	11
C. FROM RELIEF TO REHABILITATION, FROM ARMY TO CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION	11
D. RETURN DILEMMAS AND LOCAL CONTEXT CHALLENGES.....	11
E. THE CLUSTER APPROACH.....	12
F. CONCLUSION	18
4. THEMATIC ISSUES.....	19
A. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS	19
B. GENDER	19
C. LEARNING FROM PREVIOUS DISASTERS	20
5. NORWEGIAN ASSISTANCE.....	22
A. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW, TYPES OF ACTIVITY	22
B. OVERVIEW OF THE ORGANISATIONS FUNDED	22
C. ASPECTS OF THE RESPONSE AND THE NORWEGIAN CONTRIBUTION	26
D. LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE	29
E. NORWAY AS DONOR AND FACILITATOR	29
F. CONCLUSION	30
6. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.....	32
ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	34
ANNEX II: INTERVIEW LIST	35
ANNEX III: FUNDING OVERVIEW.....	37

Acronyms

ACT	Action by Churches Together
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
CBO	Community Based Organizations
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DSB	Direktoratet for samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Organization
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority
FRC	Federal Relief Commission
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HIC	Humanitarian Information Centre
IASC	Inter-agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IGO	Inter-governmental Organisation
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisations
JACER	Joint Assistance Committee Earthquake Relief
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Committee
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHF	Pakistan Humanitarian Forum
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Services
UNHC	United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The massive earthquake that struck northern parts of Pakistan and India on 8 October 2005 led to the loss of more than 75 000 lives, severely injured approximately 100 000 and left 2.8 million without shelter. The relief response was immediate: first by the local communities and NGOs, then by the Pakistani Army, the United Nations agencies and international NGOs. Destroyed roads and areas being located at high altitudes caused problems for mapping the destruction and bringing in relief supplies. The relief operation was demanding and there was a race against time to provide assistance before the onset of winter and into the most remote areas. Fortunately, the winter was milder and with less snow than usual, limiting the threat to the large number of refugees who had sought shelter in the numerous camps established. By late May 2006, a large number of refugees had returned, but still 100 000 remain in camps as return is deemed unsafe; they are judged to be vulnerable or land ownership is disputed.

The Norwegian Government responded quickly and prioritised support to Norwegian NGOs with prior experience and networks in Pakistan, to a Pakistani NGO with a strong local presence and to UN agencies. In addition, Direktoratet for samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap (DSB) was funded to establish camps for relief workers. The Norwegian Refugee Council's Emergency Preparedness Staff were seconded to a number of organisations, and Norwegian emergency equipment was frequently used. The second round of Norwegian funding was directed towards UN agencies, in support of the new Cluster approach for the coordination of emergency assistance. The total Norwegian earthquake assistance was NOK 522 million, making Norway one of the largest donors. By the year-end 2005, UN statistics showed that Norway funded ¼ of the UN earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan. The early visits paid to the field by the Norwegian Prime Minister and the Minister of International Development were highly appreciated by the Pakistani Government and NGO community. The collaboration between NGOs and the MFA and the embassy in Islamabad was deemed good, although NGOs would have welcomed more financial support in the second round of funding. The MFA and the embassy are advised to review their secondment, reporting and profiling policy following emergencies, and thereby identify capacities to be strengthened on either side.

The assistance and management support provided by the Norwegian NGOs are highly regarded by the Government of Pakistan, the UN and beneficiaries and deemed to be professional, effective and efficient. The NGOs drew heavily on their previous experience in Pakistan and in other emergency relief operations. They reportedly had good collaboration with the Pakistani army and central and local government officials, and prioritised participation in relevant clusters over establishing separate collaboration mechanisms. It is noted, moreover, that several of the NGOs made efforts to strengthen local partner organisations and to take on longer-term perspectives for assistance, thereby increasing national NGO and government response capacity for future emergencies.

The new UN Cluster approach was tested out in Pakistan, assigning responsibilities as Cluster Heads to agencies with technical expertise, with OCHA holding an overall coordination responsibility. Two agencies assumed responsibility for three clusters: UNICEF led education, protection and water/sanitation clusters and WFP led nutrition, IT/communications and logistics clusters. The remaining clusters were distributed between IOM for shelter, UNDP for early recovery, UNHCR for camp management, and WHO for health.

While the general verdict is that the cluster approach is an improvement, a number of weaknesses have been identified that need further attention. The UN was slow in getting the cluster system working beyond Islamabad and communication between clusters and between the field and the

centre was weak. The quality of coordination varied, and depended largely on the management qualification of the cluster heads and their ability to prioritise time for the cluster coordination – and their ability to differentiate between agency and cluster interests. Gender issues were not prioritised, despite the fact that women had taken on much of the early responsibility in the villages and were vulnerable in the camp environment, given local traditions.

Several of the UN agencies were reluctant to assume cluster responsibility, and those heading several clusters appeared overstretched. The system could be improved by allowing other UN agencies, or non-UN organisations, to assume cluster head responsibility. IOM came out on a positive note when they had their coordination capacity strengthened, while the IFRC could benefit from revisiting their policy stance of refusing such responsibility. There is also a need to review the role of national governments and national NGOs in the clusters, and how information sharing and joint analysis can be improved.

The Norwegian decision to strengthen the cluster approach by channelling funding through clusters raised a number of issues that need further attention from the MFA, OCHA and UN agencies. One is certainly the bureaucratic reluctance to channel funding to cluster members that was demonstrated by some UN agencies; the other is their lack of willingness to abide by decisions made in cluster and Head of Cluster meetings. In contrast, the IOM demonstrated how a bidding process can be performed within the cluster structure, and the technical working groups provided standards that helped curb corruption. Another important issue is to clarify responsibility for monitoring and reporting, and to see if procedures for fund transfers (and applying administrative overhead costs) can be made more flexible.

Two important lessons emerge from the testing of the cluster approach in Pakistan. One is that while funding should be provided for the establishing and running of clusters, direct funding for cluster activities should only start after the clusters have been able to set their priorities and have identified project and funding gaps. The second is that there is an urgent need to establish training for cluster coordinators, focusing on management and communication skills and the ability to head a very diverse team.

The review has identified four areas for possible further attention from the MFA; a closer review of how the UN agencies, and notably UNICEF, have utilised the Norwegian funding is of the highest priority.

In a comment to this Report, the Norwegian Embassy in Pakistan welcomes the review and its findings as well as its recommendations. An additional recommendation from the Embassy is to conduct such a review while the relief operations are ongoing.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to review the Norwegian-funded assistance following the earthquake that struck northern parts of Pakistan and India on 8 October 2005. This review covers the assistance provided in Pakistan; the Terms of Reference are attached in Annex I.

The team that undertook the review comprised Arne Strand (team leader) from the Chr. Michelsen Institute and Kaja Borchgrevink (International Peace Research Institute, Oslo). In the field logistical assistance was provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad assisted with setting up interview appointments.

The team undertook a desk review of available literature, agency reports and Norwegian policy and funding decisions before departing to the field. From 24 April to 7 May 2006 interviews were conducted in Islamabad and the earthquake-affected areas with the Ambassador and staff at the Norwegian Embassy, officials of the Pakistani Government, local civil officials and army personnel, local authorities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), earthquake victims in a number of locations, heads of UN agencies and locally based staff, Norwegian NGOs and their Pakistan-based partner organisations, staff from Direktoratet for samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap (DSB), Pakistani NGOs and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Upon return to Norway further discussions were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian NGOs. For details see the interview list, Annex II.

The report provides a brief outline of the scale and effects of the earthquake, introduces the assistance efforts of the Pakistani, international and Norwegian actors, presents and discusses the new cluster approach, and reviews Norwegian assistance in detail before reaching general conclusions and suggesting some issues in need of further attention.

The final report has benefited from valuable comments from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Embassy in Pakistan.

2. The earthquake and the response

a. Time and scale of the earthquake

In the morning of 8 October 2005 northern parts of Pakistan, India and Afghanistan were struck by an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale. The length of the quake and the fact that the epicentre was rather close to the surface led to immense destruction in the affected areas. 'What was built up over 58 years, collapsed in 58 seconds', was the reflection of one governmental official.

b. Areas affected, displacement and number of casualties

The earthquake epicentre was located approximately 19 km from Muzaffarabad, the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The earthquake, caused by a collision of the South Asian and Eurasian tectonic plates, was felt from Afghanistan through to northern India, and devastated an area of approx. 28 000 square kilometres in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).¹ The earthquake caused the death of as many as 75 331 people,² severely injured approximately 100 000³ and left 2.8 million people without shelter (the estimate of persons with damaged or destroyed homes was later revised to 3.5 million).⁴ Thus, it is likely that between 3.2 and 3.5 million people were severely affected by the earthquake and in need of assistance.⁵

The earthquake struck at 08:50 in the morning, a time when government officials had just reached their offices, children had started school, and many women were inside their houses. The collapse of as much as 84% of the physical structures in AJK and 36 % in NWFP⁶ caused the deaths of thousands of people and put most public offices, health facilities and schools out of operation. The earthquake further caused enormous damage to infrastructure such as roads and bridges, cutting off huge areas from main road access, and electricity and water supplies were severely affected. This made both search and rescue and relief work incredibly challenging. The high degree of work migration of able-bodied men from the earthquake-affected areas to cities in Pakistan and abroad left women and elderly men with the responsibility for organising rescues within the villages and for making decisions on whether to leave the affected areas.

It should be noted that while the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is part of Pakistan, albeit with some parts defined as Tribal Areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has a nominally autonomous status in Pakistan, with its own elected President, Prime Minister, Legislature, and High Court.

¹ Pakistan 2005 Earthquake - Early Recovery Framework, UNDP (November 2005).

² www.pakistan.gov.pk/donor/earthquake_factsfigures.jsp, accessed 30 May 2006.

³ International Crisis Group, Asia Brief No. 46 Pakistan: Political Impact of the Earthquake (March 2006).

⁴ Pakistan 2005 Earthquake - Early Recovery Framework, UNDP (November 2005).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

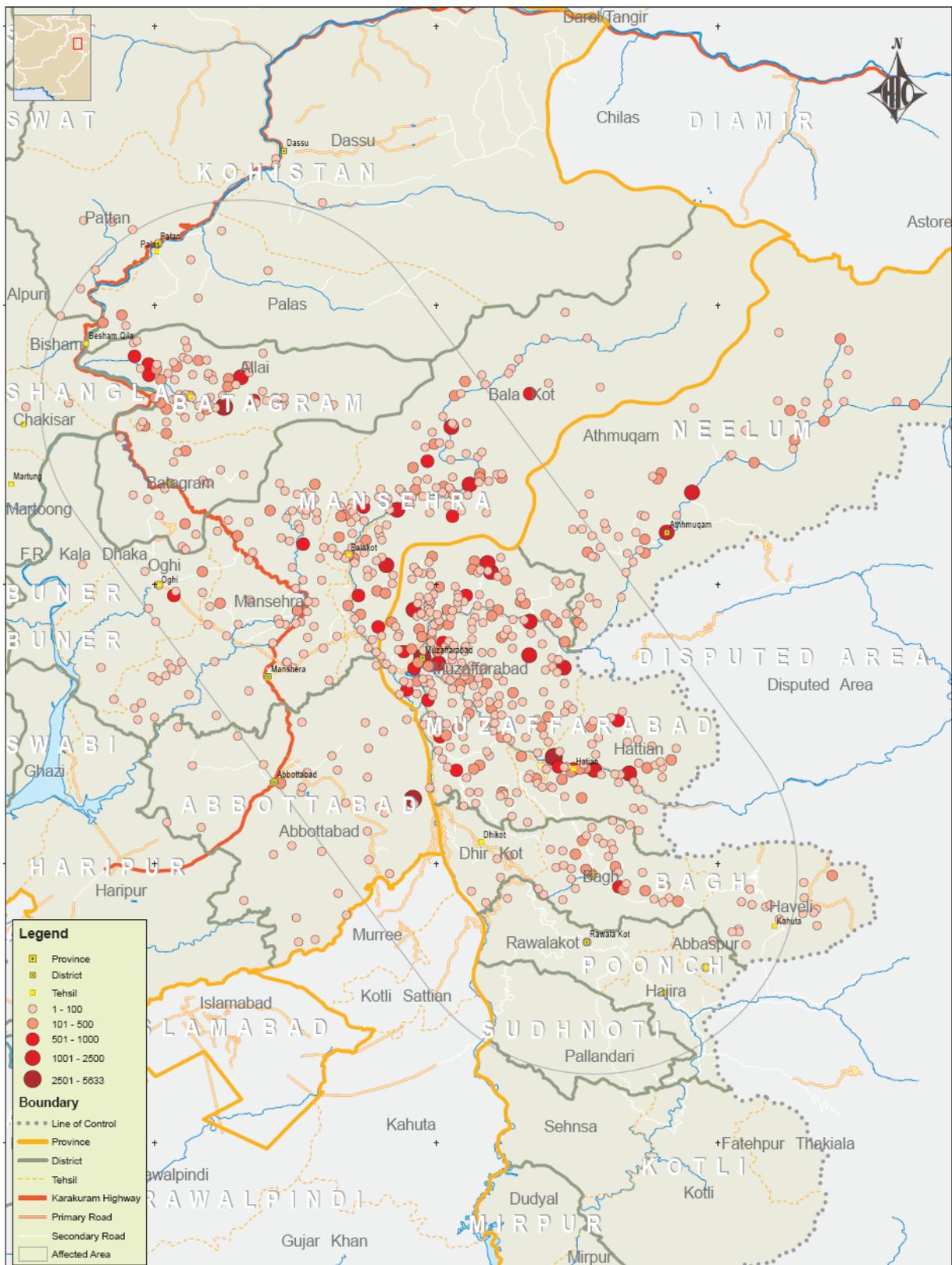


Illustration 1: Map of Affected Areas, with indication of IDP areas of origin (Source: HIC)

c. Challenges to the relief operation

The geography of the affected region, with a remote and scattered population, difficult access due to blocked roads and continued aftershocks and landslides, complicated the relief effort and made air transport essential.

This also meant it was difficult and therefore took a long time to get an overview of the actual numbers of casualties, and of how many stayed behind and would spend the winter in the high valleys.

Heavy rain and early snowfall in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, combined with the expectation of a hard winter, necessitated a 'race' to get winterised tents, blankets and clothing distributed before the onset of winter.

Data

While a number of organisations collaborated on data collection and needs assessments, there seems to have been a critical gap in data consolidation and joint analysis. It took some time before anyone realised the full impact of the earthquake and the number of casualties kept rising until December 2005.

Numerical estimates of the effects of the earthquake, of the assistance provided and the need for further assistance vary greatly between the various actors involved. Data management seems to have been generally weak and uncoordinated throughout. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) and the UN operated with different numbers, as did the World Bank. The establishment of the UN Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) was an attempt to coordinate data collection and consolidation, and to provide the humanitarian community with updated maps. However, a lack of confidence between the different actors (the GoP distrusting the UN data, in particular) resulted in parallel data sets and management systems. Furthermore, the variation in definitions, such as what to count – a nuclear family, a shelter or a household – often makes consolidation and comparison of existing data impossible.

While some of the data submitted by the various organisations was posted and made available on the HIC website, regular consolidation and analysis of the data and the situation was missing. This weakened capacity to identify gaps and to produce a consolidated response strategy. It has been mentioned by some of the agencies we talked to that the HIC data was more technology driven than it was needs based.

d. The effect on government structures

The governments of NWFP and AJK were both badly hit by the earthquake. In the worst affected districts virtually all public buildings were partially damaged or completely destroyed. A substantial number of local civil servants and elected representatives died or were injured. The participation of local-level officials varied, however, between NWFP and AJK and between districts.

In NWFP local-level mayors (Nazims) were about to take up office at the time of the earthquake, having been elected only days before. This incapacitated the local administration, resulting in a limited, uncoordinated and random response. While local government service delivery capacity was very weak, some government departments showed an interest and made efforts to participate in the relief work. The Department of Education, for example, approached Plan for assistance in the

education sector and took part in developing Plan's education strategy. In Balakot, which is completely in ruins, the government is operating out of tent offices.

As Muzaffarabad city was severely affected by the earthquake, the local administration in AJK virtually collapsed. Critics of the military-led operation stated that the military completely sidelined the civilian administration and 'as a result failed to use their expertise in assessing and meeting local needs'.⁷ On a more positive note are reports of military officers being seconded to civilian tasks where important functions were not being managed, such as the *Partwari*, responsible for property registration. The implementing partners do, however, report that while participation varied both in terms of quality and quantity, the civilian administration has now entered the scene and that the AJK government, for instance, has been active in the Camp Management Cluster in Muzaffarabad.

In general, collaboration between the international community and the civilian administration and elected representatives has been varied and often limited. This also seems to be the case for coordination between the federal government in Islamabad and local-level representatives in the affected areas. While this outcome may have been further exacerbated by the disaster, it may be due partly to already weak relations between the federal and provincial administrations.

While the actual figures are unknown, it is established from different sources that the army also lost a considerable number of its own troops stationed in the earthquake hit areas and that this affected its ability to respond in the first 48 hours.

e. National and international response

The earthquake response went through a number of phases: search and rescue in the first two weeks, followed by an intense immediate relief period and the UN-led 'operation winter race' to reach out with winterised tents, clothing and food before the winter. At the end of March 2006, the relief operation moved into the recovery and reconstruction phase, with camps being closed down and people returned to their place of origin, or, if defined as vulnerable, allowed to stay on temporarily in residue camps, or alternatively to leave for other parts of Pakistan.

The national response

The Pakistani community, in Pakistan and abroad, responded immediately to the earthquake by donating funding, medicine, food and clothes. Many tried to make their way to the earthquake areas to assist in the early recovery, or to bring in assistance on a larger scale. The earthquake invoked a spirit of solidarity that led thousands of volunteers, including professionals such as doctors and nurses, to register themselves with Pakistani NGOs and organisations. They provided extremely important assistance in the early stage of the relief operation, when the army had not become fully operational and the international organisations were not yet in place.

In Norway, despite the fact that very few Norwegians of Pakistani origin have relatives in the affected areas, there was a major effort to raise funds and collect relief items to be sent to Pakistan.⁸ Individuals and organisations went to Pakistan to deliver the support, and later on a team of medical personnel from the Oslo and Tromsø University hospitals were sent to the earthquake affected areas. The transport was funded by the MFA. An information meeting was organised in Norway by the Red Cross, with the Norwegian Ambassador to Pakistan online. Visits made to Pakistan by the

⁷ International Crisis Group, Asia Brief No. 46 Pakistan: Political Impact of the Earthquake (March 2006).

⁸ Collections of approx. 2.5 mill NOK. Aftenposten web edition 18 October 2005.

Norwegian Prime Minister and Minister of International Development were welcomed by the Pakistani diaspora, Norwegian NGOs and their local counterparts.

When the earthquake struck, no national disaster preparedness plan existed. However, the Pakistani Government responded promptly to the earthquake by mobilising the Pakistan National Army. The president established the Federal Relief Commission (FRC) on 12 October 2005. The FRC, established under military leadership, was the main body coordinating the relief operation. The army distributed tents, blankets and food, set up and managed IDP camps, distributed medicines and made available medical teams comprising medical officers and paramedics.

The Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) was established on 25 October under the Prime Minister's Office to 'plan, coordinate, monitor and regulate reconstruction & rehabilitation activities in earthquake affected areas, encouraging self reliance via private public partnership and community participation, ensuring financial transparencies'.⁹ The FRC was merged with ERRA on 31 March 2006 in the form of a Transitional Relief Cell integrated into ERRA, overlooking matters related to the transition from relief to recovery (such as the identification of camps to remain open). An ERRA Planning Cell has been established to oversee the transition from recovery to reconstruction and rehabilitation, being primarily concerned with the formulation of national policies for reconstruction and compensation. ERRA provincial offices have been established in AJK and NWFP and district advisory bodies chaired by the district Nazim/district Commissioner Officer established in the district concerned. Local units have been established to oversee and support the reconstruction process in the field.

A President's Relief Fund was immediately established. The Fund has collected USD 100 million from Pakistani private companies and individuals, of which the private sector in Pakistan contributed Rs. 8.6 billion.¹⁰ In addition, it is estimated that the Pakistani public has contributed approximately ten times the amount raised by the President's Relief Fund in in-kind and cash contributions, though these figures seem difficult to confirm.

The government has introduced a compensation policy for families that have lost members or suffered severe injuries (up to Rs. 500 000 per family¹¹) and a housing reconstruction policy, where people able to document ownership of damaged houses, and holding national identity cards will receive financial compensation divided into three instalments. The first is made in cash, while the following two will be made to their bank account upon documentation of actual house repair. This is, however, not without problems, as will be discussed in more detail later in the report.

While the general assessment is that the President, the government and administration, and certainly the Army did what was possible within given limits, the political opposition has voiced concern at the lack of transparency in the process. They argue that there have been no parliamentary consultations, not even for NATO involvement, and no insight into the spending of the President's Relief Fund.

There is a noted concern among international organisations over ERRA's ability to formulate policy and to adapt to the challenges emerging in the rehabilitation phase, with larger involvement of the civil administration and civil society. This concern arises not least as ERRA continues to be staffed predominantly by military officers or personnel seconded from UN and other agencies. A concern voiced by an agency in frequent dialogue with ERRA was that a large number of the seconded

⁹ www.erra.gov.pk/WebForms/vision.aspx

¹⁰ <http://presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/media/EQ/DC/LocalDonations.pdf>

¹¹ The exchange rate between US dollar and Pakistani Rs. was approximately 60 (Rs 500 000 equals 8 650 USD)

consultants first and foremost represent the interests of their own agencies rather than those of ERRA.

Response of the International Community

The international community responded immediately by sending professional rescue teams, emergency relief items and humanitarian aid workers. The initial response was characterised by a multitude of actors, responding in the first phase in a largely uncoordinated manner. The Norwegian response will be discussed in more detail below.

The UN Response and the Cluster Approach

The UN brought in the first UNDAC rescue team within a day and established a coordination centre under the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Islamabad; four regional hubs were established in the earthquake affected areas. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) assumed the coordination responsibility, in close collaboration with other UN organisations and the Government of Pakistan. OCHA was plagued with rapid changes of staff in the initial period, but gradually assumed a more prominent coordination role.

The decision to use the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'cluster' concept was made on the first day of the disaster, 8 October 2005. The concept provides for a single focal point or 'lead' for 'coordination of policy formulation, standard-setting, operational programming, and guideline promulgation'.¹² Cluster leads were designated in an open meeting with UN agencies, donors and NGOs on 9 October. The cluster concept is part of the ongoing UN reform process and was used for the first time in the Pakistan earthquake response.

While the decision to apply the cluster coordination concept was taken rapidly, it took time before the system became operational both in Islamabad and in the field. This delayed the response and effectiveness of the UN system during the first four weeks. (The cluster approach experience is discussed in greater detail below).

The flash appeals/donor conferences

The UN initiated a Consolidated Appeal Process, issuing a first flash appeal for USD 311,876,000 on 11 October 2005. As the actual impact of the earthquake became clearer and the need for immediate relief before the onset of winter was realised, this amount was increased to USD 549,585,941 on 26 October 2005.¹³

While it took time to realise the devastating impact of the earthquake, it took even longer for the international community to respond with the resources required. The GoP donor conference on 19 October 2005 received pledges of only USD 67, 8 million, 12% of the estimated requirements at the time.¹⁴ In view of the tsunami and other recent natural disasters, this contributed to a concern about donor fatigue. At the second GoP donor conference held on 19 November 2005 the pledges were raised to USD 6.5 billion, divided between USD 2.5 billion in grants and USD 4 billion in loans.¹⁵

¹² Cluster Management Guidelines, OCHA, approved by the Cluster Head Meeting, 28 November 2005.

¹³ <http://www.un.org.pk/undp/docs/South-Asia-FlashAppeal-2005-Earthquake-Update-26October20051.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ <http://www.erra.gov.pk/Reports/Donor.pdf>

International NGOs

The international NGO community reacted immediately to the earthquake and hundreds of international organisations have taken part in the relief operation in various ways. Organisations already present in Pakistan immediately diverted their activities to the earthquake relief.

The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), an INGO body including Plan, Oxfam, Concern, Care, SRS, Islamic Relief, Church World Service and Save the Children, was established in 2001. The PHF met on 8 October to discuss the response and divided the affected areas between the INGOs. The majority of the INGOs worked through or in collaboration with local NGOs in the early phase of the relief operation; the ICRC and national societies collaborated with the Pakistani Red Crescent Society. Because of well established relationships, this enabled the INGOs to reach out rapidly to a number of smaller organisations. Through its local partners PHF was able to conduct rapid assessments on 9 October and to start search, rescue and relief work within the first 24 hours.

f. Norwegian assistance, policy and response

The Norwegian MFA

The MFA responded to the earthquake by releasing NOK 15 million on 9 October and NOK 50 million on 14 October 2005.¹⁶ The first round of funds went primarily to Norwegian NGOs with a presence in Pakistan, to Direktoratet for samfunnssikkerhet og beredskap (DSB) for the establishment of camps for relief workers, and to various UN agencies. Funding was also allocated for initiatives taken by the Pakistani diaspora. Moreover, funds of NOK 5 million were assigned to the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad and NORAD for smaller initiatives and projects.

Once the scale of the disaster was known, NOK 260 million in extra budgetary funds were granted by the Storting.¹⁷ This second round of funding was specifically channelled through the UN with the aim of coordinating relief efforts through the UN's Organisation for Humanitarian Assistance. This was justified by the, at the time, relatively small contributions from the international community to the UN extended appeal of almost USD 550 million. According to the embassy, the Norwegian contribution of USD 53, 821,780 towards the UN flash appeal amounted to 25% of the total pledges made by the international community at the time.

The MFA made a policy decision to prioritise and support hospitals and staff from the Norwegian Red Cross, rather than the field hospital suggested by the Norwegian Army. NATO received some support for the transport of relief goods into Pakistan, and in fact the first flights of what NATO referred to as the air-bridge were funded by Norway. Moreover, the MFA set as a requirement that, in order to be supported, NGOs should have a documented presence and/or networks in Pakistan, previous experience in the provision of emergency assistance, and they should be active participants in clusters in Islamabad or in the field. With regard to the second grant from the Storting, following a change of Government in Norway, a policy decision was made to channel all support through UN agencies in support of the cluster approach.

The Norwegian NGO response

Norwegian NGOs engaged in humanitarian activities responded to the earthquake immediately. The Norwegian Red Cross, NRC, NCA, Plan, and Save the Children all issued public appeals, and started their humanitarian operations immediately. Except for NRC, which had its own staff in the

¹⁶ According to information received from the MFA.

¹⁷ Whitepaper No. 9 - dated 25 October 2005.

field, the groups had a policy of working through local networks or partner organisations in the field in the initial phase. This was later supplemented by Norwegian staff, either as experts or in support of the national organisations. The NRC's Emergency Standby Force (funded by MFA) was heavily drawn on to increase the UN and IOM response capacity. Likewise, DSB had Norwegian teams to man the camps established for housing the relief community.

The Norwegian NGOs received approximately 20% of the total funding from the MFA. The major Norwegian organisations (such as NRC and NCA) have, however, raised considerably higher amounts through public appeals, the Norwegian private sector and from other countries' development agencies, such as the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Organisation (ECHO).

g. Conclusion

The earthquake is one of the largest catastrophes to have hit Pakistan, and despite knowledge of its vulnerability to earthquakes and efforts made by UNDP to establish a Crisis Prevention and Reconstruction framework, such plans and organisations were still absent at national and provincial levels when the disaster struck.

The Pakistani and international actors did a tremendous job in meeting the needs of the earthquake victims. And despite chaos in the early stages, the slowness of the UN to get the cluster approach in operation beyond Islamabad and the initially low response from the donor community, the relief operation is to be regarded as a success. Three important contributing factors towards that end were the involvement of Pakistani NGOs/civil society and the Pakistani Army, and, not least, the fact that the winter of 2005/06 was for the most part much milder and with less snow than normal.

Norway was one of the largest contributors to the relief operation, politically, financially and as a lead nation in support of the UN cluster approach. The high Norwegian profile in Pakistan, at Prime Minister and Minister of International Development level, and the field engagement of the Norwegian Embassy, made the Norwegian involvement and contribution visible well beyond Islamabad circles.

3. General assistance assessment

a. The Pakistani mobilisation

The earthquake saw a phenomenal national response. Once news of the disaster spread, the Pakistani public (both individuals and organisations), rapidly mobilised trucks of food, blankets and clothes. This spontaneous public response was the first to reach the affected areas. Lack of information about the situation, however, resulted in initial confusion. Uncoordinated initiatives and blocked roads caused traffic jams, slowing down the response and making it more difficult to reach areas off the main roads. Despite the initial disorder the speed and scale of the public response was crucial in saving lives over the first few days. While this response was uncoordinated and therefore less effective than it could have been, the magnitude of the response shows the potential resting in a better coordinated civilian response.

More effective and better coordinated were local NGOs already working in the affected areas. These were in a position to respond to the earthquake through their networks of local community-based organisations, which enabled an immediate response, well before the international community and the UN became operational in the affected areas.

The relief response included every type of organisation, including religious ones; among these were some linked to ‘jihadi’ organisations featuring on the UNSC terrorist list.¹⁸ A recent ICG report estimates that religious organisations linked to proscribed groups mobilised volunteers from all over the country.¹⁹ Based on observations from people working in the field these organisations appeared as relatively well organised and had the ability to mobilise volunteers and resources early. It is likely that they already had some presence in the high-lying areas close to the LoC, and that they therefore were ready to provide manual labour and moral support in the very first hours and days of the crisis. They were apparently also able draw on professional expertise, as it was reported that health personnel for camps had been recruited from Lahore. Talking to members of the international community working in the field, the general impression is that these organisations, like other humanitarian organisations (of various ideologies and denominations), worked to provide relief to the earthquake victims as fast and effectively as possible. A concern was noted regarding threats posed towards the employment of female relief staff.

The government/army did not obstruct anyone from helping, including the religious organisations linked to the ‘jihadi’ groups. Several of the UN officials interviewed pointed out that to ban Islamic groups from helping would have been difficult from a humanitarian perspective as well as politically, as foreign forces were allowed to assist. And, as was emphasised by the Humanitarian Coordinator: the UN did not provide any assistance for these groups. One should not underestimate, however, the potential for ideological and political gains that these organisations may have made. It is the Government of Pakistan’s responsibility to follow up on this and ensure that proscribed groups do not capitalise on the disaster, and that long-term service provision is overseen and controlled by the GoP. A ban on single organisations, in such a highly volatile political context, would probably only led them to change their names and logos and possibly caused animosity towards ‘western’ NGOs and the UN.

¹⁸ To examine the role of jihadi organisations in the earthquake response is outside the scope of this assessment. As these organisations have received attention from the press and caused debate within the international community, we have decided to include our preliminary observations in the section discussing the national response.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, Asia Brief No. 46 Pakistan: Political Impact of the Earthquake (March 2006).

b. The role of the army

The Pakistani Army was rapidly mobilised and two divisions were dispatched to the affected areas, where it established forward base camps and mobilised troops, helicopters, vehicles, donkeys and mules to transport relief items up the valleys and take injured people down. While the civilian administration was severely incapacitated and the NGOs had their headquarters in nearby urban centres (such as Mansehra, Abbottabad and Muzaffarabad), the army was on the ground from day one. It took the lead in coordination and provided logistical support and security. The army opened up areas previously inaccessible to civilians and shared its maps, bases and storage spaces, as well as transportation.

The military also established and managed several refugee camps. They had the order and manpower required to clear land and set up camps rapidly. UNHCR, NRC and other NGOs trained the military in understanding the difference between humanitarian and military camps. The logistical capacity of the military was critical, and the army seems to have been willing to learn, encouraged by officers with experience of international operations.

The army has been criticised by the ICG for being unprepared to respond to a natural disaster and more concerned with security and military casualties than with taking part in the relief work during the first few days. That might, however, be explained by the general degree of confusion that existed in the early stages of the relief operation and the humanitarian and material losses suffered by the army in the affected areas.

While the role of the army in the relief phase has been criticised by a number of non-governmental actors, the majority of these – and particularly those working on the ground in the field – acknowledge that the army, although its performance was less than perfect, did a job no one else had the capacity to do at the time, and that they did it well. Moreover, considering the role of the Pakistani army in the country since independence, it seems the Pakistani public expected a military response and that this was viewed by most not only as natural, but critical to the success of the overall relief operation, and as fair and efficient.

c. From relief to rehabilitation, from army to civilian administration

While the government responded promptly, nobody in the civilian administration had the capacity to deal with a disaster of this magnitude. The ongoing transition from relief to rehabilitation, however, ought to include a transition from military control to civilian leadership and implementation. While the army is handing over responsibilities to civilian bodies, it seems that these are at present heavily influenced by military personnel. This remains a significant challenge.

In view of Norway's earlier focus on good governance and devolution in its development assistance to Pakistan, supporting the transition to civilian-led rehabilitation and reconstruction and assisting the civilian administration and civil society organisations' ability to respond effectively in future disasters would be a natural next step and one that would contribute to furthering long-term development goals.

d. Return dilemmas and local context challenges

The GoP declared 31 March 2006 the end of the relief phase and decided that registered camps would close on this date. This initiated a drive to return people to their places of origin, particularly in NWFP, where the army has closed all but a few residual camps. In AJK the policy on camp closure has been less strict than in NWFP and no operational deadline has been applied. And

whereas food delivery in the camps was stopped on 31 March, water/sanitation and health services are still provided.

With approximately 400,000 destroyed and damaged houses (later revised to 600,000), many issues still remain unresolved and will affect peoples' decisions and ability to return. While the GoP's housing reconstruction policy provides for a financial compensation package, this only applies to landowners or tenants who get a NOC from the owner to reconstruct. As a considerable number of the affected people lived on leased land without proper agreements, many questions have risen regarding compensation and the fate of tenants without the consent of the landowner to rebuild. Another unresolved issue is the relocation of communities lying on the seismic fault line.

Overall, the return process has been marked by weak advance planning and a lack of information to the returnees. The return has therefore come as a surprise and has increased uncertainty for many. While many people have started moving back to their homes, others have left registered camps and settled in new spontaneous camps elsewhere. It is still too early to estimate the numbers that will actually return, as affected people are considering their various options.

The GoP recognises that not everyone is in a position to return to their place of origin and a few 'residual camps' will remain open to provide security for vulnerable groups with shelter for the winter. Currently, vulnerable groups include those who have nothing to return to (because of landslides) and those who need care and have no one to take care of them. It remains to be seen, however, whether the residual camps are sufficient to take care of those who decide to stay, and those who might decide to move down-country again when next winter arrives.

e. The cluster approach

The new UN cluster approach was still under debate in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiated by the Humanitarian Reform Review (HRR) when the earthquake hit Pakistan.²⁰ Although the cluster concept was not fully developed a decision was made to run a pilot in Pakistan to test it.

A total of 11 clusters were established in Pakistan, plus overall cluster coordination under OCHA direction, with UNICEF heading three clusters (protection, education and water/sanitation), WFP likewise (nutrition, IT/communication and logistics), while the following agencies each headed one cluster: FAO (livelihoods sub-cluster), IOM (emergency shelter), UNHCR (camp management – camps of over 50 tents), UNDP (early recovery and reconstruction) and WHO (health). While all the agencies, the ICRC and the NGOs interviewed for this review were supportive of the new cluster approach, they were equally in agreement on the need for improvements.

All the Norwegian-funded organisations interviewed participated in the cluster system, and it was argued that there had therefore been no need for a separate Norwegian coordination mechanism. This reasoning seems to have applied to the embassies as well, as no specific donor coordination mechanism was established. One NGO argued that a donor coordination forum would have been useful to further a more unified dialogue with the GoP.

While the clusters were relatively rapidly established in Islamabad, as were a number of humanitarian hubs in four field locations,²¹ it took much longer for the clusters to become

²⁰ The suggestion for a Lead Agency and cluster response was formulated in 'Humanitarian Response Review', an Independent Report Commissioned by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator & Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA of April 2005.

²¹ The first Minutes from hub meetings were recorded in Muzaffarabad on 28 October 2005.

operational in the field. The quality of coordination differed, though, as a Cluster Update of 09.11.05 spells out. Only three Islamabad-based clusters had by that time presented their TORs, and only two had reported having systematic communication with the field clusters. One explanation provided was that the largest agencies, referred to as ‘the big five’, were overstretched, and it was suggested by WHO that smaller agencies could have been better suited to work as cluster lead agencies.

This illustrates a range of challenges that emerged as the cluster approach was tested in Pakistan. One example is the UN agencies’ reluctance to enter into the cluster arrangement and assume lead agency responsibility. Possibly they wanted to avoid lending approval to the cluster system, or binding the agency with a ‘last resort’ responsibility. Another challenge is the agencies’ lack of understanding of and commitment towards the new arrangement. And the third example is the way some UN agencies monopolised the Norwegian cluster funding for their own organisation, acting against decisions made in Cluster Head Meetings.

Another issue noted on the UN side is where responsibility for monitoring and evaluation should be placed – with the lead agency, the cluster or the donor – and what responsibility cluster lead agencies hold when they are to be the ‘last resort’. In addition, a number of questions were raised by national NGOs, highlighted in a recent report published by Action Aid.²² They include the difficulties they faced in contributing to cluster coordination: a lack of invitation in the first instance, their limited capacity to attend numerous meetings, the language barrier and their efforts not being recognised by the international community.

Reluctance to assume responsibility

There are two separate cases to highlight here. UNHCR was, despite its long experience of running camps in Pakistan for Afghan refugees, extremely reluctant to assume responsibility for camp management. It finally agreed to take responsibility for settlements with more than 50 tents (having first said more than 200 tents), which according to NGOs only accounted for about 20 % of the displaced. Moreover, they did not wish to recognise the displaced population as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), but introduced a new label of Earthquake Displaced Persons (EDPs), implying limited rights. In discussion, UNHCR emphasised its need to prioritise refugees over internally displaced people. It indicated, moreover, that it, and UNHCR HQ, had not been assured that the Norwegian cluster donation for the cluster was ‘fresh’ money and would not be deducted from the general contribution to UNHCR. Why it had not sought such clarification was not evident to the review team. It appeared more like to be agency reluctance to assume cluster responsibility, thereby slowing down the process of establishing a proper camp management system (over 50 tents).

In the second case the agency, WFP, explicitly stated its reluctance to channel the Norwegian funding to members of the Logistics Cluster. In a communication with the MFA the WFP HQ explains:

The cluster approach... was not originally conceived as a structure which would be responsible for resource mobilization at the country level, but should function as an effective tool to provide technical support to the field and build capacity. Existing mechanisms such as the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) still remain the preferred tool for raising resources for humanitarian action. At this point, we do not

²² Action Aid International (2006), *The Evolving UN Cluster Approach in the Aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake: An NGO Perspective*, London.

wish to set a precedent before the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) agrees on further guidance to the field on applying the cluster system at the country level.²³

WFP kept the entire funding amount assigned for food through the nutrition cluster (NOK 28.59 million) and for communication through the IT/communication cluster (NOK 5.6 million). Regarding the remainder of the total Norwegian contribution of NOK 102.4 million it initially recommended that MFA channel the funding directly to the cluster members, WFP (NOK 42.78 million), Atlas (NOK 4.75 million), IOM (NOK 6.74 million) and UNOPS (NOK 13.93million), rather than to either WFP or the cluster taking on that responsibility.

It is evident that if UN agencies are to assume the role of cluster lead there needs to be a general consensus and agreement among them on what such a responsibility implies, and, moreover, agreement that agencies might have to go beyond their UN mandate as cluster heads to accommodate the needs arising in any particular context. Otherwise the cluster approach will not be able to deal with gaps, address properly cross-cutting issues and foster a culture of collaboration rather than self-protection and self-funding.

Understanding and commitment

Much of the criticism levelled against the clusters relates to the extremely weak cluster management, a general lack of understanding of what coordination (and not directing) implies and the cluster heads lacking the ability to distinguish between the interests of their own agency and the cluster. One of the intentions of the cluster approach was to ensure that agencies with technical competence and resources were assigned responsibility for the thematic clusters. However, if coordination responsibility is placed with technical staff with an already high workload they are not likely to fulfil such a demanding task, as was demonstrated in several clusters. And, while the very general TOR developed for the clusters left room for innovation and adaptation to realities on the ground, they did not provide sufficient guidance for inexperienced agencies or agency staff. With OCHA assuming more of an advisory and oversight function in this new cluster approach, and with staff on very short rotation, it was not in a position to address the weaknesses of single clusters. Although the Humanitarian Coordinator indicated that he had used his authority to make changes in the clusters and to reduce unrealistic 'shopping lists' presented as agency budgets,²⁴ there was no overall corrective force in place.

IOM's role as lead agency for the shelter cluster may, however, serve as an illustration of how improvements can be made. Initially the IOM had assigned inexperienced and junior staff to head and manage the cluster, leaving other cluster members totally dissatisfied and about to withdraw from the cluster. Given the importance of this cluster for the overall relief operation DfID intervened by funding and recruiting an experienced consultant to head the cluster. It thereby salvaged the process and made the shelter cluster into one of the best rated clusters, even capitalising on its ability to draw on the Norwegian cluster funding (see below).

Agencies' commitment to assuming cluster responsibility provides the following lessons:

- Cluster coordination is a demanding task that requires dedicated and experienced agency staff, trained in process and programme management and with a general understanding of what inter-agency (beyond the UN) coordination and collaboration implies.

²³ WFP Donor Relations Officer, e-mail communication of 16 December 2005.

²⁴ In one instance, budget reduction, for an agency with limited implementation capacity, had been revoked in the UN agency HQ before the budget was submitted to the donors.

- A system for the training of cluster coordinators is required, to be offered for each lead agency, OCHA dedicated coordinators, ICRC and NGO staff and senior personnel in the NRC's secondment system (and for governments in disaster prone countries). This would ensure that such skills are held among the broadest possible range of actors to reduce vulnerability.
- Cluster agencies should be allowed to charge a certain percentage for cluster coordination, although along clearly defined budget lines, to ensure that experienced and dedicated staff members are designated and allowed the time needed for cluster leadership and management.

It is urgent that such a training component is developed, and that agencies ensure that senior and experienced staff members are prioritised for training.

Monopolising cluster funding

Norwegian willingness to provide direct funding for the clusters, channelled through UN agencies, helped raise a range of important issues for the further development of the cluster approach. A UN Head of Agency summarised what appeared to be an opinion held by several agencies: '...we were not prepared for a system of direct cluster funding'. One concern seems to stem from agency organisational formalities for funds transfer, or possibly being unwilling to sidestep such formalities. As IOM is not recognised as a UN agency, the funding for the shelter cluster was transferred through the UNDP. This prolongs the grant and reporting process as both the IOM and the UNDP check the incoming reports from the project implementing agencies and issue their own narrative and financial reports.

Moreover, the procedure by which the cluster funding was introduced to the agencies and the Heads of Cluster did not contribute constructively to the process. Following initial discussions with the Norwegian authorities, Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland informed all Heads of Cluster and the Humanitarian Coordinator that Norway had committed itself to funding the clusters with NOK 260 million, requesting these to start a fund allocation process. The embassy in Islamabad was at that time not informed about the decision, and UN agencies became impatient as they had expected a rapid utilisation of funding. Moreover, Stortingsproposisjon nr. 9 (2005-2006) did not specifically mention the clusters, stating rather that funding was to be channelled through UN agencies and spent in accordance with priorities set by the UN. This left the MFA, the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad and the Humanitarian Coordinator with limited leverage over single UN agencies to ensure fund distribution within the clusters. This led to several incidents where the agencies monopolised funding, applied mechanisms that protected agency interests (as in procurement) and went against decisions made by the Head of Cluster meetings.

In discussions with the UNICEF management team they stated their reluctance to distribute Norwegian cluster funding to implementers, as UNICEF was the agency to be held accountable for project implementation. Such a statement is contested by other agencies, which argue that NGO subcontracting is really nothing new. UNICEF (and other UN agencies) could have applied exactly the same procedures as when handling umbrella grants or subcontracting projects to NGOs, as is normally done in all of their operations.

The UNICEF approach in the two cases below illustrates different aspects. The first concerns the UNICEF-led protection cluster, where in the documents prepared by OCHA, and approved by the Head of Cluster meeting in Islamabad, a total of NOK 1 million was allocated for the protection work of IOM (0.6 million) and NRC (0.4 million). Despite these instructions UNICEF did not wish

to grant funds to either of these organisations, even if that could have broadened the protection perspective beyond the child protection focus that is within UNICEF's mandate.

The second case is presented by Norwegian Church Aid, which made initial contact with UNICEF for a water and sanitation project when the Norwegian cluster funding was announced. By mid-December 2005, NCA had submitted a concept paper to the cluster, but questioning the progress in January 2006 it was told to submit a full proposal following UNICEF standards. That being done, it was given a verbal reply that the proposal would be funded. However, when no formal reply had been provided by April 2006 it contacted UNICEF and was informed that NCA would not be allowed to purchase the equipment included in the proposal. Such purchases would be handled through UNICEF's regular procurement service, with a handling time of four to six months. In effect, funding that should have been available in December 2005 (when the Norwegian preparedness stock could have been made use of) and could have made a difference in the camps at that time, can at the earliest be utilised by early September (possibly December) 2006, if the proposal were approved in early May. This was not only a totally meaningless postponement of assistance provision; the procurement monopolisation might also, beyond a single agency's wish to utilise funding through its own channels, illustrate UNICEF's inability to provide a rapid response.

As a contrast to UNICEF's and other UN agencies' procedures stands IOM's handling of cluster funding. When trusted with Norwegian funding (albeit through UNDP) the shelter cluster announced a bidding process, and established a separate committee (by draw at the cluster meeting) to review the incoming project proposals. Agencies submitted their proposals fairly quickly, the bidding committee prioritised and approved a number of proposals, the cluster was informed of the decision and funding was released to the implementing agencies. IOM monitored the implementation, each agency submitted its reports to IOM and the cluster, and then further to UNDP. According to IOM, the process had gone very smoothly, and had been regarded as transparent and effective by members of the shelter cluster. UNDP, however, criticised the reporting of some of IOM's implementing agencies, and stressed that this arrangement was not ideal as it was UNDP that was ultimately responsible to the donors.

Further lessons learnt

Continuing some further reflections on the cluster approach applied in sudden natural disasters such as the Pakistani earthquake, there are five further findings to be highlighted.

One finding is that there is still a need for rapidly released and direct funding for NGOs, including national ones, the ICRC and IFRC, in the early stages of a sudden emergency, in order to save lives. Even when the UN Emergency Response Fund is in place the UN system is not likely either to have sufficient country response capacity or to get funding (and resources) out quickly enough to meet immediate needs. Reliance on such a UN-administered emergency fund might actually be a threat to the early lifesaving operation, and should only be seen as complementary to the direct and multifaceted civil society, national government, NGO, IGO and nationally based UN agency response.

Secondly, and in line with the above, direct cluster funding (beyond support for cluster coordination) is not appropriate for the first stage of this type of sudden emergency. The clusters need time to get organised, to make initial needs assessments, identify gaps and reach a common understanding of the situation before they are in a position to allocate funds among cluster agencies or enter into bidding processes.

Thus, cluster funding for projects should only be released when the cluster has prepared its first consolidated needs and gaps assessment, thereby having documented that there is a functional

cluster structure in place. This can, on the one hand, encourage a more rapid establishment and initiation of clusters, and, on the other hand, avoid the waste of funding clusters that do not have clearly defined needs to meet.

Thirdly, while the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross are supportive of the cluster approach and attended cluster meetings, they argue strongly for an independent position based on the Geneva Convention. This implies, according to the Norwegian Red Cross, that they will refuse to be coordinated by a UN agency, receive funding through a cluster led by a UN agency (due to possible political strings) or assume the role of cluster head. While, arguably, the ICRC can invoke its independence as set by the Geneva Convention, there appear to be no formal arguments for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, such as the Norwegian Red Cross, which is a Norwegian NGO, and even the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, to do so. Rather, they should be in a position to take on a more active role in the clusters, including heading them, and accept funding through a cluster lead agency. This should ensure that the most competent and experienced agency, which in many cases might not be a UN agency, is chosen to lead the clusters.

Fourthly, the role of national governments, when existing and functional, within the clusters needs to be clarified to avoid unnecessary tension and conflict. In the Pakistani case the government (and the army) established a separate organisation that mirrored the UN-led clusters, although they were invited in as deputy cluster heads. While, as some NGOs argued, this arrangement allowed them to pressurise the government, it was felt by others that they could more easily evade responsibility and blame the international community for any shortcomings.

And fifthly, and on a more positive note, the cluster approach might be a very useful mechanism to combat corruption in massive emergency responses, which is a highly likely occurrence. The example presented is from procurement of shelter material, more specifically, the metal sheets used for emergency shelter roofs. As it was recognised that agencies had used very different qualities and paid very different prices for the sheets and the transport, the shelter cluster assigned a technical working group to the problem. Based on information gathered from cluster members the working group was able then to recommend a standard quality and maximum purchase and transport price for all member agencies, thus limiting the possibility for corruption in the purchase of one of the main relief items.

Conclusion on cluster approach

The general conclusion is that the cluster approach should be taken further, but clarifications and improvements are needed on a range of issues, the most important being:

- Experiences from the Pakistani cluster approach need to be brought up for debate to identify areas of necessary improvement. The views of the Government of Pakistan, donors, UN agencies, and inter- and non-governmental organisations (national and international) need to be solicited.
- Norway needs to review the appropriateness of direct cluster funding. If it is to be continued, further discussions are required with OCHA and UN agencies on funding modalities and how rapid disbursement, transparent funding and transfer mechanisms (free of charge) within the cluster can be organised, with an agreement on monitoring and reporting responsibility towards donors.
- Likewise, the timing of the cluster funding needs to be reviewed. It appears that the system of direct and rapid funding of NGOs and INGOs with local networks should be prioritised for the immediate life-saving phase. Cluster lead agencies should receive financial support

for the establishment of the cluster structure, while direct funding through the clusters should only be released when the clusters are firmly established and needs identified and prioritised.

- The appointment of cluster agencies and heads is an import issue for clarification. One UN agency should not hold responsibility for a large number of clusters, and there should be an opening for appointing a non-UN lead agency when these, either an inter- or non-governmental agency, have the necessary country experience and organisational management capacity.
- Training of cluster heads should be a priority and immediately initiated, emphasising voluntary and facilitated coordination to ensure the broadest possible inclusion in the clusters.

f. Conclusion

The response to the Pakistani earthquake underlines the importance of local organisations that can provide an immediate response, and international donors that can quickly provide or assure funding. International NGOs with local partner organisations and UN agencies with local networks can then utilise these for a rapid response.

In a country such as Pakistan with an internationally recognised government, that government needs to be included rather than bypassed by the international actors. While the GoP was extremely supportive in issuing visas for relief staff and allowing the rapid handling of relief goods, the international aid coordination structure was established in parallel to national agencies.

The cluster approach, however, both proved its usefulness and exposed its weaknesses. A further debate is required to improve the approach, including discussions between Norwegian MFA, OCHA and UN agencies on the organisational handling of cluster funding to and between agencies and organisations, as well as ways to monitor and report.

4. Thematic issues

a. Disaster preparedness

The Government of Pakistan's disaster preparedness is generally weak and no civilian authority is geared to respond to a disaster of this magnitude. As previously mentioned, a national crisis prevention and recovery framework was developed in 2002. This initiative was not taken further and while it advised the need for a national plan, no steps were taken to start this process and the government ended up badly unprepared to tackle a disaster of this size and to coordinate an effective response. No early warning system was in place and only limited attention was paid to environmental issues that could limit the harm of future quakes.

The earthquake clearly demonstrated the need to build capacity in preparedness and response, both at the national level and among communities:

- The national level: While the national response was immediate and considerable resources were mobilised by the army, the capacity of the civilian administration was weak. While the lack of capacity could be used as an argument in favour of heavy military engagement, strengthening the ability and competence of the civilian administration to respond to disasters is a means to further democratic governance.
- Civil society: National and particularly local NGOs were the first to react in a systematic manner to the earthquake. With their established networks and contacts in villages through local-level NGOs and community-based organisations, they demonstrated the ability to respond rapidly and get information and assessments from areas cut off from the main roads.
- Community level: The experience from the earthquake shows that it is the communities – and women in particular – that are the ones that need to deal with the immediate relief work. Experience from community-based disaster preparedness committees has demonstrated that the value of community involvement is crucial. Further, as more than 18,000 students and 800 teachers and staff were killed in the disaster, basic training and drilling of teachers and students could contribute towards saving thousands of lives.

b. Gender

While nobody knows exactly how the earthquake has affected women, the disaster has been far from gender neutral. Women were in general harder hit by the earthquake and faced more hardship during the relief phase. While no systematic survey has been carried out segregating the effects by gender, we know that more female teachers were killed than male (approx. 60% female, 40% male). It is also likely that due to work migration patterns, with men working in other places in Pakistani urban centres or abroad, more women than men died and suffered severe injuries, and many women were left to cope with the immediate effects of the earthquake. Further, it seems women have been worse off in the relief phase. This applies particularly to widows, who, due to existing cultural norms, were unable to move to camps, or who, when in camps, were confined to the tents; they could not stand in line to get registered, present their claims, or use public facilities. These women became passive recipients, having to wait to be visited in their villages or tents. While it is likely that many women have suffered from neglect, no reports have been made of women that have been completely abandoned. Nor does it seem that physical violence against women has occurred in any major or systematic way, and only a few, scattered reports have been received.

In accordance with the IASC cluster concept, gender was treated as a cross-cutting theme and was supposed to be a component in the work of all the clusters. More than six months on, however, little has been done to address gender issues as a cross-cutting theme in the clusters. UNFPA was the only agency that focused its relief work specifically on gender and was responsible for the Gender Task Force, a sub-cluster under the health cluster. Many decisions have been taken at the Head of Cluster meetings, where there is no gender representation/focal point, and of which the UNFPA Gender Task Force is not part.

The overall relief work has thus not addressed gender issues, or women's needs, in any systematic way. The main challenges seem to be related to UN and other actors being too busy with their own work, paying little attention to the importance of mainstreaming gender throughout the relief phase.

UNFPA addressed its gender concerns to the UN Secretary General during his visit, and he brought it up with high-level Pakistani authorities. While there is no problem in getting commitments for these concerns at the top level in the UN and the GoP, the challenge remains to get acceptance, understanding and a practical implementation of action at the lower levels.

Existing cultural norms in the earthquake-affected areas, and in Pakistan in general, make gender sensitivity a challenge more generally. In the field, many organisations report difficulties recruiting female staff and recognise that without them they are unable to gain access to women. This demonstrates the need to ensure that issues related to female recruitment (such as conditions and facilities for female staff) are taken into consideration in the planning phase and that sufficient resources are put aside for this. It also proves the need to have gender sensitisation - in very concrete terms - included in humanitarian training of management and field workers from the UN, the government, the army, NGOs and volunteers.

A UNFPA gender advisor has been seconded to ERRA to assist in redrafting the National Plan of Action for Protection (drafted by the Ministry of Social Welfare). ERRA, however, seems to be focusing on the vulnerability aspect of protection, and less on gender issues. Whereas its capacity is weak, it is, according to UNFPA, open to taking advice. A gender advisor will also be based in the UN Humanitarian Coordinator's office. Albeit coming late, this provides an opportunity to mainstream gender in the various clusters in the rehabilitation phase.

Conclusion

Treating gender as a cross-cutting theme has resulted in no one taking gender seriously. The UN needs to ensure gender mainstreaming through the use of focal points in high-level meetings, make targeted gender intervention a standard in programmes, and ensure that staff at both managerial and implementation levels are trained in how practically to ensure gender equality in relief work. There is an opportunity for Norway to follow up gender concerns in the rehabilitation phase and in future disaster preparedness.

c. Learning from previous disasters

While, arguably, each emergency will have its special features, there is a degree of commonality to draw on from previous experiences. Those appearing least able to draw on past experiences in the initial phases were the Government of Pakistan and parts of the UN system, influenced by uncertainty as to what the new cluster approach would entail.

The national NGOs explicitly cited their past experiences of responding to a broad array of emergency types, and from working with other NGOs, local authorities and the communities.

Likewise, international NGOs with local partner organisations could draw on this expertise and add in their own experiences. Others provided their standard emergency response packages, such as hospitals, staff camps or water equipment, which have been tested in a number of previous emergencies.

This emergency provided a number of opportunities to learn from operations at high altitude and with extremely difficult access throughout the winter, and, certainly, from how the clusters approach was operationalised.

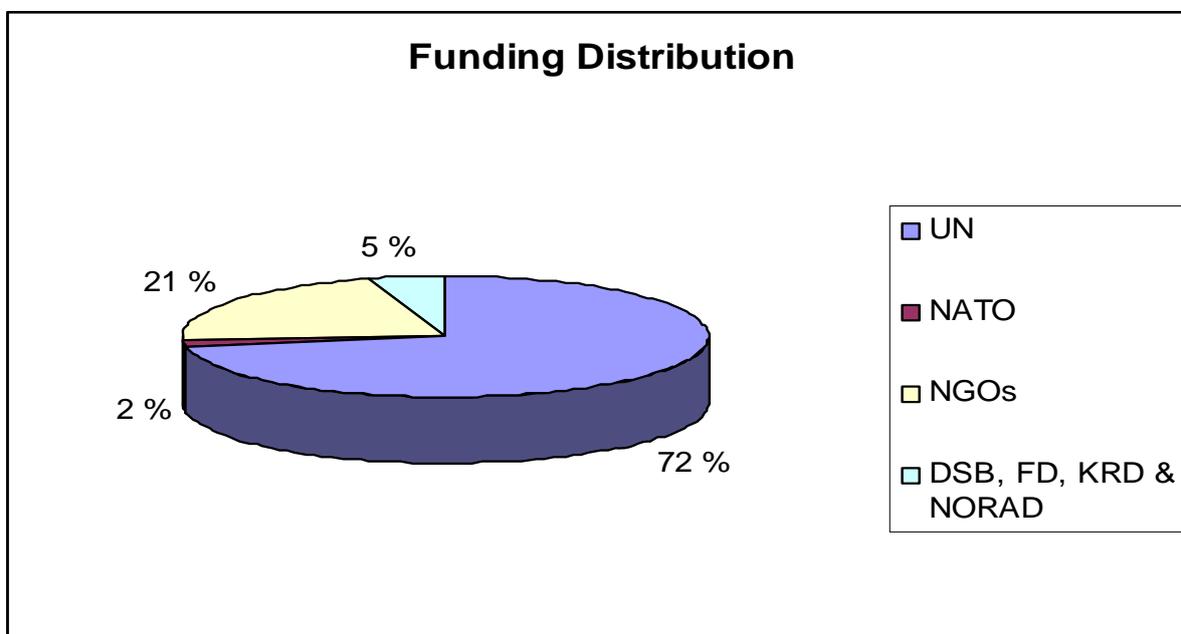


Illustration 2: Large areas were destroyed by landslides, including roads.
(Photo: Hugo B. Ark (IOM))

5. Norwegian assistance

a. Organisational overview, types of activity

Of the total funding of NOK 522,056,529, NOK 390,080,000, or approx. 72 %, was channelled through UN organisations. NOK 103,420,713, or approx. 21 %, was provided to NGOs, predominantly the Norwegian Red Cross (including assistance channelled to ICRC and IFRC), which received NOK 60,000,000 or 11.4%, and other Norwegian NGOs, which received approximately 8.7 %. Local Pakistani NGOs received NOK 5,000,000, or 0.9 %. The remainder was divided between the DSB, Norad, KRD and FD (5 %), and NATO (2 %). For details see Annex III.



The first batch of Norwegian funding (through October) went to local and Norwegian NGOs with a presence on the ground. The second batch of funding (November 2005) went mainly to UN agencies. The reason for prioritising funding through the UN was, according to the MFA, i) the new government's priority to fund UN agencies and support UN reform, and ii) the speed with which the MFA can process funding proposals and reporting.

b. Overview of the organisations funded

Given the review team's time limitation a representative number of UN agencies and NGOs were selected for interviews and closer examination, leaving out agencies and organisations that either had minimal involvement or only received limited Norwegian support.

UN Agencies

OCHA - OCHA was in place within 24 hours with a UNDAC team, and established a coordination office in Islamabad. Hub offices were gradually established in Bagh, Batagram, Mansehra and Muzaffarabad, and OCHA assumed overall responsibility for cluster coordination

UNDP - Cluster lead for Early Recovery.

The recovery cluster prepared an early recovery plan to bridge the relief phase and the reconstruction phase. UNDP also implemented shelter and heating projects and provided capacity building assistance to ERRRA.

The Norwegian grant for the IOM-led shelter cluster was channelled through UNDP.

IOM - Cluster lead for Shelter.

Main activities: Shelter, logistics and camp management of spontaneous camps. IOM was also lead agency on all non-food logistics and transported tents, blankets and equipment for subcontracting partners.

UNHAS – was instrumental in transport of relief supplies and relief workers, a well organised helicopter service allowed supplies to be shipped into remote and high altitude areas.

UNHCR - Cluster lead for Camp Management.

UNHCR's mandate includes complex emergencies and IDPs in conflict-related natural disasters, but not in pure natural disasters. Given UNHCR's experience, it also supported UNICEF and UNHRC in their protection mandates.

UNICEF - Cluster lead for Education, Protection and WATSAN clusters.

UNICEF's child orientation led to an emphasis on immunisation against measles (1 million children vaccinated), water treatment and sanitation to reduce diarrhoea, and winter clothing against respiratory infections. The agency is of the opinion that it helped prevent massive deaths, and they argue that Norwegian water purification equipment was essential in supplying safe water.

UNICEF focused its efforts on clothing distribution (to 700,000 children); the distribution of winterisation kits; providing wat/san in the camps; the vaccination of children to prevent epidemics; continuing children's schooling through schools in the camps; and the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children and the disabled.

As noted above, UNICEF did not distribute Norwegian-assigned cluster funding among cluster agencies in the three clusters they headed. UNICEF was not in a position to provide information on the allocation of Norwegian funding at the time of the review.

WFP - Cluster lead for the Nutrition, IT/communication and Logistics clusters.

Food distribution and logistics were the WFP's main activity, but it was also involved in providing field accommodation for UN agencies and other assistance providers, utilising DSB and other national civil defence organisations.

WHO - Cluster lead for Health; limited Norwegian funding.

NGOs

Caritas

Caritas Norway divided Norwegian assistance between its national partners in Pakistan and India, whereas the team reviewed only the relief efforts of Caritas Pakistan. According to Caritas, its teams reached the earthquake-affected areas on 9 October and carried out initial assessments. Caritas started immediate distribution of tents and blankets; later this was supplemented with non-food item distribution and health care. Caritas Pakistan concentrated its work on two union councils as well as earthquake-affected families living in host families around Mansehra.

Caritas Pakistan is a member of the Caritas International network, which immediately responded by sending an Emergency Response Support Team to Pakistan to help Caritas Pakistan develop a Special Operations Appeal (SOA). The SOA outlines a three-year programme, comprising an initial six-month emergency phase followed by plans for longer-term livelihood rehabilitation and housing reconstruction.

Norwegian Red Cross, ICRC and IFRC

The Norwegian Red Cross has primarily been involved in the disaster response through supporting the ICRC and IFRC operations by contributing funding, emergency relief items (such as winterised tents, sleeping bags and blankets) and Red Cross delegates. The ICRC and IFRC divided the work between the organisations in accordance with the Seville agreement, which defines issues of leadership in missions: in disasters IFRC takes the lead, while in conflict areas ICRC leads the operation, making ICRC responsible for AJK and IFRC for NWFP. It is noteworthy that the Pakistani Red Crescent Society (PRSC), IFRC and ICRC spoke with one voice (represented by Halvor Fossum Lauritzen) in the initial phase of the cluster development.

ICRC was already present in Pakistan before the earthquake. It scaled up its operation, focusing on shelter, food, health, and tracing missing persons. IFRC, working in collaboration with the Pakistani Red Crescent Society, distributed relief supplies, started the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure and provided health services.

On 21 October the Norwegian Red Cross established its first field hospitals in Muzaffarabad (jointly with the Finish Red Cross). It also contributed delegates to a field hospital in Abbottabad. 46 terrain vehicles were transported from Norway to assist in the distribution of food, medicines, and other emergency supplies to inaccessible areas. According to ICRC, the Red Cross operations have been responsible for about 20% of the total food distribution.

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

Norwegian Church Aid worked through its locally based partner Church World Service (CWS), and seconded Norwegian administrators and technical expertise (for example in water and sanitation) to strengthen its operational and technical capability. Having built up networks in the field over the last decade, CWS started its work on 9 October. CWS/NCA had Recovery and Monitoring and Assessment (RAM) teams in operation to do needs assessments, collect data and to verify information provided by the army. They started to work out of Balakot in the fields of psychosocial services, wat/san, health/hygiene and the provision of tents.

By working with Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, a global alliance of churches and related agencies, NCA was in a position to draw on local as well as global partners.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

NRC was engaged in emergency and transitional shelter distribution, camp management (of spontaneous camps, less than 50 tents), protection (through the ICLA programme), camp management training, winter survival training and emergency education.

NRC has been present in Pakistan since 2001 with its assistance to the Afghan refugee programme. NRC did the first assessment on 9 October and quickly made the decision to focus its effort on the most remote areas that were difficult to access and to procure tents locally. This enabled a rapid response and initiation of emergency shelter distribution on 21 October.

Realising the lack of coordination for the management of spontaneous camps, NRC took on this task together with IOM. NRC has provided training on camp management to the army and to NGOs running camps funded through UNHCR.

The emergency shelter programme was soon transformed into a transitional shelter programme to provide winterised shelters for households settled above the snow line. NRC collaborated in the UN-launched 'operation winter race', and worked closely with both IOM and the Pakistani Army to reach high-lying, remote settlements.

NRC's existing Information, Counselling and Legal Aid (ICLA) programme, targeting Afghan returnees, was expanded to the earthquake area to deal with cases related to compensation for loss of life, disability and shelter. In April 2006 some 1200-1300 new cases were registered daily, responding to earthquake victims' needs for information about compensation rights and processes.

Plan Pakistan

Plan Norway channelled its support through Plan Pakistan, having worked in Mansehra since 1997. It was working in 52 villages when the earthquake hit, which enabled a rapid response. Plan assumed a coordination role for sending volunteers to the areas where it worked. Plan coordinated and assisted the distribution of relief goods, including shelter, household and hygiene kits, food and clothing, as well as the deployment of volunteer doctors. Plan also started emergency education and children's play spaces in the IDP camps. As a part of Plan International, Plan Pakistan draws on resources – both financial and human – from national Plan organisations in 16 resource mobilising countries.

Sungi Development Foundation

Sungi is a local NGO based in Abbottabad in the NWFP. Through its staff members and community contacts Sungi managed to establish a first rapid assessment by the evening of 8 October. A Joint Assistance Committee for Earthquake Relief (JACER) was established in its office, bringing together more than 100 national NGOs, enabled by a reallocation of NORAD grants that same day. On 9 October 20 NGOs and the government met to plan and divide responsibility. By the evening they had managed to compile more detailed information on the situation in five districts, and thereby an understanding of the magnitude of the earthquake.

Sungi was established in 1992 as a rights-based development NGO that takes on emergency relief operations in the areas in which they work. Sungi works through Community Councils, female and male, and has established emergency relief committees in these communities. These are trained in rescue, first aid and evacuation. Sungi is a member of Oxfam's Contingency Planning Consortium and was involved in UNDP's (2003) efforts to build GOP capacity to handle natural disasters.

Sungi was involved with the distribution of tent and relief items and transitional shelters and water/sanitation, and provided medical assistance through volunteer doctors. Sungi operated with 180 staff members and 300 volunteers, including teams from other national NGOs, and it ran one-day orientation training courses for volunteers. Sungi also established a highly regarded information centre on the web, which facilitated coordination measures among smaller NGOs.

c. Aspects of the response and the Norwegian contribution

Massive logistics operation

The geography of the affected areas necessitated a massive logistical operation with as many as 125 helicopters in operation at the time. The Pakistani army, UN, ICRC and NATO created an air bridge to take down injured people and to distribute emergency relief items, food, clothing and shelter. Helicopters were also used to search systematically for affected settlements not reached by relief agencies.

The Norwegian contribution to the NATO Air Bridge was deemed critical in getting it opened and accepted. Norwegian support for the logistics cluster has been critical for the implementing partners (IOM, ATLAS, UNJLC, UNHAS, UNOPS and WFP) in distributing relief items and being able to provide logistical services to other agencies.

Protection

Protection was a contested issue as UNHCR initially opted to avoid giving IDP status and instead applied the term Earthquake Displaced People (EDP). This would have reduced the protection granted the displaced in accordance with the Guiding Principles for IDP protection. NGOs (including NRC) put pressure on UNHCR and the GoP and the general use of the term EDP was avoided.

Despite its long-term experience in IDP protection, UNHCR did not take the lead in the protection cluster. NRC seconded a NRC protection expert to the UNHCR to enhance its protection capacity, but the expert, according to NRC, was not assigned to work on protection issues. While UNICEF has long-term experience in child protection, it was criticised for not taking a broad enough approach in the protection cluster and its avoidance of channelling cluster funding to IOM and NRC contributed to this criticism.

Vulnerable groups - institutionalised care

Many children lost their parents, and figures of about 15,000 unaccompanied children circulated. That, however, seems to be based on a statistical model rather than taking into account the responsibility the extended family system assumed. UNICEF had only identified 200 cases of children without any family; the rest live with their mothers and/or the extended family.

Based on the belief that orphaned children would get a better life and more opportunities if they were placed in institutions, there was an initial drive by both the GoP and local philanthropists to send orphans to orphanages. There were some reports of children being picked up against their will by orphanages based in other parts of the country, and of groups offering children for adoption. Opposing this approach of institutionalised care, and with a view to supporting child protection in their local communities, child-centred NGOs (including, among others, Plan and Save the Children) published a position paper that was presented to the Ministry of Social Welfare. Following this, and

support from UNICEF, the government adopted a 6-month ban on adoption and is preparing a national plan to ensure support for children, widows and the disabled in their communities.

Emergency Education

The earthquake hit the education sector particularly hard. More than 18,000 students and 853 teachers and staff lost their lives in NWFP and AJK. A substantial number of teachers, school staff, and students are likely to suffer from emotional trauma and injuries and may require counselling services.²⁵

Of total institutions in four districts of AJK, 95%, or 3,685 out of 3,879 buildings, and 53% of the buildings in five districts of NWFP, or 3,984 of a total of 7,577 buildings, were reported to have been totally or partially damaged.²⁶

Emergency education in camps exposed some children, particularly in the NWFP, to education for the first time. This may be capitalised on and seen as an opportunity to provide education to children in areas earlier not served. Moreover, the education and child-friendly spaces established allowed for a degree of normality that helped children (and their families) to cope better with trauma and camp challenges.

Plans are being made to establish emergency schools in areas people are repatriated to, and a number of NGOs are involved in rebuilding schools and offering teaching in the interim period. NRC has been involved in emergency education but reports difficulties with fund-raising.



Illustration 3. Emergency Education in Bhonjaa Valley (Team photo)

²⁵ ADB-WB report of 15 November 2005

²⁶ Ibid.

Staff secondment

The secondment of staff to UN agencies was organised through the Norwegian Refugee Council's regular emergency preparedness force, funded by the MFA. The team met with a number of seconded staff in different positions, with varying contract lengths and responsibilities. They all had extensive experience of emergency operations.

Common to them was a high commitment to the task assigned, and for some, a deep frustration over the ineffectiveness of the UN agencies they were seconded to. Concerns were raised about senior UNHCR field officers refusing to share information with other agencies, officers posing security risks through drinking during working hours and security officers imposing seemingly unnecessary regulations that limited travel and work possibilities. And, as mentioned earlier, specialised staff were not always able to utilise their expertise.

While noting the high esteem in which the Norwegian seconded staff were held in several agencies, two concerns arise. One is whether the secondment system, in itself, functions as a band aid on an ineffective UN system, rather than leading to the identification of and attention to necessary organisational changes and reforms. It is understandable that seconded staff on short-term contracts should spend part of their valuable time trying to reform the system, but there seems to be a need for a reporting system that can assist the NRC and MFA to identify areas for improvement and to demand changes if Norwegian secondment is to be continued.

The second concern relates to the limitation on organisations and positions to which staff can be seconded. It would appear useful in emergency operations of this kind if the NRC, embassies and even national governments could request that staff be seconded into positions deemed important for the overall relief operation. The DfID secondment of cluster head for the shelter cluster is a case in point; other positions could be within the government at local or national levels, or include specialised advisors to the Humanitarian coordinator.

Camps for relief workers

Direktoratet for Samfunnsikkerhet og Beredskap was asked to establish camps for relief workers in Bagh, Abbottabad and Gari Habibulah, and took later over the Danish-run camp in Batagram, as Danes were evacuated following the cartoon case. The costs were covered by the MFA and camp management was undertaken in collaboration with WFP, which holds responsibility for staff camps, whereas DSB is a member (and currently Chair) of International Humanitarian Partnership.

The first Norwegian team arrived on or around 20 October, and the first camp was established over 25-28 October. Norwegian camps came with medical supplies and nurses and efforts were made to provide recreation to counter the high stress levels the relief workers experienced.

The capacities of the camps varied from about 35 beds to more than a hundred, but the need was underestimated when the initial order was made. The camps are due to close between 15 May and 15 June 2006, but the UN has not made alternative arrangements, despite planning to work for the next one to two years out of the hubs. Continuous aftershocks make shifting to regular housing risky.

All of those interviewed appreciated the Norwegian-run camps, not only for being well organised, and for the quality of the food and services provided, but also for the social environment that was established in the camps that helped the relief workers to cope better with a challenging task.

d. Long-term perspective

UN agencies, IOM, several Norwegian NGOs and the Norwegian Red Cross have set out different long-term perspectives for their engagement. Many argue for the necessity to meet the needs of the still displaced or recently returned population over the summer and possibly next winter, and to make use of present organisational structures, equipment and experienced staff in the early rehabilitation process. They fear that they might otherwise have to engage in a new emergency operation later this year, or that initiatives taken, such as for emergency education, will not be sustained by the GoP.

The UN agencies are part of the recovery process, following negotiations with the GoP, though with a lower approved budget than suggested. The Norwegian Refugee Council is operating within an 18-month project timeframe, while Norwegian Church Aid plans for a longer collaboration with CWS in the water/sanitation field. Norwegian Red Cross is about to hand over the field hospital to the Ministry of Health, accompanied by the training of medical staff to operate it, to increase their response capacity. Trucks brought in for the operation will be shifted to a regional store, to be more easily accessible in upcoming disasters in the region, while the ICRC is using the opportunity offered by the earthquake to plan for a longer term presence in Pakistan.

e. Norway as donor and facilitator

The embassy in Islamabad responded speedily to the earthquake, as did the MFA. The decision to support the local NGO Sungi was made immediately, before anyone knew the actual scale of the disaster. This gave Sungi the financial foundation to start their relief operation and contributed to the setting up of the secretariat for the JACER for national NGO coordination. The decision to fund local NGOs seems to have been one of the most strategically important, but least recognised, decisions made by the embassy/MFA.

In an emergency where the priorities change rapidly as new information is revealed, it is important that donors show flexibility so that real needs can be met. There is a great deal of variation among the responsiveness and flexibility of the various donor countries/institutions. Norway is considered by its partners to be a flexible and supportive donor in this regard. The embassy's engagement in Pakistan has been appreciated by all the NGOs supported by the MFA.

These NGOs have further provided very positive feedback with regard to the role the embassy in Islamabad played in terms of keeping in touch with the Norwegian organisations in the field, providing information about Norwegian policy and priorities, the security situation – particularly in regard to the situation arising in the wake of the cartoon case – as well as moral support from the facilitation of contact with the regional priest of the Norwegian Seamen's Mission.

Contact with Norwegian relief personnel working with Norwegian or other agencies seems to have been an important informal channel for the embassy to gain information about the situation on the ground and to get feedback regarding the working of policies and processes.

Consequently, the Norwegian policy of supporting only NGOs with networks and previous experience was correct, and should be adopted in future emergencies. Likewise, given the high political and military sensitivity of the areas to be supported – and the cost of operations – it was correct to prioritise humanitarian over military relief provision.

NGOs in the field, however, indicate that it would have been useful for them if the embassy had been more proactive in influencing high-level decisions, but question whether it had the capacity to take on that role. The MFA voices some of the same concerns about reporting to the Ministry and

visibility in the donor/UN community and at donor visits/reviews, given the high level of Norwegian funding and a wish to profile the Norwegian engagement. The embassy, on their side, prioritised strengthening administrative capacity through the secondment offered from MFA, to release periods of time for staff to work on the operational/political side. This might illustrate part of an inherent dilemma in Norwegian relief provision. There appears, on the one hand, to be an increased wish to promote the Norwegian contribution so as to profile Norway's peacebuilding role, while on the other hand, one witnessed a continuation of the more traditional development orientation with a beneficiary focus, and an emphasis on strengthening local organisations/authorities and taking on a longer-term perspective. This possible contradiction should be brought up for debate in the MFA, NORAD and the embassies to develop a common understanding of how to handle a more profiled Norwegian engagement. The Pakistani case, moreover, allows for reflection on how this could be handled in a highly volatile environment in the wake of the cartoon case.

f. Conclusion

The main conclusion is that Norwegian support for the earthquake victims was timely, targeted, effective and efficient. This view is supported by individuals and organisations interviewed in the field, where MFA, the embassy, Norwegian NGOs and seconded staff received praise. However, the entire relief community should appreciate that their capacity was not put to the full test during the winter, when the judgement could have been rather different.

All the NGOs involved have either worked in Pakistan or had established long-term partnerships with local organisations in the earthquake-affected areas. The local organisations reached the earthquake-affected areas early and used their networks to reach out to the affected communities. This facilitated a rapid and targeted response.

In view of the delayed start of the UN on the ground, it seems that direct funding (rather than through clusters) of UN agencies and NGOs was the only possible effective channel during the first phases of the relief operation.

The delayed response, lacking flexibility and willingness to share Norwegian cluster-assigned funding, raises the question whether channelling 72 % of Norwegian funding through the UN was the best way, or whether this perhaps overstretched the UN's capacity. Not all the UN agencies had the ability to utilise funds efficiently, and not all of them were the best assistance providers in terms of results.

Within the limits of this review we have not attempted a detailed overview of how each NOK was spent. At this stage it may also be too early to expect the organisations to have a detailed breakdown of costs and expenditure. It is, however, advisable that the MFA follows up with the agencies once the financial reports are available from the implementing agencies, and we would especially recommend a more in-depth review of UNICEF's assistance provision.

The assistance given to local NGOs such as Sungi seems to have been the best investment in terms of rapid and effective response. This demonstrates the value of the embassy building partnerships directly with local organisations. Sungi's experience of working through village-based organisations and establishing village-based disaster response committees shows the potential for building disaster response capacities among the communities.

It could, however, prove useful, using the Pakistani emergency as a case, to assess the response and handling capacity of the embassy and the MFA to contribute more proactively at the policy level.

Within this discussion, it would also be worth assessing whether or not it would be wise to try to align funding for emergency relief with long-term development assistance and other Norwegian priorities. That would open up consideration of whether funds could be used more strategically, with greater opportunities to engage in both political and practical implementation processes and in exerting influence in policy formulation.



Illustration 4: Helicopters facilitated assistance delivery to remote areas (Team photo)

6. General conclusion and issues for further consideration

The general conclusion of this review is that the earthquake assistance was on the whole well handled, although everyone benefited from an unusual winter, in spite of the early snowfall and record call – after two weeks which were severe in paces, the winter turned unusual mild and dry. This, combined with efforts to secure aid to those living highest up, avoided a second wave of deaths. It was also fortunate that a concern about epidemics did not materialise; there were only minor outbreaks and these were quickly controlled.

Norwegian assistance was diverse, professionally delivered and highly appreciated; and here it appeared of importance that only NGOs with previous experience and existing networks in Pakistan were prioritised. And, moreover, that NGOs were prioritised over the Norwegian military, as conflict sensitivity as well as cost effectiveness needed to be taken into consideration. What might be questioned is the exclusive use of the UN channel for the second round of funding, rather than a more diversified and NGO-targeted policy.

While the cluster approach was welcomed by most relief actors, there is a need for the further improvement and clarification of responsibility, procedures and funding arrangements.

The early recovery and reconstruction phases provide opportunities for influencing policy/ aligning the process with existing democratic governance structures. Two concerns are noted where there could be a more extended Norwegian role. First, there is uncertainty about the return of the earthquake victims, since as many as 30 % are expected to stay on in camps over the next winter due to unsettled land ownership, risks associated with return and an inability to rebuild houses. Moreover, the GoP has as yet not developed adequate plans for reconstruction, reallocation to safer areas or for handling (at national and provincial levels) new emergencies. In both of these areas there is Norwegian expertise available that could be of value.

Based on the review, there are four areas to which the review team recommends MFA to pay further attention:

1. The cluster approach needs to be further developed if it is to function as a recognised and effective coordination mechanism for governments, UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs in emergencies. This will include further debates with donors and governments, among UN agencies, and with INGOs and NGOs. Moreover, MFA and OCHA need to discuss further procedures for direct cluster funding, and all UN agencies need to be brought into the debate on cost-free funds transfer to and between agencies, monitoring arrangements and reporting requirements. Moreover, there should be an opening to allow for non-UN agencies to assume a role as cluster heads, and the IFRC and NGOs are encouraged to review their position on assuming such a responsibility.
2. The MFA should initiate an in-depth evaluation of the use of Norwegian cluster funding through UN agencies in the Pakistani earthquake operation. Of particular interest is UNICEF's handling of funds and how its application and procurement procedures might have influenced how rapidly assistance could be provided and at what cost.

3. The MFA could further use the opportunity to initiate a comparative review of funding channelled through the Norwegian Red Cross for clinics operated by the ICRC and the IFRC and with Norwegian seconded staff. Both the appropriateness of the health facilities, in the circumstances, and the price they came at should be reviewed, and a possible comparison made with the response following the tsunami in Indonesia.
4. An internal review should be undertaken by the MFA and the embassy in Pakistan on the handling of the earthquake response in order to identify best practice in staff secondment, priority areas of engagement and reporting requirements.

ANNEX I: Terms of Reference

Arne Strand and Kaja Borchgrevink shall in the period 20 April – 7 May 2006 carry out an evaluation as directed below.

1. The main focus shall be placed on the utilisation of the NOK 500 million provided by Norway, including Norwegian-financed delivery of goods and services. The team shall assess the utility and sustainability of these efforts, and the collaboration between Norwegian actors and the recipient organisation in Pakistan/other actors. Particular attention shall be given to challenges and problems related to potential administrative and personnel-related constraints, logistics, knowledge transfer and practical implementation of the assistance.
2. In addition to the above, the following aspects will be described and discussed:
 - Norwegian actors' pre-assistance planning, including contact between themselves, as well as between other actors and the MFA/other parts of the Norwegian state administration;
 - The extent to which the actors were able to draw on experience from earlier natural disasters;
 - Collaboration between Norwegian actors in the field;
 - The interplay between Norwegian external actors and respectively the Norwegian Embassy, the UN system and the Pakistani civilian and military administration;
 - The cluster system: utility, strengths and weaknesses, including Norwegian actors' participation in the system;
 - Norwegian actors' ability and readiness also to promote long-term perspectives in the relief work, for example through investment in the education sector (so-called 'Emergency Education');
 - The actors' maintenance of gender perspectives in the relief work.
3. In addition to the above, the team shall address and discuss other aspects of the humanitarian efforts after the earthquake that are considered of interest to the MFA.
4. The team shall produce a report on the assignment by the end of May 2006.

ANNEX II: Interview List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Janis Bjørn Kanavin	Ambassador to Pakistan	MFA
Torill Johansen	First Secretary (Pak.)	MFA
Hårek Aspenes	First Secretary (Pak.)	MFA
Bjørn Johannessen	Senior Advisor	MFA
Geir Moe Sørensen	Senior Advisor	MFA
Arne Jan Flølo	Advisor	MFA
Zaheer	Engineer	ERRA
Brian Kelly	Shelter Coord.	IOM
Hassan Abdel		
Moneim Mostafa	Regional Repr.	IOM
Hugo B. Ark	FSO/RCO	IOM
Sobia Rahat	Field Specialist	IOM
Omar Abdi	Country Director	UNICEF
	Protection Cluster	UNICEF
	Education Cluster	UNICEF
Michael Jones	Country Director	WFP
Jan J. Vandemoortele	UNHC/Res. Coord.	UNDP/OCHA
Haoliang Xu	Country Director	UNDP
Mohammed Zafar Iqbal	Assistant Res. Repr.	UNDP
Earl James Goodyear	Senior Advisor	UNDP
Mohammed Usman Qazi	Programme Officer	UNDP
Guenet Guebre-Christios	Representative	UNHCR
Michael J. Zwack	Dep. Representative	UNHCR
Mia Haglund Heelas	Country Director	Plan
Dr Irfan Ahmed	Health Advisor	Plan
Farooq Dar	Grants Manager	Plan
Terje Thodesen	Head of Office	UNICEF Muzaffarabad
Gro Anett Nicolaysen		UNHCR Muzaffarabad
France Donnay	Representative	UNFPA
Safia Bano		IOM Muzaffarabad
Zel Mengistu	Head of Sub-Office	IOM Balakot
Major Shaheed		Pakistan Army, Balakot
Zaniab Raza	Associate Director	CWS
Mansoor Raza	DRP Coordinator	CWS
Connie Cheung	Recovery Coordinator	CWS
Ola Forsmark	Project Manager (Pak)	NCA
Arild Isaksen	Head of Section (N)	NCA
Anne Angeltveit	Expert (Pak/N)	NCA
Guro Wenaas	Programme Officer	(N) NCA
Elisabeth Mustorp	Head of Section (N)	NCA
Samina Khan	Executive Director	Sungi
Umar Khan	Programme Manager	Sungi
Mansoor Ahmad Awan	Programme Manager	Sungi
Stig Traavik	Country Representative	NRC
Ann Kristin Brunborg	Programme Manager	NRC

Arshad Aziz	ICLA Programme	NRC
Simon Goede	NFI/Shelter PM	NRC
Michael Shaadt	Reporting Officer	NRC
John Joseph	Diocesan Exec. Secretary	Caritas Pakistan
Bertrand Lamon	Dep. Head of Delegation	ICRC
Tom Glue	EcoSec Coordinator	ICRC
Iliana Mourad	Health Coordinator	ICRC
Halvor Fossum Lauritzsen	Head of Int. Department	Norwegian Red Cross
Kristin Lunden	Relief Coordinator	Norwegian Red Cross

ANNEX III: Funding Overview

NORWEGIAN FUNDING				
PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE ASSISTANCE				
<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Budget NOK</u>	<u>Budget USD</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
WHO	10.okt	1633000	251230	health
WHO		4000000	615384	
WHO Total		5633000	866615	
WFP via DSB	21.okt	20000000	3076923	Coordination centre, including DSB camp
WFP UN Logistics	04.nov	12500000	1923076	Logistics
WFP	04.nov	10000000	1538461	Logistics: WFP(42,8), ATLAS(4.75), IOM(6,74), UNOPS(13,9),
WFP	10.nov	30000000	4615384	
WFP		102400000	15753846	Food: WFP (28,6), Communication: (5,6)
WFP Total		174900000	26907692	
OCHA	14.okt	6275000	965384	Cash contribution
OCHA	21.okt	3600000	553846	Relief supplies, Brindisi, incl. air transport
OCHA		5600000	861538	Coordination
OCHA Total		15475000	2380769	
UNHCR	04.nov	7000000	1076923	
UNHCR		33000000	5076923	Camp management
UNHCR Total		40000000	6153846	
UNFPA	04.nov	3000000	461538	
OCHA/UNICEF	14.okt	6000000	923076	UNICEF
UNICEF	04.nov	10000000	1538461	
UNICEF	10.nov	20000000	3076923	
UNICEF		68000000	10461538	Food/nutrition, wat/san (incl N equipment), protection, education
UNICEF Total		104000000	15076923	
UNDP		47000000	7230769	Shelter – IOM /shelter cluster

NATO	19.okt	3000000	461538	
NATO	19.okt	2000000	307692	
NATO		5000000	769230	
NATO Total		10000000	1538461	
NCA	21.okt	4200000	646153	Food, tents and Norwegian coordinator
NCA	31.okt	3300000	507692	Blankets, tents, wat/san
NCA	31.okt	927000	142615	Tents, blankets and tarpaulins
NCA Total		8427000	1296461	
Plan Norge	01.nov	2000000	307692	Children; food, medicine, tent, blankets
MSF	11.nov	440000	67692	Construction material and transport
MSF		443713	68263	
MSF Total		883713	135955	
Caritas	04.nov	2625000	403846	Through CWS: ER, wat/san,
Caritas	04.nov	3605000	554615	CWS
Caritas		6230000	958461	
Redd Barna	31.okt	5000000	769230	ER
NRC		10000000	1538461	ER and shelter distribution, camp management and training, protection, winter survival training.
NRC	18.okt	1500000	230769	Secondments
NRC Total		11500000	1769230	
Care		4380000	673846	
Sungi Development Foundation	24.okt	5000000	769230	ER and rehabilitation, direct funding through the embassy in Islamabad
Red Cross	25.okt	20000000	3076923	ICRC, hospital, delegates, storage and cash
Red Cross	25.okt	12000000	1846153	IFRC, 36 M6 trucks, cash
Red Cross	25.okt	15000000	2307692	Field hospital and health kit
Red Cross	02.nov	13000000	2000000	ICRC and IFRC
Red Cross Total		60000000	9230769	
DSB		10299506	1584539	
DSB		1108400	170523	Norwegian UNDAC support
DSB		1204910	185370	Norwegian Support Team
DSB		650000	100000	Workshop
DSB Total		13262816	2040433	
SOS Barnebyer	24.okt	1000000	153846	ER and psychosocial support
SOS Barnebyer	10.nov	2800000	430769	Tents
SOS Barnebyer		3800000	584615	

Total				
KRD		1000000	153846	Diaspora
Norad		500000	76923	To manage smaller Norwegian earthquake response initiatives
FD		65000	10000	Tents and blankets
TOTAL		522056529	80316389	

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SUMMARY

The massive earthquake that struck northern parts of Pakistan and India on 8 October 2005, led to the loss of more than 75 000 lives, 100 000 were severely injured and 2.8 million were left without shelter. The relief response was immediate but demanding. It was a race against time to provide assistance before the onset of winter and to reach the most remote areas.

The Norwegian Government responded quickly, and prioritised support to Norwegian NGOs with prior experience and networks in Pakistan, Pakistani NGOs with a strong local presence and UN agencies. The total Norwegian earthquake assistance was NOK 522 million, and was generally judged to be delivered in a professional, effective and efficient manner.

The new UN Cluster approach was tested in Pakistan. Cluster Heads assigned responsibilities as to agencies with technical expertise, while OCHA had an overall coordination responsibility. This evaluation finds that while the cluster approach improves the relief work, there are a number of weaknesses identified which needs further attention. An important weakness in the current response was that gender issues and women were not prioritised, despite the fact that women had taken on much of the early relief responsibility in the villages, and were particularly vulnerable in the camp environment.

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