

## Asia Regional Cash Working Group Meeting Minutes

23 February 2017, 1000hrs – 1200hrs

WFP Regional Bureau for Asia & The Pacific, 55 Wave Place, Wireless Road, Bangkok, Thailand, 10300

### Participants

Name	Title	Agency
Roselyn MULLO	Nutrition Expert	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
Rehmat VAZDANI	Regional Food Expert	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
Isidro NAVARRO	Livelihoods & Cash Delegate	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Edel SILAN	Programme Development Director	The Border Consortium
Susan BIRD	Senior Livelihoods Officer	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Kristen KNUTSON	Head of Regional Partnerships Unit	UN Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs
Samantha ORR	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	UN Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs
Mamta KHANAL-BASNET	Capacity Building Officer	CashCAP/Norwegian Refugee Council
Laura DEVOS	Humanitarian Consultant	United Nations Population Fund
Jesse DOYLE	Social Protection Economist	World Bank Group
Joanna PICKLES	Assistant Director, Poverty and Social Transfers	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Tanya LONE	Consultant	Oxford Policy Management
Eileen TUFAY	Cash-based Transfer Focal Point	World Food Programme
Christopher TURTON	Programme Policy Officer	World Food Programme
Nichola PEACH	Regional Advisor – Cash-based Transfers	World Food Programme
Louis ROVIRA	Regional Advisor – Safety Nets	World Food Programme
Ruben VILLANUEVA	Social Protection Specialist	World Food Programme
Geoffrey PINNOCK	Regional Emergency Officer	World Food Programme
Sudip JOSHI	Regional Emergency Officer	World Food Programme
Ralph OFUYO	Programme Policy Officer	World Food Programme

### Agenda

1. **Shock-Responsive Social Protection** (presentations from OPM, World Bank and WFP)
2. **CashCAP** (NRC)
3. **Grand Bargain** (please find attached background note from OCHA to shape the discussion)
4. **Next steps for RCWG** (group discussion)
5. **AOB**

## Opening & Introduction by Nichola PEACH

WFP warmly welcomes everyone to the Q1 2017 Regional Cash Working Group. Due to the transition period of CaLP at the moment in Asia, in the interim, WFP and other actors have agreed to continue the work of quarterly meetings in order to continue the coordination and collaboration of stakeholders in the region. The group can then work together to define the direction collectively as a regional community of practice.

## Presentation by Tanya LONE, Oxford Policy Management

### *Pakistan Country Case Study | Shock-responsive Social Protection Systems.*

1. Research on shock-responsive social protection systems in Pakistan.
  - 6 country case study research starting in 2015 until 2017;
  - DFID funded research as part of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme;
  - Aim of study was to *“strengthen evidence base as to when and how social protection systems can better scale up in response to covariate shocks in low income countries and conflict-affected states...”*
  - Bulk of social protection and disaster risk management has been shifted to provincial authorities since 2010, but challenges still exist in ‘smooth’ implementation;
  - No single agency responsible for social protection and thus duplication and lack of coordination hamper effective delivery of assistance;
  - Rich experience over the years in cash transfers in emergencies
  - Benazir income support programme (BISP) chosen because of national coverage and described by most as a flagship programme in Pakistan
    - Transfer value of USD 45 quarterly;
    - Objective is to reduce poverty and inequality;
    - Coverage has increased every year, 3.7 million in 2012-13 to 5.3 million in 2015-16;
    - Beneficiaries identified through the national socio-economic registry (NSER);
    - Only 75 – 80 percent are reached by the NSER;
    - NSER is outdated, last update was carried out in 2011;
    - NSER will be updated in 2017;
    - BISP has increased uptake of the computerized national identity card (CNIC);
    - BISP owns the data but the National database & registration authority (NADRA) is the custodian of the data;
    - Majority of recipients paid through debit cards managed by 6 partner banks;
  - A lot of opportunities and challenges exist for vertical & horizontal expansion as well as piggybacking and shadow alignment;
  - With critical analysis, there are a lot of feasible linkages to be made with BISP for leveraging it for humanitarian response;
    - BISP is not the only one, but one of many that can be used;
2. Comments/questions
  - Question: Branding issue (picture on debit cards) was found to be a main issue in other programmes in Pakistan, specifically the Punjab Social Assistance Programmes and the BISP to try and coordinate response, was this found to be an issue in the research in other countries?

- There was no issue like this in other countries as far as the research team has found thus far.

## Presentation by Louis ROVIRA, World Food Programme

### *Defining WFPs involvement in government's social protection schemes and safety nets in South-east Asia and the Pacific.*

3. Exploring the shock responsiveness of government social protection schemes & social safety nets with 3 examples in the region.
  - 2013, Emergency Operation responding to Typhoon Haiyan<sup>1</sup> (Yolanda) in Philippines;
    - 98,663 households reached through government's *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) in typhoon affected areas;
    - Geographic targeting primarily, pre-targeted poor and vulnerable households already registered in the 4Ps safety net;
    - Cash transferred through existing 4P systems which include banks and micro-credit agencies;
  - 2016, Emergency Operation responding to Cyclone Winston<sup>2</sup> in Fiji;
    - 12,761 households (and 7,8995 additional individuals) reached through 3 of the government's existing safety nets
      - Poverty Benefits Scheme – households;
      - Care and Protection allowance - households;
      - Social Pension Scheme – individuals;
    - Geographic targeting, specifically 12 provinces identified by the government, pre-selected as vulnerable households and individuals;
    - Cash (and vouchers) transferred through existing systems including Banks and Post Office;
  - 2016, Emergency Operation responding to Cyclone Roanu<sup>3</sup> in Sri Lanka;
    - 10,000 households reached who were 'outside' the government safety net included in the government's response;
    - Use of an implementing partner to target the households;
    - Cash transferred through new accounts included into the existing safety net payment mechanism;
4. Comments and questions
  - What were the lessons learnt from Sri Lanka?
    - A lesson learnt workshop was held together with the government and the report is in final stages of writing to be shared widely as soon as possible;
  - Cash programming helps with tackling corruption in delivery of aid and in the current Philippines government there are a lot of questions related to that. In your experience, have you had any challenges with corruption while using the existing social safety nets and what are the measures for checking corruption/fraud?

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<sup>1</sup> **Typhoon Haiyan**, known as **Super Typhoon Yolanda** in the Philippines, was one of the most intense tropical cyclones on record, which devastated portions of Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines, on November 8, 2013. It is the deadliest Philippine typhoon on record, killing at least 6,300 people in that country alone. Haiyan is also the strongest storm recorded at landfall. In January 2014, bodies were still being found. | [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoon\\_Haiyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoon_Haiyan)

<sup>2</sup> **Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston** was the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall in Fiji and the South Pacific Basin in recorded history. | [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclone\\_Winston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclone_Winston)

<sup>3</sup> **Cyclonic Storm Roanu** was a relatively weak tropical cyclone that caused severe flooding in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh during May 2016. | [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclone\\_Roanu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclone_Roanu)

- There will be measures or procedures, discussed and agreed with the government to be added to existing processes to ensure there are additional checks and balances but designed not to add delays or unnecessary layers to the whole process. Also, some governments do request the involvement of WFP (and other actors) to highlight their commitment to transparency and to adopt new processes where possible.
- Does WFP have any prioritisation in the region with regards to timing of the different domains (and the components that support them) in terms of its positioning on government social protection schemes and safety nets?
  - There is no current priority, but first to simply identify the pillars and then subsequently link them after with a view to integrating them into the response.
  - In some cases, countries already have components that WFP can align with easily and coordination of the response is much easier with regards to tools and support structure.
- Does WFP have a trigger which would allow them to activate a response, for instance in places where there may be an agreement in place with the government, what would trigger the response?
  - Triggers can be very complex and the key is to align as much as possible with the government. In cases where there is an existing strategy, WFPs role will be to compliment this as much as possible.
  - This does not mean that WFPs response will be exclusively through the safety nets, but through all ways in which the government requests response. This is merely a new instrument that we are exploring.
  - There is a project to work out practical modalities and triggers using metrological forecasts through to national action which is in its early stages, supported by the government of Germany and in collaboration with the German Red Cross. Pilots will be in Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines. Updates will be shared as and when available.

## Presentation by Jesse DOYLE, World Bank Group

### *Shock-responsive Social protection in the Asia-Pacific Region.*

#### 5. What does 'shock-responsive' mean for the World Bank?

- The ability of a social protection system to meet the challenges posed by certain shocks.
- An area becoming more prevalent is contributory social insurance where members can draw down on their savings;
- Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region have a higher level of natural disaster risk as compared to other regions across the world;
- The WB is working on building an evidence base on how well shock responsive social protection systems function starting with Fiji.

#### 6. Comments and Questions

- Were there any post-assessments done or any feasibility assessments done before the cash transfers taking place as in Myanmar, there are concerns that implementation without feasibility looking specifically into the context of the country, looking at women and girls as there are high levels substance abuse and domestic violence?
  - No; this was raised before the time of disbursement but it was not done. There were no markets at the same time and people would not have been able to buy anything. The government of Fiji mentioned that next time, they would be able to do the assessments.

## Presentation by Mamta KHANAL-BASNET, CashCAP under NORCAP

*What is the role of CashCAP.*

7. CashCAP deploys cash and market experts who provide support to national governments, regional institutions or international organizations in humanitarian crises
8. CashCAP deploys different types of profiles
  - Technical/Operational – support analysis and programming;
  - Coordination – support working groups;
  - Strategic – senior experts with host governments to guide policy;
  - CashCAP deployments typically go up to a max of 6 months, but there are currently 2 deployments of more than 6 months.
9. Comments and Questions
  - Are there any deployments in the Asia region?
    - There was a request in Iran for the cash and markets working group and there is another request from Pakistan – OCHA. Looking at the trends, there are more requests from the Middle East as opposed to Asia and the Pacific.
  - Are these deployments only for emergencies or could they be tapped for protracted refugee situations?
    - It can be for any need that fits the profiles that CashCAP offer.

## Briefing by Kristen KNUTSON, OCHA

*Discussion on the Grand Bargain*

- The Grand Bargain is a non-legally binding agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. The Grand Bargain was first proposed by the former UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing in its report "Too Important to Fail: addressing the humanitarian financing gap" as one of the solutions to address the humanitarian financing gap. The Grand Bargain includes a series of changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations that would deliver an extra billion dollars over five years for people in need of humanitarian aid. These changes include gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonised reporting requirements. The Grand Bargain commits donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments.
10. Comments, Discussion and Questions
    - Unrecognised persons who need assistance, how can we as humanitarians serve them better (open question)?
    - How can practitioners deliver payments to vendors inside camps where the same vendors do not have access to formal banking services?
    - How can we as practitioners ensure inclusion of people into safety nets?
    - What is the added value of having the humanitarian community getting into transfer modalities while banks and other financial service providers already do more?
    - Are we focusing too much on the transfer modality as opposed to the objectives and leveraging the modalities to deliver better assistance?

- What would be considered the best example of what the Grand Bargain means for emergency response?
  - It is not quite the direction – a good example – but rather to get a common collective understanding of what the situation in Asia will permit and looking at what is in place and what’s not in place.

### Wrap-up Session

- What shape should the Asia CWG take moving forward considering the transition phase from CaLP?
  - Perhaps the group could look at more practical work and in emergency preparedness;
  - It would be positive to have both policy and practitioner level discussions in the same meeting;
- A suggestion for the next meeting would be the possibility of presenting on feasibility assessments and post-distribution monitoring based on the case studies from around the region.
- One member also highlighted a recent World Bank study<sup>4</sup> demonstrating the impact of using cash transfers on temptation goods expenditure “.... results show that on average cash transfers have a significant negative effect on total expenditures on temptation goods, equal to –0.18 standard deviations. This negative result is supported by data from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, for both conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs. A growing number of studies therefore indicate that concerns about the use of cash transfers for alcohol and tobacco are unfounded.”

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<sup>4</sup> Cash Transfers and Temptation Goods, David K. EVANS (WB) & Anna POPOVA (SU)  
<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/689575>