HOW TO HELP

GUIDE TO HUMANITARIAN IN-KIND GIVING
IN RESPONSE TO THE FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

The worst floods to hit Pakistan since 1929 have affected an estimated 15.4 million people with over 8 million in need of urgent life-saving humanitarian assistance as of 16 August. Over 1,600 people have died and at least 893,000 homes are reported to have been destroyed or severely damaged, leaving millions homeless. In addition to a rising number of deaths, injuries and displacements, there is major damage to roads, bridges, infrastructure and livelihoods. Over the medium to long-term, the food security situation in the country is likely to be affected by the significant loss of crops and agricultural land.

The most urgent needs of the population are food, clean drinking water, emergency shelter, medical care and non-food-items. Access continues to be a serious challenge hampering relief efforts. As such, there is urgent need to repair damaged roads and telecommunications networks.

The Government of Pakistan and the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are working tirelessly to provide life-saving emergency assistance to the flood-affected communities. But much more needs to be done and hundreds of millions of dollars will be required to provide humanitarian assistance in the coming months. Unless response operations are rapidly scaled up to reach those who remain displaced and without immediate access to food and clean drinking water, additional loss of human lives and further suffering will occur.

Your support in meeting the immediate needs of the vulnerable people affected by this disaster is crucial!

How Can You Help?

While the United Nations and other humanitarian relief providers welcome all forms of assistance, both are urging potential donors to make cash contributions rather than in-kind donations. A cash contribution allows needs to be effectively covered and ensures that your donation will feed into the humanitarian community's existing and agreed upon strategic plan formulated in coordination with the affected country. If you can only provide an in-kind donation, please consider the following:

IN-KIND DONATIONS:

In-Kind Donations of Relief Goods:
Experience from recent emergencies has demonstrated that well-intentioned donations of material goods can accumulate at ports and airports instead of reaching the affected population, or not respond to the specific needs of a given disaster. In-kind humanitarian aid donations should be:
- well-planned with national authorities and with the humanitarian community coordinating the relief effort.
- correspond to priorities for life-saving supplies set forth by the government of the affected country and the humanitarian community and be necessary and appropriate for intended beneficiaries.
- dispatched with a full manifest of comments and a consignee. Cargo that lacks documentation and adequate planning for onward delivery may have an adverse effect on relief efforts by taking up scarce resources, such as aircraft landing slots or storage space, and by becoming an additional logistical burden on organizations working on the ground.
- Please note that the UN system and most humanitarian relief providers are usually not able to cover freight and handling costs for donations from their place of origin to the affected country.

1. Is the Type of Aid Offered Required?
  - The humanitarian community is usually organized into sectors (sometimes called clusters) such as health, water and sanitation, shelter, logistics, etc. Each cluster has a focal point that coordinates the work of
similar organizations to deliver specific types of assistance related to their area of work.  
-> Please visit [http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters](http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters) for a list of global cluster focal points.

- The humanitarian community in the affected country is responsible, in coordination with governmental authorities, for setting priorities for the types of humanitarian aid delivered after a disaster or emergency situation, to ensure that all resources are focused on the delivery of lifesaving or life-enabling materials, rather than on delivering more long-term aid.  
-> Potential donors should consult the cluster focal point before sending donations, to get advice on whether the type of relief item is a priority at that time, is indeed a requirement for the response and is appropriate for the affected population.

- Examples of issues to consider: (i) Before sending food it is important to verify whether the necessary cooking equipment is available, (ii) Do medicines and vaccines require transportation and storage at specific temperatures, in which case they may be unusable upon arrival? (iii) Are donations of clothes appropriate for the climate? (iv) Is electronic equipment compatible with the local power supply?

Special note on donations of infant formula
In accordance with internationally accepted guidelines, donations and distribution of infant formula, bottles and teats and other powdered or liquid milk and milk products should not be made. Any procurement of breast milk substitutes should be based on careful needs assessment in coordination with local health authorities and UNICEF. Human milk donations require fully functioning cold chains. The uncontrolled use of these products could endanger infants’ lives. All queries regarding such donations should be directed to UNICEF.

2. Consignee – Who Will Receive the Cargo?

- Humanitarian aid sent to the affected country must be addressed to an entity as the intended recipient (consignee). This can be a local or international NGO or UN agency or other entity which, by prior arrangement, has agreed to take responsibility for arranging collection of the cargo once it arrives at the port or airport and for onward delivery and distribution to beneficiaries.  
- Sending goods addressed to “The people of (the affected country)” will not be sufficient.  
- Goods addressed to the “Government of (the affected country)” or “Relief Authorities of (the affected country)” should be explicitly accepted, preferably in writing, by the receiving party before being dispatched.

3. Documentation – Does this Meet Requirements for Entry?

- All cargo, including humanitarian relief items arriving in the affected country must be accompanied by correct documentation in order to be accepted by the border and airport authorities, customs and others.

Basic documentation required for relief consignments includes the following:  
- Packing List, Bill of Lading/Airway Bill, Freight Certificate, Declaration of Value or Invoice  
- If applicable: Gift Certificate, Vehicle Title, Certificate of Origin, Phyto-sanitary Certificate

- Even though, during the emergency phase after a disaster, importation taxes and duties often do not apply to humanitarian cargo entering the affected country, there is still a requirement for minimum documentation as stated above.  
-> Lack of documentation may result in cargo being refused entry into the country or onward movement being delayed for failure to meet requirements of national authorities such as customs and ministries.

4. Packaging:

- Cargo must be packaged to withstand all stages of handling without breaking (e.g. offloading from aircraft; storage; loading onto trucks or aircraft for onward transport and final offloading at point of distribution) and be clearly labeled with full details of the content and the consignee.

5. What NOT to Donate:

- Items that do not match an actual need can clog transportation channels and delay the transport of more vital items to affected areas. Re-examine whether your contribution is truly needed and usable by the humanitarian relief providers and the people you are trying to assist.  
- You should also consider the relative costs and delays involved in transporting your in-kind donations to the affected country. For instance, the cost of sorting, labelling, and transporting food may be higher than the cost of immediately buying it in the country of need or in a neighbouring country.  
- There are several general recommendations regarding what cannot be accepted that are consistent across the UN system: Goods or services that are not aligned with the goals of the UN; and Goods or services that require significant additional financial commitments by the UN, e.g. in-kind products or materials that do not include arrangements for their transport, or software or other services that require the purchase of license(s)/and or maintenance.
Medicines that do not meet World Health Organization (WHO) requirements for in-kind contributions, or have expired or are near expiry. Medicines must have a shelf life of at least six months after arriving in a country and should ideally be included in the WHO Model List of essential drugs.

- Used goods
- Untested new technologies or medicines, and prototypes.

**In-Kind Donations of Services/Volunteers:**

**In-kind Donations of Experts**

- In order to ensure that all resources are focused on the delivery of lifesaving or life-enabling programmes, potential donors should consult the relevant cluster focal point before dispatching any personnel.  
  - Please visit [http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters](http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters) for a list of global cluster focal points. The list of country focal points will be posted at [www.oneresponse.info](http://www.oneresponse.info).
- The services offered should be self-sufficient in terms of accommodation, food, inland transportation, etc. The humanitarian community generally has no funds available to take into charge individuals other than its own staff or to provide full or partial support with transportation to or inside the affected country and other practical arrangements required (such as medical evacuation, etc).

**Volunteering your services**

- Humanitarian organizations such as the UN do not accept volunteer services, but apply pre-defined rules and procedures for recruitment. People seeking employment with humanitarian organizations (e.g. in the aftermath of a major disaster) should consult [www.reliefweb.org/vacancies](http://www.reliefweb.org/vacancies), or apply through the web recruitment channels of the organization of their choice.
- While volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, it contributes best to tackling development challenges. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide.  
  - Please visit [www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org) to learn more or to register.

**For information on in-kind contributions contact:** OCHA Logistics Support Unit: [lsu@un.org](mailto:lsu@un.org)