

Floods in Pakistan: Bringing Local Perspective through International Humanitarian Organisations

The 2022 devastating floods caused due to heavy rains have impacted more than 33 million people across Pakistan, killing at least 1600 people (UNDP 2022) and incurring high-scale destruction of roads, livestock, crops, homes, etc. Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces are still inundated, forcing thousands of poor, including women and children, to leave their homes and livelihoods. The situation is worse compared to the floods in 2010, as this time the rains were 190% more than the 30-year average, whereas Sindh received 466% more rain.

The Government of Pakistan (GoP) is leading the humanitarian response and carrying out rescue and relief operations in flood-affected areas supported by the United Nations (UN) and other humanitarian partners (UN OCHA 2022). UN agencies and international humanitarian partners also supported the government during the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods (Ibid.). The current catastrophic floods and massive infrastructure destruction requires the world's attention and collective support for future preparedness and mitigation efforts (PHF 2022).

Any effort towards disaster mitigation is not possible without the deep involvement and active participation of local communities. In emergency response, the international community's interventions should be coupled by a bottom-up approach, especially for flood mitigation. It is believed to be a paramount step in connection with enabling local communities to cope with such disasters and sustain initiatives taken by the international humanitarian groups. It is a systematic way by which local communities can contribute, perform, and deliver as a cohesive partner.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned facts and severity of the situation, SDPI and its partners will be hosting a panel discussion with the aim to explore the following questions:

1. Amid floods and other such crises, what has been the role and contribution of international humanitarian agencies in strengthening the voices, roles, and actions of local communities and organisations?
2. What risks and challenges are local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) facing in delivering their mandate and what can be learned from international experiences?
3. How can the government and international agencies help in dealing with some of these challenges?
4. In the medium to long-term, can the local private sector, with the support of the government and international community, help in sustaining the initiatives of CSOs on ground?

References

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