

Why Adopt URS?

- Many international and national development and relief agencies are part of the humanitarian response scene in India, often leading to duplication and less organized responses
- Past experiences and lessons have suggested the need for more consultative and coordinated disaster response by the NGO community
- Improve quality of delivery through equitable distribution of relief and minimize social exclusion
- Complement and supplement Government relief efforts
- Advocate in order to legitimize the role of civil society in humanitarian crises
- Demonstrate, learn best practices and improve overall humanitarian response standards
- Collaboration between NGOs, Government, Disaster Management Authorities and public institutions
- Promotion of stakeholder participation and accountability in the humanitarian sector

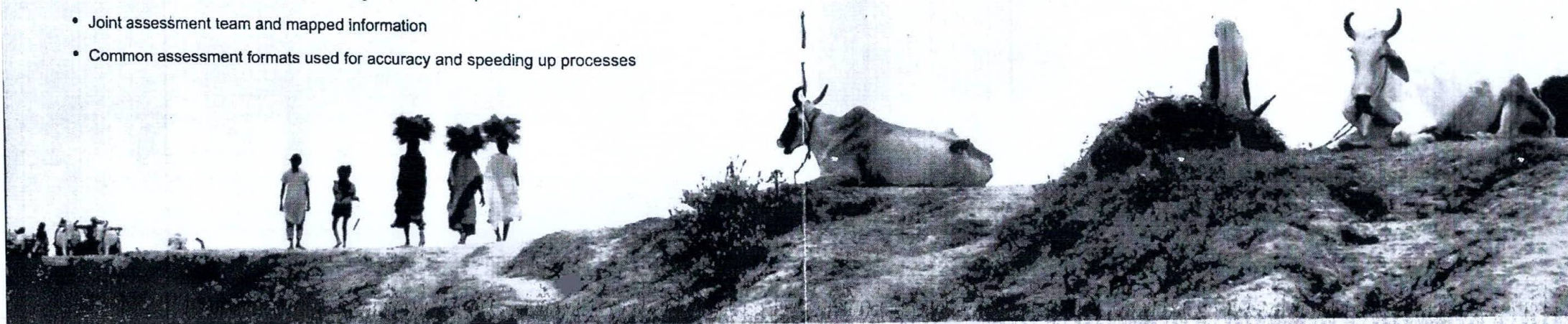
Tools and Instruments

- Regular meetings throughout the year
- Participatory and consultative approach among members
- Experienced focal person and a standby for coordination purposes
- Communication and information sharing channels and protocols
- Joint assessment team and mapped information
- Common assessment formats used for accuracy and speeding up processes

Communication

URS is an information-driven project which makes use of different channels of communication to streamline knowledge and experience sharing among member organizations and the disaster management community. One of its first initiatives was the creation of the blog www.sphere-urs.blogspot.com, that later expanded into other media:

- The URS Goggle mailing group has today more than 330 professionals on its members list, with about 190 messages posted: <http://groups.google.com/group/Sphere-URS>
- An interactive website with documents downloading and uploading facility and an online media player is hosted at www.sphereindia-urs.org
- A state and national level directory of Sphere India and URS members was created with updated e-mail addresses, phone numbers and postal addresses. This directory is available to all member agencies
- To highlight the extent of damage during the 2007 floods and help member organizations in their individual efforts of seeking relief support, Sphere India launched a Flash Appeal. The appeal was widely circulated in the national and international humanitarian arena and was well received



URS TIMELINE

2006

June
URS
preparatory
meeting

October
Compilation &
collation of
Common Damage
Assessment
Formats

2007

June
URS Activation
for 2007 floods

January to
September
State Inter
Agency (IAC)
meetings

July
District Level
meeting (Orissa)

July
Joint Assessment
conducted and
Common
Assessment
Formats used

October 2006
to September
2007
URS Delhi
Preparedness
and Response
meetings

November
URS deactivation
for 2007 floods



"We need to be professional enough to go beyond positions and functions. To have this recognition of belonging to a larger organizational legos."

Mritika Chatterjee/ActionAid

Reuters/Kimimasa Mayama, courtesy www.alertnet.org