

Public Law 100-576
100th Congress

An Act

Concerning disaster assistance for Bangladesh.

Oct. 31, 1988
[H.R. 5389]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Bangladesh
Disaster
Assistance Act
of 1988.
7 USC 1691 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Bangladesh Disaster Assistance Act of 1988".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) as a result of the 1988 floods, two-thirds of Bangladesh has been inundated with flood waters;

(2) over 30 million people in Bangladesh are homeless, over 2,000 dead, tens of thousands ill, and potentially millions at risk of waterborne disease and epidemic because of lack of safe water and overcrowding;

(3) transportation, communications, and normal commerce in Bangladesh have been seriously interrupted, with a potential cost for replacing destroyed or damaged infrastructure of \$500,000,000;

(4) agricultural lands have been flooded, with a potential crop loss of nearly \$1,000,000,000;

(5) the people of the United States have respected and generously supported the efforts of the people of Bangladesh to maintain their independence, promote equitable economic growth, and strive for political pluralism and greater democracy; and

(6) the Government of Bangladesh has taken quick action to cope with this disaster, one of the most serious in the history of Bangladesh, but must rely on a generous response from the international community for emergency assistance and, even more importantly, for the expertise and resources needed to prevent the continual recurrence of such disastrous floods.

SEC. 3. COMMENDATION OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH.

The Congress—

(1) commends the courage and resourcefulness demonstrated by the people of Bangladesh in response to the 1988 floods;

(2) commends the President for the generous provision by the United States of emergency assistance for Bangladesh;

(3) commends United States private and voluntary organizations, international organizations, foreign governments, and others for their compassionate response to this natural disaster;

(4) expresses its support for the people of Bangladesh at this most critical time;

(5) declares its willingness to work with the President to provide generous levels of emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Bangladesh;

(6) declares its willingness to work with the Government of Bangladesh and with private and voluntary organizations to ensure that emergency assistance quickly reaches those most in need; and

(7) declares its willingness to work with the international community to seek the means to prevent a recurrence of such natural disasters, and urges the President to promote a regional solution designed to prevent a recurrence of such natural disasters.

SEC. 4. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR BANGLADESH.

(a) **USE OF FOOD FOR DEVELOPMENT LOCAL CURRENCIES FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE.**—(1) Section 301 of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 is amended by adding at the end the following:

7 USC 1727.

Rural areas.
Urban areas.

Health and
medical care.

“(c) In the event of a serious natural disaster in a country participating in a Food for Development Program, funds accruing from the sale of commodities made available under this title may be used, with the approval of the United States Government, for disaster relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction assistance in any rural or urban area of that country adversely affected by the disaster. Such assistance may include (but is not limited to) food, medicine and medical supplies, shelter, and in-country transportation.”.

7 USC 1727 note.

(2) Food for Development agreements entered into under title III of that Act before the date of enactment of this Act may be amended in order to implement the amendment made by paragraph (1).

7 USC 1727 note.

(3) Pending amendment pursuant to paragraph (2) of Food for Development agreements with the Government of Bangladesh, the use of funds accruing under those agreements, with the approval of the United States Government, for flood-related disaster assistance authorized by the amendment made by paragraph (1) shall be deemed to be consistent with the applicable agreement.

(b) **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR BANGLADESH.**—It is the sense of the Congress that, in order to provide additional resources for disaster assistance for the victims of the 1988 floods in Bangladesh, not less than \$100,000,000 of the local currencies generated under Food for Development agreements with the Government of Bangladesh should be used for the disaster relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction assistance purposes authorized by the amendment made by subsection (a)(1).

(c) **REGULAR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO BE MAINTAINED.**—Disaster assistance provided for Bangladesh by the United States because of the 1988 floods should be in addition to the regularly programmed assistance for that country for fiscal year 1989 under chapter 1 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (relating to development assistance) and titles I, II, and III of the Agriculture Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (relating to food assistance); and the level of such regularly programmed assistance should not be reduced because of such disaster assistance.

(d) **EXTENSION OF PERIOD FOR USE OF FOOD FOR DEVELOPMENT LOCAL CURRENCIES.**—It is the sense of the Congress that the period, during which funds accruing under Food for Development agree-

ments with the Government of Bangladesh must be used, should be extended from September 30, 1989, to at least September 30, 1990.

SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the Congress a report on efforts by the international community and the governments of the region to develop regional programs for the Ganges basin and the Brahmaputra basin that are designed—

(1) to ensure an equitable and predictable supply of water in the dry season; and

(2) to promote better flood control mechanisms to mitigate in the mid-term, and prevent in the long-term, floods as severe as the 1988 floods in Bangladesh.

(b) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a)—

(1) shall describe what efforts have been made by international organizations and other international institutions, by bilateral and multilateral assistance donors, and by countries in the region, to achieve the objectives set forth in subsection (a);

(2) shall describe the feasibility studies, planning studies, or actual projects that are in preparation or have been completed to achieve those objectives;

(3) shall analyze the potential costs, the technology obstacles (such as those presented by the earthquakes to which the region is prone), and the political problems that stand in the way of effective flood control in the Ganges basin and the Brahmaputra basin;

(4) shall describe the environmental causes of the flood, particularly deforestation and soil erosion; and

(5) shall describe the efforts made, and the efforts proposed to be made, by the President to promote a regional approach to achieving the objectives set forth in subsection (a).

SEC. 6. OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT.

It is the sense of the Congress that the Office of Technology Assessment—

(1) should cooperate in the effort described in section 5; and

(2) in particular, should provide to the Department of State and the Congress—

(A) a synopsis of all current studies and reports—

(i) on flood control in the Ganges basin and the Brahmaputra basin, or

(ii) on state-of-the-art technology available for the construction and maintenance of flood control projects, and

(B) any cost benefit analysis of efforts to improve water availability in the dry season and to mitigate or prevent severe flooding.

Approved October 31, 1988.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 5389:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):

Oct. 4, 6, considered and passed House.

Oct. 14, considered and passed Senate.