

## **Social Impact and Recovery Needs**

### **Introduction**

This annex addresses the social impact of the Gujarat earthquake and the recovery needs of the affected areas. The Assessment team included social development specialists and a communications specialist whose investigations concentrated on social aspects. In addition, other members of the team contributed observations on the social dimensions of reconstruction. The team members engaged in discussions with government officials, UN and bilateral agencies working in Gujarat, NGOs and other private entities, and affected people, beginning in Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad and fanning out through the worst affected areas of Kutch and several other affected districts. Particular effort was made to talk with local communities and grassroots NGOs. Those social dimensions that have an important bearing on reconstruction in specific sectors are included in the sectoral annexes, while this annex presents an overall analysis, differentiating the impacts and recovery strategies for various social groups (the poor, women, lower castes, and tribal people) and including an assessment of the local institutional framework for earthquake reconstruction.

### **Social Situation Prior to the Earthquake**

The state of Gujarat has a poverty ratio of 24 percent, lower than the all-India average on account of its relatively higher levels of industrialization and urbanization, but other indicators of poverty (child malnutrition levels) show that the poor--especially women and children--may be more disadvantaged than this figure suggests. The National Family Health Survey (1998-99) found that over 45 percent of children were wasted, and over 50 percent were stunted (an indicator of chronic malnutrition). The earthquake-affected areas, particularly the worst hit district of Kutch, have high levels of rural and urban poverty. Social structures in the districts of the Saurashtra region are typical of India, with the most vulnerable groups being the Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Castes, Muslims, tribal people, women, and the landless. There are large numbers of all these groups in the earthquake areas. The status of women varies from group to group, but is generally higher in Gujarat than in northern India. Gujarat's female:male ratio is 936 compared with the all-India average of 931, and 914 in the neighboring state of Rajasthan. The land-owning Patels and related castes, the Jains (a religious minority), and other trader communities are generally regarded as being better off.

Most urban and rural settlements contain a mix of communities, with the range of socioeconomic levels and average being determined largely by the quality of natural resources (primarily land) and the degree of development of infrastructure ("remoteness"). Among the earthquake-hit areas, Kutch is more remote, more poorly endowed, and hence poorer in the aggregate, although it is also home to a sizeable, wealthy business community that has social networks in other parts of the state, in Mumbai, and indeed in many parts of the world. This social capital has proved invaluable in the aftermath of the earthquake and will continue to be important in the reconstruction period. Even among poorer communities, including some nomadic pastoralists, for example, family and clan ties are reputed to be extensive and strong. Most villages and some sections of the towns would be organized into caste or community neighborhoods. While this arrangement stems from traditional religious practice, it is also a basis of social capital. The homes of the poor scheduled castes, tribal Kolis and Rabaris, and Muslim minority, in particular, would be clustered together, as well as some of the better-off groups such as the Jains.

Gujarat appears to have fewer village-level organizations than some other parts of India. The earthquake affected areas, and Kutch in particular, do not have many of the producer (e.g., dairy) cooperatives for which the state is renowned, and sectoral associations and committees, such as water users' associations, forest management committees and village education committees also appear to be less developed than in many other states. In addition, the Panchayati Raj structure is currently missing its most important layer, the village level Gram Panchayats. However, there are large numbers of community, religious or secular philanthropic organizations, and of service or development oriented NGOs in the state. Some of these had joined to form the Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan (literally, the Kutch Reconstruction Consortium) prior to the earthquake to assist the drought-affected people of Kutch, and have rallied to provide post-earthquake relief to the affected people. The team was impressed with the good coordination and collaboration between this NGO network and the Government in the affected area. Overall, the institutional structure suggests that, while participation in formal institutions is limited, Gujaratis have a spirit of community and of service which would serve them well in the reconstruction phase.

### **Social Impact of the Earthquake**

The social fabric of the earthquake-hit areas has been seriously affected by the large number of human deaths (officially over 20,000) and injuries (about 167,000). In addition to the immediate suffering caused, it is likely that an equally large number of families have been torn by the death or serious disability of a member (though family-based data are not yet available). This will have long-term consequences on the well-being of other members, particularly widows (especially young women), single parent children, orphans, and the elderly. There have been more adult female than male deaths, and a large number of children were also killed. Similar differences are likely among the injured.

Further, a large number of villages have lost a number of their members, which in addition to the grief caused could have community impacts that are as yet unknown. Typically, Indian villages have only one or two persons or families providing some basic services (e.g., barbers, street cleaners, blacksmiths, millers, priests), and deaths among these could affect traditional village functions. The earthquake has spared no community--both rich and poor, upper and lower castes, land-owning and landless have been severely affected. Among the villages that the team visited were extremely poor and remote ones, mixed habitations, and new settlements built by traders living outside the region. All were destroyed or severely damaged--from the mud and thatch huts of the poorest to the multistory shop-cum-residence establishments of the well-off.

Other social impacts of the earthquake include deep insecurity among those who have lost assets, including movable and immovable property, and increased vulnerability among them to poverty. The earthquake struck in the wake of a massive cyclone in 1998 and two consecutive years of drought in 1999 and 2000. Around 400,000 houses have been destroyed and another 500,000 damaged. The livelihoods of many families have been disrupted, particularly among those resident in the worst affected towns and villages. The loss of lives, and loss of or damage to homes/workplaces, productive assets and/or industrial units has caused more severe disruption, while temporary disruption has occurred in the wake of the shock and fear caused by the earthquake, and of disruptions in financial services, markets and distribution channels. About 19,000 handicraft artisans of Kutch appear to be the most severely affected group. In addition, several thousands of salt farmers are faced with collapses of their brine wells and destruction of salt fields containing the salt of up to two years labor. Many salt refineries are also damaged, which will hamper the export of salt from the region. Kutch alone accounts for 80 percent of India's salt output, and 80 percent of its facilities are reportedly dysfunctional. Another important source of livelihood in Kutch is cattle--about 20,000 cattle deaths have been reported. Economic

recovery has been hampered by the outflow of people, including normally migrant workers, such as laborers on the salt farms in the affected areas.

Insecurity also stems from the repeated tremors in the region and the continuing drought situation. Among those who were poor prior to the disaster, there may be a sense of helplessness and dependency (particularly on the Government), though Kutchhis are known for their strong independence and resilience in the face of natural disasters. Within two-and-a-half weeks of the earthquake, the Joint team observed that even in the worst affected villages a number of communities had established their own temporary shelters in family or village groupings, and were beginning to resume economic activity.

Another serious consequence of the earthquake is an almost complete lack of services in the worst-hit villages and urban areas, including education, health, water supply, electricity, solid waste disposal, and agricultural extension. Most Gujarati villages are usually well served by these, but both public and private services are largely at a standstill, though drinking water is being provided in many places by tankers and electricity is being restored. The Government is making a serious effort to start schools--often with the help of NGOs and in tents, but the large number of buildings destroyed and extensive household disruption mean that many children are still out of school. Markets and banks have begun to function in the less affected areas, but are still limping back to normal in the worst situations. Rapid mobilization on the part of the Government has given large numbers of people access to food grain and some cash, but others are still awaiting assistance with a sense of dependence. A large number of non-governmental organizations including philanthropic groups, development agencies and private businesses have stepped in to provide food, medical services, clothes, blankets, utensils, basic supplies, and tents.

Thus, the affected people are being served by community resources, outsiders and authorities, but the word "stoic" appears to be the most frequently used to describe their attitude towards this disaster and the future. In spite of all their problems, the Kutchhi community has refused to put orphaned children up for adoption. This demonstrates an expression of community solidarity and mutual support in a time of need, and is an indication of the will and ability of the communities to organize and get on with their lives using their own resources rather than depend on outside charity.

## **Recovery Strategy**

Immediate and medium-term recovery and reconstruction, particularly related to housing, education, health, drinking water, civic services and livelihoods, will require attention to a number of social issues and needs. The strategy suggested here focuses on principles of local participation and attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable that should be integrated into every sector. Some of these could build on prevailing positive situations while others would need to address potential negative trends.

### **A. Relocation or Rebuilding *In Situ***

It is clear from numerous interviews with the affected population that the vast majority of people who have lost their homes wish to remain in the same locations, and rebuild their homes to better standards than before. They recognize that different construction methods are required, and are looking to the government and other agencies for technical and financial assistance to strengthen their homes against future cyclones or earthquakes. Many also mentioned the need for finding solutions to rainwater harvesting and other ways of dealing with the problems of drought.

The wish to remain in their old location was particularly prevalent among rural villagers. Some of them said, “*We will stay here even if the Government tells us we have to move.*” Among urban dwellers, for example the people who lost their homes in the old walled city of Bhuj, the opinions were more mixed. Many said they wanted to build new residences nearby and maintain their shops in the old city. They recognized that there may be a need to reduce the density of the population, and rebuild the city in such a way that it is safer than before.

The clearly stated desire of most people to remain and rebuild their homes in the old locations reflects national and international experience. Many externally planned townships have become ghost towns, with the local population refusing to live in homes that they feel don’t meet their social, cultural and economic needs. Even when people have shifted temporarily to the new homes provided for them, they frequently return to their old location after some time. The cost of relocating is also much higher, and more of a burden on Government. From a social perspective, people prefer to stay where they have a familiar neighborhood and are surrounded by a community of relatives, members of the same sub-community, or same religious affiliation that can provide networks of support. The cost of removing rubble in rural villages is also likely to be much lower per unit than in a town setting, and reduces the need to rebuild homes elsewhere.

The available evidence shows that relocating whole communities rarely works. It should be avoided unless it is clear that (a) staying in the same place is unsafe, or (b) the villagers clearly express that they want to shift to a new location. (For instance, after the Latur earthquake in Maharashtra, some villagers wished to move because of the large number of fatalities that had occurred, and the old villages had become cremation sites and were uninhabitable for psychological or religious reasons). A clear, transparent and participatory approach is in any case required to assess the wishes of the villagers, and also take into account the natural but temporary tendency to want to flee from a disaster.

The assessment team therefore recommends that the approach to reconstruction in the rural villages should be to facilitate quick removal of rubble using local labor, and reconstruction of permanent housing in the old locations wherever possible. The principles for involving the communities in planning and implementing such reconstruction are discussed in the next sections.

## **B. Communication and Information Dissemination**

Communication and information dissemination are important to the successful and harmonious implementation of the earthquake recovery and reconstruction program. Policy initiatives, financial assistance, and technical know-how will not be effective without a system to convey their content swiftly and equitably to the public, to hear of and assess their suitability and sustainability within communities, and to make appropriate adjustments based on community feedback. Community-driven reconstruction must be at the heart of the state’s recovery program. However, the Government has a leading role to play in collating community requirements, transferring funds and material to the affected areas, sharing knowledge and lessons learnt, setting technical and other parameters, enumerating locational, housing, financial and employment options, facilitating civil society interventions, ensuring justice and protection for the vulnerable, preventing corruption, and providing political and administrative support to the reconstruction process. It cannot perform these roles without effective communication between itself, the public, and other partners; and if it does not put in place mechanisms for consultation with, within, and among communities.

There is thus an urgent need for the Government to devise a communication strategy to support the following aspects of the recovery program:

- dissemination of information;
- community consultation and participation;
- building local technical capacity;
- coordination among partners;
- transparency; and
- addressing external stakeholders and audiences.

*Dissemination of information.* This is the most basic and essential communication requirement. In order to serve the principles of justice and transparency, to share technical knowledge, and to ensure informed participation, it is necessary that every single affected family be made aware of government policies and compensation packages, the housing and other options available, and individual entitlements and rights. Information dissemination is a continuous process, beginning now and running throughout the recovery and reconstruction period. A variety of media, materials and methods will need to be employed both to proactively convey information to the public, and make it accessible to those who come seeking it.

*Community consultation and participation.* In order to facilitate participatory and consultative processes, a two-way communication mechanism needs to be in place. It must convey information from the government and society at large to individuals, and also be able to collect and channel community views back to policy-makers. Moreover, it must give voice to poor, vulnerable, and marginalized sections. This implies both a network of rural and urban grassroots workers who dispense information and solicit views, and a mechanism to integrate their feedback into policy.

*Building local technical capacity.* The most gigantic challenge of the recovery program is to rebuild hundreds of thousands of individual homes, as well as a huge number of public buildings and other physical infrastructure, to affordable but exacting engineering standards. This implies educating, in a very short time and over a vast geographical area, a very large number of house-owners, laborers, builders, architects and assessors. The communication challenge includes the very basic one of demystifying concepts like ‘earthquake and cyclone resistance’, and goes on to the more substantial tasks of publicizing technical standards and explaining techniques. A logistical concern will be the suitable deployment of a limited pool of trainers and skilled masons. The communication strategy must serve these needs at a number of levels: providing teaching tools and aids to trainers, calibrated for different audiences; functioning as an information exchange to enable skilled manpower to be judiciously rotated; and becoming a force multiplier through strategic use of mass media and other methods to reach messages to remote and inaccessible populations.

*External audiences.* It is important that the Government also devise a communication strategy for secondary stakeholders and external audiences, such as the public elsewhere in the state, non-resident Gujaratis, the media, etc. Messages need to be consistent and clear in order to portray a correct picture of the situation on the ground, boost public morale, and generate continuous goodwill and support. For example, the criteria and procedures for business organizations and other donors to “adopt” (preferably, “partner”) villages need to be communicated clearly. A proactive external communication policy would include a clearly identified, authoritative spokesperson for the recovery program alongside strategic handling of the media, regular interaction with civil society, and creative use of the Internet.

*Immediate and medium-term actions.* Given the dynamic situation in the affected areas and the multiplicity of stakeholders, communication mechanisms need to be put in place as quickly as possible. The following actions are desirable in the next month:

- determine the specific nature of communication requirements;
- formulate a communication strategy accordingly;
- assess capacity of Government and other key partners for such work;
- identify basic messages and communication tools, and start implementing to the extent feasible; and
- define process and criteria for selecting consultants.

The following steps could be undertaken in the next three months:

- identify and appoint consultants;
- fine-tune messages and improve communication techniques and materials;
- identify, train, and orient grassroots workers;
- upgrade and extend implementation program to all worst affected areas; and
- use mass media to convey basic messages to other affected areas.

Over the medium term (i.e., two years) it would be necessary to extend and intensify communication activities in all affected areas, and within the first and second year it would be advisable to evaluate whether the desired effects are occurring, and modify the strategy where necessary.

### **C. Community Consultation and Participation**

Community participation will be a fundamental requirement in most sectors for the success of their reconstruction efforts. Local communities will need to be actively involved in the decision-making for and implementation of reconstruction activities. The team found that affected people in both rural and urban areas want to participate in and contribute to the range of efforts that will be required, including decisions about rebuilding *in situ*/relocation, housing, location of and types of services, and so on. While they recognize a need for external financial and technical assistance, the communities are equally clear in their desire to have a say in the utilization of resources coming into the affected areas.

Community participation would accomplish several objectives in the reconstruction phase:

- *Reduce trauma.* Trauma and depression are not always visible immediately after a disaster but may occur weeks or months later. Active involvement in work and participation in community affairs can reduce the psychological problems experienced by many earthquake victims.
- *Result in more culturally- and socially-appropriate solutions.* Experience shows that plans and designs created by external agents (Government or other) in housing and other areas of reconstruction do not always correspond to people's needs. Following the Maharashtra earthquake in 1993, it was reported that many people in the new colonies found the houses constructed inappropriate and chose to tie their cattle inside them rather than live in them. Often, relocation decisions imposed from outside break up the social fabric, to the detriment of people's community support systems. This was the case after the Kobe (Japan) earthquake in 1995, where a rehabilitation plan was hurriedly prepared by the municipal government. Inappropriate decisions resulted in suicides, out-migration, and implementation delays.
- *Increase transparency and accountability.* Large-scale reconstruction efforts with tenders and formal bidding processes reduce opportunities for local people to be involved in reconstruction. Many government officials, NGOs, and community members feel that large

contracts reduce transparency and increase the risk of corruption. Local people have expressed their concern that outside commercial interests may promote costly solutions, and profiteer from the disaster. Distrust of contractors and builders is particularly strong at this time because of people's belief that some of the damage caused by the earthquake was due to poor quality of construction and cheating on materials. Informed participation of communities could contain costs and ensure reliability. By ensuring that funds are made available directly to the communities and the individuals involved, the scope for these irregularities is decreased. Thus, wherever possible, communities should undertake their own reconstruction efforts, knowing what funds and other support are available to whom. Village people should be involved in listing beneficiaries and in reviewing damage assessment reports. Material and cash transfers should be made only in public settings. Accounts and records should be publicly displayed and updated. During the relief effort, people have already taken on responsibility for restarting schools, and are expressing a desire to rebuild themselves with some material support and financial assistance from outside. They are certainly willing to participate in meeting their immediate need for temporary shelter.

- *Reduce dependency.* While relief and charity are important in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, they should be replaced as soon as possible with efforts to foster a greater sense of ownership and involvement among people. The assessment team was told by several people that relief assistance is already creating competition for handouts, community conflict, and dependency. Greater local participation and contributions to the reconstruction effort could reduce social tensions and lead to more sustainable development efforts.
- *Provide opportunities for employment.* Employment and income are urgent needs of the affected people. Rather than purchase materials, expertise and labor from outside, efforts to utilize local resources and employ local people in the rebuilding activities, including work schemes such as removal of debris and construction of community infrastructure, would benefit them greatly.
- *Increase access to, utilization and effectiveness of services.* Community participation in decisions on school and health center locations, and the type of water supply and sanitation infrastructure to be built, for example, would ensure better access to these, increase their utilization and, hence, make them more effective in meeting people's needs. Experience has shown that women's involvement in the planning of public services as well as of housing benefits families and communities a great deal. Organizations such as the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) could assist in working with women.
- *Improve equity.* The ongoing relief effort has by all accounts been a tremendous cooperative achievement of the GOG, armed forces, NGOs, corporate sector, international agencies, and the people themselves. Among anecdotes of remarkable heroism and efficiency, however, one criticism heard by the team was that relief has been less effective in remote villages, and that certain disadvantaged communities (such as the tribal Kolis) have benefited less than the powerful upper castes. Participatory mechanisms have the potential to iron out such inequalities without exacerbating social tensions. Most often, decisions -- for example, on compensation--are taken by communities on the basis of actual need rather than on 'academic' criteria such as socioeconomic level. The use of such criteria in the Government's recently announced compensation packages reinforces inequities and could exacerbate them.
- *Save time over the medium-term.* It is often thought that participatory planning takes time, which is unaffordable in emergencies. However, a lack of consultation and participation in planning could cause more delays in subsequent implementation than participatory processes. After the 1995 Kobe (Japan) earthquake a rehabilitation plan was decided on quickly by the

government, but implementation was delayed as time had to be spent subsequently to get the consent of the affected population: *“The initial top-down approach created distrust between the government and the local people, or even among the local people, thus caused many problems in rebuilding the harmonious communities.”* (Report by Toyokazu Nakata, former Chief Coordinator, NGO Coordinating Team for Hanshin Earthquake Relief, Kobe). Participatory planning can in fact speed up implementation by ensuring a priori 'buy-in' of all concerned, and participation efforts can be designed in such a way that they run simultaneously with technical and physical efforts, and strengthen these rather than delay them.

The modalities for ensuring appropriate community consultation and participation need to be developed. These will depend on the community organizations and local support structures that can be called in to assist the reconstruction effort. The paucity of organized community groups in the region, and the absence of legitimate decision-making structures such as panchayats pose a risk to any participatory strategy. Furthermore, there is limited capacity for such work among NGOs and the Government, which means that support will be required from outside the area. After the Maharashtra earthquake two nodal NGOs were brought in to assist the process of participation, and a similar approach involving several NGOs may need to be followed here. A thorough social assessment conducted by an experienced institution or group could contribute to the social mobilization and capacity building required. Such an assessment could be undertaken as an on-going process to provide the social, cultural and institutional analysis needed to ensure that support mechanisms reflect the needs of various stakeholders involved, particularly poor and vulnerable groups.

#### **D. Partnerships between Government, NGOs, and Community Organizations**

Involving communities in their own reconstruction and rehabilitation will require a well-coordinated effort between Government, NGOs, and existing community institutions, including the Panchayati Raj institutions. The team found that collaboration among these agencies was excellent during the relief phase. Several well known and credible NGOs such as SEWA are active in the area and are helping people restore livelihoods and meet other needs. The Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan has developed a plan for reconstruction based on *“a fundamental belief in self-help, confidence-building and enabling local villagers to meet, organize and carry out their own needs assessment and handing over the relief operations to the hands of the beneficiaries with minimum supervision....”* The Abhiyan has set up 16 local sub-centers in Kutch to coordinate information and assistance, with encouragement and formal endorsement from the Government.

The relief effort thus far is impressive. However, much of the work done by Government and NGOs has been managed by people from outside the affected area – senior, experienced government officers from the Indian Administrative Service, and skilled volunteers and workers from development organizations around the state, country and abroad. As the availability of skilled people may not continue, efforts are needed immediately to ensure that sufficient numbers of capable organizers are present among local people or trained within a short time. The United Nations' Volunteers' program support to and training of local volunteers to assist the rehabilitation effort is a worthy solution. While NGOs have a reasonably good geographical coverage in the affected areas, they are unlikely to be able to coordinate the reconstruction in all affected towns and villages. It is therefore essential to extend the partnership and coordination between Government and NGOs to local institutions by involving and building capacity among community associations, women's groups, village committees and Panchayati Raj Institutions at the local level. It will also be necessary to establish more such groups -- the social structure of the area suggests that women's groups would be particularly beneficial. Among the lessons of previous earthquakes worldwide is the finding that affected people work most effectively to

rehabilitate themselves--more so than NGOs or governments. A clear strategy for capacity building and organizing is a high priority at this stage.

### **E. Coordination**

There is also need for coordination among different national and international agencies involved in the reconstruction effort. The coordination undertaken by the Government of Gujarat and the United Nations' Disaster Assistance Committee (UNDAC) during the relief phase is of a high quality. The assessment team recommends that similar arrangements be maintained during the reconstruction phase. UNDAC has been succeeded by the UNDP for the rehabilitation phase.) Consultations need to be undertaken amongst the different agencies to assess capacities, identify complementarities, recognize gaps, avoid duplication, and coordinate efforts.

Communication between the Government and the numerous aid agencies, commercial organizations, NGOs and community-based organizations which have come forward to assist in this massive recovery program is of paramount importance. Not only should their physical activities be coordinated but it is important that they follow common technical and finishing standards, harmonize policies where appropriate, and do not undermine the drive and initiative of local communities. Outside partners need to ensure that local leadership as well as poor, vulnerable and marginalized sections participate, and to be mindful of communities' dignity, traditions and practices. Only a continuous two-way communication and dialogue interface between the communities, external partners, and the Government will ensure this.

### **F. Safeguarding against secondary displacement or other negative impacts of the reconstruction effort**

As noted in this assessment report, relocation should be avoided where possible, and assistance should be given to enable people to rebuild their homes to better standards in their old location. This would also minimize the need for new land acquisition, which may cause hardships to those affected by losing land or livelihood opportunities. The assessment team recommends that if land acquisition or displacement of people to make room for new housing colonies or infrastructure is unavoidable, a social assessment process involving all stakeholders should be undertaken. Gujarat has developed an excellent framework for support to people affected by land acquisition or displacement by encroachers on public land in its State Highways project, and the mission recommends that the principles of support and entitlements adopted in the Highways project be used in case there is a need for secondary displacement for reconstruction after the earthquake.

The approach recommended would be based on the following principles:

- To the extent possible, **relocation should be avoided**. This corresponds with the views of many rural dwellers met by the Joint team, and also with the wishes of many people in urban areas. Decisions about relocation should be taken only after full consultation with all affected people, and full disclosure of information and entitlements.
- Where **temporary relocation** is unavoidable, for example, in urban areas, such shelters should be built on Government land wherever possible.
- If **permanent housing** is to be constructed in new areas, for instance, because of the need to reduce density in an urban area and improve housing standards and safety, the principle of self-relocation should be followed. The affected population should be given financial and

technical support to choose locations and housing based on their own preferences. This should reduce or eliminate the need for large housing colonies.

- If acquisition of private property is unavoidable, the Government should assist in purchasing the necessary land through the principle of willing seller – willing buyer, rather than resorting to land acquisition under law.
- If none of the scenarios mentioned above are feasible, people affected by land acquisition are entitled to full compensation and assistance in regaining livelihoods, as described above. In such cases, an agency experienced in planning and implementing resettlement action plans should be contracted to ensure proper consultation, compensation, and relocation assistance to those displaced by secondary land acquisition.

### **G. Independent Monitoring and Grievance Redressal**

The joint team recommends that effective monitoring and grievance redressal mechanism be established. The Terms of Reference of such monitoring and grievance redressal systems should be made public. In addition, quick and accessible grievance redressal mechanisms, such as *lok adalats* (people's courts), could be put in place, at least at the *taluka* level in the worst affected *talukas*. The public should be informed of their right to grievance redressal. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of a permanent, independent body to enforce existing and new building codes.