

## SOS MESSAGE

**Sub: Crisis in the hilly region of Wayanad consequent to the worst ever natural calamity it recently witnessed in the century and the challenges/responsibilities of BLOWIN AGRO RESEARCH, Mananthavady and its parent organisation WAYANAD SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY(WSSS) to mitigate the sufferings of the inhabitants predominated by migrant settlers**

**Dear Friends and Benefactors,**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The district of Wayanad in Kerala State in India has been witnessing the worst ever natural disaster in the recent decades. Torrential rains accompanied by strong winds in the past three weeks has virtually devastated a vast region, mainly the taluks of Mananthavady and Vythiri. The region is still continuing under the grip of torrential waves and vast flooding with about 12000 people continuing to stay in Relief Camps in most congested and miserable conditions having lost all their belongings, in several cases their houses also. Because of the fragile nature of the soil in these areas some places have become totally uninhabitable. In fact, from the very beginning of south west monsoon that started towards the end of May this year, it was pouring out heavily all the while, assuming alarming proportions in the months of July and August. All the low lying areas have been totally flooded with waters still resent to recede even after a month now. To make matters worse, occurrence of a series of cloud bursts and heavy land sliding has made the situation irredeemable. Further, releasing of huge amounts of water from the local water dams/reservoirs dangerously scaled up the extent of damages. There are several instances of human casualties and to a very great extent that of the livestock. The people dwelling in the camps are anxiously waiting to return to their homes to see what is there in store for them and the destiny ahead. However, it would appear that time is not yet right to return as the fury of the nature is continuing unabated.

The Government machinery, the volunteer sector and the public have been doing their very best for alleviating the sufferings of the victims. The Diocese of Mananthavady and the Diocesan Social Service Organizations have been in the forefront in providing space and facilities to run relief camps and to supply food and other necessary items such bed sheets and woollen blankets. But the resources at disposal and that it could lay hands is getting fast exhausted, leaving the only option to appeal philanthropic organizations and persons to come to our help. The State

Government, which is also not good in its financial situation, is all out requesting support from all possible sources to tide over the crisis. In this regard, time and again, the Government has been requesting the co-operation and intense involvement of voluntary organizations and individuals.

To illustrate further, the hill district has been isolated after landslides on major highways such as Wayanad ghat section of road on the Kozhikode-Kollegal National high way 212; Palchuram and Periya ghat section of roads on the Mananthavadi-Kannur state highway, and the Kuttiadi ghat section of road on the Mananthavadi-Kuttiadi highway. The District Disaster Management Committee has issued a red alert after the heavy rain battered the district. 10 persons (from June onwards) were killed and 23 seriously injured in landslips in Wayanad District. National Disaster Response Force, Navel rescue team and Defence Security Corps are deployed in the District. Landslides and floods destroyed the crops of thousands.

Incessant rain triggered landslips in the District. According to the official report 36 landslides have occurred in different parts of Wayanad. As per the latest news 225 houses are completely destroyed and 537 houses are partially damaged. The torrential rains in the past two weeks alone has incurred a loss of approximately Rupees 800 crores in Wayanad District as per the official report. The agriculture and trade of the district are badly hit by the flood. The latest report shows that 14645 hectares of cultivated land is submerged in water and various crops like pepper, coffee, food crops and vegetables perished in the flood. It is very difficult to assess the actual quantum of loss caused owing to the unfavourable weather and the total isolation of many areas from the mainland because of the destruction of roads. The banana and paddy farmers are the most affected as the unmaturing banana are ruined in the flood and paddy fields are flooded with water from the rivers. Public properties worth huge amounts also have been destroyed. Apart from Agriculture almost all open wells are damaged, hence there is an acute shortage of pure drinking water. Almost 60% of the toilet facilities have crumpled in the floods. Majority of the families lost everything including dress materials, food articles, house hold utilities, school books and even official documents including title deeds. Many lost supplementary income sources like milch animals, goat and poultry.

The District Authorities has opened more than 135 relief camps in Mananthavady, Sulthan Bathery and Vythiri Taluks. Some of the victim families are refused to be shifted to relief camps from trouble prone areas for fear of losing their cattle and other domestic animals, which often are their only source of income.

## **RELIEF MEASURES BEING UNDERTAKEN**

The Catholic Diocese of Mananthavady through its social service department called *Wayanad Social Service Society* (WSSS) and *Biowin Agro Research* has taken immediate steps to rehabilitate the victim families to the relief camps and ensured supply of food, medicines and clothes. Govt. machinery alone is not in a position to meet all the requirements of the flood hit areas and the necessities of the victims. So the local non-governmental agencies also rose to the occasion. The team members of WSSS and Biowin have visited the flood hit areas, relief camps and families of victims. So far WSSS / Biowin has distributed 1750 Food Kits worth Rs. 1750000/- It has outsourced food materials, dress items as well as household utilities from the good minded people and the nearby Catholic dioceses and is in the process of distributing them to the needy. The Bishop of Mananthavady has made an appeal to all the parishes and the diocesan institutions for supporting the victims of this disaster and opening up their parish halls and schools for turning them into relief camps.

## **SUPPORT NEEDED**

Out support and assistance is essential to reconstruct the faith and life of the people in distress. So whatever support given to the victims will not be of gargantuan. The intervention of the state has reduced very much the misery of the people. But it is not sufficient enough to bring life to normal. Rehabilitation process is hindered by shortage mainly of housing. There is a chance for occurring water-born diseases when the water starts to recede. So a second stage rehabilitation process also is to be planned out.

Now we need:-

1. **Immediate Support** (Food Materials, Drinking Water, Cloth especially blankets, Medicine, Animal Feed, House hold utilities and Books, bags, umbrella etc.)
2. **Short Term Support** (Repairing of Houses/ Shelters, Support for house construction, Construction/Repairing of toilets, Supply of seedlings of seasonal and perennial crops, Medical Camps)
3. **Long Term Support** (Soil and Water Conservation Measures, Drinking Water Resource Development, Livelihood Development Programs, Skill Development Programs and Farm Development Activities)

## **CONCLUSION**

Emergency Assistance is sought for the captioned project favoring the suffering population living in the district of Wayanad to cater to the migrant settler communities to this hilly region in the north eastern sector of Kerala. WSSS/Biowin earnestly involved in promoting the rural life through substantial endeavour in the field of social development. WSSS is a registered entity (NGO) in keeping with the existing government Laws established in the year 1974 to ensure sustainable livelihood and wellbeing of the weaker sections especially the farmers, women and tribes. With the Bishop at the helm of affairs as President in ex-officio capacity, the Wayanad Social Service Society, which is designated as the legal holder of the project, has a democratically constituted General Body and duly elected Governing Body for policy formation, decision making and to oversee the organizational matters and programme processes. The local units – Social Welfare Societies (SWS) for women empowerment and farmers’ groups spread over Wayanad are accepted as the primary agents and authentic planning subjects of the Society.

Kindly be informed that this communication is a hurried one and we shall, by all means follow it up with more up-to-date and specific particulars in detail together with justification of each of the measures we propose to undertake.

I humbly request your immediate attention to this emergency situation and provide maximum assistance to the disaster hit population.

**Fr. John Joseph**

Chairman, Biowin Agro Research &  
Director, WSSS Organic Programme

### **Account Details:**

**Secretary**

**Wayanad Social service Society**

**BANK NAME: HDFC**

**FC A/C NO: 50100210972174**

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