

December 7, 2007

Dear Friends of Fr. Bill and IIRD Bangladesh,

I am writing this letter in hopes of reaching as many people as possible to ask for help for our rural poor as they struggle to overcome an incredible series of natural disasters that have occurred in the past three months. If you have received and responded to an earlier appeal I apologize and I thank you.

The enormous need for basic life sustaining support makes this unusual appeal necessary.

In September and October a series of monsoons swept across Northern India and Bangladesh displacing 15 million people. These floods were called the worst in 20 years by the UN. Six of IIRD's work areas were among the hardest hit. The cost in terms of loss of human life, serious injury, homelessness, hunger and health will continue to rise in the months ahead. Individual small businesses and small industries were damaged or lost, meaning that income has stopped and future work for these already desperately poor people is uncertain. Among the rural poor, many of whom survive at a level of partial starvation on one meal a day, the lack of work means that they will lose even that small food security.

Flooding has washed away crops and school classrooms are gone or severely damaged. The loss of hard won assets such as a cow or goats means the resources built up from long years of struggle are gone. It is hard to describe the devastation when a disaster hits an already impoverished land. Millions are living out in the open. It is winter, and the situation is beyond what most of us can comprehend. The cold, hunger and despair are numbing. Immediate relief can be many weeks away for most. They need our help now.

For those of you who have already generously supported Fr. Bill and IIRD this year and we are grateful. Because of the extraordinary circumstances facing IIRD and its outreach to the rural poor, we are asking that if you are able, to please consider an additional gift this year. The needs are staggering. The ultra poor in the rural areas have no resources with which to rebuild their lives without your help.

IIRD pledges that whatever you are able to give will be transferred immediately to Bangladesh and used to restore the financial and food security of IIRD's rural poor lost through these natural disasters.

Gratefully,

*Virginia Klein*

Virginia Klein  
Executive Director