

Resolution of Council

19 September 2022

Item 3.3

Support for the People of Pakistan

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The people of Pakistan are facing “a monsoon on steroids -- the relentless impact of epochal levels of rain and flooding”.

These are the words of Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a video appeal on 30 August 2022, calling for the “world’s collective and prioritized attention”.

Since June this year, devastating monsoonal rains have inundated a third of Pakistan, causing floods and landslides that have severely affected over 33 million people, including approximately 16 million children. Rivers and lakes have breached their banks and dams have overflowed, wreaking major destruction. Critical infrastructure including roads, bridges, hospitals, water systems and public health facilities have been destroyed, along with farms and over 1.4 million homes. Many more have been severely damaged. Many displaced people are living without shelter, food or clean drinking water. Damage to roads and bridges, with whole villages being cut off, is hampering aid and rescue operations.

More than 1,200 people, including around 400 children, have lost their lives. Many more are at risk of diarrhoea, skin diseases, respiratory infections and water-borne diseases such as cholera.

The impact on children is heart-rendering. According to UNICEF, at least 18,000 schools have been damaged or destroyed across the country due to the floods. After two years of pandemic school closures in the last few years, children once again risk further disruption to their learning, in areas where one-third of girls and boys were already out-of-school before the crisis. Many of the hardest-hit areas are amongst the most vulnerable in Pakistan, where children already suffer from high rates of malnutrition, and poor access to water and sanitation.

To quote Mr Guterres, “Pakistan is awash in suffering”, with the “scale of needs... rising like the flood waters”.

In his message, Mr Guterres pointed out that South Asia is one of the world’s global climate crisis hotspots, with people living in these hotspots 15 times more likely to die from climate impacts.

This claim is supported by the Sixth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Its climate change projections for South Asia as a whole suggest that annual and summer monsoon rainfall will increase and heatwaves and humid heat stress will be more intense and frequent.

Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to climate change, despite contributing less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Southern Pakistan experienced record setting back-to-back heat waves in May and June 2022, creating a strong thermal low that brought heavier rains than usual and triggered glacial flooding. Higher than average monsoon rains were also recorded in India and Bangladesh. The rise in sea surface temperatures is believed to increase monsoon rainfall, with the Indian Ocean being one of the fastest warming oceans in the world.

I am recommending that Council responds to Mr Guterres’ call to support the people of Pakistan in their hour of need.

Australian charities are working to address these needs. Oxfam Australia is working with its partners to intervene as quickly as possible, in particular to ensure access to drinking water for those who have lost everything. Other support includes providing basic provisions including tarpaulins, water containers, soap and sanitary materials and food survival packs.

UNICEF is on the ground, helping to reach children and their families with life-saving medical equipment, essential medicine, water and sanitation supplies.

These donations comply with the City of Sydney Humanitarian Emergency Response Guidelines, the Support for Charities Guidelines, are in line with previous donations, and align with objective 7.3.2 (2) of the City’s Operational Plan 2022/23, which states that the City will support communities beyond our local area and international communities experiencing emergency situations.

Both organisations are signatories to the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct. Accordingly, I am recommending donations totalling \$100,000 to these charities.

In recommending this action, I also recommend we heed Mr Guterres call to “stop sleepwalking towards the destruction of our planet by climate change”.

“Today, it’s Pakistan. Tomorrow, it could be your country”.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Scully –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council donate:
- (i) \$50,000 from the 2022/23 General Contingency Fund to Oxfam Australia to be directed to efforts on the ground with local partners to deliver urgent actions in response to the crisis caused by the floods; and
 - (ii) \$50,000 from the 2022/23 General Contingency Fund to UNICEF Australia to support emergency health and nutrition supplies, safe water and sanitation, education and child protection recovery; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to arrange a program for staff donations to Oxfam and UNICEF and for Council to match dollar for dollar any contributions until the end of October 2022 from the 2022/23 General Contingency Fund.

The Minute was carried on the following show of hands –

Ayes (8) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Ellsmore, Davis, Gannon, Kok, Scott, Scully and Weldon

Noes (1) Councillor Jarrett.

Minute carried.

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