U.S. Senate Government Affairs & Homeland Security Committee Hearing
Testimony
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I am Stanley S. Litow, Vice President for Corporate Community Relations and President of the IBM International Foundation. I oversee IBM's corporate citizenship and philanthropic activities worldwide. Over the last ten years, IBM has been one of the leading corporate contributors of cash, technology and talent to non-profit organizations and educational institutions across the U.S. and around the world. We are committed to applying our skill and ability as an innovator against the challenges that exist in communities across the globe, addressing both education and societal concerns and doing so in a fundamental and systemic way.

As a global company with employees and customers in more than 165 countries, IBM has a unique understanding of how a single devastating event in one city in America or in one corner of the world can be destabilizing for us all. Natural and manmade disasters remind us just how interconnected we are and how fragile our networks can be.

But they also remind us how generous, resourceful and focused we, as a global community, can be when we put political, economic and other self interests aside and pull together to respond in times of crises, whether they are next door or halfway around the world.

IBM has a long-term and deep-seeded commitment to exemplary corporate citizenship. Our work includes launching the world's first humanitarian public grid project to help find cures for diseases like Alzheimer's and AIDS, raising literacy by finding new ways to teach children and non-literate adults to read and making the Internet more accessible for seniors and people with disabilities.

But through our experience, we've learned that corporate citizenship is exemplified most clearly in times of crises. In the face of earthquakes, hurricanes and acts of terrorism, IBM has responded immediately, bringing our expertise and technology to affected areas to make real and measurable differences for governments and their people.

IBM has a Crisis Response Team that has responded to more than 70 critical incidents in 49 countries during the last decade. The team provides immediate, 24/7 assistance, including international humanitarian relief, emergency management and on-site services, as well as business services to government and business entities in the U.S. and around the world.

After the Tsunami in Southern Asia, IBM deployed over a 10-week period our Crisis Response Team and more than 700 employees, business partners and

customer volunteers across the four countries of India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. It was clear within the first week that the tremendous challenges faced by these governments, as well as relief agencies, businesses and community organizations could be aided significantly through technology.

Among the solutions we provided were Open Source applications to address a complex set of needs, including tracking and identifying the missing, dead and injured, as well as displaced individuals and orphans. We also consolidated UN, NGO, private sector and government information and provided on-the-spot analysis and reporting.

We developed an organization registry, camp management systems, relief and assistance databases, logistics management, financial restitution tracking systems, event management and damage assessment applications. We deployed high-speed wireless data and voice transmission systems and a range of equipment from mobile computers, servers, hubs, and routers to specialized education solutions, including computer learning centers and software for young children in the affected areas. Finally, to help the countries become self-sufficient in managing the ongoing crisis, we trained thousands of volunteers and government officials on customized software applications and on trauma and emergency response.

After our work concluded in Southern Asia, we left with a set of customized Open Source solutions that could be easily modified and deployed in other disasters. They included:

1. A Relief Materials Management System
2. A National Relief Fund Management System
3. A Victim Tracking System
4. A Relief Camp Management and ID card system (biometric, fingerprint and photo)
5. Report Generation and Statistical Analysis capability
6. Helpline Services Tracking (captures services requests and monitor status)
7. Tracking systems for signs of disease outbreaks

Because of our intensive experiences across multiple disasters in the U.S. and globally, after Hurricane Katrina hit and subsequently after Hurricane Rita and the earthquake in Pakistan as well, IBM was able to deploy assistance more efficiently and effectively. IBM talent, technology and systems have made a critical difference on the ground virtually from the moment disasters hit.

Specifically, after Hurricane Katrina, our goal after we deployed the Crisis Response team to Baton Rouge was to address critical health and safety needs. Among the efforts were:

1. Missing Person Reunification Project: A number of Web sites and local registries, including two that IBM hosted – the CNN Safe List and the Safe List for Urban Broadcast – were helping evacuees and the public locate missing family members, friends and colleagues. IBM worked with the State of Louisiana to implement the Entity Analytics Solution, a new IBM solution, to integrate these different databases and make it possible to search a single, unduplicated, up-to-date list of people and support reunification.

2. Jobs4Recovery: In a partnership with the US Chamber of Commerce, local Chambers in the Gulf, and nonprofit partners, IBM launched www.Jobs4Recovery.com, a new job post/job search web site for the large numbers of individuals who have an immediate need for employment in an easy to access format that brings together the largest number of opportunities from the Web and also presents targeted new jobs developed by local chambers.

3. American Red Cross Disaster Relief Self-Registration Internet Site: IBM designed and developed the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Self-Registration Internet Site, which captures and stores demographic and family data in a secure data base through a user-friendly web page. This will be particularly helpful moving forward when those who are affected by a disaster can apply for benefits online and the Red Cross has the ability to validate information, check for duplications and efficiently manage the application process.

4. Centers for Disease Control Support: IBM provided support to the Centers for Disease Control of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to respond to emergency health needs and assure that evacuees had access to prescriptions and care for both chronic illnesses and trauma resulting from the disaster.

5. Online Curriculum Management Application: IBM implemented an online curriculum management application to post the Louisiana state curriculum in an easy to search and access web site for teachers in Baton Rouge and other parishes who accepted thousands of new students, and to provide background information on new students to teachers in Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia.

6. Trauma Specialists: We worked with trauma specialists to train teachers to welcome evacuees into their classrooms, including how to recognize and respond to signs of serious trauma.

7. Temporary Housing: With the City of Houston, we developed an application to track and manage temporary housing and efficiently match and assign individuals to appropriate facilities.

8. Volunteer.org Web Site: We worked with the Points of Light Foundation to enhance its 1-800-volunteer.org site to streamline volunteer recruitment prior to and during emergency situations. Previously, the site connected volunteers to opportunities in their communities, helped them track their service, and sent them automatic e-mail notifications, enabling them to respond when they were needed most. IBM's enhancements improved the ability of Volunteer Centers to recruit for specific needs through the addition of volunteer skills taxonomy and specialized matching for disaster preparedness and response.

Obviously things are far from completed and the IBM team and resources are still at work in the affected region. As one example, we are meeting with Louisiana State education officials now to help determine a long-term course to restore school-based instructional services.

While we were still heavily engaged in the US Gulf Coast, the earthquake in Pakistan hit. We immediately deployed our Crisis Response Team to Islamabad. After the initial assessment, it was clear that the Open Source software IBM created after the Tsunami to track refugees and their needs, as well as to monitor goods and material, would aid significantly in the Pakistani crisis. It thus became our first priority for implementation. The applications originally developed in Sri Lanka were easily customized, and the government agency responsible for relief and recovery adopted the software as the standard. IBM is providing servers, hosting, project management and six months of support for the applications.

In recent years, IBM has learned a great deal about disaster relief and believes that we have much of value to share. As we regroup and consider lessons learned, we would like to stress the following:

1. We can't predict disasters, but we can prepare for them. The degree to which we are able to do so can make a tremendous difference for the people and governments that must move forward in times of extreme crisis. As a nation, we must ensure that we have the plans, the resources, the people, and the technologies at the ready – doing so can help save untold numbers of lives.

2. Advance planning of people, tools and technology, as well as formal agreements among public agencies on sharing information and decision making are vital to the success of any disaster relief and recovery plan.

3. In cases such as Hurricane Katrina, 9/11 or the Tsunami, rapid response is critical to the assurance of the safety of the situation. Basic communications systems must be either established or restored immediately and local and regional officials need help in determining where and how to invest resources, and deploy the assistance that is offered. The existence of a formal disaster plan and advance planning and training of key staff is critically important here.

4. Local, regional and national governments along with the private and voluntary sector must work collaboratively and establish the systems to be able to do so. Models and best practices from other geographies are critically important to learn what to do and what not to do.

5. Technology tools are critically important. They allow people to communicate with one another when communication systems are wiped out or when disaster hits remote areas of the world. They also permit information – including education and health records and missing person information – from disparate organizations to be shared and organized so that resources can be deployed and used effectively.

6. Technology also can only be effective if it is integrated into a set of services, operational plans and strategies. Open Source tools are the most effective since they can be customized and deployed rapidly and are readily available to both public and not-for-profit agencies. This allows all systems to communicate with each other.

It is a most sobering thought to know that disaster will strike again, often without warning and always without regard for the people and places it leaves in its wake. If any good can come from disaster, then it must be our ability to take the best, most effective practices from one situation and bring them to the next. While we must be sure to customize resources to local situations and cultures, doing so can save money and lives, alleviate human suffering and bring order out of chaos – to the greatest and most immediate degree possible.

Thank you.