

**2008 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE USE OF MILITARY AND CIVIL DEFENCE ASSETS  
Geneva, 18 November 2008**

**SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING**

**1. Introduction**

The annual meeting of the Consultative Group on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) was held in Geneva on 18 November 2008. Under the continued chairmanship of Austria, the meeting comprised representation of civilian and military bodies and representatives of Member States, UN Agencies, the Red Cross Movement, the NGO consortia, international and regional organisations. Prior to the formal opening of the Meeting by The Chair, Ms. Brigitte Brenner, Austria, introductory remarks were given by Mr. Gerhard Putman-Cramer, Chief Emergency Services Branch and Deputy Director OCHA Geneva.

The Agenda of the meeting and a list of participants are attached.

**2. Briefs by Consultative Group Members**

Briefs were given by the following Consultative Group Members on international civil-military activities undertaken by Member States and International Organisations during the year:

- EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Following an introduction from France, the current EU Presidency, the representative from DG ECHO briefed the Consultative Group on the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adopted in December 2007.

- NATO/CEPD. The NATO/CEPD representative briefed the Consultative Group on the need to operationalise the Joint UN-NATO Declaration of September 2008.

- SWITZERLAND informed the Consultative Group Members on their activities to include the implementation of UN-CMCoord guidelines in operational level training of the Swiss Armed Forces.

**3. Civil-Military Guidelines and References for Complex Emergencies**

CMCS briefed the Consultative Group on developments related to Civil Military Guidelines and References for Complex Emergencies; a consolidated document comprising the guidelines on Civil-Military Relationships in Complex Emergencies, the MCDA Guidelines and guidelines on the Use of Military or Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys. The Government of Norway was thanked for its contribution, which made possible the consolidation of these guidelines for Complex Emergencies and the translation of this document into the UN languages.

#### **4. Drafting of UN-OCHA Reference Paper for Foreign Military Forces Deploying on Relief Operations During Natural Disasters in Complex Emergencies**

CMCS briefed the Consultative Group on the current status of the reference paper on deploying Foreign Military Forces in Relief Operations during a natural disaster in a complex emergency context.

The document aims to provide concepts and principles as globally applicable as possible, recognising the important role played by regional organisations and the different national mechanisms for disaster response.

The Consultative Group appreciated the briefing and expressed its interest in receiving a draft of the reference paper. CMCS confirmed that an outline will be shared with the Consultative Group Members as soon as it's available and welcomes comments.

#### **5. APC – MADRO: Draft Guidelines on Facilitation of Foreign Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations in the Asia-Pacific Region**

CMCS informed the Consultative Group about the Asia-Pacific Conference on Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations process. Results from APC-MADRO 2008 were shared with participants regarding the refinement of the current Draft Guidelines for the 'Facilitation of Foreign Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations in the Asia-Pacific Region'.

The Consultative Group appreciated the briefing and reiterated the importance of regional processes and it was confirmed by CMCS that some other regions have shown interest in the adaptation of similar Guidelines to a regional perspective (e.g. Latin America). CMCS also confirmed to the Consultative Group Members that the first draft of the APC-MADRO Guidelines would be available soon for sharing with members.

#### **6. SIPRI Study**

CMCS briefed the Consultative Group on the SIPRI Study on The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response. It informed them that the study was commissioned by OCHA but was an independent study.

The Consultative Group expressed interest in the document and suggested that part of its recommendations can be incorporated in CMCS activities. CMCS confirmed to the Consultative Group that it would follow up on the appropriate recommendations.

#### **7. Support to Military Exercises**

CMCS presented to the Consultative Group the rationale and criteria for support to military exercises and provided highlights of the Exercises supported during 2008. CMCS informed that the Exercise schedule for 2009 is under preparation and will be made available as soon as ready. The first scheduled exercises for 2009 are:

Title: Cobra Gold

Location / date: Chiang Mai, Thailand / 04 – 17 February

Lead: ROAP Bangkok

Description: Thailand and US co-host this annual exercise, which consists of a CPX with participation, planned by up to 15 nations. The scenario is peace operations with a transition from an UN-authorized coalition to a UN Peacekeeping Mission, with significant humanitarian issues and incorporation of aspects requiring a response to Avian Influenza.

Title: Steadfast Joist 09

Location / date: Madrid (TBC) / 21 March – 03 April

Lead: CMCS

Description: NATO Response Force 13. Training for NRF HQ for upcoming standby period. Scenario is based on UN mandated peacekeeping operation in a fictitious country.

Title: Tempest Express 16

Location / date: Philippines / 16 March – 03 April

Lead: ROAP Bangkok

Description: Disaster response planning exercise which involves more than 20 Asian nations. USPACOM sponsored Command Post Exercise (CPX) covering a large-scale natural disaster, with IDPs and requiring a response to the breakout of a highly contagious influenza-like illness.

## **8. UN-CMCoord Training**

CMCS briefed the Consultative Group about the Training Programme, including achievements in 2008 and the way forward in 2009, targeting key stakeholders through specific UN-CMCoord training packages.

CMCS thanked the Governments of Norway and Switzerland for their continuous support to the Training Program and the Consultative Group expressed its appreciation for the Training Programme.

CMCS confirmed that it will work in close coordination with other partners in the development of comprehensive templates, capturing key elements of civil-military coordination based on previous experience and on relevant present issues.

CMCS informed that more information about the Training Schedule for 2009 will be made available after the Consultative Group Meeting. The initial schedule of UN-CMCoord Courses in the first half of 2009 is: January 11-16, Finland; March 22-27, Chile; May 24-29, Thailand. A "Training of Trainers" is also scheduled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2009.

## **9. CMCS Support to Field Operations**

CMCS presented to the Consultative Group its current and future activities in support to Field Operations. The briefing included details on 2008 deployments of UN-CMCoord Officers and on actions taken to support the establishment of an OCHA office in Afghanistan relevant to creating UN-CMCoord capacity in the office.

The Consultative Group welcomed the briefing and expressed support to opening an OCHA Office in Afghanistan. It requested its partners and Members States to contribute to and support the establishment of this office.

## **10. Review of CMCS Role, Activities and Future Strategy**

CMCS briefed the Consultative Group on a recent internal review on its role and activities. The review process was conducted by CMCS, with the participation of UN-CMCoord Officers from the field and inputs from OCHA management and informal consultation with other humanitarian and military entities. The review focused on CMCS core role, activities, key stakeholders and future strategies.

In this framework, CMCS is planning to re-orient its activities in order to engage more with Member States in conjunction with OCHA Regional and Field Offices. Future strategies include: (1) a closer integration of UN-CMCoord with the Humanitarian community, (2) seeking the creation of an IASC Sub-Working Group on UN-CMCoord. Also, in order to broaden engagement with key stakeholders at the policy and decision making level in New York, CMCS is also considering strengthening CMCS capacity in NY. By strengthening the UN-CMCoord Policy function in OCHA NY CMCS can better engage DPKO/DFS/UNDSS and US Armed Forces.

The review also brought up the need to clarify UN-CMCoord identity by emphasising the humanitarian perspective of civil-military relations through the possible use of the term 'Humanitarian – Military Coordination'.

To enhance the support of field operations, CMCS is foreseeing an increased and more focused use of the UNDAC system for deployment of UN-CMCoord capacity during natural disaster response. Furthermore, to increase the effectiveness of a coordinated response in natural disasters, CMCS also briefed the participants about the need to develop a docking methodology with existing field mechanisms in natural disasters.

To better support the field and receive regular feedback from deployed personnel, CMCS aims to establish responsibility with OCHA Regional Offices to include the Chief of CMCS as an additional Reporting Officer for UN-CMCoord Officer Performance Appraisals.

The Consultative Group appreciated the intense work behind the review. Some recommendations of the review process presented by CMCS were expressly supported while several delegations expressed reservations due to the lack of the necessary time for prior consultation with their capitals and headquarters. Some delegations expressed the desire to retain the term "UN-CMCoord" instead of using the term "Humanitarian-Military Coordination". Consultative Group Members noted the proposal for the establishment of an IASC sub-working group on civil-military coordination. Upon receipt of the presentation made by CMCS, Members of the Consultative Group are encouraged to send their comments on it to CMCS by the end of January 2009.

The Consultative Group considered the possible revision of the MCDA Requesting Procedures to make them more practical and result-oriented. Comments are again requested from Consultative Group Members by the end of January 2009.

## **11. Any Other Business**

CMCS expressed its gratitude to all Member States and organisations for their generous contributions and support to civil-military coordination activities.

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