



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
(OCHA) SOMALIA

Summary of discussions - Inter-Cluster Working Group, Monday 23 February 2009

Venue: OCHA RO Conference Room, Nairobi at 10.30 – 12.00 pm

Introductory remarks

The meeting opened with the new Deputy Head of Office introducing himself to the participants.

Cedric Petit, OCHA senior HAO gave an update on the contingency plan. He stated that when he took over the task of finalizing the contingency plan, he realized that the various cluster response plans are inconsistent in terms of information and planning. Consequently, he visited each cluster chair to discuss plans to ensure harmonization and consistency. More work needs to be done on the plan and there should be a process to update the scenarios on a regular basis, which should include UNDSS. He noticed that what is missing in the current version is a listing of the stocks, supplies and warehouse locations and which warehouse covers what region per cluster/agency.

Action points:

- OCHA will circulate to clusters the current contingency planning documents outlining gaps and way forward
- OCHA will convene a small group to review, discuss, and update the existing scenarios to reflect the current realities on the ground.
- Cluster leads are requested to adequately provide information on supplies (location) at least every month. This would form a basis of addressing gaps and provide a clear framework on how to move forward on the process.

Nutrition Response in Central

The cluster lead stated that indicators show nutrition gaps, with actual progress in response being limited. Progress in responding since the meetings in November and December has been very slow, particularly as it has been very difficult to identify partners to work with. Additionally, due to the conflict, and the fact that some organizations have been targeted, nutrition response has slowed now significantly. There are glaring gaps with no nutrition interventions in Cadaado, Cabudwaaq and Hobyo districts. This is worrisome because Cadaado Districts has registered the levels of severely malnourished people. Agencies have limited resources and require support. IRC and IR have ongoing WASH activities and are being approached on possibility of partnering with other agencies to engage in additional WASH and nutrition activities. Access still poses a challenge with NGOs having limited staff trained on nutrition response. Whilst there are NGOs present on the ground, not all are involved in nutrition activities. A suggestion

was made to look at current INGO capacity building models, which could be used to capacity build local NGOs

It was pointed out that WASH, in particular, is absent from any emergency response in Central, and that it had to do with the fact that WASH for Somalia has only received 300,000 CAP funding to date for the entire country.

Clarification was sought on HRF funding available for emergency response. HRF advised that Somalia will receive USD 10 million from the CERF out of which USD 4 million has been allocated to WASH and nutrition projects. Disbursement of the CERF funds was decided by the Somali UNCT to the areas of security/common services, agriculture and nutrition. Clusters were reminded that if there is a capacity to respond, the HRF would be a useful tool in funding, even though HRF is coming close to the strategic reserve of 5 USD million. Should agencies be able to implement prior to 15 March, when it is expected that the CERF money will be available, then requesting funds from HRF is reasonable.

Nutrition Response in Gedo

The Gedo nutrition situation was highlighted as critical with indications of deterioration. A meeting on Gedo Nutrition/ Humanitarian Response was called for to critically review the response.

Action points:

- OCHA to generate lists of NGOs on the ground together with their activities needs to be developed and circulated widely.
- OCHA to approach the UNHAS User Group to have the El Bur and Cadaado airstrips opened
- Copy of the Gedo meeting to be attached to these Minutes

CAP prioritization process

Clusters felt that the process is quite onerous with questionable benefits in terms of donor funding. Debate took place on the prioritization process. HR stated that so far two processes have taken place with the September 2008 exercise yielding a total of USD 8 million. Eight clusters were represented in the exercise with 24 projects totaling over USD 70 million. In the CAP for 2009, this prioritization process should take place twice per year; however, there is no reason why it could not be done more often, such as on a quarterly basis.

It was questioned whether such an exercise has any utility. The answer is that Donors are fully supportive of the process and, in fact, there is an expectation that priority projects would be presented on a regular basis.

Though OCHA circulated the criteria used for prioritization based on what the IASC had decided, OCHA was not involved in the actual interpretation that each Cluster gave to the criteria. Numerous comments were made with respect to the fairness of the process such as that only 4 projects could be put forth when some clusters have 70 plus in the CAP. A proposal was made that there is a need to prioritize projects much more frequently against the CAP by looking at the percentage of the CAP funds required at a point in time. It was agreed that, if the prioritization process should occur more that what is stated in the CAP, and then the process needs to be clear and equitable. It was agreed that a smaller group should be formed to draft a prioritization process, which then would be presented to the larger ICWG meeting.

Action points:

- A taskforce to be established to address the process and criteria for the next prioritization exercise. The Taskforce will consist of FAO, Nutrition, Education, NGO representative, and OCHA as secretariat.
- The TORs for the Taskforce will be drafted and prior to the next ICWG meeting.

Utility of Cluster Reports

Clusters were requested to provide feedback on how the Report could be strengthened so that it better responds to cluster needs. The rating of the report was low following the OCHA product information survey that was conducted in January, so the question needed to be asked as to whether the Report has utility. It was noted that current format is not standardized and there was a feeling of it lacking continuity in the sense that each cluster had different reporting headings. Some clusters were of the opinion that it should be released bi-monthly so that more detailed information is provided. Other clusters proposed the report should outline needs as opposed to factual information. It was generally agreed that the Report does have utility, and that with the suggestions provide it could become a useful information product. ,

Action point:

The OCHA information unit will incorporate comments made by the clusters.

A.O.B

Update on National Cluster Support Officers:

The Deputy Head of Office advised that there was hitch in the NCSO recruitment process, which calls for possibility of conducting interviews again. A critical error was that the advertisement was internal, and yet, external candidates were selected. They do not qualify for recruitment (internal candidates have to be on fixed term UN contracts). Only the Livelihood cluster's choice was processed in the correct manner, and therefore, that individual can be recruited.

The current process cannot be used, and therefore, the only two options are to re-advertise and begin the process afresh, or use only a list of candidates who are on a fixed term contract. The cluster chairs expressed their frustration and questioned the value of this entire process given that it is nearly March. The Deputy Head of Office agreed to meet with those cluster chairs affected after the meeting. An email would be circulated outlining the options available.

Action point:

- OCHA to circulate an email to the chairs/co-chairs as to what options exist to recruit the NCSO, and for the Clusters to make a decision which way they wish to proceed

The OCHA information management unit is working on a database of a NGO contact list. Clusters were requested to enquire from their respective NGOs whether the lists they have provided to OCHA could be made public.

Action point:

- OCHA to provide the Clusters what information OCHA would like to make public regarding NGOs
- Clusters to confirm with their NGO partners whether contact information can be made public

OCHA informed participants of a possible mission to K50 to meet with partners and get a grasp of ongoing activities, as well as, address issues of returns to Mogadishu. The mission will provide an

IRIN, UNOCHA House, UN Crescent road, off UN Avenue

P.O. Box 28832, 00200 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel No: (254-20) 7622762; Fax No: (254-20) 7622632

Website <http://ochaonline.un.org/somalia>

opportunity to conduct mapping of population estimates along the Afgooye corridor. OCHA will liaise with UNDSS and inform cluster chairs as to whether there will be mission.

The agenda item on OCHA's support to the cluster leads will be addressed in the next meeting.

The next Intercluster working group meeting will tentatively take place on 12 March 2009.