

# HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN SOMALIA



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

## The Global Humanitarian Reform

Over the past years, international response to humanitarian emergencies has not always met the basic needs of affected populations in a timely and predictable manner. With varying responses from crisis to crisis, existing capacity levels are often insufficient to adequately meet key emergency needs. To better understand and correct such deficiencies, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator commissioned in 2005 an independent Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) of the global humanitarian system. The HRR identified a three-pronged reform programme to improve the predictability, timeliness, and effectiveness of humanitarian response:

1) **Strengthen humanitarian response capacity** through the adoption of a cluster approach which encourages the effective use of expertise of mandated organizations in their particular sectors to fill identified response gaps, ensure accountability with strengthened leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and bolster coordination of efforts. In early 2006, Somalia became one of four pilot countries to implement the cluster leadership (together with DRC, Liberia and Uganda).

2) **Strengthen the Humanitarian Coordinator System** through the establishment of an Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) at the field level, engaging the broader humanitarian community, and making proactive use of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan as a strategic planning instrument.

3) **Ensure predictable funding** by strengthening the existing Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to allow for an immediate response to an emergency. Approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2005 and launched in March 2006, the modernized CERF targets US\$ 500 million to be made available from additional voluntary contributions. OCHA administers the disbursement of CERF grants.

## The Humanitarian Context in Somalia in 2006/2007

Over the years, Somalia has experienced one disaster after another. In early 2006, the country experienced an aggravated humanitarian emergency brought on by the worst drought in over a decade. Around 2.1 million Somalis country-wide were in need of critical assistance (including 400,000 protracted IDPs). The drought was centered in southern Somalia. Following the 2006 *Gu* rains (April-May), the number decreased to 1.8 million.

The 2006/07 *Deyr* rains (October to December) caused widespread flooding in southern Somalia. In some parts, rainfall measured six times the average for the time of year. Around 255,000 people in the Shabelle and Juba riverine areas were displaced. Just as floodwaters were receding, in late December 2006, fighting erupted between forces of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), backed by Ethiopians troops. The ICU was defeated but an estimated 65,000-70,000 people were displaced at the peak of the fighting, some of whom had already been displaced by flooding. Access to IDPs and other vulnerable groups in early 2007 was hampered by conflict, ongoing military air operations, resumed inter- and intra-clan fighting, and a lack of local authorities/counterparts.

Despite the flooding, the heavy *Deyr* rains resulted in an improvement in livelihoods and food security. Around 1 million people (including the 400,000 IDPs) are in need of assistance until June 2007; almost all in southern Somalia. At the same time, despite a reduced AMISOM deployment, resumption of fighting in Mogadishu between TFG/Ethiopians and 'insurgents' since February 2007 has prompted thousands of displaced to flee the city. Between 1 February and 5 April, around 124,000 people have escaped clashes, many heading south to Lower Shabelle. Meanwhile, projections for the 2007 *Gu* season indicate an enhanced likelihood of normal rains in Somalia as well as near to above normal *Gu* rains in the Ethiopian highlands. Southern Somalia thus faces the possibility of more flooding. That said, rains could also further assist in the post-drought recovery process.

Against this backdrop, Somalia has endured sixteen years of armed conflict and generalized violence, resulting in widespread human rights abuses, destruction of public infrastructure, and disintegration of basic social services. Up to 400,000 people are protracted displaced living in settlements and public buildings, extremely vulnerable, devoid of livelihood assets or clan protection. Within this ongoing complex emergency, droughts and floods have progressively debilitated livelihoods and aggravated already difficult living conditions. Limited humanitarian access and presence, particularly in southern Somalia, remains an overriding constraint to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

## Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms in Somalia

Since 2005, humanitarian coordination mechanisms have been adapted and strengthened to enhance responses to the unraveling humanitarian situation.

**Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC):** In consultation with partners and in compliance with the Global Humanitarian Reform, the Somalia IASC (or Humanitarian Country Team) was established in January 2006 and meets on a monthly basis. The IASC membership includes OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, CARE, Gedo Health Consortium, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM/NOVIB, Concern, Save the Children (UK) and Somali NGO CASUALTY. ICRC is an observer, while FAO/FSAU, FAO/SWALIM and FEWS/NET are technical advisors. On a needs basis, the Somalia IASC meets with donors.

**Clusters:** As a result of the Reform, nine clusters have been established in Somalia together with respective cluster leads and co-leads from UN Agencies and NGOs: i) food aid; ii) agriculture and livelihood; iii) water and sanitation; iv) health; v) nutrition; vi) protection; vii) education viii) logistics, and recently ix) shelter. Supported by the co-leads, cluster leads are accountable for sectoral response plans, including identifying key partners, planning, standard-setting, and coordination of programme implementation. To minimize duplication and ensure harmonization of coordination structures, IASC clusters are now embedded within the Somalia Support Secretariat sectoral committees.

**Humanitarian Response Group (HRG):** A forum to discuss humanitarian issues needing urgent attention and timely mobilization of responses, the HRG is an inter-sectoral working group composed of cluster leads and co-leads, as well as UN and NGO representatives, reporting to the IASC. The HRG is complemented by the Flood Working Group during the rainy seasons. The HRG now meets on a monthly basis for information sharing purposes, with an inter-cluster working group meeting more regularly to tackle specific operational aspects of the response. In view of the 2007 *Gu* forecasts, the Flood Working Group was revived in early March to address flood related preparedness and responses.

## The Role of OCHA

Humanitarian needs in Somalia abound and require urgent and sustained coordinated assistance. In a complex emergency, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator plays a critical role in mobilising and coordinating an effective and timely humanitarian response. OCHA's mandate is to support this role based on the premise that a coherent approach to emergency response will maximise benefits and minimise pitfalls, such as duplication. In Somalia, OCHA endeavours to improve coordination at the field level through strengthened field presence (both international and national), to better support aid partners in the delivery of assistance. OCHA facilitates the planning of common responses (including contingency planning) to identified needs and negotiates humanitarian access, supporting grass-root local reconciliation initiatives where they promote humanitarian access, in collaboration with the appropriate local structures and leaders. OCHA promotes the respect for, and compliance with humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, independence and "Do no Harm", in particular for the protection of vulnerable civilian populations. Advocacy is a key element to bringing international attention and support to crises but also engagement and commitment by national and local authorities.

Specific coordinating tools available include:

**Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)** - Created in 1991 (General Assembly Resolution 46/182), and coordinated by OCHA, the CAP is an inclusive annual programme cycle to analyse the humanitarian context, assess needs, identify strategic priorities and plan programmes for humanitarian response. In short, the CAP is a coordinating, planning, advocacy and fund-raising tool at the disposal of the aid community in close cooperation with national and local authorities.

In mid-2006, following the findings of the post-*Gu* Survey, the 2007 Somalia CAP targeted 1.8 million people, in particular around 1.1 million Somalis in South/Central. Launched in November 2006, the CAP appealed for just over US\$ 237 million in support of 128 projects. (With the onset of the flooding, an additional Flood Response Plan appealed for US\$ 28.6 million to cover immediate life-saving activities. Around US\$ 10.4 million was sourced from the CERF (see below)).

In March 2007, given the improvement in overall food security and reduction of the number of people in need of assistance as a result of the *Deyr* rains, the Somalia 2007 CAP was revised. The 2007 CAP now appeals for around US\$ 253 million in support of 140 projects to target the needs of 1 million people. The increase is explained by the inclusion of post-flood infrastructure rehabilitation needs, early recovery and disaster prevention opportunities, and new programmes to support Somali livelihoods, particular in areas where recovery has been noted.

**Humanitarian Response Fund for Somalia (HRF)** - Administered by OCHA Somalia and in existence since early 2004, the HRF aims to improve the timeliness and appropriateness of aid responses through the provision of a flexible resource that can be drawn on by aid partners. The Fund supports rapid response projects that are developed in the first phase of an emergency and before mainstream responses come into play. Since its inception, the HRF has supported 79 projects throughout the country. Around US\$ 13.2 million has been disbursed to various NGOs and UN agencies and it is estimated that about 2 million people have directly benefited from these initiatives.

**Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)** - As mentioned above, the CERF at the global level has been strengthened to promote early action and enhance response to time-critical requirements, and strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in under-funded crises. To date, the Somalia operation has benefited from over US\$17 million: in 2006 US\$ 6.1 million was received to enhance the response to the drought, and a further US\$10.4 million was allocated toward the Flood Response Plan. In early 2007, an additional US\$1 million was approved to enhance security of operations in Somalia.

### IASC Cluster Leads and Co-Leads in Somalia

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