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| MINUTES OF MEETING |
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TOPIC: Emergency Shelter Co-ordination
DATE: 31-August-2007
LOCATION: UNHCR, Colombo

ATTENDEES:

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|----------------------|-------------------|
| Dirk Hebecker | UNHCR |
| Tony Oliver | UNHCR |
| Chris Nixon | UNHCR |
| Jasmine Sathiagnanan | UNHCR |
| Stella Ogunlade | UNHCR |
| David Evans | UN Habitat |
| P. Pathmansthan | UN Habitat |
| Joern Kristensen | NRC |
| Sean Scales | NRC |
| Thushanti Scharajah | UNOPS |
| Brett Moore | UNOPS |
| Ghada Ajami | Solidar |
| Tamara Nanayakkara | UNOCHA |
| Horst Indorf | HELP from Germany |
| Anusha Fernando | People In Need |
| Guy Hovey | UMCOR |
| Ulrika Haapaniemi | UNICEF |
| T. Mahrswararajam | IOM |

APOLOGIES:

Nil received

| REF | ITEM / DETAIL | ACTION |
|------------|---|--------|
| 1.0 | Contingency & Preparedness For The North: | |
| 1.1 | A presentation and progress report was made by Solidar regarding contingency plan site assessment | |
| 1.2 | Workshops have been conducted in Vavunya, Kilanocha and Jaffna, on the assessment of available proposed sites. The Workshops were to provide standardised methodology and to raise awareness of IOs, INGOs and Government agencies. | |
| 1.3 | Following from the workshops assessments have been commenced on proposed available sites as provided by the government, in Vavunya (assessment and initial analysis complete), Mannar (assessment due for completion in approx one week), Killinochichi (assessment approx 60% complete), Jaffna (assessment due to commence shortly) | |
| 1.4 | In addition to the training course, a standard assessment form and pocket guide / handbook for site assessment has been developed and distributed. | |
| 1.5 | It was stressed that the assessments are an organic process and situations are constantly changing. Consequently the initial assessment is a first stage, but the assessments will need to be updated from time to time, and especially prior to using the sites. | |
| 1.6 | Initial indications from the assessments are: Vavunya: While the worst case scenario envisages a flow of 150,000 to 200,000 IDPs, the proposed sites have an indicated capacity on not more than 117,000 persons. However, if sites | |

considered to high security risk are deleted, the capacity of sites drops to 55,000 persons. Schools have not been included in the data list in accordance with UNHCR policy of not planning to use schools.

Killinochichi and Mulitivu: 12 assessments have been made covering 27 proposed sites of which 18 sites are schools and nine sites are open sites. It is reported that 3 suitable sites were identified with a capacity of some 73,000 persons. It is considered important the implications of schools that have additional land (i.e. not playgrounds) that may be useable. UNICEF is already checking available data.

Jaffna: 305 sites proposed with capacity of 5 to 12 persons per site. Most of the proposed sites are schools while many others have either security constraints or are privately owned land.

Mannar: 21 prospective sites have been indicated, which include 9 churches. Some church rectors have indicated that church sites can only be available for 48 hours (max 5 days) and cannot have additional wat / san facilities installed – these can therefore only be transit sites. Additionally a number of the sites are immediately adjacent to schools and have access to the school grounds which will need to be closed, and still may not prevent overflow into the school grounds - containment of IDPs within these sights will therefore be problematic. UNHCR is to follow up with the GA for more potential sites.

Overall Summary of Indications:

More prospective sites are needed for assessment.

Proximity of security installations is an issue in many sites and may disqualify them.

A significant number of open sites have extensive scrub and jungle on the sites which will take some time plus mechanical plant to clear.

Other sites have difficulties such as a decommissioned site that will require extensive preparation to remove old foundations, infill latrines, etc, and existing Welfare Centres that have current inhabitants thus presenting limitation on additional IDPs and constraints on upgrade.

Priorities of IDPs change from district to district, sometimes education, livelihoods, wat /san, protection, but consistently security is the first stated priority.

Solidar will distribute a summary of the site assessments as completed.

- 1.7 NRC questioned whether it is prudent to exclude schools from the contingency planning when identified Vavuniya sites only have the capacity for one third of the anticipated IDP caseload. Schools have historically been a short term location for incoming IDP's and will probably remain so until sufficient alternative locations that can immediately receive IDP's have been identified.
- 1.8 UNHCR stressed that:
- (a) contingency planning must not be misconstrued by the general populous or GoSL as planning for military activities or for an acknowledged planned IDP movement. This could create alarm and panic. Consequently "subtlety" is required in making assessments and planning, but it is nonetheless important to develop an effective and workable plan.
- (b) Schools are not to be included in the contingency plan and the field assessments. In addition to causing alarm, it will encourage the use of schools as IDP facilities which will effectively close or prevent from functioning the schools used in addition to rapidly overloading their facilities and utilities (such as wat / san). School premises which are no longer functioning as schools can be considered, but operating schools should not. It was agreed that known data from schools should be retained for future use and preparedness in the event these are spontaneously utilised, but this should not be shown in the contingency plan (Solidar confirmed data on schools which is already available, e.g. Vavunya, has been retained on file but is not intended to be included in the contingency plan).
- (c) Additionally sites next to schools must not use the adjacent school facilities and utilities (e.g. wat /san) – if such sites are to be used, additional facilities are to be provided, not on school premises or within school grounds.
- 1.9 Solidar and UNHCR pointed out from the field assessments that the standards required for welfare centres have changed significantly since when some welfare centres were created. Previously Sphere 2004 and current UNHCR standards and guidelines for suitable practice were not in existence. Consequently welfare centres that previously had large capacity now no longer had the same capacity under the current standards. Example Poonthottam Welfare Centre in Vavunya was previously thought to have a capacity of some 1700 families but is now assessed as capable of hosting approx 680 families – with much of this 680 current total capacity already utilised.
- ## **2.0 Camp Consolidation - Batticaloa:**
- 2.1 It was explained that the basic principle in Camp Consolidation, was that IDPs should move to the preferred "better" sites which can be more effectively supported and maintained, and that as the less favoured sites were vacated they should be closed and decommissioned.

Previous efforts of camp consolidation had not worked well due to a variety of factors including (but not limited to) inadequate notice of IDP movement and resettlement by GoSL, DS's not implementing consolidation in accordance with priorities agreed with the GA, IDPs reluctant to move, and the necessity to decommission sites to prevent both spontaneous and concerted looting of camp materials.

- 2.2 The GoSL is reinitiating camp consolidation to reduce the number of sites. At present 43 sites remain, not all of which are open sites, and some of which are the least preferred sites in terms of quality and effective serviceability and support.
- 2.3 NRC provided an update on the current camps status:
- (a) NRC has visited the current camps to survey conditions.
 - (b) All shelters are currently occupied as vacant shelters are dismantled as or shortly after being vacated by the residents. There is consequently, typically no vacant shelter in the camps
 - (c) It is crucial that the GoSL agencies give early advice on persons to be resettled as residents and new incoming residents (to the vacated sites) must be moved quickly before looting occurs.
 - (d) Currently the GoSL agencies are giving only 4 to 5 days notice which is not adequate in order to:
 - develop lists of preferred sites and opportunities for consolidation
 - arrange transport of incoming (consolidation) IDPs
 - assess if IDPs wish to be moved from existing sites
 - prevent delays in filling the vacated sites as any delay will result in the looting of the "temporarily" vacated shelter
 - (e) Secondary displacement of IDPs must be avoided
 - (f) There is a need to identify those IDPs who can and are willing to move, or those who stay.
- 2.4 Practically speaking it is difficult to effect consolidation in all camps in 4 to 5 days notice. Consequently the emphasis needs to be on those who will stay in camps longer term (i.e. not be immediately resettled) and where necessary provide upgrades in the camps of facilities and shelters to meet the extended usage, beyond initial expectations.
- 2.5 Previously the Gas have endorsed the selection and principles of Camp Consolidation, but it has not been enforced at DS level. DS's have applied other criteria not respecting the agreed principles and camp priorities. It is essential that the Gas again endorse the principles and selected camp priorities and that these are enforced and applied through the DSs.
- 2.6 NRC emphasised the protection issues, especially that IDPs are given clear and proper information, and encouraged to accept the recommendations for camp consolidation and the respective need for them to move to camps with improved facilities and support – but compulsion or coercion cannot be used.

3.0 Camp Upgrades:

- 3.1 It is noted that camps are being used for significantly longer periods than originally planned for. Consequently upgrades of the camps are needed.
- 3.2 In Jaffna and Killiveddi (Trincomalee) there is a need consider upgrades in drainage, security fences, etc.
- 3.3 UNOPS is currently filling gaps where the original agencies cannot do C&M.
- 3.4 UNOPS reported that a number of the agencies originally supporting the camp establishments have not committed on C&M. Some agencies do not have funding for C&M and upgrades. Consequently UNOPS is implementing.

4.0 Early Recovery:

- 4.1 Sustainable options for design and implementation of housing for persons with fully destroyed (or irreparably damaged) houses are under consideration by the TWG and interested stakeholder agencies.
- 4.2 In parallel the GoSL has requested input on names of agencies interested in, or having existing programmes in permanent housing construction.
- 4.3 While UNHCR is not seeking to lead the permanent housing initiative, they have assisted UN Habitat who has been in contact with various agencies in the short period since government inquiry [Ed Note: 21 and 24 August 2007], in formulating a list of factors for consideration in developing policy (equity, access, assessments, size, cost, etc) and a covering note. UN Habitat forwarded a draft

UN Habitat

note to the Ministry of Resettlement highlighting these issues on 30 August. It was agreed UN habitat will circulate the draft to the Shelter / Housing Sector attendees.

4.4 In response to whether UNHCR and UN Habitat were developing a policy with the GoSL that all agencies would be required to subscribe to, it was clarified that this was not the case. Rather the GoSL is looking for advice from the housing / shelter sector and was seeking details of whom they should contact and what are crucial issues, as so far they [GoSL] indicated they had been unsuccessful in securing contacts and inputs from interested agencies. A provisional list of agencies rapidly assembled to meet the GoSL timeframe before the Min of Resettlement discussions with the Minister, was compiled through SCC and provided with the draft paper. The paper highlights concerns such as (but not limited to) the following and a need to avoid some of the problems associated with tsunami reconstruction initiatives, e.g.:

- absence of policy at thus time;
- discrepancies in the numbers of destroyed houses
- access to sites and communities for assessment and implementation
- what resources and materials / assistance should be provided
- preferred or acceptable forms of housing - core housing, transitional housing, full permanent construction, other
- as permanent housing is the issue the GoSL wishes to address but with stated as less that tsunami type budgets, the concept of permanent "core" housing built in incremental stages was introduced to see if this could be an acceptable solution for immediate need, but sustainably eventually reaching full size and requirement of housing - typically this may (subject to agreement) in principle be a core unit of 200 square feet, for approx USD 1,000, constructed in some 6 weeks, and then subsequently added to by additional contribution from donor or beneficiary to provide a final 500 square feet house.
- immediate construction of a full 500 square foot house would take too long and require substantial initial funding.
- the issue of semi permanent housing and what this comprises, and its acceptability was raised

4.5 It is noted that the definition of "semi-permanent" has yet to be defined. In some locations it is noted that this is perceived by some organisations and agencies as a means to:

- circumvent the GoSL requirement for a 500 sq ft house, which in all other respects is permanent and can be added to as a core house (though not actually designed as a core house - i.e. defining the final structure, but erecting part.
- to avoid the risk that a smaller (200 sq foot) house may be defined as a permanent structure and therefore result in the beneficiary not receiving the full resettlement benefits, on the basis the beneficiary is deemed "assisted". In some locations and programmes (e.g. reported in Vavunya) resettled persons receive land, LKR 25,000 and permanent house entitlement

As a result some GAs and some organisations are reported to have elected to describe the otherwise permanent 200 square foot house as "semi-permanent".

Other definitions linked to the durability or expected longevity of the "semi-permanent" house and / or its materials and / or quality of construction, spatial planning, etc have been encountered.

4.6 In summary the GoSL has indicated that it wants to start focussing on "permanent" housing and appears to be seeking inputs.

4.7 NRC reiterated that the GoSL must have a specific policy to discuss what can be realistically achieved. The magnitude of the government's "Rising East" program, including the permanent housing issue is USD 100's of millions. Additionally NRC emphasised the necessity that security and protection needs must be addressed within the GoSL permanent housing policy.

4.8 It was highlighted that the draft document to the Min of Resettlement recommended that a group should be established to assist the GoSL in addressing the issues and formulating policy, and that a subgroup drawn from the Shelter / Housing Sector should established for advice.

4.9 The question of agencies not having access to areas for housing assessment and construction, especially Batticaloa West, was raised and whether UNHCR could do more to vouch for or co-ordinate INGO access.

It was clarified that UNHCR cannot vouch for individual INGOs or NGOs, but does advocate for access by all agencies.

Some agencies now are obtaining access, and it appears that the GoSL has very specific requirements in organisations requesting access. The meeting was told that some organisations appear to have been clear and met requirements and secured access, others appear to have been less clear and been denied access.

It is proposed that GAs should be asked to clarify on the specific and detailed requirements for an organisation to obtain access. It is then with individual agencies to progress their applications accordingly.

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[post meeting note: it is confirmed that in respect of West Batticaloa access, the process for access and co-ordination has already, previously, been clarified with the GA and Shelter agencies operating in Batticaloa]

5.0 Return Shelter Assistance:

- 5.1 UNOPS reported that 238 shelter kits had been distributed in Vavunatheevu (West Batticaloa) comprised of decommissioned materials including cgi, etc.
- 5.2 A donation for 700 kits was assured as forthcoming via UNICEF, and UNOPS will action same.
- 5.3 Assessment is ongoing of those IDPs with damaged housing, thereafter it is intended to target those IDPs that cannot undertake repair with the kits.

6.0 Any Other Business:

- 6.1 It was recorded that Tony Oliver (UNHCR Shelter / SCC Co-ordinator) and Jasmine Sathiagnanan (UNHCR / SCC administrator) are concluding their engagement with UNHCR as at 31 August 2007. Tony hands over to Chris Nixon (UNHCR). Tony and Jasmine were thanked for their very significant contributions and efforts in respect of the Shelter Sector and given best wishes for the future.
- 6.2 It was recorded that Ghada Ajami (Solidar Shelter Co-ordinator / SCC Focal Point North) is concluding her engagement with Solidar as at 7 September 2007. Solidar have indicated a successor will be named imminently. Ghada was thanked for her very significant contributions and efforts in respect of the Shelter Sector and given best wishes for the future.

7.0 Next Meeting(s):

- 6.1 Next meeting for Emergency Shelter Sector Co-ordination is scheduled for Friday, 28 September 2007 at 11:00 at UNHCR, Colombo.
- 6.2 Next meeting for the Technical Working Group for Early / Sustainable Shelter Recovery is scheduled for Friday, 14 September 2007 at 14:30 at UNHCR, Colombo