

IASC Weekly Meeting
9 March 2005
Notes



1: Briefing on the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with a focus on Ituri and IDP trends in the DRC
(by Noel Tsekouras, OCHA Kinshasa, DRC, and Michel Kassa, OCHA)

Mr. Noel Tsekouras, Emergency Humanitarian Intervention Manager at OCHA Kinshasa and Michel Kassa, Chief a.i. of OCHA's Africa I Section gave a briefing on the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Mr. Tsekouras particularly looked at the ethnic conflict in the Ituri district and its humanitarian consequences. On several maps the "hot spots" of the different opposing groups in Ituri as well as the access for humanitarian workers to the district were shown.

He also explained the priority areas for rapid response and intervention that were identified by humanitarians. Different presences of humanitarian workers have been established in Ituri, two Coordination Offices, one Coordination Antenna, OCHA Offices in areas of great needs for maximal 6 months to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance and two humanitarian houses which are offices at the disposal of humanitarian organizations in newly accessible areas for a period of three months.

Movements of newly displaced persons have taken place in Muhito, Gina, Tche, Kafe/Kakwa, Kasenyi/Tchomia and Lopa. Following the killing of 9 peacekeepers in Tche on 25 February, humanitarian assistance was suspended for a few days in Tche, Gina and Kafe. Regarding the humanitarian assistance delivered to newly displaced persons in Ituri, Mr. Tsekouras referred to the report "Etat de l'assistance humanitaire aux récents déplacés de l'Ituri" dated 7 March 2005.

Mr. Michel Kassa expressed concerns over the situation and highlighted the long duration of the tensions. Although MONUC is the biggest mission under UN mandate with 5000 troops, the area has not been secured, and Mr. Kassa pointed out that many more troops would be needed in that respect.

Following the briefing, the discussion evolved around the main constraints for humanitarian assistance in the Ituri province, and in the DRC in general. Where as food and health stocks are sufficient to meet the needs of the province, the unstable security situation is hampering access. MONUC denies access in most areas without armed escort, which some participants pointed to as being unsustainable with regards to delivering an impartial and neutral relief effort.

The UN efforts in reestablishing the state and to strengthen national and regional institutions was discussed, and it was mentioned that there needs to

be legal basis for reconstruction, elections and disarmament, which is, at the moment, not there. In this context Mr. Kassa mentioned the absence of the World Bank in DRC from 1993 to 2000 as having made the efforts towards building institutional structure and transition difficult. Concerns were raised on the note that the national government has integrated former militia groups into the army

There was some discussion on the needs of IDPs. Over 1 million people returned from 2003-2004 and most of the return happened spontaneously. Furthermore only an estimated 5% of all IDPs in DRC are in camps. It was mentioned that a common framework for dealing with IDPs and their return is being developed.

Finally it was mentioned that focus should not just be on the troubled areas, but also on those that have reached some stabilization.

2: Briefing on 2005 Montreux Donors' Retreat (by Toby Lanzer, OCHA)

Mr. Toby Lanzer, Chief of OCHA's Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) Section, gave a briefing on the Donor Retreat on the Consolidated Appeals Process and Coordination in Humanitarian Emergencies, which took place from 24 - 25 March 2005 in Montreux.

The Montreux Rereat has taken place annually for the last six years to bring together governmental donors to discuss humanitarian coordination, including the CAP.

During this year's two full days of discussion, the main points included the wish for greater involvement of donors in the CAP's programme cycle, the support to needs analysis and the donors' commitment to assistance according to needs instead of mandates and the welcoming of prioritisation of humanitarian agencies. Participants at the retreat also reaffirmed their commitment to Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) and to the GHD pilots in Burundi and DRC.

At the meeting, the need for further collaboration among the humanitarian community was emphasized and the wish for inter-agency country teams in all countries where OCHA is active was expressed.

Mr. Lanzer also mentioned the upcoming issues of pooled funding, which is planned to be discussed further by donors at a donors-only meeting in London.

During the discussion, participants mainly discussed the issue of pooled funding and who would be responsible for the distribution of the funds.

3: IASC Standard Briefing (by Elisabeth Rasmusson, Norwegian Refugee Council)

- The IASC Task Force on the Tsunami will meet on Wednesday, 9 March from 17h00 – 18h00 in Room III of the Palais des Nations. Briefings will be given by ISDR (Secretariat for International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) on Early Warning Systems, by UNDG (UN Development Group) on Recovery Funding and on Indigenous Populations in Aceh.
- MCDU (Military and Civil Defense Unit) informs that they conduct the 42nd United Nations Training Course on Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) this week. The session focuses on the interaction between civilian and military organizations in the recent tsunami relief operation in Indonesia. Twenty-three experts from the region attend the training. Amongst the speakers are Pete Bradford III (Chief COE Hawaii), Major General Bambang (Commander Indonesian Relief Forces), Michael Elmquist and Jesper Lund. The Centre of Excellence in Hawaii sponsors the event.
- The Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division (IDD) informs that Mr. Mark Cutts returned on Tuesday, 8 March from a one-week mission to Maldives at request of GoM to advise on Tsunami-affected populations. Mr. Simon Bagshaw will be travelling on Thursday to Rumbek to assist the Country Team in drafting the Protection Framework

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List of Participants



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