

1. Update on UN Action in Response to Hurricane Katrina

By Mr. Dusan Zupka, OCHA

Mr. Zupka emphasized that the assignment is unique, given that the US has never before asked for UN support. After the US finally accepted the UN offer of assistance, agencies came late, only nine to ten days after the hurricane had struck. By then, the most important period of any disaster response – the first 48 to 72 hours – had passed.

Overall, the involvement of UN agencies in the US relief efforts has been limited. Three teams, two of them inter-agency teams with staff from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and OCHA, were sent to: Washington DC (Overall coordination centre: OCHA staff), Baton Rouge; (Relief hub: Inter-agency team, incl. three UNDAC members) and Denver (Relief hub: Inter-agency team, incl. three UNDAC members)

The teams have mainly facilitated the coordination of other international and multilateral assistance. Their work and expertise is highly appreciated by US government agencies. However, by Monday 12 September US organizations had the situation largely under control. Within the next three to seven days the UN teams will therefore scale down their activities. Only selected staff with special expertise in public health, logistics and (possibly) information management will remain for another one to two weeks.

Mr. Zupka drew several lessons for future action: Firstly, the window of opportunity for the most effective assistance typically closes after the first 48 to 72 hours. Hence, Mr. Zupka emphasized that the response to the disaster should have been more rapid.

Secondly, it seemed that coordination problems between domestic US agencies on the local, state and federal level impacted negatively on the relief efforts. Thus, the episode again underlines that coordination between relief actors is key.

Thirdly, the secondary effects of the disaster such as flooding, fire, pollution and the resulting environmental crises can have serious long-term effects, and must therefore be addressed urgently, ideally in parallel to the initial relief efforts.

In the discussion following the briefing it was mentioned that many countries had wanted to send bilateral assistance to the US, but had been obstructed by the US border control. Furthermore UNICEF underlined that the US acceptance of UN assistance could set a positive example to countries, which are concerned about sovereignty in the context of international humanitarian assistance. IFRC briefed shortly on the efforts of the American Red Cross. Overall, it is estimated that the Red Cross movement's part of the operation would cost about USD 1 billion. Mr. Zupka noted the good coordination between UN agencies and the IFRC. Finally, he underlined the significant involvement of both of the EU and NATO in the disaster relief and management – a development that may challenge the UN, but which should be seen as an opportunity for future cooperation.

2. Malaria in Emergencies (According to the new World Malaria Report)

By Dr. Charles Delacollette, WHO and Mr. Eric Laroche, UNICEF)

Mr. Delacollette briefly introduced the new World Malaria Report 2005, jointly developed by WHO and UNICEF and launched in May 2005. He emphasized that 3.2 billion people in less developed regions of the world are living with the risk of Malaria. Each year 350 to 500 million clinical cases are registered and over 1 million people die directly from malaria. Indirectly it contributes to many more deaths.

During his presentation on malaria control in emergency settings (file attached), Mr. Delacollette underlined that at least 30% of the malaria burden is in countries of humanitarian concern. Thus, the disease is relevant to all humanitarian agencies. On best practices, Mr. Delacollette underlined that there is widespread agreement that the effective Artemisinin Combination Therapy (ACT) should be free of charge to users. However, it is 10 to 20 times more expensive than conventional drugs, which challenges aid budgets. Furthermore, the free distribution can threaten local commercial supply and thus meet resistance.

Secondly, in the acute phase active malaria detection and distribution of Impregnated Treated Nets (ITNs) should be prioritized towards pregnant women, children under two, HIV positive as well as malnourished persons. In a chronic stage of malaria infection, ITN coverage should reach at least 60 percent of the population.

Thirdly, NGOs and other implementing partners should contribute more actively to surveillance and data gathering on malaria, because the lack of systematic and consolidated information inhibits effective reporting and advocacy.

With regard to the use of the Global Fund to Fight TB, AIDS and Malaria (GFTAM) in fragile states, Mr. Delacollette noted that performance in these countries was lower than in non-fragile states. Reasons include bottlenecks in local capacity, drug procurement, and fund disbursement. Among other things, the deployment of international staff to improve capacity and surveillance, as well as the prioritization of assistance can help to address these problems. Overall, the GFTAM is a very important tool in the fight against malaria, with a total of USD 250 million disbursed between January 2003 and 2005. In sum, due to the high danger malaria poses, it should be a major concern to humanitarian agencies.

Re-emphasizing the points made by Mr. Delacollette, in particular those on ACT and ITNs. In addition, Mr. Laroche argued that emergencies should be seen as opportunities to reach high humanitarian impact, because of the typically high degree of social mobilization. Thus, it is important for agencies not to neglect general basic services, such as malaria control in emergency settings.

3. Update on Conclusions of European Foreign Ministers Council on Improving the European Civil Protection and their Consequences for the UN

By Mr. Sergio Piazzini, OCHA

Mr. Piazzini briefed on changes in EU civil protection and humanitarian assistance arrangements, and their impact the work of the UN. In the wake of recent natural disasters and terrorist attacks, the EU Council of Ministers has decided (18 July 2005) to strengthen civil protection mechanisms within member countries, to further develop civil-military cooperation in response to disasters and emergencies through the office of the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and to establish further EU Rapid Response capabilities (e.g. integrated Civil Response Teams).

Important for the UN is that the Council explicitly recognizes the UN as the coordinating body of international assistance in third countries. It stated that the EU will therefore support the coordinating capacity of the UN, and that EU Rapid Response capabilities should contribute to UN capacity in disaster response. Mr. Piazzini noted that while these developments are positive, several general issues should be kept in mind. Firstly, the European Foreign Ministers increasingly take decision on crises relevant for the UN humanitarian agencies. Secondly, the integrated Civil Response Teams may be perceived as competition to UN capabilities. Thus, good coordination between the UN and EU will become increasingly important. Overall, there should be a division of labour, in which the EU responds to disasters and emergencies in member countries and the UN to those in third countries.

Mr. Piazzini referred to the Tsunami as an example for good EU-UN coordination. There, EU capabilities were well integrated into the overall effort after the UN had early on taken the lead in coordinating the disaster response. To further strengthen EU-UN relations OCHA is liaising with future EU presidency countries.

Mr. Piazzini furthermore touched upon the decentralization of the EU aid administration, which means that the UN often will have to engage with the EU in the field. \

IASC Weekly Meeting

14 September 2005, Room I, Palais des Nations

Summary Notes



4. IASC Standard Briefing

By Ms. Yukiko Yoshida, IASC Secretariat

Before announcing upcoming IASC related events, Ms. Yoshida briefly informed participants that the IASC Working Group had met in a retreat on 6-7 September in New York. The meeting had produced a draft outcome statement, which was submitted to the *ad hoc* IASC Principals meeting on 12 September, UNFPA Headquarters New York. Marilena Viviani, Chief of IASC Secretariat would brief the IASC Weekly in more details on the outcomes of these meetings at a later date.

- On the 15th and 16th of September ICVA will hold its 130th EXCOM in Maison International de l'Environnement II. This will include a joint HAP-International/ICVA debate on *Good Humanitarian Donorship*, which takes place on the 15th from 14h00 to 17h30
- On Monday the 19th of September, the IASC Cluster WG on Early Recovery will meet from 15h00 – 17h00 in at UNDP in Geneva.
- On 19 September agencies are invited to the briefing for member states on the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR), which will take in Room XVIII, in the E-building of the Palais des Nations
- On the 20th of September the CAP SWG will meet from 15h00 – 16h30 – the venue will be communicated to participants shortly.
- Later that day, from 17h00 – 18h00 the IASC/UNDG Tsunami Task Force will meet in OCHA Video Conference room C-3, Palais des Nations.
- On the 20th and 21st of September there is a Workshop of the IASC Task Force on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. The Workshop will be held at WHO HQ

IASC Weekly Meeting

14 September 2005, Room I, Palais des Nations

Summary Notes



Name	Organisation	E-mail
Nina Sreenivasan	UNFPA	Nina.sreenivasan@undp.org
Lea Matheson	IOM	lmatheson@iom.int
Amanda Bok	ICRC	abok@icrc.org
Eric Laroche	UNICEF	elaroche@unicef.org
Pina Annunziata	WHO	Annunziatag@who.int
Charles Delacollette	WHO	delacollette@who.int
Kristin Barstad	UNICEF	kbarstad@unicef.org
Line Handahl Jakobson	UNICEF	ljakobson@unicef.org
Lin Xiaojie	UNRWA	gunrwa@unog.ch
Aalje Rietveld	WHO	rietvelda@who.int
Tanja Sleuwenhoek	WHO	sleuwenhoek@who.int
Vanessa Huguenin	OCHA	huguenin@un.org
Sophie Diet	IRIN/OCHA	dietsophie@hotmail.com
Florie Huck	WFP	Geneva.guest2@wfp.org
Safren Khalfaoui	WFP	
Mirko Forni	UN/HABITAT	Forni.unhabitat@unog.ch
Claude Jibidar	WFP	Claude.jibidar@wfp.org
Linda Stops	IFRC	Linda.stops@ifrc.org
Maria Olga Gonzalez	UNDP	mgonzalez@undp.org
Yukiko Yoshida	IASC Secretariat	yoshiday@un.org
Charlotta Benedek	OCHA	benedek@un.org

IASC Weekly Meeting

14 September 2005, Room I, Palais des Nations

Summary Notes



Jacob Korreborg	IASC Secretariat	korreborg@un.org
Sergio Piazzi	OCHA	piazzi@un.org
Kersten Jauer	IASC Secretariat	jauer@un.org
Ivane Bochorishvili	IASC Secretariat	Bochorishvili@un.org