

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING

**Cluster Working Group on
Early Recovery
Executive Summary**

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I Executive Summary

The IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER), consisting of 17 partners from both the humanitarian and developmental communities and with UNDP as the cluster lead, aims to enhance the global capacity for more effectively supporting Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators in strategically planning early recovery and integrating risk and vulnerability reduction measures at the very early stages of emergencies and beyond. “Early recovery” has been defined as a multi-dimensional process - encompassing livelihoods, shelter, governance, environment, and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations - that stabilizes human security and lays the foundations of a transformation process that integrates risks reduction at the very early stages of humanitarian action.

An assessment of existing capacities among member agencies has been carried out and included in this report. Based on this, critical gaps in the global system-wide capacity in early recovery were identified. These are focused on the need to strengthen strategic planning capacity, including tools/methodologies, financing mechanisms, predictable surge capacity, training, information management, knowledge management, and inter-agency cooperation agreements/mechanisms. Furthermore, the CWGER identified priority sectors where strategic planning capacity needs particular enhancement, for each of which an appropriate focal point agency is designated.

Since receiving the endorsement of its approach by the IASC Principals in September, the CWGER engaged itself in a process of further prioritisation among its initial actionable recommendations and developed an implementation plan for 2006 (included in this report), focused on the above-listed critical capacity gaps at the global level. The CWGER had an initial experience of applying its key principles to the early recovery process following the South Asia earthquake, and has incorporated into its work plan important lessons learned. Furthermore, given the multi-dimensional nature of early recovery, relevant cross-cutting issues (e.g., disaster risk management, environment, human rights, gender, and youth) are already integrated in the work plan.

Staff and financial requirements necessary to support the planned work will, to the extent possible, be provided through maximum use of existing resources within the cluster members. However, the CWGER estimates that for 2006, a modest level of additional resources will be required, estimated at US\$2.415 million, to enable gradual application of the cluster's approach. These include the resources to support preparedness for rapid deployment of surge capacity and the development of cluster capacity. For the cluster to be able to deliver the planned system upgrade in early recovery, the mobilization of these resources is urgently needed.

Since September 2005, the CWGER has made headway in strengthening partnerships particularly in the areas of protection and human rights as well as larger recovery and development. It is now closely cooperating with UNDGO, which participates in the CWGER on behalf of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues. Consultations were also held with the Cluster Working Group on Protection, OHCHR, as well as the NGO consortia. With respect to the development of capacities for post-disaster recovery, the CWGER is underpinned by the partnerships and workplan already established by the International Recovery Platform (IRP) that includes many CWGER members as well as others such as the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the World Bank. The IRP has core resources from UNDP and ILO and has mobilized key additional resources from the Governments of Japan, Switzerland and Italy. Partnerships with international financial institutions remain a challenge, despite some progress on the field level and in the context of the IRP.

It should also be stressed that early recovery in itself is a cross-cutting issue, which must be integrated into other initiatives, and the CWGER will continue its "mainstreaming" efforts across other IASC clusters.

The CWGER's work is a dynamic, evolving process. This is a progress (not final) report of the cluster, delineating the achievements during the reporting period of September to December 2005. There are still outstanding issues and challenges, which the CWGER will continue to address.

Prepared by Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery – December 2005