

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
63RD WORKING GROUP MEETING

**Issues Arising from Consultations with the Humanitarian
Coordinator and IASC Country Team on Implementation of
the Cluster Approach in the DRC:
(1-12 November 2005)**

21-22 November 2005

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At the ERC's request, an OCHA-led mission to the DRC took place from 1-12 November 2005. The aim of the mission was to support the Humanitarian Coordinator and IASC country team in undertaking preliminary capacity mapping and response planning in the context of the cluster leadership approach, in advance of the IASC Principals meeting on 12 December. The mission, which included a donor representative and an NGO participant, consulted a wide range of humanitarian partners both in Kinshasa and Goma.

At the HC's request, the mission focused on the following: (1) briefing field colleagues on the cluster approach; (2) consulting humanitarian partners on how the cluster approach may be effectively implemented in the DRC; (3) consulting with IASC country team members on main gaps/weaknesses in the current humanitarian response in the DRC; and (4) advising on ways of strengthening the draft 2006 DRC Action Plan to reflect the IASC Principals' humanitarian reform priorities.

I Briefing on the cluster approach

The mission found a significant lack of clarity amongst humanitarian partners at the field level about exactly what the cluster leadership approach entails. Much time was therefore spent clarifying the IASC-led reform process and recent developments. To help clarify the cluster leadership approach, it was suggested by a number of interlocutors that there should be a short, simple generic terms of reference for cluster leads. Drawing on relevant IASC documents, the mission produced a one-page draft generic terms of reference for cluster leads, which was shared with members of the Humanitarian Advocacy Group in Kinshasa for comments.

1.1 Recommendation to the IASC Working Group

The mission recommends that the IASC Working Group approve a short and simple generic terms of reference for cluster leads, for subsequent endorsement by the IASC Principals. (Reference should be made to the draft terms of reference attached below)

II Implementation of the cluster approach in the DRC

There was general acceptance amongst humanitarian partners that sectoral management and accountability in the DRC needs to be strengthened. The RC/HC made it clear that he believes the cluster approach can help to achieve this. He said he would like to see it adapted to the DRC context and applied in all sectors/areas of activity, rather than only in some. Based on this, and following consultations with a wide range of humanitarian partners, the RC/HC endorsed a proposal, put forward at a meeting of the Humanitarian Advocacy Group in Kinshasa on 11 November, for the humanitarian operation in the DRC be structured, at least initially, along the following lines:

Overall coordination: RC/HC with OCHA support

Sector / Area	Cluster Lead
Water & sanitation	UNICEF
Education	UNICEF
Emergency Shelter/NFIs	UNICEF
Food security	FAO/WFP
Nutrition	UNICEF
Health	WHO
Protection	UNHCR (with MONUC)
Return and Reintegration	UNHCR/UNDP
Logistics	WFP (with MONUC)
Emergency Telecommunications	UNICEF

Two of the clusters which have been established at the global level are missing from this list: Camp Management and Early Recovery. In the case of Camp Management/Coordination, there are not many camps in the DRC and it was agreed that this would be dealt with through the Protection cluster. In the case of Early Recovery, as there was a strong feeling, (including in UNDP) that in operational terms it would be more useful in the DRC to maintain a focus on Return and Reintegration. A Return and Reintegration Working Group, jointly chaired by UNDP and UNHCR, was set up in

Kinshasa a few months ago and the recommendation was that this mechanism should be strengthened and in some cases be replicated at the provincial level.

In the case of Protection, UNHCR agreed to act as the lead for IDP protection, in line with the commitments it has made at the global level. The RC/HC has requested, however, that the focus should continue to be on the protection of civilians in general and not only on IDP protection. Recognizing this, and in an attempt to avoid setting up two parallel structures (for IDP protection and for protection of civilians), it was agreed that there should be one cluster lead for all protection activities. Following the procedure proposed by the Protection Cluster Working Group, whereby the first option is for the three protection-mandated UN agencies (OHCHR, UNHCR and UNICEF) to agree as to which of the three will assume the role of cluster lead for protection, it was agreed by all three that in the DRC it would be UNHCR. UNHCR has stressed that this is subject to the formal approval of the Country Team and donors. The RC/HC has requested that the protection cluster coordinate closely with MONUC, which has a mandate to ensure the protection of civilians and which is involved in numerous activities in this regard.

In the case of Education and Food Security, clusters have been proposed for each of these in the DRC, while no similar clusters have yet been established at the global level. These were included because of a general preference amongst members of the IASC country team for the cluster approach to be applied consistently to all sectors/areas of humanitarian activity in the DRC.

In the case of Emergency Shelter, it was agreed that this should include also NFIs. Although UNHCR is the cluster lead for Emergency Shelter at the global level, UNICEF offered to continue to take the lead in this area and UNHCR and other humanitarian partners agreed to this. This is consistent with the Outcome Statement from the IASC Principals meeting on 12 September, which states that the cluster approach “is not intended to undermine existing arrangements when they are effective”.

There was general agreement amongst those present at the meeting of the Humanitarian Advocacy Group in Kinshasa on 11 November on the proposed cluster leads for the DRC. Some agencies pointed out, however, that prior to implementation, this would need the formal endorsement of their headquarters.

2.1 Recommendation to the IASC Working Group

Agencies requested by the Humanitarian Coordinator to assume a cluster leadership role in the DRC should confirm their willingness to take on this role, so that the proposed cluster leads can begin carrying out their new responsibilities as soon as possible with the full support of their headquarters.

III Main Gaps / Weaknesses in the Humanitarian Response in the DRC

The mission noted a general consensus amongst humanitarian partners that there are particular gaps/weaknesses in the humanitarian response in the DRC in the following four sectors or areas of activity: **water/sanitation, protection, logistics and return/reintegration**. The Country Team has agreed to give priority to addressing the gaps in these four sectors/areas, in terms of operational capacity, strategic planning and coordination.

Concerning water and sanitation, UNICEF is already taking the lead in identifying additional needs, which will be reflected in the 2006 Action Plan. Concerning protection, subject to the approval of the Country Team and donors, UNHCR is considering organizing an inter-agency protection needs assessment which should lead to a clear indication of additional resource requirements. Concerning logistics, the UNJLC has recently deployed a team to the DRC which has started mapping additional resource requirements. Concerning return and reintegration, UNDP and UNHCR are both planning to increase their field presence in eastern DRC in 2006. UNDP plans to open three new sub-offices and plans to gradually take over from OCHA in three other field locations. UNHCR is also considering a further expansion of its field presence.

IV The 2006 Action Plan for the DRC

The RC/HC has recommended that the part of the 2006 Action Plan for the DRC that deals with humanitarian activities should be re-structured to reflect the ten distinct sectors or areas of activity mentioned above.

4.1 Recommendation to the IASC Working Group

To the extent possible, additional resources required by agencies to address gaps and carry out their responsibilities as cluster leads should be reflected in the 2006 Action Plan. To do this, agencies will need to move extremely quickly, as the draft Action Plan is currently being finalized.

V Proposed Action by the IASC Working Group

1. Adoption of the generic ToR for cluster leads in the field (attached);
2. Clarification of the procedure for activation of the cluster approach in the field;
3. Clarification of resource mobilization processes for implementation of the cluster approach in the field.

Prepared by OCHA – November 2005

Annex I

Draft: Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster Leads at the Country Level

The aim of the cluster leadership approach is to enhance the ability of the RC/HC at the country level to ensure timely, effective and well coordinated inter-agency responses to humanitarian crises by strengthening management and accountability at the sectoral level. It involves mobilizing clusters of agencies/organizations/NGOs to respond to particular sectors/activities, each cluster having clearly designated leads, as agreed by the RC/HC and the Country Team.

Country Level

At the country level, the RC/HC – with the support of OCHA – retains overall responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and is accountable to the ERC.

Sectoral Level

At the sectoral level, cluster leads – working under the overall leadership of the RC/HC – are responsible for the following:

- **Identification of key partners**
Identify key partners to participate in the work of the cluster, respecting the individual mandates and programme priorities of different humanitarian actors, and ensuring the complementarity of the various stakeholders' actions.
- **Planning and strategy development**
Ensure predictable action within the cluster for analysis of needs, addressing priorities and identifying gaps in the sector/area; take the lead in preliminary needs assessments in the sector/area, in support of the HC and in cooperation with the Country Team; ensure needs assessments and responses are carried out effectively and in line with existing policy guidance and standards, being based on participatory and community based approaches which integrate cross-cutting issues such as human rights and HIV/AIDS and which give due priority to age and gender mainstreaming; develop strategies and action plans for the cluster and take the lead in ensuring that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies;
- **Standard-setting**
Promote best practice within the cluster and ensure establishment of appropriate technical standards for the crisis.

➤ **Coordination and programme implementation**

Ensure timely, effective and coordinated responses in the sector/area concerned; secure and follow up on commitments from cluster members in responding to needs and filling gaps; ensure the establishment of appropriate sectoral coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the country/local level; ensure synergies and effective links with other clusters; ensure that participants within each cluster work collectively, building the operational capacity for the functions agreed within each cluster.

➤ **Monitoring and reporting**

Ensure appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place (including in the area of age and gender mainstreaming) to review impact and progress against implementation plans, and to keep the RC/HC informed of developments.

➤ **Advocacy**

Identify core advocacy concerns and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives.

➤ **Training and capacity building**

Ensure the most efficient use of the capacities and expertise of all agencies and actors; promote and support training of humanitarian personnel and capacity building of humanitarian partners; support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

Cluster leads are responsible for ensuring that they have the necessary resources, including dedicated staff where necessary, to carry out the tasks listed above. In some cases [to be specified at the country level], cluster leads are also responsible for acting as the provider of last resort.