

Joint donor mission to Zimbabwe (21th to 22nd February 2011)

On February the 21th and 22nd 2011 delegates from some GHD member states (Finland, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway and Spain, plus representatives from Demark, Estonia, EU, Germany, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States at Embassy level in Harare), made a field visit to Zimbabwe in order to study its 2011 CAP process formulation.

The visit was suggested by Spain to the GHD group by the bias of the Swiss Presidency, following a visit of the Head of the OCHA Geneva's Office to Madrid last October. OCHA Harare facilitated and conducted much of the program. Following an agreement with the Swiss Presidency, Spain acted as focal point.

This report and its visit's conclusions have being drafted by the focal point and shared for revision with the rest of participants before its circulation to the rest of the GHD's members for information.

1. Terms of reference of the visit:

The three main objectives of the visit, following the ToR shared with participants, were:

- To establish a clear understanding of the merits of the new program-based approach introduced to the Zimbabwe CAP 2011.
- To identify appropriate ways of donor engagement in support of the programme-based approach.
- To identify future developments in humanitarian and early recovery assistance to Zimbabwe.

The focus of the visit was on technical matters, not aiming to an evaluation of the CAP programme-based approach or to the delivery of formal recommendations/conclusions to the GHD Group.

Links to lines of 2.3 and 3.1 of the current GHD Working Plan were established.

2. Brief Context of the 2011 CAP for Zimbabwe:

Zimbabwe 2011 Consolidated Appeal targets 8 million beneficiaries (1.7 million food insecure), with a funding requested of 415 million USD\$.

Most of its emphasis is made on recovery. However core humanitarian issues like health emergencies (cholera, HIV/AIDS...), protection (IDP's and kids) or food security are still on the agenda, with clear risk of involution.

CAP 2010 was funded to a 47%, with an obvious misbalance in the coverage among clusters. This was the lowest rate in the past few years

Efforts have been made to improve follow up by the FTS in 2011 of activities outside CAP in 2010 (around 30% in Zimbabwe).

Programme-based approach, introduced in 2011, is defined as “whereby the clusters are made responsible to develop holistic, cluster-specific programmes owned by the entire cluster”. A deep coordination-joint assessment exercise is therefore launched at cluster level in order to obtain a more strategic document.

This strategic approach has produced a limited list of programs instead of projects in around 11 clusters.

At the same time, an operational draft procedure is recommended to donors via the CAP Donors Supplement. Donors are invited to approach cluster coordinators and OCHA on future funding arrangements.

The system is designed to guarantee a continuous monitoring at intra and inter cluster level.

3. Agenda:

Delegates had the following meetings during their 2 days visit to Zimbabwe:

o Meeting among donor mission members:

Delegates arriving from capitals had the chance to exchange points of view with counterparts posted in Harare.

Early recovery and the transition to development were identified as pivotal issues in Zimbabwe. However it was suggested that the page might not have been turned yet, the risk of involvement still being present (especially if elections are finally scheduled for this year) and that Humanitarian needs clearly persist in some areas (IDP's or cholera outbreaks for instance). That complex reality forces to Humanitarians to maintain its capacity to respond to possible new emergencies in order to avoid a 2008's scenario.

There was a clear consensus among partners that there is a need for a special platform, capable of dealing specifically with the transitional scenario from Humanitarian to Development in the country, and that some of the constraints introduced by Humanitarian programs (mainly in terms of calendar) are not suitable for the type of response needed in Zimbabwe. The possibility of a parallel strategy and the convenience of a flexible approach were also pointed out by some participants.

It was also stated that introducing the program-based approach could be a response to those actors (mainly NGO's) disappointed with their participation and involvement in previous CAP's, since this new process has enhanced inclusiveness and inter cluster coordination. Doubts do persists, however, about the level of involvement of the HCT in the whole exercise. Furthermore, there was a doubt whether this new approach brought about effective coordination at inter-cluster level since Donors are not invited to inter-cluster meetings

o **Meeting with Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA Zimbabwe head Office:**

A warm welcome to GHD's representatives was given by the HC/RC and OCHA's HO (the previous night an official reception was hosted by the HC to delegations).

OCHA's HO made a comprehensive presentation on the programme-based approach. The CAP was defined as "everybody's business", therefore active participation by NGO's and beneficiaries had been considered as an essential element.

After this introduction, the presentation outlined two main objectives: origins of the 2011 CAP for Zimbabwe and its mechanics.

Comparing this CAP with Flash Appeals, it was acknowledged that the programme-based approach is most suitable for protracted humanitarian crisis, where no need for compromises exists. A Flash Appeal requires a different process because of the urgent and quick response needed. Protracted crisis do require a more strategic planning, with a closer collaboration of all actors, a clear division of tasks, a holistic approach and, on a case like Zimbabwe, a common language with Development partners that facilitates transition from early recovery (LRRD). These requirements were clearly behind the Humanitarian reform process.

In terms of context, it was reminded the trajectory of Zimbabwe from "the valley of need of 2008" to the current uncertainty about its future, the obvious risk of involvement but also, the impressive capacity of the country to rebuild itself at a very fast pace.

The advantages of a CAP programming based approach for donors were enumerated:

- ✓ the avoiding of a "shopping list" structured CAP, where donors tend to limit their intervention to the selection of projects as suggested by clusters, the also called "cherry picking",
- ✓ a clear increase of the accountability inside the cluster as a result of a much more functional integration of all actors in the formulation of the CAP (NGO's participating in proposals from the very beginning and with a more accurate perception of the Agency-donor relationship),
- ✓ major alignment with the Humanitarian reform by the empowerment of the leadership of the clusters and clusters themselves, increasing complementarities among programs and fostering of inter cluster coordination,
- ✓ deeper responsibility of the cluster towards the donor,
- ✓ improvement in terms of transparency and in terms of easiest reaction to changes in needs/new emergencies,

- ✓ reinforcement of the NGO's participation (with possible major role as cluster co-leader's if financial means are to be provided for the fulfilment of this full time job).
- ✓ Active involvement of the Government of Zimbabwe in the CAP process. The Government attended the launch of the CAP 2011 for the first time at ministerial level, which indicated its approval of the new approach.
- ✓

As a background element, it was suggested that OCHA's role should be reinforced to guarantee the fulfilment of its responsibilities as coordinator agency due to the complexity of the task in terms of monitoring and management of information.

By answering the questions of delegates, OCHA provided the following extra points:

- ✓ cluster system has been reinforced by the creation of Strategic Advisor Groups (SAG) and task forces; (There are too many participants in the cluster meetings to make a strategic decision);
 - ✓ accountability shall remain as it is today, based on the Agency reporting to donors but improved by the reinforcement of OCHA, as well as cluster leads, delivering of extra information about the CAP process and priorities;
 - ✓ financing could be improved by the introduction of Pooled Funds or the creation of consortiums of NGO's able to receive direct funding from donors;
 - ✓ CAP has been simplified by the introduction of a limited number of programs;
 - ✓ extra effort should be made in terms of standardisation on donors proposals;
 - ✓ CAP provides a new window of opportunity as a more flexible, fast reacting tool.
- **Meeting with cluster coordinators: UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNDP, IOM and WFP.**

It was introduced by a presentation made by the Nutrition cluster leader (UNICEF). The advantages in terms of standardisation of the response were explained to delegates. Although every cluster has a different nature and Nutrition might be specially fit to this sort of exercise, the virtues of providing a similar response by all the clusters members were made clear to delegations, specially in terms of cost efficiency (by using economy of scale. The emphasis was made on the fact that eventual differences in cost would be, from now on, only the result of differences on project associated expenses).

The use by all cluster members of common baselines, indicators, similar training processes and methodology were also outlined.

Better gap filling was also identified as a clear advantage of the programme-based approach.

Other cluster leaders expressed their perceptions on the exercise:

- ✓ the reinforcement of the cluster provides a useful “buffer” or a coverage for NGO’s in the case of the Protection cluster; (at the same time, “buffer”effect might have a negative aspect in a sense that visibility of each agency’s activity decrease)
- ✓ the programme-based approach might not be adapted to the agricultural cluster needs in terms of time framework;
- ✓ LICHI underlined the improvement in terms of the last resort role of the cluster leader, as well a much more efficient way to bring to the cluster the assessment from the field;
- ✓ Health cluster leader considered this approach as an enhancer of the coordination with the Host country authorities (as well as others performing as cluster leader of Health is a full time job);
- ✓ Multisector cluster considers it allows the recollection of better and faster information;
- ✓ WASH cluster leader believes it improves the inter cluster coordination, although Nutrition case (and its impressive results) is rather exceptional;
- ✓ To the Food’s cluster leader the programmatic approach is not much of a change.

Afterwards an intense debate took place about the autonomy of the cluster leaders vis a vis the HCT and heads of Agencies.

As another line of discussion, most of the cluster leaders, though linking the programmatic approach to the LRRD situation in Zimbabwe, acknowledged that they would like this mechanism to be introduced in any other CAP process responding to a protracted crisis.

Answers were provided to the questions launched by delegations in the following terms: the Humanitarian Principles have been reinforced by this approach at least in the case of the Protection cluster; inter cluster coordination has improved although human factor and means to become full time cluster leader play a key role.

○ **Meeting with members of Government: Minister of regional Integration and International Cooperation & PS of line Ministries:**

The purely technical profile of the visit had been pointed out to the Zimbabwean authorities while preparing the program. However there was a clear interest from the Government to maintain at least two encounters of the delegates with representatives of both sides of the inclusive executive.

At the beginning of both meetings, the goal of the visit was emphasised again by both the representative of the GHD Presidency and the focal point.

From her side, the Minister of Regional Integration and International Cooperation, acknowledged its satisfaction by the programme-based approach in terms of a greater participation of the Government in the process (specially in the needs assessment), increased engagement, better identification of key issues and priorities

(as IDP's...), changes in the instruments to respond to the humanitarian needs and improvement of transparency and accountability in terms of NGO's activities.

Answering to the questions of the delegates, the Minister considered this CAP as a more strategic document, still far from perfect (especially in terms of selection of areas of intervention) but better than previous ones; she stated that the LRRD is still not properly addressed but this should happen soon.

From their side, several representatives from different Ministries, chaired by the PS of Regional Integration and International Cooperation, acknowledged, the challenges existing in Zimbabwe in terms of Humanitarian response, the country not being a traditional humanitarian scenario.

Although not successful in other countries, the advantages of the programme-approach used in the elaboration of the 2011 CAP for Zimbabwe were emphasised: more inclusiveness of all actors, better planning, coordinated assessment at community level, more recognition of the Government's role, better coordination and accountability of NGO's activities (building up bridges with them by the bias of the clusters), more information and improvement in terms of preparedness and risk reduction.

This CAP is also helping them in capacity building and might clarify the division of roles between NGO's and the Government.

They are aware of the limits of the CAP in the current Zimbabwean scenario and the existence of a debate around for how many more years there will be a CAP for the country.

Administrative expenses are a concern for the Government as well as the role that the Government has to play in the decision making not being sufficiently taken into consideration by Agencies.

The delegation clarified that the visit was completely disconnected from the eventual financial response by donors to the CAP.

○ **Meeting with the UN HCT members:**

Chaired by the HC, the purpose of the meeting was to see the perception by heads of Agencies of the programmatic based approach used by OCHA during the elaboration of the CAP 2011 for Zimbabwe.

HCT members were much more reserved in their comments about the CAP elaboration process, especially when compared with the enthusiasm showed by the cluster leaders (in some cases, delegates from their own Agencies).

In response to a question whether UN HCT hopes that OCHA should be strengthened so that it can play a leadership role rather than a mere secretariat, one of the members answered that OCHA should be an active secretariat rather than a leader which serves as an arbitrator among cluster leads if necessary. Another

member of the delegation pointed out that the Head of OCHA has much more experience in Humanitarian Emergencies than the HC and therefore should take the lead in the event of another Humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

Although they defined themselves as fully engaged in the CAP process for 2011, and the advantages in terms of coordination, improvement in the consultation process, more strategic approach, gap filling...were clearly stated, it was also obvious that for at least some of the members of the HCT the CAP should be understood as a mere programming exercise that should have no impact on the traditional system of funding allocation or on the establishment of priorities by the Agencies.

This point was made as they also acknowledged the existence of a debate among NGO's on their financial participation on the CAP and on problems in terms of tracking humanitarian response outside the CAP.

Some members even stated that their participation on the process was based only in their commitment with consensus inside the HCT, otherwise not finding the exercise useful at all. This perception apparently might also be shared by some of their headquarters.

To other members, the CAP was basically a way to have access to humanitarian financial resources, although the activities of the UN Agency were clearly framed on the Development Strategy. Therefore all the debate in terms of coordination with the purely humanitarian response was in a way rather vain, and a specific structure for countries like Zimbabwe (not purely humanitarian) should be introduced. Only the peculiar situation of Zimbabwe justified the presence of its programs in the CAP, an instrument that should be reserved for purely emergency scenarios and that does not provide with the timing framework and previsibility in funding needed.

Differences among clusters were also outlined.

Delegations expressed in their questions their doubts in terms of changes in the accountability system by the new CAP approach, as well as better assessment on the field.

They also suggested that CAP 2011 was the answer to the dissatisfaction by NGO's for their weak participation on the financial resources of the previous CAP, although they had been deeply engaged at planning level. CAP provides a framework for LRRD and connects better with CHAP.

Harmonization of reporting system could also be achieved.

A real time evaluation could be appropriate to foresee the impact of the 2011 CAP.

- **Meeting with NGO's:**

A large number of representatives from the main NGO's active in Zimbabwe and involved in the cluster system, were present (Zimbabwe having a rather large civil society, with more than 1500 NGO's registered).

NGO's representatives made a very positive assessment on the cluster functioning under the programme-based approach, identifying as its main virtues:

- ✓ its strategic character,
- ✓ the visibility provided to the NGO's,
- ✓ its flexibility in terms of adapting the response to unforeseen needs,
- ✓ its advantages in avoiding duplications and reducing costs by the standardization of responses,
- ✓ the openness in the discussion within cluster,
- ✓ better information sharing,
- ✓ more engagement,
- ✓ more transparency,
- ✓ more focussed in objectives and not so much on financial contents,
- ✓ Improvement in inter cluster coordination.

However, the lack of benefits in terms an increase of the direct allocation of funding to NGO's via CAP was a general worry.

Also several doubts were expressed in terms of the perspectives for the future in the context of a decrease in the level of coverage of the Zimbabwean CAP in the last two years (2010 around 47%), as well as concerns due to the reduction of Humanitarian space in the last months in the context of a more and more complicated political scenario.

Most of the NGO's acknowledged that 2010 CAP was a bit of a deception in terms of financial support to their activities by the CAP, and considered that they did not benefit at all from the exercise in terms of funding allocation. They also stated that it is sometimes too much time consuming, cumbersome and might be outdated by the time donors start to contribute, several months after its drafting.

Having said that, they also considered that the process by itself provided them with benefits in terms of coordination and information sharing, therefore the process was valuable by itself.

Differences between the clusters in terms of efficiency were stated once again (also concerning the level of participation of Government representatives) as well as the importance of co leading (and in certain cases, replacing the cluster leads if vacant).

Answering the questions of the donors' representatives the following points were made:

- ✓ the role of the HC was acknowledged, as well as its support to the CAP programme-based process,
- ✓ accountability and transparency will definitely be increased since they will be aware of the contributions by donors to the clusters,

- ✓ the use of several instruments at the same time (CAP, pooled funds...) is not considered necessarily a negative trend,
- ✓ consortiums among NGO's might attract more direct funding from the donors,
- ✓ clusters help to increase leverage and advocacy in cases of access limitations,
- ✓ timing and predictability of funding is clearly an issue,
- ✓ NGOs do not necessarily depend on the CAP for fund-raising. They obtain majority of the necessary funds through other channels such as bilateral assistance, which they do not usually report to Financial Tracking Service (FTS).they are happy to collaborate with the FTSin
- ✓ they are happy to collaborate with the FT system in order to include those contributions made outside the CAP framework (around 30% in Zimbabwe),
- ✓ they do not consider the cluster as a "buffer" from their activities in terms of Government control.

OCHA reminded to participants that CAP is not a financial window but merely a resource mobilisation tool and that some donors do need the CAP as an umbrella for their contributions, having serious limitations in terms of direct contributions to NGO's.

Later in the day, a cocktail co-hosted by the Swiss and Spanish embassies in Harare provided participants with the chance to have further exchanges with NGO's representatives.

○ **Visit to field projects:**

OCHA's Office in Harare organised a visit to 4 field projects on health, education, livelihood and child protection. They are implemented by IOM, UNICEF and the NGO Childline Zimbabwe and represented interventions in 4 of the main clusters of the CAP. During the visit beneficiaries confirmed to participants their good perception of the CAP process

○ **Meeting with the IOM Country Representative:**

A separate meeting with the IOM representative provided participants with a more direct perspective of its evaluation of the CAP process.

IOM considers protection to be a core element in the CAP 2011, especially due to the level of vulnerability of the IDP's. Concerns over this community have pushed this Agency to implement programs beyond their traditional activities.

CAP process and reinforcement of the cluster system has helped to promote better standards and mapping. Specifically, assessment of needs has been reinforced with a better assessment of capacities among cluster members.

Inter cluster coordination has also been improved.

New references on accountability by donors were also made.

CAP is still a useful tool since strategic frameworks are not completely adequate for a transitional scenario as the Zimbabwean.

○ **Meeting with the WHO Country Representative:**

A second meeting was organised with the head WHO Zimbabwe in order to have a closer appraisal of her perception over the 2011 CAP process and characteristics of the programme based approach.

WHO representative declare herself also very supportive to the CAP process, although underlining that other financial instruments as the ERF should be used by NGO's. Therefore programming should not affect the current budget distribution.

Cross cutting issues as gender are better managed thanks to the CAP programming model.

4. Conclusions:

After an internal exchange among all participants (representatives of the Swedish, Danish and German Embassies in Harare included), the main conclusions of the visit were presented to the HC and OCHA's representatives:

- Participants underlined their gratitude for the organisation and development of the visit that was considered unanimously as very successful.
- The visit has provided all delegates with a better understanding of the CAP programmed-based approach, as well as of the particular scenario of Humanitarian activities in Zimbabwe. However they acknowledge that a two days visit was not sufficient to make a proper diagnose on the matter and only general observations could be made.
- In general terms the conclusions were very positive and the programmed- based process was considered extremely useful.
- An impressive atmosphere of enthusiasm and motivation was clearly perceived from OCHA's Office in Harare and most of the Humanitarian actors as well as the Government of Zimbabwe. Mobilization of all of them was considered a success by itself. Representatives acknowledged the hard work done by CAP's makers.
- Among the advantages perceived in the programming approach donors representatives could recall: agreement on strategic goals, its flexibility, its advantages in terms of participation of all actors, its inclusiveness, improvement in coordination, better information sharing, better appraisal of cross cutting issues, better coverage of gaps and distribution of labour, improvement in capacity building, better needs assessment and capacity mapping, reduction of cost via standardization and improvement in terms of transparency and accountability.
- All these advantages were obvious to Government, cluster leaders, NGO's and beneficiaries; although at HCT level more doubts could be perceived.

- The particular Humanitarian context of Zimbabwe was another element present all over the visit: early recovery and LRRD had influenced clearly the CAP process and marked the content of many of the clusters initiatives. However most counterparts declared that they would prefer a CAP programming approach when dealing with any humanitarian protracted crisis. However the goal of the team was limited to the analysis of the programming based approach, independently of the context.
- Some doubts were expressed by participants in terms of how the programme-based approach might have consequences in the mechanics of the CAP, especially in what concerns the information sharing with donors, the coordination role of OCHA and budgetary allocations. Concerns were also showed over how a process like this might become time consuming and extremely heavy, and how the mandate of the cluster leaders could become cumbersome. Transparency and translation into practice of the CAPs priorities were also still unclear because of the timing of the visit. It was pointed out that the success of the new programme-based approach depends on good reporting mechanism to the donors.
- It was agreed that a real time evaluation or a new assessment at the end of the CAP time framework would provide further and much more illustrative information about the programme-based approach. The real-time evaluation should concentrate on gathering the main lessons learnt concerning the programme-based approach and providing recommendations on how to move from humanitarian assistance towards development.
- Though it was quite clear that coordination within each cluster was much improved, it was not yet clear whether this new approach led to better coordination at inter-cluster level.
- OCHA's role should be reinforced if such a rich analysis of needs and humanitarian responses should take place in future CAP processes.
- An indication by OCHA of where priorities lay in terms of donor's intervention will be welcomed.
- Active participation of the NGOs in future CAP process will depend on how they see themselves as beneficiaries from the process.

The HC and OCHA's representatives thanked the GHD group for their conclusions and for the interest showed on the Zimbabwean CAP. They consider the process still open and many of the functionalities and instruments needed to bring the document into practice might still be missing. However, the process by itself had been extremely successful.

The HC endorsed completely the programme-based approach and foresees his own role as an active promoter of the CAP, supportive and engaged.