

Minutes of IASC Task Force Meeting, South Asia EQ
Monday, 14th November 2005

BRIEFINGS:

Update and Recommendations on Current Health Concerns (by WHO, UNICEF): The main concerns affecting health assistance continue to be ensuring that there is adequate shelter and accessibility to those injured. Currently, specific health concerns and recommendations for cross cluster-response include:

1. Acute watery diarrhoea (even though the rate of new cases is decreasing)
Key recommendation: to ensure that water quality control is adequately assured in all locations as there have been some misunderstandings with regard to the water provided to camps being chlorinated or not.
2. Acute respiratory infections
Key recommendation: to provide adequate shelter.
3. Health services to mothers giving birth and to new-borns. It is expected that 1,800 women will give birth every month.
Key recommendation: to provide adequate obstetric health care.
4. Continued surgical assistance.

WHO and UNICEF also highlighted that we must keep the emergency mode, at least until spring next year and continue to strengthen the health coordination mechanisms in the area as there are still several actors who are not yet adequately coordinated. Partners were also encouraged to keep track of what they are doing by using the health surveillance system and standardize health assessments.

Follow-Up Action Points for IASC:

- More NGO implementing partners in the nutrition area needed, especially in therapeutic feeding.
- Transportation support for the measles campaign is needed, which already reached 400,000 children, and for a meningitis campaign, which will also be launched.
- Need for shelter materials for temporary health facilities.
- To focus more attention on gender and mental health issues.

Feedback from INGOs (by ICVA): There is still a lot of confusion amongst NGOs about the cluster model/ approach. It is unclear what the differences are with the previous sector approach and what the added value of the cluster approach is. Due to this lack of clarity, actors in the field participate in all meetings as if they were normal coordination meetings for information gathering and sharing. It was highlighted that the actual effectiveness in the field depends much more on the individuals involved than on the organisation as such.

Follow-up Action point: : It was suggested that cluster meetings at the HQ level also be held with actors other than UN agencies and NGOs such as donors and Government counterparts as this is done already on the field level.

SUMMARY CLUSTER POINTS:

Telecommunications services: There is a lack of funding for the project.

Follow-Up Action point: OCHA Gva to revert on funding for the telecommunication project. OCHA NY to organize a meeting between WPF, UNICEF and OCHA on this issue. (*update: OCHA will channel a request for CERF Funding*)

Logistics: A concern was expressed on how long the base camps are going to remain functional and under what funding.

Follow-Up Action point: a decision is needed on the costs for the length of use of the base camps being spread into the operational costs of each agency. It is suggested to have this issue on the agenda for the next IASC TF meeting.

Camp Mgt: UNHCR is concerned about reports of people being encouraged by the Government to move from Islamabad back to Muzaffarabad in order to receive an allocation for reconstructing one-room houses. This is seen as a conflict between the early recovery and the relief phase as people are still moving down from the mountains to the Muzaffarabad area. All these people will need temporary shelter. Worldvision also stressed the need to analyse push and pull factors for population movement.

Follow-Up Action point: IOM, UNHCR to present information on current response to population movements in next IASC.

Shelter: IOM expressed the concern about some donors pushing for prefabricated shelter whereas this is against the recommendations of the Government.

DSS: The security situation is still reported as being stable. A drivers training will be organized by the end of this week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- IFRC was concerned about emerging discussions on emergency phase vs. recovery phase. Any distraction away from the emergency phase would have negative effects.
- The RSG's Office had some questions on changed language in IDP terminology statement which would be bilaterally discussed with IDD.

SUGGESTED NEXT AGENDA :

- Report from WFP/JLC on status of NFI pipeline tracking system
- Report from UNHCR/IOM on population movements and current int'l response
- Decision on cost and use of base camps led by WFP.
- Report from UNDP on outcomes of Reconstruction Conference.

NEXT IASC TF MEETING: Wednesday, 23rd November 2005, 15:30 GVA