

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE  
IASC WEEKLY MEETING

**Summary Note**

15 August 2007  
Geneva

**I Cote d'Ivoire - Briefing on the Situation of IDPs**

*Ms. Moetsi Duchatellier, Human Rights Officer (OHCHR)*

Ms. Duchatellier, who is assisting the mandate of the RSG on the Human Rights of the IDPs, Mr. Walter Kälin, briefed participants on the RSG's recent mission to Cote d'Ivoire (25-29 June 2007). The RSG's latest visit follows the official mission he carried out in April 2006, which had the objective to assess the evolution of the situation of IDPs after the Ouagadougou peace agreement signed on 4 March 2006. This time the visit was planned after the RSG had received a request by the Ivorian Government aspiring that such a visit would put focus on the critical funding situation.

As a general remark Ms. Duchatellier noted that while the security situation has improved, real challenges remain with regard to the IDPs. Compared with the RSG's findings during his visit in 2006, the IDP situation has worsened dramatically, in particular as the IDPs have become poorer and women often prostitute themselves in order to earn their living. Tensions are increasing among IDPs and host communities, and the RSG has, consequently, stressed that a durable solution for the IDPs is essential in order to avoid return to conflict and ensure sustainable peace.

Addressing the situation of the IDPs, Ms. Duchatellier stressed that it is important to differentiate between the situation in the North and the West. The North is characterised by marginalisation, an 80% unemployment rate and tensions in the population. Groups or whole communities that fled during the crisis are now coming back, and in particular women have reported cases of assaults by returnees. Property restitution poses another problem, as many rebels have occupied the houses of the fled IDPs, who do not dare to claim their property back upon their return. The Ministry of Reconciliation, which is in charge of IDP related issues, has set up an antenna, and with the current redeployment of the administration in the North things are expected to move forward. At this point, the situation in the North should no longer be characterised as an emergency situation, but rather as being in the early recovery phase.

In the West the situation remains difficult due to violence and tensions among groups. Moreover, governmental pressure for people going back to cultivate their land risks aggravating tensions, as the returnees' claims for land are not well received by other IDPs living there.

Whereas the RSG was rather critical concerning the humanitarian response after his visit in 2006, his overall impression after his recent mission is that the humanitarian response has improved, both at the national and international level. Nevertheless, implementation efforts at all levels are still seriously hampered by lack of resources. Consequently, the RSG has

undertaken an initiative to approach donors and advocate for better funding, in order to ensure that the international organisations on the ground can stay there.

The issue of funding was also raised by several participants, who, while noting that the CAP only has been funded by 25%, welcomed the RSGs advocacy efforts, just as they invited Ms. Duchatellier to keep participants posted on further developments in this regard. While discussing the role of funding, Ms. Duchatellier noted that while the low level of funding constitutes a problem, the two track appeal system in Cote d'Ivoire constitutes another. At the same time as the CAP was revised to provide more realistic figures, the Government launched an appeal matrix, including a slot for IDPs, that has created some confusion among donors as to which mechanism to support.

The cluster approach was initiated last year, but both Ms. Duchatellier and participants expressed concerns with regard to the level of implementation, particularly in terms of the protection cluster. In relation to this, Ms. Duchatellier explained that the Government currently is undertaking a registration process of the inhabitants in the country. Current legal structures demand that all Ivorians acquire a birth certificate from their place of origin - which of course is the problem in a nutshell for the IDPs. These problems have been recognised by the Government that, consequently, has requested advice and assistance from the international community. Ms. Duchatellier, therefore, concluded that if assistance will be provided to the IDPs in Cote d'Ivoire, now is the right time.

## **II South Asia - Briefing on the Humanitarian Situation in Context of the Recent Floods**

*Mr. Jean Verheyden, Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)*

Mr. Verheyden provided participants with an overview of the latest available information on the flood situation in Asia. On the situation in Pakistan, Mr. Verheyden explained that floods are currently receding and that the Government is in control of the situation. However, waterborne diseases still remain a problem, just as gaps in the provision of food, shelter, water and sanitation still need to be addressed. The Flash Appeal has only been funded by 20%, hence a CERF contribution is now being considered. If funding is not forthcoming, the UN country team will consider merging the shelter and camp management clusters, just as it will be necessary to launch an appeal for further funding.

With regard to DPKR, the floods hit the country in North Hwanghae, South Hwanghae, Kangwon and South Phyongan provinces. Thousands of people have been reported dead, 30,000 houses have been damaged and the infrastructure has been severely damaged. Local telephone lines have also been damaged, which has slowed down information flows. Humanitarian assistance by the international community has been welcomed by the North Korean authorities, thus a joint needs assessment is underway, just as a CERF contribution and a Flash Appeal currently are being considered.

In Vietnam heavy rains throughout the past 4 days have caused flooding across Central Vietnam and 68 have been reported dead and 130,000 affected. IFRC has reported on gaps in assistance and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office closely monitors the situation. In the Northern Philippines the local governments are attending to needs, and there is no need for humanitarian assistance. 5,000 displaced families are currently returning to their homes, but a storm expected to hit the country this week may deteriorate the situation.

Nepal has been severely affected in the last two weeks, but the water levels are currently receding. An inter agency needs assessment mission is still ongoing, but currently it is estimated that 50% of the affected will need full assistance during at least three months.

In India, China and Bangladesh water levels are currently receding, but heavy rains remain a challenge. While these are the countries estimated to be the most affected (up to 105 million in China), there have been no appeal for international assistance. In Bangladesh the situation has, however, been eased by the UN Country Team, which was well prepared with adequate stocks of food, water tablets, and medicine.

On questions concerning the second role out of the cluster approach in Pakistan, Ms. Merete Johanson (OCHA) noted that while the Pakistan Government has been very forthcoming, just as it has insisted on coordination with its own national disaster management agency, UN agencies and NGOs have been more reluctant to engage in the cluster work due to the critical funding and access situation.

## Participants

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