

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WEEKLY MEETING

Summary Note

11 July 2007
Geneva

I Update on the Outcomes of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction and briefing on CADRI

Ms. Joanne Burke (ISDR Secretariat), Coordinator, Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI)

Ms. Burke briefed participants on the highlights and outcomes of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP/DRR) meeting, which was held in Geneva on 5-7 June 2007. Ms. Burke presented the topic with a background introduction to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which sets out the agenda for disaster risk reduction efforts over a decade (2005-2015). The HFA was endorsed by 186 countries at the world conference in Hyogo, Japan in 2005.

The GP/DRR, which was the first meeting of its kind since the Hyogo conference, was convened by Switzerland and was attended by 105 organizations and states. One of the key recommendations endorsed at the meeting was that the current structure of the Inter Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction should be replaced by a broader stakeholder process, which should also include UN agencies and governments. Another central recommendation was the need to ensure better cooperation at the regional level in order to ensure better coherence and flexibility. At the GP/DRR, it was agreed to convene a follow up meeting in two years time. Ms. Burke, moreover, mentioned that the record is currently being finalized and will be distributed shortly.

In her briefing on CADRI, Ms. Burke explained that this is a joint initiative created in 2007 by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, OCHA and ISDR. CADRI constitutes a thematic platform for stakeholders to enhance capacity for disaster risk reduction. CADRI's main objectives are to (i) Assist selected countries in enhancing their disaster risk reduction capacity; (ii) Stimulate collaboration and ensure wider access to or exchange of experience amongst disaster risk reduction actors; (iii) Expand the role of disaster risk reduction within academia; and (iv) Provide knowledge products (educational and learning materials, methodological tools and resources) for capacity development to advance the implementation of the HFA. 2007 activities include supporting the Government of Mozambique in their efforts to develop a "road map" for their newly approved National Disaster Plan; assisting the Algerian UNCT's Contingency Planning Workshop on preparedness, response and recovery; developing and adapting tools for capacity assessment at the country level; facilitating training and organizational mapping/network analysis; establishing a community of practice in the ISDR system for Higher Education; and finally establishing a UNRC Leadership Initiative for a holistic disaster approach.

Participants welcomed the broad participation of NGOs and governments at the GP/DRR meeting, but concerns were raised with regard to the low level of governmental accountability called upon with regard to compliance with the HFA. Questions were also raised as to what

extent links have been established between CADRI and the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning. Ms. Burke acknowledged that there is a synergy between the work of the Sub-Working Group and CADRI, but noted that there has been no exchange at this point. Finally, OCHA reminded participants about the IASC Informal Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Action on 24 July 2007, 15h00 at IFRC.

II Chad - Joint briefing by OCHA and WHO on the Humanitarian Situation from a Political, Security and Health perspective

Mr. Daniel Augstburger (OCHA), Senior Emergency Officer, Surge Capacity Section, Emergency Services Branch and Dr. Alessandro Loretto (WHO), Coordinator, Health Action in Crises, Emergency Response and Operations Branch

Based on his recent mission to Chad, Mr. Augstburger briefed participants on the political, security and humanitarian situation in Chad. Mr. Augstburger started out by noting that for a long time only humanitarian issues have been addressed, meanwhile violence has increased. However, Mr. Augstburger cautioned against framing Chad in terms of a failed state. Only one clan is in power and strong structures prevail. Security remains a serious issue (phase 4) but Mr. Augstburger stressed that violence is concentrated in specific areas. In these areas community violence has increased in the vacuum after the withdrawal of the national armed forces. This situation has been further exacerbated as the Chadian Government, instead of sending armed forces to the areas troubled by violence, has provided local militias with arms with the purpose of empowering these local groups to uphold law and order. As these militias make no distinction between civilian and military targets, the consequence of these arms handouts has been recurrent abuses of international humanitarian law. The Government's efforts to remove traditional – often Sudanese – power holders have, moreover, removed individuals and groups with capacity to reduce the violence. As a consequence, the delivering of aid has been delayed in these areas, but access has not been restricted completely.

With regard to the cluster implementation, Mr. Augstburger commented that while the word cluster has been used during the last year, no cluster structure has been established yet. However, discussions on the roll out of the cluster approach are currently taking place and the roll out has been incorporated in the 90 Days Plan.

The humanitarian reform process and the arrival of new NGOs, including Save the Children and Concern, have posed new challenges in terms of coordination. While an expansion of the NGO community is a positive development, it also demands a rethinking of current partnership structures. Before the arrival of the new and more specialised NGOs, the NGOs on the ground covered all activities, and many have signed contracts with UN agencies. As a result, the newly arrived specialised NGOs often end up being engaged in issues outside their area of expertise.

Following Mr. Augstburger's briefing, Dr. Loretto informed participants on health related challenges based on his recent needs assessment mission to Chad (18 June to 1 July 2007), where he visited Ndjamena, Abeche and Goz Beida in the East. In his briefing, Dr. Loretto emphasised the high mortality rate, low food and water rations leading to malnutrition and diarrhoea, and the absence of hygiene and sanitation leading to increased hepatitis B infections.

A concern that was raised by both Dr. Loretto and Mr. Augstburger, was the increasing number of IDPs. The numbers are continuously rising and are amounting to up to 170.000 as of mid July 2007. While coordination efforts from the UN Country Team have improved the situation, the future situation of the IDPs remains an outstanding question. Less concern was expressed with regard to the refugees given their legal status and right to settle in camps. Another concern that

was raised in this regard was the fact that the IDP situation has worsened dramatically since the last CAP assessment and appeal, which is one of the reasons why sufficient funding is not available.

On questions on the impact of the CERF, especially in the light of the insufficient CAP funding, Dr. Loretta responded that both CERF and ECHO funding have made a major difference. Because of these funds, WHO has been able to expand its operations in Chad.

Other participants raised questions as to what extent the Ministry of Health has engaged in the health cluster response and the extent to which local authorities are included in site management. Mr. Augstburger explained that the Government has been active in several regards. Several commissions have been established to address the humanitarian problems, a significant amount of oil money has been allocated to address humanitarian needs and efforts are undertaken to address gaps and deliver assistance. Nevertheless, there is a lack of interest in engaging in protection related issues, but Mr. Augstburger noted this has been taken into account in the 90 Days Plan.

Finally, Ms. Foaleng Mpako from the Norwegian Refugee Council presented the Council's report on the Internal Displacement Situation in Eastern Chad, which was published the same day as the Weekly meeting.

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