

1: Cote d'Ivoire – Inter-Agency protection network and disarmament
(by Daniel Augstburger, Senior Emergency Officer, Surge Capacity and Contingency Planning, OCHA)

Mr. Daniel Augstburger briefed on his mission to Cote d'Ivoire from 11-16 June. The purpose of the mission was, 1) to support the protection network OCHA intends to put in place; and 2) to look at the humanitarian aspect of the Disarmament Demobilizing Re-integration Re-settlement/Re-integration through Communities (DDRR/RC) project.

Despite negotiations, of which there was a second conference last week, led by the South African Presidency, the demobilization process is practically at a halt. Basically the conflict, and its root causes (for the Force Nouvelle, the issue of nationality), has not been settled. Furthermore many, especially donors, have questioned the accountability and transparency of the process, because it is led by the government, which is an active party in the conflict.

The mission discussed with the DSRSG in Abidjan, to set up a joint operational cell (JOC), with the participation of all main actors, including the humanitarian.

On the issue of protection, a working group on protection and IDPs has been set up in Abidjan based on a collaborative approach including all present UN agencies including ONUCI with a standing invitation for ICRC. This group has come up with a number of deliverables: 1) to advise ONUCI on the movement of troops; 2) to collect information on trends of violations against civilians in the field – setting up of a network allowing the working group in Abidjan to receive information from the field and act as an advisory board to the SRSR and DSRSG for proposed action by the Government and Forces Nouvelles; and 3) to improve the advocacy, coordinating between Abidjan, New York and Geneva.

Questions following the briefing focused on the process of demobilization. Mr. Augstburger informed that detailed information on the issue lies with UN-DPA and DPKO.

2: Guinea Bissau – Contingency planning and preparedness linked to the presidential electoral process.
(by Daniel Augstburger, Senior Emergency Officer, Surge Capacity and Contingency Planning, OCHA)

Mr. Augstburger briefed on his mission to Guinea Bissau from 6-11 and 17-24 June. The purpose of the mission was to support the UN Country Team in the finalisation of a contingency plan drafted in direct relation with the potential violence during the presidential elections.

The electoral process is ongoing. 1st round has been completed with two candidates proceeding to the 2nd round to be held on 24 July. Malam Bacai Sanha received the most votes in the 1st round, but it can prove difficult for him to win the election as Kumba Yala, the third-place candidate, has thrown his support behind former military ruler Joao Bernardo Vieira. Kumba Yala's constituency is a very homogenous group, with 90% of his voters belonging to the same ethnic group (a trend which is not seen for any of the other top candidates). This is believed to make him capable of easily steering his voters.

The situation in Guinea Bissau is volatile, and international actors in the Country should be ready to go from a traditional development mode into a humanitarian set up. Mr. Augstburger underlined the importance and necessity of the UNCT, at its present set-up, to be capable of coping with a humanitarian crisis for a period of at least 10-15 days – before support could be flown in from HQs or arrive from Dakar in neighbouring Senegal. Hence the mission to set up a contingency plan.

UNCT has set up several technical working groups dealing with different sectors. Water supplies as well as NFIs relating to water are ready for up to 80.000 people who, in the case of violence would flee Bissau City. Food stocks have been put in place at potential flashpoints. A problem is shelter. ADRA, implementing partner of UNHCR could support initial assistance to 3000 IDPs, which will most likely be inadequate. Protection is another concern. UNHCR is not present. ICRC, UNFPA and UNICEF are present. Sanitation: Only the national Red Cross society has the capacity for providing sanitary facilities.

On a question of NGO participation in the contingency planning, Mr. Augstburger explained that most NGOs have left Guinea Bissau, and that those remaining are mostly dealing with development issues. ICRC has its own contingency plan, which is annexed to the UN plan.

3: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – Needs assessment in preparation for the coming CAP 2006 Workshops in DRC.
(by Tom Delrue, OCHA-Consultant)

Mr. Tom Delrue, one of the consultants who recently conducted the needs assessment missions in DRC in preparation for the CAP 2006 Workshops, briefed on the missions and the preliminary findings and recommendations.

The mission consisted of 36 consultants in total divided into 6 teams, each with a team leader (of which 5 were internationals contracted by OCHA), completed with 5 Congolese consultants. Over a period of 6 weeks the teams covered the provinces of Maniema, Katanga, North Kivu, South Kivu and Equateur (the team for Equateur also covered the Bas-Uelé district in the province Oriental) as well as the district of Ituri.

As methodology the consultants used an adapted version of the Needs Analysis Framework (NAF). Information was collected through contacts with the population during the numerous field visits, through talks with local authorities, international agencies and NGOs, MONUC as well as through the over 120 focus groups that were set up.

Mr. Delrue, who was the team leader for Ituri, stressed that the lack of access, both for security and infrastructural reasons, as well as the absence of a coherent state structure, makes quantified information very difficult to obtain in the DRC. Population estimates can vary by several million people (the last census in DRC/Zaire was done in 1984).

The teams used all sorts of transportation and even went on foot in many cases to reach as many sites as possible. In the district of Ituri access was submit to MONUC escort.

Cooperation with agencies and NGOs was generally very good, and members often accompanied the consultants on missions.

The mission report, which is still in the in the making, will include a global part looking at the broader issues as well as a chapter on each of the provinces/districts covered. The report will contain 1) recommendations per technical sector; 2) recommendations on cross cutting issues (looking at the way to go from humanitarian assistance to a transition period leading to development); and 3) recommendations per actor (donors, DRC government, agencies and NGOs, MONUC and the civil society).

Acknowledging the constraints of access and the need of urgent humanitarian intervention in the vulnerable zones identified, the report will also stress the importance for the humanitarian actors (donors, agencies and NGOs and the Congolese government) to move out of the humanitarian mode into transitional activities there where possible.

Furthermore, an increase of MONUC troops should be considered in order to be more effective.

The findings of the missions were shared with the humanitarian actors in the provinces and districts before the consultants returned to Kinshasa, where information was also shared with agencies, NGOs and donors.

Following the briefing the discussion focussed on the issue of access, security and the possibilities of moving into transitional activities.

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