

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
63RD WORKING GROUP MEETING

**Inter-Cluster Working Group Meeting (25 October 2005)
Final Summary Record and Action Points**

21-22 November 2005
Hosted by ICVA, International Council of Voluntary Agencies
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I Objectives:

1. To discuss the cluster approach implementation and phasing out of that implementation.
2. To discuss the proposal on the countries to be selected for the application of the cluster approach in ongoing emergencies.

II Welcoming Remarks

1. Ms. Yvette Stevens, Chairperson of the IASC WG and Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator, (AERC), welcomed participants and highlighted the objectives of this meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Jan Egeland (ERC).

III Introductory Remarks

2. Mr. Jan Egeland (ERC) stressed the importance of this meeting and of its timing, indicating that the crucial stages of implementation for the clusters are now lying ahead. He also reminded participants that the IASC Principals, at their meeting on 12 September 2005, agreed that the clusters approach would form the framework for the humanitarian response and that the clusters implementation plans for 2006 would be submitted to the IASC Principals on 12 December 2005. He also indicated that starting from January 2006, there will be a phased implementation of the cluster approach. The IASC Principals also agreed in September 2005 to implement the cluster leadership approach in all new emergencies and in a selected number of ongoing emergencies in 2006.

3. The ERC also noted that the cluster approach has already been partly implemented in response to the recent South Asia Earthquake. Having just returned from Pakistan, the ERC mentioned that he was impressed by the level of energy and coordination

demonstrated by the Country Team in adopting the cluster approach. As a result, ten clusters were established in Pakistan, largely following the lead agency structures agreed upon in September 2005. These clusters are meeting regularly, under the overall leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. The ERC stressed that the importance of the approach is self-evident in the South Asia Earthquake relief effort, with clusters being the main forum for coordinating the division of work both geographically and thematically.

4. Finally, the ERC also outlined some of the pending issues related to the general cluster discussion, as follows:

- **Mapping and capacity building.** The example of the South Asia earthquake revealed limited capacity worldwide for securing winterised shelter material. This issue also brought up the role of the cluster lead agency as the provider of last resort.
- **Funding for capacity building.** Donors should be engaged in funding the clusters, including through the CAP.
- **More inclusive process at the global level and in the field.** More efforts should be needed to engage the NGOs, the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions as well as the Country Teams in the field.
- **Consistent information sharing.** Information and communication on the cluster approach should be made available to agencies, at HQs and field level.
- **Activation of the cluster process.** Clusters should ideally start at the same time in all countries, but in reality there will be different tempos, and not the same number of clusters will be needed in all countries.

IV Update on the on-going process within the Clusters and feedback from Cluster Chairpersons

4.1 Camp Coordination and Camp Management. *By Mr. Pablo Mateu, UNHCR.*

5. The UN agencies are actively involved in the cluster process, as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council, while improved efforts should be made to better engage the Red Cross Movement and more NGOs. A global capacity matrix is being drafted, based on inputs received from agencies on their respective capacity. It would be also very important to include into this process crosscutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, age and diversity, as well as human rights.

6. The ERC encouraged non-UN agencies as well as national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies to be systematically engaged in the cluster process.

4.2 Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery. *By Mr. James Rawley and Mr. Andrew Maskrey, UNDP.*

7. The work of this cluster and the preparation of the 2006 work plan are making progress, though somewhat more advanced on natural disasters side than on complex emergencies side. It is taking also into account the recent experience with the South Asia Earthquake response, which would be useful in order to draw some initial lessons learned. It was also noted that NGOs participation in this cluster is higher in the field when dealing with more operational issues in the cluster (based on the experience in Pakistan) than in HQs. The cluster is also enjoying good participation from the Red Cross movement, and that it would be important also to engage the international financial institutions in this cluster.

4.3 Cluster Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications. *By Mr. Chérif Ghali, OCHA.*

8. The work of this cluster is on track and non-UN participants are involved in the process, therefore the implementation plan would be available for the IASC WG meeting in November. A Cluster Portal has been created following the recommendation of 14 October IASC WG Inter-Cluster meeting in order to facilitate information exchange and enhance collaboration among the clusters.

4.4 Cluster Working Group on Emergency Shelter. *By Mr. Yoichiro Tsuchida, UNHCR.*

9. The cluster is focusing on the assessment of capacities and gaps, in order to draft a consolidated matrix on capacity mapping, to prioritise actionable recommendations, to come up with the criteria in order to enlarge participation within the cluster and to develop an implementation plan. The absence of a cluster lead in natural disasters is still a constraint.

10. On the cluster lead in natural disasters, the ERC reiterated that discussions are still ongoing with the IFRC and thanked IOM for taking the lead in Pakistan in Emergency Shelter.

11. ICVA (Mr. Ed Schenkenberg) commented on the Emergency Shelter Cluster criteria, that were distributed during the meeting, and inquired whether these criteria were developed for the UN Agencies or for NGOs, whether for global or for national level. The ERC reaffirmed the importance of equality among all IASC members and underlined that no criteria can be developed which will exclude any of the members.

4.5 Cluster Working Group on Water and Sanitation. *By Mr. Henk van Norden, UNICEF.*

12. The cluster has been able to involve 13 agencies and more efforts are made to engage more key NGOs. Several products have been finalized, such as the Framework for Accountability, Responsibility and Recommendations and the ToRs. The

Responsibility Matrix and the Implementation Plan with timeline are still under review and will be finalised by mid November. The cluster is suggesting establishing dedicated cells at HQ New York, Geneva and at regional levels in order to strengthen UNICEF's capacity to lead the cluster. The issue of implementation countries among on-going emergencies (DRC, Liberia and Uganda) was discussed by the cluster members and it was agreed to proceed initially with Liberia and Uganda.

4.6 Cluster Working Group on Nutrition. By Ms. Sherine Guirguis, UNICEF.

13. The cluster has been able to involve 10 agencies, including UN and non-UN members. The ToRs for the cluster have been drafted for both the national and global level. The cluster has also developed a draft implementation plan, which will be further discussed in the group in early December. The ERC reiterated the importance of including key NGOs in the cluster process, such as MSF.

4.7 Cluster Working Group on Health. By Dr. Ala Din Alwan, WHO.

14. Several meetings have been held focusing on South Asia Earthquake and at least 40 NGOs have been involved at the global as well as the field level. It was noted the Ministry of Health of Pakistan has been actively engaged in the cluster process.

15. Regarding the overall Health Cluster process, preliminary action plans and implementation plans are being drafted, and will be further fine-tuned by the group. As a next step, the detailed implementation plan will be finalized with the assessment of gaps in order to present the final report to the upcoming IASC WG and Principals meetings.

4.8 Cluster Working Group on Logistics. By David Morton, WFP.

16. This cluster has been able to ensure the participation of a large number of agencies, including the Red Cross movement's and NGOs'. The cluster is focusing on drafting a capacity matrix, including the compilation of data on regional stockpiles, a NFIs tracking system to be managed by UNJLC, the handling of air support and the identification of inter-agency rapid response teams. Funding mechanism will be needed in order to implement the above process and mobilize resources.

4.9 Cluster Working Group on Protection. By Mr. Steven Wolfson, UNHCR.

17. This cluster is near to finalise its actionable recommendations, which form the basis of its Implementation Plan. It has also made good progress on the "broader protection framework" (the UNICEF-OCHA discussion paper), as well as on the finalization of the Response Capacity Matrix. However, it is difficult to accurately reflect and assess existing capacity, particularly at the national level, since the specific countries for implementation are not yet selected. It was noted that it is quite difficult to map NGO capacity at the global level; and virtually impossible at the national level for this reason. More NGO involvement would be welcomed in developing the capacity matrix to avoid overlaps and to enable coherence of deployment schemes for both the UN and the

NGOs. The strong support provided by OCHA-IDD was well acknowledged by this cluster.

18. Finally, UNICEF (Dr. Eric Laroche) raised the issue of recognizing the establishment of an Education Cluster Working Group. In this regard, the process is already set in motion similarly to the other clusters, with an important role played in this regard by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). The ERC suggested that the IASC WG in November could discuss this issue for possible further decision to be made by the IASC Principals in December.

V Implementation of the Cluster Approach.

19. On the issue of implementing the cluster approach, the ERC reminded that a final decision would take place at the IASC Principals meeting, on 12 December 2005. It is expected that the Principals would endorse the implementation plans, including plans for capacity building and funding needs, which could be then submitted to donors.

20. The ERC outlined three possible elements that could activate the cluster approach:

- a. In response to dramatic events or disasters, as in the case of Pakistan.
- b. To fill major gaps in humanitarian needs, identified by the agencies and by the hosting Government, as was the case of Aceh for the shelter cluster.
- c. By initiative and guidance of the concerned Humanitarian Coordinators/Resident Coordinators (HC/RCs) in consultation with the Country Team members.

In principle, the cluster approach can be activated at the request of any agency (UN as well as non-UN) in the field or in HQs.

21. In terms of targeted implementation of cluster approach in existing emergencies, the ERC noted that several countries were suggested by agencies for initial implementation (DRC, Liberia, Nepal, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Uganda), but no decision was taken yet on which ones to select. The ERC recommended that IDD and OCHA would continue to undertake intensive consultations with agencies and with respective Country Teams on this selection. He also clarified that the discussion is underway on whether the implementation of the cluster approach should take place across all relevant clusters (which would be the ideal situation if feasible) in the selected ongoing emergencies. He also expressed his hope that most of the relevant Humanitarian Coordinators would try to start the cluster approach by the end of 2006.

22. WFP (Mr. Allan Jury) stressed the importance of fully integrating the cluster approach within the IASC Country Team structure, and expressed concerns on the establishment of parallel structures involving global and field-based clusters. On the proposal to establish the education cluster, WFP reminded that the cluster approach was intended to fill the existing gaps, and it was not meant to cover all areas of humanitarian activities (this explains the rationale for not having a “food cluster”). With regard to the proposed countries, WFP pointed out that the implementation of the cluster approach in

Southern Sudan may require reconsideration, given the existence of a robust coordination structure there established through the Integrated Mission. In that regard, suggested that the implementation of the cluster approach would be more appropriate in Liberia. Furthermore, WFP (Mr. Daly Belgasmi) requested clarifications on the financial implications of the cluster approach and also on the status of engaging national governments and societies into this process.

23. UNICEF (Dr. Eric Laroche) emphasized the urgency of the cluster approach to be able to trickle down to the country level. UNICEF favored the idea of piloting the clusters in a limited number of countries and furthermore underlined that the tempo of implementation will vary from one country to another. On the selection of the specific countries, UNICEF called for intensified action in Uganda and in Liberia and for improved engagement of field partners. UNICEF questioned the added value of having clusters implemented in DRC, due to the complexity of the situation (large size country with an ongoing crisis). UNICEF also stressed the critical situation in Nepal, a country in a difficult humanitarian situation for children in the rebel areas.

24. UNHCR (Mr. Hussein Khan) reiterated WFP's point on the importance of integrating the cluster approach with the structure of the IASC Country Teams. UNHCR also requested a clarification on the roles and responsibilities of global cluster structures vis-à-vis the field-level, an area where OCHA leadership is needed. It was suggested that global clusters could play a role, for example, in the area of policy setting at the request of the Country Teams. He also agreed with the remarks made by WFP, namely: a) if a gap is not identified in a given sector, a cluster should not be established and b) a country with a robust Integrated Mission should not be selected. Finally, UNHCR would agree about the choice of DRC, but respects the concerns of other agencies.

25. OCHA (Mr. Gerhard Putman-Cramer) stated that based on the experience in the recent earthquake in South Asia, the cluster approach implementation is different in practice than in theory. He also stressed the importance of a very inclusive and participatory process in the clusters, beyond the IASC agencies. In addition, chairs of the clusters should ensure that their reports should focus on cluster work, and not on the progress made by the cluster lead agency.

26. WHO (Dr. Mukesh Kapila) indicated that the health sector volunteered to be "clusterized", even if the health sector had not been identified as a gap. He also stressed that all vulnerable populations have equal rights to benefit from humanitarian assistance, regardless of the type and scale of crisis and in accordance with humanitarian principles. As such, WHO as lead of the health cluster is willing to implement the health cluster in selected countries deemed to require assistance in the future.

27. ICVA (Mr. Ed Schenkenberg) stated that is crucial in this process to facilitate an inclusive IASC Country Teams. He reminded that at the last Inter-Cluster Teleconference held on 14 October, it was stressed the important role of HCs in setting up inclusive IASC Country Teams, while there are not clear criteria yet developed for

this. In that regard, it was recommended to further discuss this at the next IASC Working Group.

28. FAO (Mr. Dominique Burgeon) stressed that livelihood and agriculture should be integrated into relevant clusters, in particular into the nutrition and early recovery clusters.

VI Next Steps and Action Points:

29. The ERC thanked participants for the valuable inputs received, and noted that the cluster approach had progressed dramatically, while recognizing that this is still work in progress. It is expected that the Principals will endorse the implementation plans (including plans for capacity building and funding), which could be then submitted to donors.

30. With regard to the selection of countries for the initial implementation, the ERC reiterated that he would facilitate the consultation on the six countries proposed (DRC, Liberia, Nepal, Somalia, Southern Sudan and Uganda) and to ensure inclusive approach with the IASC Country Team members. At the Principals meeting on 12 December 2005, the status of the above consultation will be reviewed.

31. In the meantime, the ERC informed the participants that OCHA/IDD would undertake missions to facilitate consultations with the Country Teams to be led by HCs in DRC, Liberia and Uganda on the activation of the cluster approach in these countries.

32. For other countries that may require the activation of the cluster approach, the ERC will consult with relevant HC/RCs as well as with agencies, similarly to the process followed in Pakistan.

33. The ERC also clarified that the role played by the Clusters at global level should focus on building capacity, support, funding and ensuring smooth operations. In the field, the clusters should focus on being fully operational.

34. The ERC also stressed the importance of engaging non-UN agencies in the IASC Country Teams and in the cluster process at large. He also underlined the importance of engaging the host governments, with due consideration being given to identifying appropriate strategies as per the type of emergency.

35. With regard to the suggestion by UNICEF to set up the Education cluster, the ERC proposed to convey this recommendation to the IASC Working Group in November, and then, if endorsed, to submit it to the IASC Principals in December.

VII AOB

36. The ERC provided an overview on Ministerial Level Meeting on Assistance to communities affected by the earthquake in South Asia, to be convened on the following day, on 26 October in Geneva with the participation of the Secretary-General. In that

meeting, the ERC will provide updates on the situation in Pakistan in the aftermath of the earthquake, focusing on current response by humanitarian agencies and remaining key challenges. The ERC will use this occasion to strongly request donors to announce new pledges in response to the Flash Appeal.

VIII List of Participants

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