

## MULTI-DONOR MISSION REPORT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

May 27-June 8, 2002

A multi-donor mission comprised of member countries of the Geneva-based Contact Group for the Democratic Republic of the Congo embarked on a two-week assessment of the coordination of the humanitarian response programs during the period May 27 – June 8. The mission was led by Belgium and included representatives from the US, the European Commission, Sweden, Canada and the Netherlands. OCHA facilitated the mission by working with its staff in the DRC along with the RC/HC and members of the UN Country Team and the three Provincial Humanitarian Coordinators to arrange logistics and meetings. The program began and ended with extensive meetings in Kinshasa and included field visits to Kisangani, Goma, and Bukavu as well as meetings with humanitarian partners from Bunia in Goma. The participation of two field-based senior humanitarian officers from USAID and ECHO provided the mission with an overview of coordination beyond the areas visited. (Please see annex for list of meetings in each location.)

The objective of the DRC multi-donor mission was to determine a) to what extent recommendations made at the July 2001 high level meeting concerning humanitarian coordination have been implemented and b) what further steps should be taken to improve coordination at the strategic and operation levels. The overall conclusion of the mission is that the existing structure is not best-suited for the current operating environment. The political and humanitarian landscapes have changed dramatically since the current coordination structure was established. There are an expanding number of humanitarian partners in the field and a more robust OCHA network throughout the country. In addition to issues arising from the organic structure of the coordination effort, continuing confusion over relative roles and responsibilities and lack of prioritization of core coordination activities are resulting in a less than optimal allocation of resources for either coordination or humanitarian programs. The assessment mission served to reinforce donors' strong belief that the approach to coordination as well as its structure must be changed if it is to provide the vital support to humanitarian operations that is needed. Recommendations focus on the following four areas: Structure, mandate, tools and resources, and relations with MONUC.

### I. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION SYSTEM

Representatives of UN agencies acting as national or provincial coordinators face several obstacles in carrying out their coordination roles within the current structure: 1) workload; 2) lack of clarity concerning their specific coordination functions; 3) lack of clarity concerning the division of labor between the coordinator and the OCHA office; and 4) lack of coordination-specific skills, training and resources.

The amount of time devoted to coordination by provincial coordinators varies greatly depending upon the interpretation of the coordination role. In Goma and Kisangani, where the provincial humanitarian coordinators (PHCs) have adopted a “reactive” approach to coordination, they devote around 20 percent of their time to coordination (excluding coordination activity during the volcano in January). In contrast, the Bukavu PHC, who has taken a markedly more proactive stance towards coordination, said that he was engaged in coordination activities for roughly 60 percent of his time. A significant amount of coordination work in Bukavu is concentrated on security matters. Most partners were highly appreciative of his commitment and competence in this role, but both the PHC himself as well as WFP/Kinshasa felt that WFP operations in the area were suffering as a result.

None of the PHCs have received TORs specifically for their operational coordination role. Each one has been left to interpret his function according to his own views, perceptions and experiences. The consequences are: An ad hoc approach and in some areas a disproportionate focus on transition/development activities instead of emergency humanitarian needs. Moreover, there appears to be limited communication between the PHCs and the RC/HC, although the link between PHCs in Goma and Bukavu is strong.

In Kinshasa, the RC/HC and the head of the OCHA/FCU are working closely together with no apparent confusion with their respective roles. However, this is by no means the case elsewhere in the country. PHCs complained that there was no formal structure/document governing their relationship relative to the OCHA field offices and respective responsibilities. Furthermore, PHCs wanted clarity concerning the reporting arrangements for OCHA information and believed that OCHA field offices should be reporting to/working for the PHC. Conversely, OCHA field offices saw their role as more than the “petit secretariat” for the PHCs and their lines of reporting as being directly with OCHA/Goma and OCHA/Kinshasa.

UN agencies and NGOs were generally pleased with the coordination support from the PHCs and with OCHA in acting as the interface with local authorities on a variety of security and administrative issues. However, other core coordination activities – e.g., coordination of humanitarian response to acute food needs and epidemics - receive much less attention. In all locations visited, interlocutors noted that coordination meetings – especially sector meetings - lacked focus, generally confined to exchanges of over-detailed information concerning activities already carried out. Partners from among the UN and NGO communities expressed a genuine desire to see these meetings develop into fora tasked with prioritizing and determining joint action. For their part, PHCs commented that coordination tasks often require additional financial resources – particularly in the case of a sudden, on-set disaster such as the volcano – for which there is no budget.

The RC/HC, PHCs and the majority of other interlocutors argue that humanitarian coordination is a “full-time” job, entailing specific functions and requiring specific skills. They have recommended that more attention be given to coordinating humanitarian

programs and facilitating humanitarian interventions in the areas of greatest need, particularly in the east.

Is field coordination needs driven and is it responsive to the changing humanitarian environment?

For a variety of reasons, particularly security-related, UN agencies are often prevented from accessing areas of greatest humanitarian needs located around the main coordination hubs of Goma, Bukavu and Kisangani. Most coordination activity takes place in towns where UN staff are physically located but where humanitarian needs are not always the greatest, such as in Kisangani where development actors have started to move in. Political developments have further complicated this issue by constantly shifting the humanitarian space.

Further complicating this situation are the differing geographic areas of responsibility for PHCs, heads of UN agencies and heads of NGOs in the current structure. At present, in Kisangani (under RCD control), the PHC believes he is coordinator for Orientale province as a whole, but in fact receives only sporadic information from “mini-hubs” (Aru and Bunia) controlled by different (non-RCD) forces, and has little or no operational access to these areas. In Goma, the Unicef representative is appointed PHC for N. Kivu, whereas the weekly coordination meetings and the OCHA Goma office *de facto* deal with “the east” (not defined) as a whole. Finally, the WFP representative based in Bukavu covers the whole of “the east”, but as PHC is appointed for S. Kivu – although in fact – to a lesser and undefined degree – he is also covering the equally crucial theatre of N. Katanga and Maniema, whereas OCHA has separate offices in the three (Bukavu, Kalemie, Kindu). This confusion clearly undermines the ability of the present structure to provide a coherent overview of needs and to prioritize humanitarian response as appropriate

OCHA international staff are overwhelmingly located in Kinshasa and Goma, elsewhere relying on under-equipped outposts staffed solely by Congolese personnel. While the latter impressed the mission with their competence and dedication, they themselves point out that expatriate staff are necessary to handle more delicate situations. There does not appear to be focal point which brings together information from areas of common concern. Furthermore, in some cases, implementing partners, principally NGOs, are moving into newly accessible areas of great need. The current configuration of OCHA’s organigram concentrates resources on Kinshasa and Goma as hubs for management of OCHA activities; whereas the humanitarian situation appears to call for a greater number of light and flexible structures capable of responding rapidly.

Is coordination of humanitarian programs at the strategic level taking place?

As noted by the RC/HC, the eastern part of the DRC is “split into pieces” with a patchwork of field offices and different areas of access and humanitarian needs. The complex environment in which humanitarian interventions take place and the magnitude of the humanitarian need in the area differ greatly from the reality in areas controlled by

the Kabila regime in Kinshasa and require dedicated attention and a semi-permanent presence. According to some partners in the eastern part of the country, strategies designed in Kinshasa tend to focus more on LRRD/development matters, and are therefore of dubious relevance to priorities in areas in which the humanitarian needs are greatest. This applies equally to sector strategies as well as to overall strategy for the humanitarian zones. There is a perceived need (expressed by the majority of UN and NGO field operations) for constant oversight of evolving humanitarian needs and response strategies by a high-level individual.

In the current configuration, the RC/HC is responsible for overall humanitarian coordination in the DRC as well as for all other UN activities in the country and for UNDP programs. The probable re-entry of the World Bank and other development partners to the DRC will likely place increasing demands on the RC/HC. This does not allow adequate time to provide the extensive support and overall strategic guidance that the humanitarian operations require in the field. UN agencies and NGOs voiced strong support for assistance in negotiating with local authorities/actors and non-RCD rebel movements to improve access to populations in need. At present, NGOs must undertake this role themselves. At the same time, it was agreed that the international community must reinforce the integrity of the territory of the DRC and not give the impression of a "divided country." A senior-level post dedicated to the areas of major humanitarian need (high mortality and malnutrition rates linked to the conflict) is needed in the field to ensure a holistic approach to coordination and to support the RC/HC in pursuing a comprehensive, country-wide humanitarian strategy for the DRC.

The table of "lead agencies" currently designated (albeit with greatly varying degrees of formalisation and responsibility) for decentralized coordination underlines the "patchwork" nature of field coordination in DRC:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Designated lead agency for coordination</b>	<b>Permanent OCHA expatriate presence</b>	<b>Permanent OCHA national staff</b>
Bas Congo & Bandundu	UNHCR	No	No
Equateur (Gemena)	WFP	Yes (50%)	Yes
Equateur (Mbandaka)	WFP	Yes (50%)	Yes
Orientale (Kisangani)	Unicef (Kisangani)	No	Yes
Orientale (Bunia)	WFP	No	Yes
Orientale (Aru)	UNHCR	No	No
North Kivu (Goma)	Unicef	Yes	Yes
South Kivu (Bukavu)	WFP	No	Yes
North Katanga (Kalemie)	WFP	No	Currently recruited <sup>1</sup>
S. Katanga	UNHCR	No	Yes
W. Kasai	Unicef	No	No
E. Kasai	WFP	No	No
Maniema (Kindu)	WFP	No	Yes
Kinshasa	UNDP	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> OCHA's national staff in Bukavu has been declared 'persona non grata' in February 2002. Senior national staff based in Kalemie moved to Bukavu.

## II. MANDATE AND ROLE OF OCHA

Do current coordination activities facilitate humanitarian work?

In general, coordination in the DRC suffers from a lack of focus on core functions and a lack of prioritization of activities. In discussions with PHCs and OCHA field offices, it was clear that each held very different views of the definition of “coordination” and of the role of the OCHA offices. As mentioned above, PHCs depended upon OCHA to act as a “secretariat” to their positions. OCHA offices located in the towns in which a PHC has been appointed often felt that they were in fact relegated to this position, but have tried to expand beyond the limitations of this role. In Goma, the OCHA office engages in a number of activities in addition to supporting the PHC, such as providing assistance to family reunification programs, disseminating information on humanitarian principles, and EHI/QUIPs. This office also played a critical role in organizing the coordination of the humanitarian response to the volcano in January. In areas where OCHA is the only coordination presence, OCHA staff have sought to expand their role in coordination activities with some success, but have been thwarted by a lack of resources. NGOs were for the most part confused as to the role of OCHA relative to that of the PHCs and in some cases commented that OCHA was “not visible.”

OCHA staff in Kinshasa and the field have looked for creative ways of facilitating coordination through the use of the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for the Emergency Humanitarian Initiative (EHI) and Quick Impact Projects (QUIPS). Recognizing that humanitarian emergency programs alone will always fall far short of the overwhelming needs in the country, OCHA has looked for opportunities to engage the humanitarian community in projects aimed at peace-building and advocacy. In the absence of partners ready to take on the tasks, OCHA has become substantially involved in initiating, administering and at times jointly implementing some of these activities. As a result, significant time and energy has been devoted to EHI/QUIPS, particularly initiatives such as the “peace barges” and current plans to rehabilitate stretches of the Lubumbashi-Kindu railway. However admirable, such projects cannot be described as either “emergency” or “humanitarian”. With regard to QUIPS in particular, many partners appreciated the potential of such a tool if it could be efficiently managed at decentralized level. However, most concurred that the current system for centralized project approval by Kinshasa is cumbersome, and questioned OCHA’s capacity and mandate to appraise and monitor such projects.

Interlocutors from both the UN and NGOs expressed a strong desire for better coordination within the humanitarian community and for a greater role by OCHA in coordination. While all agree that coordination cannot be dictated from above, there is consensus that a much more proactive approach is needed at both the strategic and field levels. Most partners articulated a role for OCHA which follows closely its core mandate activities, adding value by providing a dedicated service for the collation, synthesis and dissemination of accurate information as the foundation for facilitating field coordination, targeting operations, providing a more holistic strategy, engaging in advocacy and in resource mobilization.

## EFFECTIVENESS AND USE OF COORDINATION TOOLS

Are existing coordination tools being utilized efficiently and effectively to facilitate coordination?

The key coordination tools used in the DRC are: Assessment missions, general and sector meetings, the CAP/CHAP, reporting, program matrices, and EHI/QUIPs. They are utilized to varying degrees by OCHA and the PHCs. Both UN agencies and NGOs strongly endorse most of the above concepts and have provided useful suggestions for improvement. In particular, sector meetings are deemed critical to the overall coordination of the humanitarian response. While OCHA can support the work of implementing partners through the use of the other “coordination tools” listed above, any hope of realizing coordination of action and of identifying gaps and synergies in and among programs lies in the sector committees. To date, sector meetings have been under-utilized in all sights visited by the mission, and appear in some to exist principally on paper. All acknowledged that the relevant implementing partners, either from the UN or NGO community, should take the lead in chairing these meetings and in promoting sector-wide coordination. OCHA, for its part, has a role to play in supporting the work of the committees and in providing the linkage among the committees.

According to most of the partners, general coordination meetings are too long, too large (in number of participants), and lacking in focus. They are little more than an exchange of information and not considered to add much value in their current form. Despite the international donor community’s repeated promptings in the past, needs/intervention mapping and program matrices continue to be under-utilized, non-existent in some cases and out of date in others. OCHA has difficulty in some cases in receiving responses from implementing partners to calls for updates on program activities. Partners feel that the information flow is often one-way and that they do not receive feedback from OCHA on the information they provide. In either case, there does not appear to be any systematic approach to preparing and updating program matrices. The recent addition of OCHA staff dedicated to information management is a good start to improve this situation.

All partners are aware of the CAP/CHAP, and several had provided input to the 2002 strategy. It is seen as useful tool in creating a global strategy for the DRC. Confusion remains, especially in the NGO community, concerning the purpose of the CAP/CHAP (is it fund-raising document or a strategy document). Many currently see that CAP as too “reactive” and supply-driven rather than needs-based. Again, NGOs feel that feedback regarding the results of the CAP/CHAP is lacking. Interlocutors welcomed a greater role for OCHA in facilitating joint assessment missions.

## RELATIONS BETWEEN MONUC AND THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

Is coordination between MONUC and the humanitarian community effective and how does it impact on humanitarian operations?

The relationship between MONUC and the humanitarian community can best be described as contradictory and confused. MONUC's mandate to support humanitarian operations remains largely open to interpretation by each MONUC installation. In Kinshasa, the SRSG and the DSRSG adopt a relatively strict interpretation of the mandate, given the lack of a dedicated budget for humanitarian operations and the less than clear guidance provided by the Security Council. This translates into mainly support in the area of logistics, i.e. air transport of humanitarian personnel free of charge and of supplies via air and barge at the expense of the implementing agency. Both the SRSG and the DSRSG are also considering how MONUC resources could be used in the area of demining. Also, the SRSG made clear that MONUC is responsible for the "DD" in the "DDRRR" program. In the field, the mission encountered a variety of definitions from MONUC staff of their role in humanitarian operations. This ranged from providing transport assistance when possible to conducting separate assessment missions of humanitarian needs. Field coordination between the "Civil Affairs" sections of MONUC and the humanitarian community consequently tends to be an ad hoc affair, driven predominantly by personal initiatives and sympathies. For the NGO and Red Cross communities, in particular, MONUC is characterized as "institutionally unapproachable". Collaboration - especially with UN agencies - exists to some extent in the area of security briefings and information (links between the two entities being via the Field Security Officer (FSO)), but again, nothing systemic. According to the RC/HC, the UN and MONUC have some joint communications systems. Joint planning has taken place concerning evacuation of UN staff.

The humanitarian community's view of what MONUC should be doing to render support diverged. In some areas, such as Kisangani, NGOs look to MONUC to be more proactive in supporting their operations by opening cross-frontline corridors for humanitarian actors and providing logistical support on the ground. In contrast, Bukavu-based NGOs want to disassociate themselves completely with MONUC for security reasons. All NGOs and some field-based UN agencies fear that local populations and armed elements cannot distinguish between the mandates of the humanitarian community and MONUC which, they believe, could lead to grave security consequences for the humanitarian effort. Indeed, local Congolese refer to all humanitarian workers in the field as "MONUC."

MONUC to date has not ventured far into the realm of humanitarian operations, and their use of QUIPS is aimed first and foremost at building relations with local communities, rather than targeting humanitarian needs. It is, by their own admission, an opportunity – rather than needs – driven approach, hampered by ponderous procedures and no real capacity to identify, appraise or monitor projects. As such, there has been no coordination between MONUC QUIPS and humanitarian partners in setting priorities for their use.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### STRUCTURE:

While good coordination at both the strategic and operational level requires the participation of all UN humanitarian agencies and implementing partners, the primary responsibility for core coordination activities in the field should rest with OCHA, not with UN operational agencies. UN agencies should remain the lead on coordination within sectors. In addition, coordination activities should be focused in the main areas where humanitarian needs are the greatest. This will require a flexible approach to the deployment of human resources in line with the evolving humanitarian situation. A new structure should build from the bottom up and ensure the maximum geographical coverage of the major project areas by reinforcing field offices along with a shift away from traditional hubs, such as Goma and Kinshasa. (These offices would, however, continue to exist as part of OCHA's field network.) This will effectively erase the division between western and eastern parts of the country and focus attention on the key humanitarian theatres. Proposed structure:

**RC/HC:** The RC/HC is in charge of overall country-wide coordination of humanitarian programs in the DRC. (In the absence of the RC/HC, the most senior UN official from an implementing agency is the RC/HC a.i)

A Deputy HC/Head of OCHA/DRC should be appointed to support the mandate of the RC/HC in zones of greatest humanitarian need through the following tasks:

- Negotiate access with all actors at the field level in support of field units' initiatives;
- Inter-face with authorities at the national level throughout DRC in support of RC/HC mandate;
- Provide global strategy for humanitarian operations in areas of greatest humanitarian need linked to the global strategy for the DRC;
- Support creation of regional approaches;
- Located in Kinshasa, spending at least 70 percent of time in the field.

An OCHA Head of FCU/Director of Operations, in addition to core mandate activities, would serve as centralized management hub for OCHA activities country-wide.

OCHA field units should be reinforced with international staff as needed and in some cases relocated to provide effective geographical coverage of areas in greatest humanitarian need. These units should be light, flexible and able to respond/redeploy as the humanitarian situation dictates:

- each unit would consist of a minimum of one HAO and one IO plus support staff as required;
- each unit would be responsible for a clearly designated geographical area.



Sector committees, led by relevant implementing agencies in the field should be the primary forum for program coordination.

Agreed terms of reference in accordance with the new structure should be established for each position.

**MANDATE:**

While all of the activities undertaken by the OCHA offices in DRC have had merit and in many cases yielded remarkable results, the more operational activities in which OCHA has been engaged through EHI have been at the expense of its coordination functions. Implementation of operational activities should be assumed by UN agencies and other partners to allow OCHA to focus on its core functions. Moreover, in a world of limited resources and expanding coordination requirements, OCHA should prioritize its functions to ensure that the principle coordination needs are met:

These should be, in order of priority:

**Information management:** Collecting, synthesizing, and disseminating information; providing a database within field units for operational partners on contact information, a mapping of projects; analysis and prioritization of humanitarian needs; focus on humanitarian principles and avoid political conclusions; facilitation of assessments

**Field Coordination:** Convene general coordination meetings; support sector committees to be convened by relevant UN agencies and/or NGOs; provide global overview of sector discussions; negotiate access to new areas; inter-face with local authorities on administrative issues affecting humanitarian partners.

**Strategic Planning:** Facilitate the development of common and coherent approaches to humanitarian response; managing the input for the CHAP and preparing the final product for Kinshasa. As the situation in the DRC improves, OCHA in tandem with UNDP should coordinate strategies to ensure a smooth transition process.

**Advocacy:** Promoting humanitarian principles with local authorities and rebel groups (IHL, code of conduct and SPHERE guidelines); engaging in outreach to the local population; liaising with media on behalf of the humanitarian community.

**Resources Mobilization:** facilitate appeals to donor community to respond to emerging and sudden onset emergencies; manage input to CAP for protracted emergency in DRC.

**TOOLS AND RESOURCES:**

Assessment Missions: The key roles for OCHA should be to identify potential areas of needs to be assessed, to facilitate assessment mission for operational partners, to participate on missions as necessary

Matrices/Mapping: Use should be made of this essential tool. As a first step, project mapping should be a standard part of information packages for all field offices. Donors should reinforce with NGOs the importance of providing input for these documents.

General Coordination Meetings: Management of weekly/biweekly meetings should be improved to make them more focused, results and action oriented to include cross-sector coordination and prioritization of activities.

Sector Coordination Meetings: Meetings must be revitalized and should serve as the main forum for identifying gaps in coverage and synergies among projects in specific sectors.

Reporting: Lines of reporting within the OCHA network should be streamlined and timely feedback to all humanitarian partners should be guaranteed; donors and partners are urged to provide timely input to OCHA on their plans and programs;

CAP/CHAP: Participation of NGOs (international) in the CHAP should be increased; OCHA should also provide timely information to local humanitarian communities on schedules for workshops, reviews as well as feedback on results of the efforts, and the UN agencies should be more involved in the CHAP and should avoid use of the CAP as shopping list for implementing agencies and adopt more needs-based approach.

ERF (EHI/QUIPS): Transparency in management of the ERF should be improved by making a clear budgetary distinction between activities which are clearly “emergency” and “humanitarian” (QUIPS, air and other logistical support to relief operations) and peace building and advocacy. Selection of projects should be decentralized to ensure field offices have access to the funds; the application process should be streamlined; OCHA’s involvement in the ERF should be limited to administering the fund and to serving as catalyst for identification of potential projects.

Budget: Budgeting process should be more decentralized to allow for longer-term planning; donors must ensure core coordination activities are funded in a timely manner to allow for rational allocations.

Human resources: Decentralized deployment of human resources should reflect humanitarian needs. The donor community should be prepared to support this process as appropriate. OCHA should expand its search for potential candidates, focusing in particular on experienced personnel from the NGO community, but also maximizing use of national staff and – insofar as security conditions allow - JPOs, UNVs under supervision of experience OCHA personnel), etc.

## MONUC

MONUC’s mandate regarding humanitarian activities must be clarified and elaborated in a way that ensures its efforts are complimentary rather than supplementary to the activities of the humanitarian actors. MONUC can best assist the humanitarian community through a less operational role and a greater emphasis on enhancing its support to humanitarian partners, particularly in the areas of logistics, security and demining. Beyond this limited scope of activities, MONUC may also be able to play a role in opening up commercial links, such as barges and railroads.

Background document for DRC Multi-Donor Mission : Mission Report

MONUC should clarify how it relates to the humanitarian community and a system-wide protocol should be established to that effect.

MONUC should communicate to local officials and population to reinforce the separation between MONUC and the humanitarian actors.

Annexes:

List of participants

Terms of Reference

List of meetings

Selected List of acronyms