

Minutes of IASC Task Force Meeting, South Asia EQ
Monday, 19th December 2005

1) Regular update from agencies on progress and concerns regarding the implementation of the “90 Day Winter Plan”

- **OCHA (situation update):** There are serious concerns about logistics with roads to Neelum Valley and Battagram being cut off. Operations are hampered. On a better note, more helicopters are operational and WFP have sent out mountaineers. As for population movements, these are reducing in number, with an exception in Battagram. The key concern is currently the need for winterised tents (shelter). There are also protection concerns for a big number of children amputees. In the health sector, funding is a major problem. An overall problem is the lack of capacity, especially in light of the handover of responsibility from the military to the civilian side of the Government.
- **UNHCR:** The priority is to conclude the winterisation by distributing plastic sheets and blankets within 1 week to 10 days. This will be done through direct implementation or through implementing partners. The second phase will then be the distribution of stoves in tents, which will need to be carefully planned along with the necessary information campaigns and community mobilization on how to use them. This will start on 1st January 2006. The second priority is to make sure that the handover from the army to the civilian authorities runs smoothly. The needs are massive; the civilian authorities have no real grasp of what is needed in relation to camp management. It is planned that each bigger camp will have one person from the civilian authorities as responsible for the camp. For the smaller camps, one person will be responsible for a “cluster” of camps. As for the WatSan situation in the camps, UNHCR is working closely with UNICEF. They have come up with a clear plan and will go for direct implementation in some camps. A big issue is the police escorts, which are slowing down the response.
- **UNICEF:** A strategic meeting will soon take place on the winter period. As for the provision of blankets, 40,000 have arrived recently, and 200,000 are in the pipeline. UNICEF intends to provide assistance to 1,2 million homeless children.

Current key concerns/ messages:

- **Police escorts:** It was highlighted that the police escorts are compulsory for all international staff according to a national law. Some NGOS have also indicated that they are unwilling to travel if this means that they have to travel with police escorts.

Follow-up Action point: OCHA NY to bring this up with UNDSS in NY.
It was also suggested that the HC take up the issue of the police escorts on behalf of the whole UN.

- **UNHCR:** 1) UNHCR would like to see the full empowerment of the Pakistani Government in the camp management. UNHCR will fully support the Government. 2) It is important to look at the linkage of the current relief activities with the recovery and early recovery activities. 3) A reflection is needed **on the side of the donors** about what they still want to “inject” to agencies for the post-spring period. If the operation is to be kept at a quality level, it won't end in February/March/ April. Funds will therefore be needed for the post-spring period.
- **Funding situation:** UNOPS raised the concern about a possible confusion at the donor level, which might be created by the various messages that come across on the funding situation. According to WHO the message should be that the funding situation is still very fragile. The response to the Appeal was initially very good but subsequently, it was rather absent. If more funds are not forthcoming very soon, there is a risk that the operations will need to be downsized or even stopped.

Follow-up Action point: Agencies are requested to send the messages that they want to have reflected at the donor meeting to Anvar Munavvaraov at munavvarov@un.org .

2) Exit strategy

- **OCHA:** Agencies have been asked to come up with exit plans for the relief aspects of this operation and to come up with a common timeframe. The exit strategy is determined by the role of each agency in 1) the emergency phase: until the handover of responsibility from military to civilian authorities; 2) the medium term: until the arrival and distribution of all pipeline commodities; 3) in the long term: until the end of winter, approximately the end of March. What needs to be done when? What are the factors to be taken into account? What is needed as regards the implementing partners?

Follow-up Action point: The field is working on these issues in the next 2 weeks.

- **UNDP:** Discussions on transition issues are currently in progress between OCHA, UNDP and the members of the Early Recovery (ER) Cluster at the Islamabad and Geneva level. Question and issues that have been identified are: 1) The process needs to focus on a transition to the Government with the UN and donors in a support function. The ERRA has indicated that it will pursue a sector approach similar to that of the humanitarian clusters. 2) Humanitarian clusters are expected to gradually move towards recovery-type operations. Additional clusters/working groups may only be established for those sector/cross-sector issues that are not yet covered by the existing humanitarian clusters, i.e. environment, livelihoods, governance or disaster reduction. 3) The challenge will be to ensure that recovery is approached coherently across these clusters; it will be important to feed issues/policies and approaches relevant in the recovery process as soon as possible into the work of the humanitarian clusters, within the broader context of the ER framework. 4) The transition needs to feed and link into ongoing development program. Recovery and development programming should not be pursued in separation but be merged. This will also be crucial in terms of the institutional set-up dealing with development – at Government, the UN system (UNCT, thematic groups), community level, etc. 5) The transition will need to **fill the policy gap** and ensure advisory support to the Govt/ ERRA on issues such as ‘rebuilding shelter in a hazard resilient manner’ or ‘building standards for schools in the education sector’. Work is already been done in this regard. In order to boost the capacity of the ERRA to guide this standard setting process, the UN & donors have agreed to place 6 advisors into the ERRA for education/health; livelihoods/protection; livelihoods/agriculture; transport; urban planning; rural housing.
- A concern was expressed on reconstruction efforts not to be based on pre-earthquake standards, as they were quite relatively low in some parts of the affected areas.

3) Update on cluster review

- **OCHA :** The focal point in OCHA HQ for this is Susanne Frueh in NY. The basic idea would be to do a "lite" semi-preparatory visit in February (mostly likely to Islamabad only) by an inter-agency evaluation team (in-house staff) plus one consultant. During that visit the TOR for the real time evaluation would be elaborated as well as a real-time assessment of the cluster approach, its tentative impact and emerging issues for the response. A draft note on the short mission in February will be shared with the agencies.

Follow-up Action point: Agencies are encouraged to submit any suggestions on how to proceed to Susanne Frueh at frueh@un.org .

4) AOB

- **Special Envoy:** It is expected that former President Bush will start by approaching the international community on the funding issue. It is also expected that he will be travelling to the affected areas in early January.
- **Female staff:** It was stressed that all agencies lack female staff on the ground, especially female staff speaking the local language.
- **Psychosocial programs:** This is as of yet not adequately being addressed.
- **Protection:** There is a gap in addressing general protection issues in the field.

- **IASC- UNDG:** A discussion is to be initiated amongst IASC members on whether to transform the present IASC TF into an IASC-UNDG TF.

Follow-up Action point: Agencies are kindly requested to make sure that details of contact persons are available over the Christmas period.

SUGGESTED NEXT AGENDA items:

- The '90 Day Plan Update' (especially with an update on logistics)
- Cluster review (?)
- DSS update (especially in light of the police escorts- issue)

NEXT IASC TF MEETING: Tuesday, 27th December 2005, 15:30 GVA time