

**CLUSTER WORKING GROUP ON  
NUTRITION AND FEEDING**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The IASC Nutrition and Feeding Cluster Working Group (NFCWG) was chaired by UNICEF and included representatives from OCHA, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO, ICRC, Action Against Hunger, and Save the Children/Sphere Focal Point (for ICVA, InterAction, and SCHR)

**A. Roles and responsibilities** were identified first for the NFCWG (as the overall Nutrition and Feeding coordination body, composed of representatives from IASC member agencies). It was agreed that the primary long-term objective of the NFCWG will be to *ensure a predictable, speedy, effective, accountable and coordinated response to Nutrition and Feeding in emergencies*. Roles and responsibilities were then initially identified within 10 subcluster areas of Nutrition and Feeding. All IASC member agencies will participate equally and actively in each of the areas, as appropriate to their mandates, through Subcluster Task Forces (STFs). Subcluster Task Forces will function as technical task forces, responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring a detailed work plan of action in their respective areas. Subcluster Task Force Lead agencies, identified through objective and transparent criteria, have been designated to coordinate the development and implementation of an actionable workplan in each subcluster area. Subclusters Task Forces and respective lead agencies are listed below:

*Thematic Subcluster Task Forces and lead Agencies:*

Infant & Young Child Feeding (UNICEF); Micronutrients (UNICEF); Therapeutic Feeding (UNICEF); Supplementary Feeding (WFP); Food Security (WFP)

*Cross-cutting Subcluster Task Forces and lead Agencies:* Norms and Policies (WHO); Response triggering (UNICEF); Assessment, Monitoring & Surveillance (UNICEF); Emergency Preparedness (UNICEF).

It has been agreed that a cross-cutting STF should be developed to focus on HIV/AIDS, however it is not yet determined which agency will lead. It has also been agreed that UNHCR should take the lead on nutrition in refugee settings, however it is not yet determined if a STF should be established for this area.

It is suggested that there be a matrix management of thematic and cross-cutting areas, requiring collaboration and integration of thematic areas into cross-cutting areas, and vice versa. It is the responsibility of the thematic lead agencies to coordinate implementation of their thematic area, which entails monitoring performance in each cross-cutting area related to their theme. Conversely, it is the responsibility of each cross-cutting lead agency to ensure their respective area is integrated into the thematic areas. These accountabilities need to be further elaborated upon and must be accompanied by a comprehensive work plan for each STF.

**B. The following recommendations were yielded by the NFCWG** through several teleconferences, one face-to-face meeting, and email exchanges, for consideration by the IASC Principals on September 6-7, 2005:

**General Recommendations to the IASC for All Cluster Groups**

1. Establish the IASC Cluster Working Groups as the official coordination mechanisms for action in humanitarian crises;
2. Endorse measurable indicators developed by the agencies to hold them accountable for cluster and subcluster response areas, using the “Sphere Handbook”, as appropriate;
3. Endorse concept of national lead agencies and develop a mechanism of coordination at country level for preparedness and rapid response;
4. Strengthen CERF or similar funding mechanism whereby funds can be made available to crises in a reliable, consistent and objective manner;

**Specific Recommendations to the IASC for Nutrition and Feeding**

5. Appoint UNICEF as lead agency for Nutrition and Feeding in Emergencies, as recommended by the NFCWG ;
6. Endorse the development of Subcluster Task Forces and their respective lead agencies, for 10 subcluster areas in Nutrition and Feeding;
7. Prioritize human resources as an area that requires immediate attention to improve quality and quantity of deployable and available staff;
8. Invest in the strengthening and development of national early warning systems and effective response triggering for Nutrition and Feeding;
9. Support the standardization of evaluation and monitoring methodologies and tools;
10. Secure sufficient financial resources for adequate supplies to cover preparedness and rapid response.

**C. The Terms of Reference for the Lead Agency in Nutrition and Feeding (UNICEF) is as follows:**

- a. Provide the administrative, financial and human resource support for the secretariat of the NFCWG,
- b. Ensure that systematic working arrangements at global and country level are in place to respond effectively to Nutrition and Feeding emergency areas. This includes providing overall technical coordination among the Subcluster Task Forces, and coordinating with other technical secretariats (e.g. Water and Sanitation, Health, etc.). [Details must still be worked out on the implementation mechanisms of coordination]
- c. Clearly define preparedness requirements for specific crises
- d. Identify the resources required for a predictable, speedy, and effective response in nutrition emergencies
- e. Coordinate the development of capacity within the Nutrition and Feeding Cluster Working Group (e.g. standardizing training materials, developing standby arrangements, developing staff profiles, etc.)
- f. Mobilize awareness within the international community to ensure an adequate response for nutrition in declared emergencies (e.g. raising attention related to lack of access or limited resources, etc.), and raise early warning signals for imminent or foreseeable emergencies

The lead agency will not be expected to do everything directly itself, nor will it have the authority to direct or supervise other agencies. The humanitarian response to Nutrition and Feeding must be a collaborative and joint effort involving all agencies. *The Lead Agency will, however, respond to the generic request made of all leads by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to exercise "primary managerial responsibility and accountability", consistently, and on a global basis.*

**D. An implementation plan** to address the above recommendations, as well as to address technical gaps and recommendations will be developed by the NFCWG, following endorsement of the cluster report and recommendations by the IASC Principals.