

NOTE ON TESTING OF THE FIELD GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CONSOLIDATED APPEAL PROCESS

21 October 1994

I. INTRODUCTION

During the first half of 1994 an Inter-Agency Task Force has worked on transforming the Consolidated Appeal Process Guidelines into a set of Field Guidelines. At its meeting on 27 July 1994, the IASC-WG decided that consultations should take place with a selected number of field offices with emergency relief management experience. The purpose of this exercise was to obtain comments on the Field Guidelines from staff who have had direct experience of emergency relief work and of consolidated appeals in order to help refine these guidelines into a practical and useful manual for field staff confronted with major or complex emergencies.

II. METHOD

In collaboration with UNDP, eighteen field offices were selected for these consultations [Cambodia, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Cuba, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Mozambique, Sudan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia]. The draft Field Guidelines were sent to these eighteen offices with a letter from USG Hansen on 8 August [see attached], proposing that UN agencies and NGOs in the country review the guidelines and provide their reactions and suggestions on how to make them as practical as possible as well as to indicate any matters that should be developed further.

III. THE RESPONSE

Answers have been received from staff representing 10 out of the 18 country offices which were invited to comment on the Field Guidelines. Many of the comments were of a relatively general nature, giving advice on the direction in which the Field Guidelines should be developed further. Some provided insight into the particular emergency experience of field offices with particular references to the use of appeals. In addition, comments have been received on specific paragraphs of the Field Guidelines.

IV. REVIEW OF COMMENTS

[i] General Comments

The first reaction from the field is that of welcoming this initiative of working out clear and acceptable procedures for the process. However, some offices feel that the guidelines could be shorter and look forward to receiving the next draft in which the detailed annexes would be included.

Some comments show that field offices feel overwhelmed by all the activities to be undertaken and that their staff resources are inadequate. A proposal is that this could be remedied by teams from HQs going to disaster-prone countries to assess what would be required in case of an emergency (including type and use of staff, logistics, communications, etc).

Another comment received from field offices underlines the need to attach a glossary to the main text which explains the terms and acronyms used.

[ii] Types of Emergencies Addressed by the Guidelines

The Field Guidelines text does not indicate clearly enough whether they concern complex emergencies only or also natural disaster. The term "major and complex emergencies" is used in the text but may need to be defined. Furthermore, it may not be clear that these Field Guidelines concern new as well as on-going emergencies.

[iii] The Disaster Management Team (DMT)

The DMT is a concept which is consistently commented upon in very positive terms. The DMT should be a standing mechanism or should at least be set up at an early stage but in some cases the agencies do not have staff for this. This comment is particularly relevant for the countries in the New Independent States (NIS) where the history of external humanitarian organisations presence is brief. Another comment concerns the denomination of these teams which, if concerned only with complex emergencies, may rather be "Emergency" than "Disaster" Management Teams.

Although the DMT concept is praised for creating team spirit and to ensure that the response approaches are consolidated, a few offices have remarked that involving

all concerned organisations in all stages of the work is a very cumbersome and time consuming exercise which may not be practical.

[iv] Relief - Recovery - Development Linkages

The prioritisation in the Guidelines of relief activities has provoked many critical comments which indicate that more attention should be put on the rehabilitation /reconstruction/development aspects than is currently the case, otherwise, there is a risk for dependency syndrome of those assisted. It is also not really a "Continuum", but parallel activities (relief, rehabilitation and development) which should in fact overlap each other in time rather than follow a chronological sequence.

[v] Governments' Points of View

Some governments (e.g. Ethiopia), prefer to prepare and launch their own national appeals which could then be supported by agencies rather than the launching of a consolidated appeal for one or several countries together. Regional consolidated appeals seem to provoke a fear among a few Governments that much needed resources may go to another country. This reaction may to a certain extent be due to the fact that the relevant Government officials are not sufficiently informed about the entire process and involved in the work.

[vi] Internalisation of the Guidelines

A proposal from one field office is that the Field Guidelines should be transmitted by the HQs of all concerned organizations to their field offices with a note of support for this approach to ensure full sharing of the procedures so that all offices would be incited to cooperate in the field. DMTP in collaboration with IASU will, from March 1995, develop an Inter-Agency Field Manual which will include the Field Guidelines.

[vii] Plan of Operation/Consolidated Appeal

The preparation of the plan of operations and the consolidated appeal as described in the field guidelines gives the impression that we are dealing with two separate processes, while in fact they should be regarded as closely connected and part of the same exercise.

[viii] Appointment of Humanitarian Coordinator and Deployment of other Staff

The importance of a very early appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator has been underlined as the crucial point of departure for all coordinated emergency work in the field. The second action to be taken by the respective concerned organizations is to ensure that the right type and number of staff to implement the emergency response are put in place. It may also be so that certain organizations whose special knowledge and abilities are required for a particular emergency response are not present in the concerned country. It should then be the task of the H.C. to call in the necessary expertise. These points need to be emphasized stronger in the Field Manual.

[ix] Reporting

The section on field reporting needs to be clarified further. A comment is that clearance by agency representatives with their HQs takes too long time in emergency situations and should therefore only be used for quarterly reports while the HC will have to take the responsibility for the content of more frequent reporting. Draft Guidelines on Field Reporting have been developed by IASU and Field Offices will be asked to comment on these.

[x] Revisions of Consolidated Appeals

It has been pointed out that revisions should not occur too often as this would be confusing to the donor community. The cut-off date of 31 December should be avoided both because that would mean that many appeals would have to be revised at the same time and also because for certain parts of the world this is the most difficult time of the year (i.e. harsh winter climate) and a break in funding delivery would therefore have particularly serious repercussions during such periods.

V. FOLLOW-UP

Some of the above comments can be incorporated in the text to clarify the objectives and to avoid any ambiguities. However, the IASC-WG is invited to guide the Task Force on the following points:

DMT

_Should the denomination be EMT rather than DMT?

_How to orient field staff of all organizations on the objectives and modus operandi of the DMT/EMT?

Relief - Recovery - Development Linkages

_How can the "prioritisation" rule of activities for consolidated appeals be reconsidered to better link relief with recovery and development activities?

Internalisation of the Guidelines

_How to make the Field Guidelines known and used in the field by all concerned as soon as possible?

Revisions of Consolidated Appeals

_What should be the Guidelines concerning the duration of appeal periods e.g 6, 12 months, the mechanism for revisions of appeals, cut-off dates for appeal periods e.g. end of year, mid-year.