IASC PRINCIPALS AD HOC MEETING

Central African Republic

15 January 2014

**Summary Record and Action Points**

# *Opening remarks by the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator*

The objectives of the meeting were to review progress made in implementing operational priorities, scaling up capacity and mobilizing support, ahead of the OCHA-EU High-Level Conference on the humanitarian situation in CAR scheduled on 20 January in Brussels.

The DERC noted some major developments since the last IASC meeting, including the resignations of the transitional president and prime minister; agreement in principle by the European Union to deploy a military mission in support of MISCA and French troops; and arrival of more than 300 Moroccan troops to form the BINUCA Guard Unit and provide security for UN staff and assets, as authorized by the Council on 29 October 2013.

# *Update on humanitarian situation and operations*

The Senior Humanitarian Coordinator stressed that the humanitarian situation remained dire. Half of the population of Bangui was displaced and 2.6 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. The results of the multi-sector needs assessment (MIRA) released on 14 January revealed that the number of affected persons was significantly higher than originally estimated. Funding required was expected to increase significantly to possibly USD 500 million for the revised SRP for 2014. The HCT planned to establish eight operational hubs, with one UN agency in the lead for each location.

Priorities highlighted by the MIRA, and commented upon by participants, included: **Health/ WASH**: the health system has collapsed and 70% of people interviewed identified access to health services as their top priority. The lack of health and WASH infrastructure in camps greatly increases the risk of communicable disease outbreaks. **Food Security:** There was growing food insecurity due to displacement and disruption of market and agricultural activity. WFP was engaged in a large food assistance programme. There were concerns about a fragile food pipeline with virtually no resources for the pre-positioning that needed to begin immediately to avoid costly airlifting during the rainy season. **Livelihoods:** 49% of affected communities stated the need to receive seeds before the March planting season; FAO planned to distribute seeds to 240,000 households by then. **Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** most communities reported violence, executions (men) and rape (women). Unaccompanied children were reported in the majority of communities. UNHCR underlined its intention to focus on protection issues. Several participants underlined the need for an SGBV prevention strategy. **Refugees:** The crisis comprised a significant regional dimension, with 240,000 refugees registered in surrounding countries. **Logistics:** WFP stated that it was increasing its air and trucking capacity to provide common services as required matching the operational scale-up. **IDPs:** Participants called for an improved system to track the increasingly dynamic IDP numbers, movements, as well as host families and returnees. In respect of the Bangui airport, as re-establishing a safe environment for people to return to was likely to take time, the HCT needed to double its efforts to meet critical needs, which may involve the installation of some infrastructure, without institutionalizing camps as permanent solutions. The SHC advised that a contingency plan for the airport would be ready by the end of January.

Priority areas were Bangui, and the North East and North West Provinces. In the NW Provinces, additional priority needs for the IDP were in communication, food and NFI, and assistance for IDP returning home. An additional priority was **Communication with Communities (CwC),** in the broader context of improving accountability to affected people learning from past experiences, especially OCHA’s work in the Philippines.

**Human Rights:** A press release with preliminary findings of the OHCHR fact-finding mission in December had been released on 14 January, documenting grave human rights violations since 5 December. The Human Rights Council would have a special session on 20 January and it was expected that an independent expert on the situation of human rights would be established. OHCHR had sent an advance team of the Commission of Inquiry and was taking urgent steps to strengthen the BINUCA Human Rights and Justice Section. OHCHR reiterated the call for IASC organizations to support the work of the Commission of Inquiry.

**Political:** The current political situation, particularly progress in the new transitional arrangement, and its impact on the security and humanitarian crisis was discussed. In particular, an update was provided on the temporary solution being sought to provide food to the cantoned but not disarmed ex-Séléka.

# *Implementation of L3 system-wide response*

The Chair of the Emergency Directors Group noted that the L3-activation had led to the successful instalment of strong leadership; the timely completion of a top quality MIRA; and the imminent finalization of the revised Strategic Response Plan (SRP). The UN presence has expanded. According to DSS, there are 680 UN personnel from 15 agencies currently deployed, 75 of them in field locations.

Lack of implementation capacity was cited as a major hurdle, with NGO presence limited, and UN agencies and IOM filling the gap through direct implementation. Given the high up-front costs for establishing new NGOs, and uncertain timeframes, NGO consortiums advised the UN to work with NGOs already present in CAR. In view of the capacity shortage, an NGO participant urged the UN to focus on priority areas in Bangui and the northwest axis, rather than throughout CAR. The IFRC is looking to increase capacity of the CAR Red Cross. It was also announced that OXFAM-GB intended to scale up its presence.

To expand capacity, the IASC could: (i) provide funding to NGOs already in CAR to scale up (including via the Common Humanitarian Fund); (ii) scale up the capacity of UN organizations to deliver directly; and (iii) invest in local infrastructure.

In terms of L3 scale-up, the process needed to be streamlined in future emergencies. An Operational Peer Review was being planned. The ERC would confirm the cluster arrangement in near future, based on IASC comments. IOM proposed a multi-sector approach to dealing with migrants and refugees in the region.

**Security:** participants appreciated the good leadership on security and stressed the importance of closely linking security and operational planning. The first group of the United Nations Guard Unit comprising over 300 soldiers had been deployed to Bangui to provide static and mobile protection to UN facilities, personnel and operations. An additional 200 or more soon to arrive would be deployed to field locations outside the capital as UN internal security reinforcement. While recognizing the risk of armed protection and integration to the perceived neutrality of humanitarian actors, these measures were necessary to take some distance from other military forces deployed directly in the conflict. DSS invited all IASC organizations to contact them if they would like to add NGOs to the list of humanitarian organizations that receive the daily security updates produced under the Saving Lives Together policy. Participants highlighted that it would be helpful to have a common immediate risk analysis and security advice from DSS in case of major political events or developments.

# *Mobilizing financial and political support*

The two major challenges to humanitarian response were identified as the significant underfunding and the lack of implementing capacity on the ground, with the former exacerbating the latter. Funding was significantly lower than in other humanitarian emergencies of similar or even lower scale. The high-level conference in Brussels, although not a pledging conference, was crucial to communicate the urgent humanitarian needs in CAR and to increase funding. The messaging should convey to development actors and donors that the establishment of local networks was crucial for the humanitarian operational capacity, the prevention of SGBV, and the provision of health services including maternal health. While addressing the critical humanitarian situation, it would also be important to emphasize the need to engage simultaneously in early recovery efforts, community security and social cohesion as critical to stabilizing the situation and supporting humanitarian efforts. Key messages on this would be sent to the Emergency Relief Coordinator ahead of the Brussels meeting

Several participants called for an additional CERF allocation of USD 15 million increasing the total CERF contribution to USD 25 million. Other participants called for an additional CERF allocation of USD 25 million to accompany the launch of the SRP. The Chair said that the ERC was not opposed to additional funding, if the new request was in line with the MIRA and complementary to allocations planned under the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF).

The IASC Principals:

1. *Decided to scale up the capacity to deliver by (i) mobilizing funding for NGOs active in CAR; (ii) increasing UN implementation capacity; and (iii) assessing local organizations and investing in local infrastructure.* ***Action by: All IASC organizations and the HCT.***
2. *Requested the ERC to consider additional CERF funding, in order to address the priority needs identified by the multi-sector rapid assessment (MIRA).* ***Action by: The SHC to present to the ERC for consideration priority gaps for potential CERF Rapid Response funding, in line with the revised Strategic Response Plan, the MIRA results, and upcoming CHF allocation.***
3. *Requested the ERC to include the conclusions of this meeting in her messaging on the high-level conference on 20 January in Brussels. This includes the issue of early recovery and need to tap into development funding streams for CAR;* *the establishment of local networks to enhance humanitarian operational capacity; the prevention of SGBV; the provision of health services including maternal health; and the need to assist migrants and refugees in the region.* ***Action by: The IASC Secretariat to provide a summary to the ERC and OCHA to include these points in the ERC statements by 19 January.***
4. *Requested DSS to send immediate risk analysis and security advisory to the HCT when the political situation changes rapidly; and asked IASC organizations and NGO networks to contact DSS if they wish to be added to the distribution list of daily security updates.* ***Action by: DSS and IASC organisations/NGO immediately.***
5. *Considered a multi-sector arrangement to address refugee/migrant issues; asked the HC to include them in the SRP under multi-sector assistance; and asked the ERC to raise the issue at the Brussels CAR conference.* ***Action by: UNHCR, IOM, Senior HC and ERC by end-January.***
6. *Requested OCHA to better track IDPs (numbers and locations, host families) to enable an adequate response to the dynamic IDP situation.* ***Action by: OCHA immediately.***
7. *Proposed to increase civil-military coordination capacity to support liaison with different military groups that are deploying.* ***Action by: HCT, OCHA and WFP by 31 January.***
8. *Reiterated the need to promote Accountability to Affected People and Communication with Communities, building on lessons learnt in the Philippines, especially regarding humanitarian principles.* ***Action by: All IASC organizations, led by OCHA, in cooperation with the IASC Task Team for AAP.***

*Prepared by: the IASC secretariat*

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