

# FLASH APPEAL OVERHAUL

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2007 saw a sharp increase in the number of flash appeals compared to previous years, due in part to a greater frequency of weather-related disasters (which have climbed steadily in recent years), but also to the fact that more small-scale disasters generated flash appeals in 2007. A key related fact is that more disasters and flash appeals are happening in countries with low humanitarian capacity among the international organizations present. This paper reviews the flash appeal mechanism in light of other developments in humanitarian policy and response tools, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the cluster approach, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) function, and current efforts to improve contingency planning, rapid needs assessment and surge capacity. The basic rationale of flash appeals – to organise the response and funding requests, and to stimulate funding supply – endures, but the design, practice, and image of flash appeals need an overhaul.

Potential improvements in the quality of flash appeals are clearly interlinked with the strengthening of other humanitarian response tools. This paper draws linkages to current efforts to enhance such tools, but does not propose remedies for the totality of IASC response mechanisms. Within these parameters, practical proposals are made for improving the quality and timeliness of flash appeals, and for adapting their design and practice to new political and operational realities.

In particular, greater clarity is needed on the timing of flash appeals, what should be included in them, the nature of the relationship to immediate CERF funding, and the need for systematic and dynamic reviews of flash appeals. There is room for discussion on these issues, but the OCHA view is that flash appeals should be what they claim to be: very rapid (e.g. within five to seven days of a sudden-onset disaster or from the declaration of an emergency, in ways yet to be determined); that initial CERF allocations should aim for the same timing, to kick-start the appeal and provide very rapid funding; a flash appeal should be limited to time-critical needs and include early recovery projects for which there is a need and the implementation capacity is available; that a process of revision should be immediately started with a view to a formal update (rolling version) three or four weeks later; and that systematic and regular revision of flash appeals should be obligatory. Meanwhile, rapid needs assessment methodology needs to be simplified and standardised; and the relationship between system-wide appeals and individual agency / organisation appeals clarified.

Many of the key practical steps relate to the need for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to enhance humanitarian preparedness and response capacity in disaster-prone countries, in particular in countries with development-profile United Nations country teams. In so doing, the humanitarian community must adapt to the fact that developing countries have invested heavily in disaster preparedness and response capacity in recent years, particularly in Asia. The Red Cross estimates that 80% of disasters are managed at the national level.<sup>1</sup> This changes the nature of UN involvement in disaster response: the UN needs to engage systematically with disaster-prone countries prior to disasters, making full use of available early warning information, with a view to complementing host governments' capacities as well as addressing their sensitivities surrounding the activation of a flash appeal.

A second area of key steps is to ensure stronger alignment between disaster response (and resulting flash appeal content) and humanitarian reform, with focus on the cluster approach (or "adapt[ing] current working methods to conform to cluster approach guidance"<sup>2</sup>), the authoritative role of RC/HCs in prioritising among projects, NGO inclusion in flash appeals, and the balance between life-saving and early recovery projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, "International cooperation in humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development", 7 September 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Rome Statement on Cluster Roll-Out, paragraph 8, adopted at the IASC Working Group (WG) meeting of 5-7 November 2007.

Following the analysis after this executive summary is a list of immediate steps that OCHA, the IASC CAP Sub-Working Group (SWG) and humanitarian country teams can take to address key weaknesses in flash appeal guidelines and practice. The paper also maps a broader set of measures that OCHA and the IASC need to explore regarding the flash appeal's long-term adaptation to emerging trends.

## **BACKGROUND ANALYSIS**

### **1. The climatic context**

Between 2000 and 2006, the annual average number of disasters doubled to more than 400, according to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters. The rise in the total number of disasters may be attributed, in part, to improved reporting. Other factors include the effects of global warming, and increased concentrations of people in unsafe and hazard prone areas. The number of climate-related (or "hydro-meteorological hazard") events, such as floods, hurricanes and droughts, has increased dramatically over the last 20 years, both in absolute terms and in comparison with the number of geological disasters (such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis). From 1987 to 1998, the average annual number of climate-related disasters was 195. From 2000 to 2006, the average was 365, representing an increase of 87%. Comparable figures for the same period for geological disasters reflect a rise from 28 to 38, which represents an increase of 36%.<sup>3</sup>

Of the 15 flash appeals published in 2007, all but one (Peru earthquake) were climate-related (cyclones, floods and droughts).<sup>4</sup> In the future even more natural disasters may strike in unexpected places. For example, climate change has already had unexpected impact on floods, reducing their predictability. Disasters may strike at different locations simultaneously: for instance, floods can hit two or three countries the same day. In these situations, OCHA Regional Offices' available surge capacity is easily overstretched. This trend requires a review of existing response mechanisms for sudden-onset disasters, including flash appeals.

The quality of such appeals (situation analysis, needs assessment, overview of response capacity, and prioritisation among sectors and projects) remains pivotal for well-informed funding decisions by donors; joint planning of disaster response among agencies; and evidence-based provision of humanitarian relief to beneficiaries. If a greater number of disaster responses and appeals are to be managed effectively, longstanding systemic shortcomings and constraints must be addressed in the medium term. However, there are short-term measures that can be taken to remedy some of the commonest flaws in flash appeal practice.

A consequence of 2007's climatic patterns is that more disasters struck in countries with no longstanding humanitarian operation: for example OCHA does not have a presence in 11 out of the 15 countries for which flash appeals were issued in 2007, and in some of these countries other humanitarian agencies were not structured to conduct rapid assessments, planning or response. OCHA does not currently have sufficient regional surge capacity to fully remedy this situation.

### **2. Weaknesses and challenges in the flash appeal process**

#### **2.1 Delay**

2007 saw some significant delays in the issuance of flash appeals, moreover with no commensurate gain in quality or precision. Among 2007 flash appeals, the average span between disaster<sup>5</sup> and appeal was 35 days, with the slowest being Burkina Faso at 79 days, and the Dominican Republic the

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (GA), 7 September 2007: "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development".

<sup>4</sup> Bolivia (floods), Dominican Republic (tropical storm Noel), Nicaragua (hurricane Felix), Democratic People's Republic of Korea (floods), Lesotho (drought), Madagascar (floods), Mozambique (floods and cyclone), Pakistan (cyclone and floods), Peru (earthquake), Sudan (floods), Swaziland (drought), Uganda (floods), Ghana (floods), Zambia (floods).

<sup>5</sup> Measuring the date of disaster from the date of the first international report thereof.

fastest at eight. Even the latter should be seen as slower than desired; and an average of a month between disaster and flash appeal is completely unacceptable. Comprehensive data have not been gathered for the span between disaster and appeal in previous years, but note that the Tsunami Flash Appeal was issued after 11 days, and the Pakistan Earthquake Flash Appeal after only three days. Common causes for delay include: inexperience in humanitarian response on the part of the country team; light deployment of surge support from headquarters or regional offices (for example, often only one OCHA staff is deployed); a misperception that thorough assessments must precede even the initial edition of an appeal; and affected country governments' perceptions of the role of international organisations in the disaster response, in particular an aversion to being the subject of an appeal. Close inspection of the data on the intervals in the various stages of appeal development (Table 3 below) shows that by far the longest interval is typically that between the disaster and the RC's/HC's decision to develop a flash appeal – an average of 21 days, in 2007.

Why rush the initial flash appeal – why not wait a few weeks until there is better information, detailed assessments and elaborate planning? A fundamental reason for issuing an initial flash appeal quickly with available information, inference and elemental joint planning is that the humanitarian system, particularly donors, rely on flash appeals as proxies for estimating the scale, severity, nature and urgency of disasters. Several other reasons flow from this. If the implementing side of the humanitarian system with all its expertise cannot provide this overview within a few days, the credibility of and confidence in humanitarian response suffers. Flash appeals stimulate funding supply in that some donors can access emergency funding reserves only, or more easily and quickly, if a flash appeal has been launched. A rapid flash appeal pre-empts solo appeals that agencies might otherwise feel obliged to launch but which concern stakeholders who see solo appeals as a sign of systemic fragmentation. The strategic planning forum that the development of a flash appeal provides – even if the joint planning is elemental in the first days – can produce a more prioritised immediate response than disconnected actions in lieu of such joint planning.

For these reasons among others, despite the obstacles, country teams should be held to issuing flash appeals within five days of a disaster, to organise the response and mobilise resources fast, and capitalise on donor and media attention.

## **2.2 Failure to find the right balance between speed and precision in needs assessment**

Donors accept the principle of a trade-off between speed and precision in needs assessment and the resulting appeal.<sup>6</sup> To issue an appeal within five days, a country team that is not already on a humanitarian footing will probably not be able to conduct any thorough ground assessment. (Experience shows that assessment exercises which were initially intended to yield a result within 2-3 days usually end up taking 7-10 days.) The humanitarian system should therefore accept the principle and develop the practice of launching initial appeals with estimated needs and response largely based on remote sensing, secondary data, and reasonable inference. (Appeal funding requests should be commensurately conservative.) The initial appeal would be revised after better needs assessment, on a rolling basis, and with an updated document published a few weeks later.

Needs analysis methods also have to be refined. Flash appeals rarely distinguish between the levels and ways in which people are “affected” by a disaster, with for example the entire caseload often deemed to need food aid. The appeals rarely compare needs across sectors and are therefore inadequate to inform funding decisions. More nuanced categories of “affected”, including levels of displacement, loss of shelter, food, sanitation etc, are therefore needed.

More broadly, the humanitarian community presently lacks a mechanism to judge needs and make comparisons between crises, in the form of a template that brings together, for example, numbers affected; state of the affected population pre-disaster; coping mechanisms; extent of the damage; ease of access and state of infrastructure; and capacity of the government. Standardization of such basic metrics would both inform the decision on whether to trigger a flash appeal (especially in borderline situations where predictable climatic variation widens to cause humanitarian needs), and provide basic rapid needs analysis for appeals that are triggered.

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<sup>6</sup> An exception was the 2007 Pakistan floods, where Islamabad-based donor representatives encouraged the country team to conduct assessments on the ground before launching even an initial appeal.

### **2.3 Perceived over-budgeting**

Funding requests are often perceived by donors to be unfounded. Two types are apparent: over-budgeted projects, and non-humanitarian projects. Pre-agreed, standardised cost ranges may be a way of addressing the former. In the 2006 global cluster appeal, three clusters produced a generic estimated cost for addressing needs in their sectors for a hypothetical emergency of 500,000 people. Since then OCHA has encouraged the global clusters to formalise these estimates as a budget starting point for flash appeals, but so far the global cluster leads have not made progress. The IASC CAP SWG should request the global cluster leads to go ahead with this generic estimation.

### **2.4 Phased Inclusion of Early Recovery Projects**

Early recovery projects that are included in flash appeals may be perceived as 'non-humanitarian', since most of them do not entail 'life-saving' activities. However, well-prioritized early recovery interventions do address time-critical needs: as such, they may involve saving lives in the longer term, (although not necessarily immediately), and very probably hasten the end of aid dependence. Therefore, common sense suggests that early recovery projects can be proposed in a flash appeal's rapid first edition, provided that they: 1) have been reliably assessed (including through reasonable inference); and 2) have a strong rationale for beginning sooner rather than later; and 3) can be completed roughly within the flash appeal's six-month planning horizon.<sup>7</sup> Essential 'start-up' costs for early recovery (to support coordination, rapid assessments and initial planning) can also be included. Additional early recovery projects, based on subsequent more thorough assessments of early recovery needs, will be included in the Flash Appeal revision (hence a phased approach). The IASC should formally adopt a policy governing early recovery requests in flash appeals, along the lines of that drafted in 2007 by UNDP with support from IOM.

Some flash appeals before 2007 requested huge sums for early recovery (Bangladesh Floods Flash Appeal 2004, Tsunami Flash Appeal 2005, Pakistan Earthquake Flash Appeal 2005). Since 2007, early recovery requests have generally been much more limited: the 'Economic Recovery and Infrastructure' sector, which is used as an imperfect proxy for early recovery, comprised only 11% of flash appeal funding requests in 2007 (see table 2 below).

### **2.5 Flash appeals left unrevised**

Flash appeals, especially if they are rapid, should be revised a month after initial publication, to incorporate more accurate information and government recovery plans. However, in 2007, only three out of 15 flash appeals were revised; moreover two of those revisions (Madagascar and Dominican Republic) had the purpose of adding new projects in response to further storms rather than updating the original plan and projects. Leaving a flash appeal unrevised misses an opportunity to improve the targeting of resources, and to maximise the quality and quantity of assistance to beneficiaries. The IASC should enforce the practice of revising appeals, with the option to close an appeal (reduce its unmet requirements to zero) if the country team is unwilling to revise it within the flash appeal's duration or planning horizon (maximum six months).

### **2.6 Interaction between CERF and flash appeals**

Despite a perception that flash appeals in 2007 are very poorly funded, their funding percentage has in fact been only somewhat lower than previous years: the average response is 56% (and rising), compared to 69% for all flash appeals issued in 2006 (excluding the over-funded Lebanon flash appeal, which skews the average), 67% in 2005 (excluding the Tsunami flash appeal for the same reason), and 48% in 2004.

However, CERF is mainly responsible for keeping 2007 funding levels close to the historical average. CERF has contributed 34% (\$69 million) of the total funding to date for 2007 flash appeals (\$204

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<sup>7</sup> Until alternative sources of funding for early recovery activities are established and developed, denying the opportunity to appeal for early recovery activities which might need a swift start but also a longer timeframe (over 6 months) might impede an effective emergency and rehabilitation response programme that can truly meet the needs of those most affected by a crisis. Therefore the urgent need remains for the humanitarian community (the CWGER and OCHA in particular) to further work with donors on the issue of funding gaps for early recovery activities in the emergency context. In addition, when flash appeals are revised after additional information and needs assessments become available, there should be a mechanism for proposing early recovery projects with an implementation timeframe longer than the flash appeal's six-month planning horizon. in order to meet clearly identified needs.

million). By contrast, in 2006, CERF provided 22% (\$60 million) of total flash appeal funding (\$273 million, counting quasi-flash appeals such as the Ethiopia floods appeals).

Some donors appear to take the view that their contributions to CERF replace their previous direct flash appeal funding. This coincides with speculation that the CERF process could replace flash appeals, at least in the early phase of disaster response, by funding urgent projects in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, based on a skeletal strategic plan. This initial CERF allocation would be followed by a more detailed “disaster appeal” (which might justify a second CERF allocation).<sup>8</sup> A variant of this idea is that CERF could be designated to respond to small/medium-scale disasters, hence defining a financial threshold for flash appeal activation: for example, CERF could serve as the exclusive funding mechanism for disaster response needs up to several million dollars.<sup>9</sup>

However, there are several counter-arguments to these ideas:

- ◆ CERF is a funding mechanism (‘supply side’), while the flash appeal is a strategic planning forum (‘demand side’) – albeit an embryonic one in the first days after a disaster;
- ◆ Donors, including CERF, need a common action plan to serve as the basis for their funding decisions;
- ◆ Funding needs for most disasters exceed what CERF can provide at its current size;
- ◆ Some agencies need an appeal document (planning and resource mobilization at the same time) to accept income from donors for new activities outside the annually-planned programme;
- ◆ NGOs have funding needs that CERF cannot meet but flash appeals can highlight.

Since the CERF’s inception, OCHA has advised country teams that flash appeals and CERF applications should be developed in parallel, with the flash appeal noting the amount committed by CERF, and CERF in effect kick-starting the response to the flash appeal. This has been practiced in most 2007 flash appeals. Nonetheless, in practice country teams evidently find it hard to pursue CERF requests and flash appeal development simultaneously and complete both processes fast enough. OCHA/IASC should therefore explore ways to improve synergy between CERF and flash appeals, and to support inexperienced country teams to use both tools on time.

Although the funding patterns of some donors suggest that they are substituting their contributions to CERF for part of their previous direct funding to flash appeals, a large critical mass of donors state that the above counter-arguments are stronger, and that CERF requests and flash appeals should continue to interact along the lines of current practice, though with improvements in the practice (including heavier OCHA support to field teams trying to do both processes at once, and maximal simplification to both processes). A practical observation by one donor is that CERF tends to fund the most urgent and feasible projects, leaving little that is attractive for other donors to fund until the response develops.

## **2.7 Ensuring the implementation of the cluster approach without causing undue delay in flash appeal production**

A potential delaying factor in the issuance of a flash appeal is the implementation of the cluster approach, which takes time in itself and sometimes alienates host governments in such a way that they oppose a flash appeal. At field level, it is observed that the implementation of the cluster approach as a precursor to developing a flash appeal is useful only if cluster leads can meet very rapidly and give inputs. While the cluster approach should not delay the production of an initial flash appeal, and while the introduction of the cluster approach in a country with little or no humanitarian tradition or CAP process might be problematic, the role of clusters may be much more important during the stage of flash appeal revision. The disaster and the flash appeal should be a signal that clusters need to be activated in order to permit a coherent response including revision of the flash appeal. Better still would be for country teams to consult government, as part of disaster risk management (DRM) and contingency planning, and decide in advance what type of clusters should be in place as a preparedness measure, or activated after a disaster.

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<sup>8</sup> In order for this to work, CERF may have to relax the amount of project detail required in its funding applications for the initial phase. Note that the IFRC counterpart to CERF, the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), requires only a couple of lines to justify a request.

<sup>9</sup> However, the principle of additionality, as per GA Resolution, must be re-emphasised here. In requesting the GA to approve the expanded CERF, the Secretary-General asked that the CERF’s funds be additional, not diverted from existing humanitarian resources.

Of the 11 emergencies in non-CAP countries that led to flash appeals in 2007, the cluster approach was only adopted in three (Mozambique, Madagascar and Pakistan). This practice runs counter to the IASC Guidance Note on the cluster approach which states that “In the event of a sudden major new emergency requiring a multi-sectoral response with the participation of a wide range of international humanitarian actors, the cluster approach should be used from the start in planning and organising the international response.” However, the reality is that adoption of the cluster approach is only possible if RCs and country teams are aware in advance of what it means and how to do it, as well as perceiving an incentive to do so.

In the “Rome statement” of November 2007, the IASC Working Group attempted to balance between the difficulties of frequent formal cluster approach invocation (especially with non-humanitarian country teams) and the operational advantages to the best practice embodied therein, by stating “All Country Teams in countries with Humanitarian Coordinators should consider what needs to be done in their countries, as a minimum, to adapt current working methods to conform to cluster approach guidance.”<sup>10</sup> For developmentally-oriented country teams with no exposure to cluster principles, such adaptation may be all that is possible in the short timeline in which flash appeals should be issued.

OCHA should pursue its communication and training strategy vis-à-vis RCs and country teams to capacitate them on basic principles, tools and practices of humanitarian response, building on the work already done by OCHA ROs. In parallel, drawing on the Focus Model, Regional Offices should intensify training and workshops vis-à-vis the most vulnerable countries. In addition to contingency planning, table-top exercises in response should be organised, including rapid assessments, clusters, and flash appeal/CERF preparation. In general, affected states should be more systematically engaged on humanitarian questions before a disaster strikes. This needs to be done at the field level, but also in NY and Geneva. Such an effort should be made at the inter-agency level and not by OCHA alone.

Other measures should also be considered, including better and more systematic sensitisation of potential beneficiary countries and donor countries, and urgent inclusion in preparedness processes (including contingency planning) of clusters’ basic guidelines.<sup>11</sup>

## **2.8 Strengthening the participation of NGOs in flash appeals**

In all the 2007 flash appeals, NGOs were involved in response/coordination activities, but for various reasons – including resistance from some affected governments to the idea of including NGOs in the response – some or most of them opted not to participate in the flash appeal. In several appeals, for example Nicaragua, Uganda and Ghana, no NGO funding needs were mentioned.<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance and role of NGOs in the aftermath of an emergency, the primary responsibility to respond lies with the national authorities of the affected country, and governments are often inclined to reject appeals prepared without their concurrence/participation. In Nicaragua for example, NGOs were involved throughout the process, and they had projects included in the early drafts of appeal. However, national authorities were opposed to the presence of NGOs in the document and did not authorise the launch of the appeal until all references to NGOs were deleted. This delayed the process substantially.

At the same time, it has been noted that national NGOs, which are often the first to respond, put all their resources where their operations are and do not necessarily have extra staff in the capital to represent them at cluster meetings and flash appeal negotiations. Furthermore, unlike international NGOs which have a global presence, national NGOs are often not familiar with the cluster system or flash appeal process. Considering the critical role they play and importance of building national

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<sup>10</sup> Rome Statement on Cluster Roll-Out, paragraph 9, adopted at the IASC Working Group (WG) meeting of 5-7 November 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Cluster meetings should not run parallel to or compete with government-led sector meetings; where governments run sectors, clusters should be incorporated therein.

<sup>12</sup> Getting more NGOs into flash appeals in countries where there is resistance or difficulty to their presence might be solved by ‘pre-qualifying’ or registering them, or discussing their participation before a disaster strikes, as part of advance cluster creation in contingency planning.

response capacities, conscious efforts are required to reflect their priorities and needs in the FAs. This can be done as part of good cluster management.

As OCHA ROs assume a greater role in the production of flash appeals, they should ensure that NGOs participate not only in needs identification and prioritisation of action, but also in appeal drafting and project inclusion. Furthermore, cluster leads should register all funding needs of cluster members, including NGOs. This responsibility must be communicated clearly to the field, to avoid United Nations-only flash appeals. Similarly, FTS should be strengthened with research capacity to reflect non-UN response and map where the money goes (flash appeal, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other international organisations receiving direct funding, national agencies receiving bilateral aid, and other contributions financial or in-kind by neighbours or diaspora).

More broadly, country teams rarely provide in flash appeals an accurate picture of response by non-UN actors such as NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other international organisations, and national government. This makes a flash appeal unsatisfactory as a forum for strategic planning, mapping needs and identifying gaps. While stakeholders accept that such detailed analysis may not be available in time for a flash appeal's rapid first edition, it should be thoroughly presented in the revision.

**Table 1: Flash Appeal funding history since 2003**

Year	number of flash appeals (FAs)	FA funding needs (\$)	Median funding need per FA	FA needs as % of total CAP/FA needs	FA funding received	FA funding received as % of FA needs
2003	2	\$31 million	n/a	1%	\$16 million	51%
2004	9	\$451 million	\$33 million	13%	\$179 million	40%
2005*	10	\$2,181 million	\$20 million	36%	\$1,766 million	81%
2006	6	\$268 million	\$35 million	5%	\$214 million	80%
2007	15	\$373 million	\$19 million	7%	\$210 million	56%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>\$3,304 million</b>	<b>\$29 million</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>\$2,380 million</b>	<b>72%</b>
<i>*2005 excl. Tsunami</i>	9	\$781 million		17%	\$518 million	66%

**Table 2: Flash appeals 2007: funding requests per sector**

Sector	Sector funding request (\$)	Sector request as % of total
Agriculture	\$46 million	13%
Coordination and support services	\$22 million	6%
Economic recovery and infrastructure	\$40 million	11%
Education	\$18 million	5%
Food	\$110 million	30%
Health	\$55 million	14%
Multi-sector	\$0.7 million	0%
Protection/human rights/rule of law	\$7 million	2%
Safety and security of staff and operations	\$0.5 million	0%
Shelter and non-food items	\$38 million	10%
Water and sanitation	\$33 million	9%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$373 million</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3: Flash appeals 2007: details on time taken in stages of development**

Country	Type of disaster	Date of disaster*	Date of RC/HC decision to issue flash appeal	Date final field draft sent to OCHA-GVA	Date flash appeal published	# days disaster - decision	# days decision - final field draft	# days final field draft produced - appeal published	# days disaster - appeal
Burkina Faso	Floods	13-Aug-07	05-Oct-07	22-Oct-07	25-Oct-07	53	17	3	73
Zambia	Floods	16-Jan-07	02-Mar-07	27-Mar-07	27-Mar-07	45	25	0	70
Swaziland	Drought	31-May-07	26-Jun-07	18-Jul-07	20-Jul-07	26	22	2	50
Sudan	Floods	05-Jul-07	26-Jul-07	22-Aug-07	27-Aug-07	21	27	5	53
Lesotho	Drought	12-Jun-07	23-Jul-07	26-Jul-07	28-Jul-07	41	3	2	46
Mozambique	Cyclone and floods	04-Feb-07	26-Feb-07	09-Mar-07	12-Mar-07	22	11	3	36
Bolivia	Floods	18-Jan-07	15-Feb-07	20-Feb-07	22-Feb-07	28	5	2	35
Uganda	Floods	20-Aug-07	17-Sep-07	20-Sep-07	21-Sep-07	28	3	1	32
Ghana	Floods	07-Sep-07	15-Sep-07	01-Oct-07	03-Oct-07	8	16	2	26
Pakistan	Cyclone and floods	19-Jun-07	03-Jul-07	13-Jul-07	15-Jul-07	14	10	2	26
Madagascar	Cyclones	20-Feb-07	20-Feb-07	14-Mar-07	15-Mar-07	0	22	1	23
Korea DPR	Floods	12-Aug-07	20-Aug-07	26-Aug-07	27-Aug-07	8	6	1	15
Peru	Earthquake	15-Aug-07	18-Aug-07	22-Aug-07	24-Aug-07	3	4	2	9
Nicaragua	Hurricane	04-Sep-07	06-Sep-07	13-Sep-07	14-Sep-07	2	7	1	10
Dominican Rep.	Hurricane & floods	29-Oct-07	02-Nov-07	04-Nov-07	06-Nov-07	4	2	2	8
<b>Averages (medians)</b>						<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>

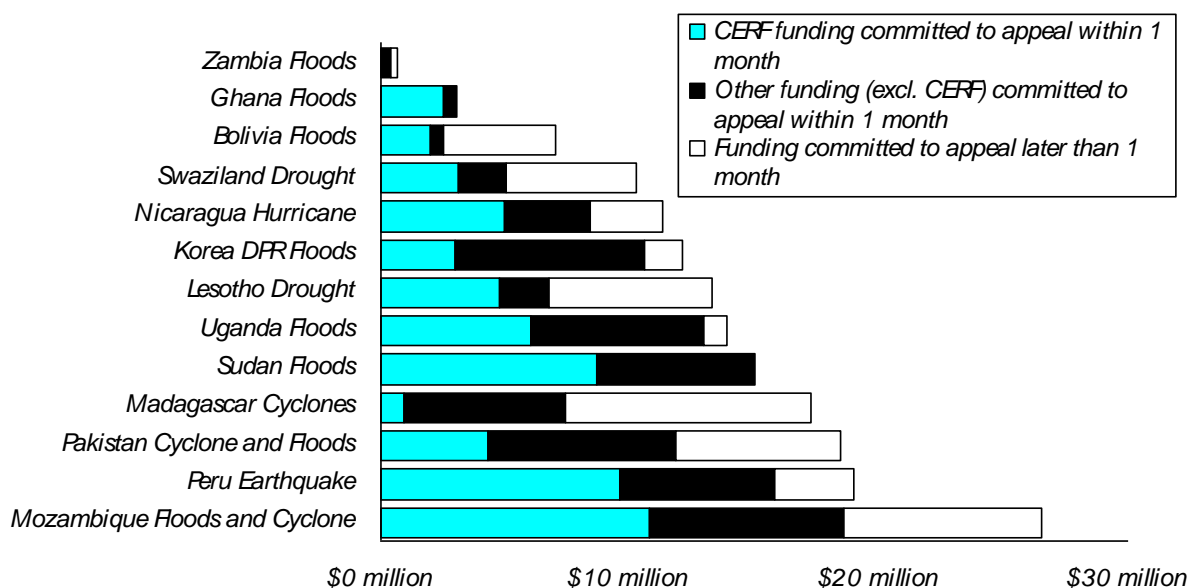
\* For the gradual-onset disasters – floods and drought – the date of the first international report is cited.



**Table 4: CERF funding in 2007 flash appeals**

Appeal	CERF funding	total funding	CERF funding as % of requirements	CERF funding as % of total funding
Bolivia	2,000,000	7,443,140	14%	27%
Burkina Faso	0	1,185,784	0%	0%
Dominican Rep.	3,879,893	7,223,213	20%	54%
Ghana	2,496,956	6,566,308	21%	38%
Korea DPR	3,000,000	15,344,867	20%	20%
Lesotho	4,742,070	17,682,198	21%	27%
Madagascar	3,431,553	16,778,357	18%	20%
Mozambique	11,162,980	26,582,033	29%	42%
Nicaragua	4,975,500	16,686,748	12%	30%
Pakistan	5,806,965	20,695,578	14%	28%
Peru	9,591,713	21,195,182	25%	45%
Sudan	8,679,942	16,243,577	25%	53%
Swaziland	3,136,815	14,666,665	17%	21%
Uganda	6,001,015	20,386,962	15%	29%
Zambia	0	1,101,840	0%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68,905,402</b>	<b>209,782,452</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>33%</b>

**Table 5: 2007 Flash appeals: funding within a month after appeal launch, and later**



**Table 6: Flash Appeals in 2007, per region and type of disaster**

<b>per region</b>	Southern Africa	5	<b>per type of disaster</b>	Hurricanes/Cyclones	4
	South America	3		Floods	8
	East Africa	2		Droughts	2
	West Africa	2		Earthquake	1
	Asia	2			
	Caribbean	1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	

## ACTION POINTS

- 3.1 The IASC WG, based on a draft provided by the IASC CAP SWG, will be invited to revise the existing Guidelines for Flash Appeals<sup>13</sup> and agree a leaner flash appeal template. The initial appeal should be a minimal immediate needs document with a skeletal action plan confined to evident needs (including those that are reasonably inferred), and conservative funding requests. The revised guidelines should clarify to country teams the nature of information, analysis, joint planning and decisions they are expected to produce in a flash appeal. A flash appeal should be issued within ideally five days, and no more than seven days, of a disaster.<sup>14</sup>
- 3.2 The IASC WG will be invited to task the IASC CAP SWG to develop an advocacy strategy towards governments in disaster-prone countries. Efforts should concentrate on capacitating authorities in disaster management while lobbying donor countries to invest more in prevention and mitigation, in DRM, and to provide funds to flash appeals in a consistent way based on needs over time. At the same time, the process, nature and benefits of flash appeals and the cluster system should be explained to the country teams and governments in countries where OCHA is not present (though the advocacy strategy should not be aimed at systematic use of international assistance).
- 3.3 The IASC WG will be invited to authorize an optional variant on the name “flash appeal,” to make them more palatable to appeal-averse governments.<sup>15</sup> (However, to put this problem in perspective, while such aversion is sometimes a significant obstacle to the issuance of flash appeals, in fact in a majority of cases a proposal to issue a flash appeal does not meet with resistance from the host government. Among the 15 flash appeals issued in 2007, only two host governments were seriously reluctant; there were two additional cases in which host government reluctance was a factor in deciding not to issue a flash appeal.)
- 3.4 The IASC WG will be invited to address the Development system to ensure reference to flash appeals is placed and recognised within contingency planning, as well as in UNDAF processes and documents and other inter-agency mechanisms, with a requisite level of capacity development, training and sensitisation at the country level, and familiarisation with DRM.
- 3.5 The IASC WG may ask the ERC to ensure and enforce the practice of revising flash appeals some weeks after initial publication to incorporate more reliable information, enhance credibility, and stimulate thorough assessment and planning. The option to reduce the unmet funding needs of an unrevised appeal to zero should be considered (but not before the stipulated timeframe has elapsed, i.e. maximum six months). The revision process should be a rolling one: as the clusters begin their work, and more information becomes available, the assessment of need can gradually be updated, and new projects and financial requirements added. An ‘event’ or publication one month or so after the initial launch would still be required to ensure proper communication with the donors.
- 3.6 Global cluster leads should deploy technical experts and cluster organisers to support inexperienced country teams, in the event of sudden-onset disasters. This is particularly important in the lead-up to an appeal’s revision.
- 3.7 OCHA should develop guidance, and be prepared to provide necessary support, to help country teams with the practicalities of doing CERF applications and a flash appeal at the same time. CERF-trained surge capacity staff could assist as needed, as well as persons trained as CAP facilitators and who are currently on the facilitators roster.
- 3.8 Global cluster leads should develop standard or generic project budgeting tools, including cluster templates, as well as project selection criteria, for flash appeals based on an estimate of generic per capita costs of response in each sector. This could serve as an indicative guide

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<sup>13</sup> Adopted by the IASC CAP SWG in October 2006: <http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/DocView.asp?DocID=1397>.

<sup>14</sup> Or of its declaration, in the case of slow-onset disasters.

<sup>15</sup> A re-naming of flash appeals, to “disaster response plan”, “disaster appeal” or similar, would require an IASC WG amendment to its 2003 ‘nomenclature’ paper.

in budgeting appeal projects, and thereby improve the predictability, transparency and accuracy of costs, as well as save time in issuing appeals. IASC should request global cluster leads to proceed with this task.

- 3.9 Global clusters leads should define standard rapid needs assessments or appraisals for each sector, with a view to making their use the standard by which to judge the scale and severity of a disaster, capitalising in particular on work done by the clusters with the Initial Rapid Assessment tools (IRA). Such a tool would inform the decision on whether to develop a flash appeal.
- 3.10 The IASC WG will be invited to clarify who has the ultimate responsibility for deciding on the scale and content of the flash appeal and its various components. The RC's office often has insufficient humanitarian capacity to ensure that appeal content is proportionate to need, realistic and/or relevant. OCHA, supported by the IASC CAP SWG, should backstop the RC to ensure good project selection and budgeting.<sup>16</sup>
- 3.11 The IASC WG will be invited to adopt guidelines on the inclusion of early recovery in flash appeals.<sup>17</sup> Early recovery projects in the initial appeal should be limited to those that (1) are justified by existing needs assessment information or at least solid inference, and (2) are time-critical (having a strong advantage in starting immediately). Preference may be given to projects that can be completed within six months, with a rapid impact on the ground. Further early recovery projects justified by subsequent information will be proposed in the appeal revision (and the preference for projects that can be completed in six months may be relaxed at this stage).
- 3.12 The IASC WG will be invited to adopt guidelines for the interaction between individual agency appeals and flash appeals. Donors are concerned by the tendency of individual agencies to issue solo appeals prior to flash appeal publication, and see this as a fragmentation of response methods. Individual appeals should be coordinated and rolled into the inter-agency appeal.<sup>18</sup>
- 3.13 OCHA's Humanitarian Coordination System Strengthening Project should continue to further increase familiarity among RC/HCs with the flash appeal process. OCHA, UNDP/BCPR and ISDR, through their joint endeavor CADRI (Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative) should work together to ensure that RCs/HCs are prepared to manage the full range of their disaster risk management-related responsibilities, from disaster reduction through emergency response to recovery

## **MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (OCHA AND IASC)**

### **4.1 Recommendations related to preparedness**

4.1.1 OCHA should record historical, operational data on national and international responses to previous disasters, building on the Who What Where (3W) mapping tool developed by FIS. As OCHA improves its baselines on preparedness and response capacity, this should be cross-referenced with country-level vulnerability levels pre-disaster, as per the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office's (ECHO's) humanitarian benchmarking system.

4.1.2 The IASC WG will be invited to agree on basic standard indicators and related thresholds to measure the severity/scale of a disaster, with a view to better supporting fast decisions on whether to develop a flash appeal, and to improving the reliability of stated funding needs therein.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This would respond to a longstanding demand by donors for better prioritisation of actions proposed in flash appeals.

<sup>17</sup> Based on a draft policy on regulating early recovery in flash appeals, prepared by UNDP and IOM for the CAP SWG in 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Faster issuance of flash appeals will go a long way to solving this problem.

<sup>19</sup> In 2008, key indicators for determining the severity and scale of crises will be identified through the Assessment and Classification of Emergencies (ACE) mapping, in consultation with humanitarian actors (United Nations, IFRC, NGOs). These will be incorporated into a pilot "common humanitarian classification system", which will be field-tested in two countries. This initiative will build on the work of the

4.1.3 OCHA and the IASC Information Management SWG should further develop and make use of standardised rapid appraisals and needs assessments for the purpose of improving quality and timeliness of flash appeals, and to enable comparison of needs across disasters/countries. In this task, OCHA should seek input from IFRC, drawing in particular on IFRC's vulnerability and capacity assessment methodology, and capitalise on work done by the clusters with the IRA.<sup>20</sup>

## **4.2 Recommendations related to financing**

4.2.1 OCHA should make the method for CERF's initial allocation more objective and transparent, by developing a standard method for initially calculating the amount that CERF provisionally allocates to a new disaster (which has been perceived by some as arbitrary) pending submission of suitable projects. This method may include setting a range or target percentage of the amount of the Appeal.

4.2.2 OCHA should seek to use an existing CAP in lieu of flash appeal, where possible. In many cases, existing CAPs can be used to accommodate the additional requirements of a new emergency in lieu of a flash appeal.

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Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system developed by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s Food Security Assessment Unit in Somalia.

<sup>20</sup> Some relevant work has already started within OCHA, on making use of proxy indicators to gather disaggregated baseline impact data across an affected area within 2-3 weeks of a disaster, in order to establish an inventory of all affected communities; identification of most-affected communities; calculation of relief needs; baseline for coordination and monitoring. See "Using proxy indicators to assess impact and needs in sudden-onset disasters: initial concept paper," Craig Williams, OCHA ROAP, Bangkok, December 2007.

## ANNEX: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Assessment and Classification of Emergencies
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster reduction Initiative
CAP	Consolidated Appeal or Consolidated Appeal Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CRD	Coordination and Response Division
CWGER	Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery
DPPT	Disaster Preparedness Planning Training
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EPS	Emergency Preparedness Section
ER	Early Recovery
ERB	External Relations Branch
ESB	Emergency Services Branch
EWGPS	Early Warning and Contingency Planning Section
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCSS	Field Coordination Support Section
FIS	Field Information Services
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GA	General Assembly
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for the Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRA	Initial Rapid Assessment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDRA	National Disaster Response Advisor
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
RC	Resident Coordinator
RO	Regional Office
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean
RTE	Real Time Evaluation
SWG	Sub-Working Group
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WG	Working Group