

# **Guidance Note on Implementation of the Cluster Leadership Approach at the Country Level**

## **1. Aim and scope of the cluster leadership approach**

The cluster leadership approach operates at both the global and country level. It is part of a wider reform process aimed at improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response through improving the predictability and accountability of humanitarian actions. The cluster approach was adopted by the IASC as a mechanism that would address identified gaps in response and enhance the quality of humanitarian actions by strengthening partnerships between UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, international organizations and NGOs and through enhanced coordination of response in the areas where this is required.

**At the global level,** the cluster approach seeks to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by designating global Cluster Leads who are accountable for ensuring predictable and effective inter-agency responses within sectors or areas of activity. At the Global level clusters leads will seek to establish a broader partnership base that engages in

- Enhanced standard setting, monitoring and advocacy
- Establishing and strengthening surge capacity and standby rosters
- Securing consistent access to appropriately trained technical expertise
- Establishing or improving material stockpiles
- Improved response capacity through pooling and complementarity of effort and resources

**At the country level,** the aim is to ensure a more effective response capacity by mobilizing clusters of agencies, organizations and NGOs to respond in particular sectors or areas of activity; each cluster having a clearly designated lead, as agreed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the IASC Country Team. More specifically, the intention when establishing the cluster approach at country level should be to:

- Ensure identified and predictable leadership in key gap sectors/areas of response
- Create stronger partnerships between UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, international organizations and NGOs in critical gap areas of humanitarian operations.
- Strengthen the accountability of operational partners to the Humanitarian Coordinator for different aspects of the humanitarian response where this is lacking
- Improve strategic field-level coordination and prioritisation

The cluster leadership approach can be used in both conflict-related humanitarian emergencies and in natural disaster situations. Although not limited to situations of internal displacement, it will make a significant improvement in the quality, level and predictability of the response and represents a substantial strengthening of the 'collaborative response'. The success of the cluster approach should however be judged by the impact it has on improvements to the services afforded to those affected by crises and their improved outcomes in terms of health and well being.

## **2. Cluster leadership at the global level**

At the global level, cluster leads have been established in nine areas of humanitarian activity where the IASC Principals agreed that there was a need to reinforce the response capacity, as follows:

<i>Area of Activity</i>	<i>Cluster Lead</i>
<b>Service provision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistics:</li> <li>• Emergency Telecommunications:</li> </ul>	WFP  OCHA (Process Owner), UNICEF (Common Data Services) WFP (Common Security Telecommunications Services)
<b>Relief and assistance to beneficiaries:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Shelter:</li> <li>• Health:</li> <li>• Nutrition:</li> <li>• Water, Hygiene and Sanitation</li> </ul>	UNHCR (for conflict-generated IDPs) IFRC (Convener for Emergency Shelter Cluster in natural disasters) <sup>2</sup>  WHO  UNICEF  UNICEF
<b>Cross cutting concerns:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Recovery:</li> <li>• Protection: <sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Camp Coordination and Camp Management</li> </ul>	UNDP  UNHCR (for IDPs and affected populations in complex emergencies) UNHCR, UNICEF or OHCHR (for all populations in natural disasters and for populations in complex emergencies facing acute protection needs even if no displacement has occurred)  UNHCR (for conflict-generated IDPs), IOM (for natural disaster)

Sectors and areas of activity where no significant gaps had been noted are not included among the nine clusters at global level. These are: food, led by WFP; refugees, led by UNHCR; education, led by UNICEF; and agriculture, led by FAO.

At the global level, cluster leads are responsible for ensuring: (a) assessments of the overall needs for human, financial, and institutional capacity; (b) reviews of currently available capacities and means for their utilization; (c) links with other clusters, including preparedness measures and long-term planning, standards, best practice, advocacy, and resource mobilization; (d) taking action to

<sup>1</sup> While UNHCR remains the global lead for the Protection Cluster, at the country level, under the overall leadership of the HC/RC, the three core protection-mandated agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF and OHCHR) would consult closely and agree which of the three would assume the role of Cluster Lead for protection either on the basis of existing arrangements or after conducting a common assessment to determine the required operational capacity. This option would enable the HC/RC to rely on one protection agency to lead the response for the cluster. For more information on these arrangements refer to Annex III, Outline of Clusters at the Global Level.

<sup>2</sup> Taking into account the IFRC's obligations and independence, IFRC will act as convener.

ensure that required capacities and mechanisms exist, including rosters for surge capacity; and (e) training and system development at the local, national, regional, and international levels. (Appendix 1 provides a detailed outline of the scope and priorities for each of the clusters)

### **3. Cluster leadership at the country level**

At the country level, the cluster leadership approach should help to strengthen coordination by clarifying the division of labour among organisations and lines of accountability to the Humanitarian Coordinator.

To enhance predictability, where possible cluster lead arrangements at the country level should be in line with those established at the global level. However, the cluster leadership approach should be applied flexibly, based on the existing capacities and strengths of humanitarian partners in the country. This may mean that in some cases cluster lead arrangements at the country level do not replicate those at the global level. The principle should be to ensure that there are no major gaps in the humanitarian response.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the Humanitarian Coordinator, in full consultation with the IASC Country Team, to ensure that Cluster Leads are designated for all areas of humanitarian activity where there are identified gaps in response, respecting the fact that for Food, Refugees, Education and Agriculture, there are already clearly mandated lead UN agencies.

As spelt out in the *Terms of Reference for Cluster Leads at the Country Level*, Cluster Leads at the country level are responsible for ensuring: a) needs assessment and analysis in their respective sectors, fully inclusive of partners and with the participation of affected populations; b) identification of the capacities of cluster participants and other relevant actors; c) development of response plans to address priority needs; d) ensuring appropriate delegation and following-up on commitments from cluster participants to act in particular areas; e) acting as the provider of last resort in remaining gap areas; and f) sustaining mechanisms through which the cluster as a whole monitors and assesses its performance. Cluster leads have mutual obligations to interact with each other and to address cross-cutting issues.

At the end of the emergency phase, some clusters may be able to cease or decrease their activities. Others covering activities which need to continue beyond the emergency phase will need to make the necessary shift in programming. The Early Recovery cluster will need to play a key role in supporting the Humanitarian Coordinator in planning, preparing, and managing a phased transition of coordination arrangements from emergency to longer-term recovery and development. Strategies and procedures for phasing out or handing over activities should be included in the work of all clusters.

In principle, cluster lead agencies should seek close collaboration with Government partners and seek to strengthen their capacity to provide leadership wherever possible and appropriate. Cluster lead agencies should therefore ensure that the clusters promote a sustained strategy that will develop the capacity of Government partners from the outset of the response and enable stronger linkages between humanitarian and development actions.

### **4. Relationships between clusters at the global and country levels**

Cluster Leads at the country level are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator. They do not report directly to Cluster Leads at the global level. However, Humanitarian Coordinators with the

IASC country team and Cluster Leads should treat the global level clusters as a resource that can be called upon for advice on establishing cluster arrangements in the field, for building capacity, and for guidance in assessment and strategy development.

## **5. What is the difference between a sector and a cluster?**

A ‘sector’ is a specific area of humanitarian activity; while a ‘cluster’ is a group of organisations and other stakeholders working together to address needs in one of these specific areas. Some clusters will address thematic or cross cutting issues such as protection or early recovery, others are geared towards support functions such as logistics and telecommunications, while clusters such as Water and Sanitation, Health and Nutrition focus on a more effective technical response. At the country level where the cluster approach is used to address identified gaps, this approach is intended to strengthen, rather than to replace, sectoral coordination

The major distinction between the cluster approach and previous sectoral approaches lies in the emphasis that the IASC and that cluster leads have placed on **accountability** for ensuring appropriate levels and standards of response and in acting as a “**provider of last resort**” as a means of underwriting responses in their area of activity. The cluster approach also seeks to strengthen and broaden the basis of partnership and engagement by bringing together all relevant IASC and national expertise in a particular area under a common planning and implementation plan, irrespective of funding sources. The establishment of clusters at the global level in areas where there are clearly identified gaps in capacity is an important addition that will enhance technical capacity and better ensure the immediate availability of critical materiel.

## **6. Strengthening partnerships and complementarity amongst humanitarian actors**

In many of today’s emergencies, the vast majority of humanitarian personnel in the field are with NGOs, the Red Cross Movement or other international or national humanitarian organizations. Recognizing this, a central component of the cluster leadership approach is the need to strengthen strategic partnerships between UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, International Organisations, NGOs and other humanitarian actors. It is about involving them, as much as possible, as equal partners in all aspects of the humanitarian response, from assessment, analysis and planning to implementation, resource mobilization and evaluation.

To be successful, the cluster leadership approach must function in a manner that respects the different roles, responsibilities and mandates of those participating in the cluster. There must also be recognition of the diversity of approaches and methodologies that exist between humanitarian actors. It is essential that clusters find non-bureaucratic ways of involving non-UN agencies in a collaborative and inclusive process focused on areas of common interest.

By ensuring that non-UN humanitarian actors are fully and equally involved in setting the direction, strategies, and activities of the cluster, it should be possible to achieve more collective responsibility for different aspects of the humanitarian response. In some cases, Cluster Leads at the country level may request NGOs or other non-UN humanitarian actors to be cluster focal points for particular issues or geographical areas.

While some humanitarian actors may not be prepared to formally commit themselves to structures involving lines of accountability to the UN, Cluster Leads are responsible for ensuring – to the extent possible – appropriate complementarity amongst different humanitarian actors operating in their sectors or areas of activity.

The establishment of IASC Country Teams in all countries with Humanitarian Coordinators should help to strengthen partnerships and complementarity amongst humanitarian actors, in line with the overall aims of the Cluster Leadership Approach.

## **7. Accountability of Cluster Leads**

The overall intention of the cluster approach is to strengthen overall levels of accountability for humanitarian response and to ensure that gaps in response do not remain unaddressed because there are no clearly assigned responsibilities. At the global level, in recognition of IASC agreement on the allocation of responsibilities Cluster Leads are accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator for ensuring adequate preparedness and effective responses in the sectors or areas of activity concerned.

At the country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator – with the support of OCHA – retains overall responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Cluster Leads at the country level are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator for ensuring adequate preparedness and effective responses in the sectors or areas of activity concerned. This must be done in ways that ensure the complementarity of the various stakeholders' actions, strengthen the involvement of national and local institutions, and make the best use of available resources.

While Cluster Leads at the country level cannot be held accountable for the performance of all cluster participants, they are accountable for ensuring, to the extent possible, the establishment of adequate coordination mechanisms for the sector or area of activity concerned, as well as adequate strategic planning and operational response.

In cases where stakeholders consider that Cluster Leads are not adequately carrying out their responsibilities, it is the responsibility of the Humanitarian Coordinator (at the country level) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (at the global level) to consult the relevant Cluster Leads and, where necessary, to propose alternative arrangements.

The accountability of individual cluster participants will depend on the specific commitments that they have made. In all cases, cluster members are encouraged to be proactive partners in the elaboration and implementation of the cluster's priorities.

## **8. What is meant by 'provider of last resort'?**

The 'provider of last resort' concept is critical to the cluster leadership approach, and without it, the elements of predictability and accountability for an effective humanitarian response are lost. It is not, therefore, negotiable. But it is circumscribed by some basic limitations that affect any framework for humanitarian action. It will also need to be applied in somewhat different ways, depending on the type of cluster. The determination of when last resort applies will usually depend on the Humanitarian Coordinator's advice that critical needs are not being met by existing responses.

The Cluster Lead ensures the joint assessment of needs and the capacities of different actors within the cluster, in developing a strategy and response plan. Where there are critical gaps in the response plan, the Cluster Lead, as provider of last resort, will do its utmost to find a way of addressing these, calling on whatever partners it can. If this fails, then depending on the urgency and priority that the cluster gives to addressing this gap, the Cluster Lead may need to commit itself. This means ensuring adequate needs assessment, project design, budgeting and fund-raising. In these efforts, the

Humanitarian Coordinator should be fully supporting the Cluster Lead. If, finally, funds are not forthcoming for these activities, the Cluster Lead can no longer be expected to act as the provider of last resort, but should continue to work with the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to mobilise the necessary resources.

Humanitarian action under any framework or approach can be limited by two additional factors: access and security. Where the efforts of the Cluster Lead, Country Team as a whole, and Humanitarian Coordinator as the leader of that team are unsuccessful in gaining access to a particular location, or where security constraints limit the action of all participants in the cluster, then the provider of last resort will not be expected to respond, but will be expected to continue advocacy efforts and to explain the constraints to stakeholders.

For cross-cutting issues such as Protection, Early Recovery and Camp Coordination, the concept of 'provider of last resort' will need to be applied in an appropriate and realistic manner. Clearly one agency as Cluster Lead cannot be held accountable for all aspects of the response in these areas. In the case of the Protection Cluster at the global level, different agencies have been designated as focal points for particular areas of responsibility and they have each agreed to be the 'provider of last resort' in their respective areas of expertise. Similar arrangements could be made at the country level. In the case of Early Recovery, each Cluster Lead in the sectors relevant to early recovery planning is responsible for ensuring agreed key actions are undertaken. The Cluster Lead for Early Recovery is, however, the 'provider of last resort' for the overall planning, advocacy and support in all relevant areas. Likewise, in the case of Camp Coordination, the Cluster Lead is responsible not for providing all services in camps, but for ensuring that such services are provided by the relevant clusters. The Cluster Lead for Camp Coordinator is, however, the 'provider of last resort' for the overall planning, advocacy and support in all relevant areas.

### **Key Issues to consider when establishing and implementing the cluster approach**

Early experience in developing the cluster approach has highlighted a number of issues that will assist in its successful implementation at country level;

- **Establishment of an IASC country team:** Strengthened partnerships are the critical element of the cluster approach. The success of the approach is dependent on the level of inclusiveness and common ownership of all those engaged in the area of activity covered by the cluster. A broadly based IASC country team will better ensure that there is a common understanding of gap areas and provide the basis for more effective planning and prioritisation.
- **Creating an appropriate structure:** The cluster approach necessarily involves organisations with differing levels of capacity and support staff. Effective engagement of all that need to be involved will require that the structure of each cluster does not make excessive demands on scarce agency technical staff resources. Planning the cluster approach should take into account practical issues such as the frequency of meetings and avoid over design through the creation of subsidiary structures that cannot be sustained.
- **Reflect flexibility at the District level:** Priorities and needs will vary by district, just as much as they do between countries. Establishing the cluster approach at District level should be determined by need rather than by a concern for creating a uniform structure.
- **Ensure that clusters provide added value:** the effective operation of clusters will require that they sustain the meaningful engagement of the cluster membership. Sustaining effective clusters at all levels will require that clusters act as the basis for the division of labour, responses and responsibilities amongst its participants, provide a useful exchange of information and analysis and establish shared strategic priorities and plans

- **Remain engaged with cross cutting issues:** Clusters have a critical responsibility to remain actively engaged in addressing cross cutting concerns such as Gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS older persons, and environmental concerns. Experience of recent crises suggests that these important dimensions to ensuring an effective and appropriate response have too frequently been ignored. Cluster leads will need to actively determine how to address these concerns within each cluster.

## 9. The role of the Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA at the country level

At the country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator – with OCHA support – is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. This includes ensuring that:

- Cluster Leads are consulted closely in developing the overall strategic direction of the humanitarian operation;
- Cluster Leads work closely together to identify major gaps in the humanitarian response, to agree on priority activities, and to ensure that the work of the different clusters is integrated into a coherent overall response;
- Appropriate forums are established for Cluster Leads to discuss strategic and operational issues of mutual concern, bearing in mind the need to ensure that these strengthen, rather than undermine, existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms;
- Unnecessary duplication and overlap among clusters is avoided;
- Cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS and environmental impact are effectively addressed in all sectors/clusters;
- Strategic planning is coherent throughout the country, i.e. at the national (capital) level, between capital and the regions, and among the regions;
- Cluster Leads are provided with the necessary common services and tools, particularly in the areas of information management, inter-agency needs assessments, development of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP), preparation of the Consolidated Appeal, Flash Appeal and contingency planning;
- Cluster/sectoral coordination meetings supplement rather than replace general inter-agency coordination meetings, to prevent a fragmentation of the humanitarian response;
- Cluster/sectoral coordination meetings at both the capital level and in the regions are streamlined to the extent possible; applying the principle that what is needed is not more meetings, but better meetings.
- Support to Cluster Leads in advocacy and resource-mobilisation efforts that ensure a balanced, comprehensive and well-prioritised humanitarian response;
- Financial and human resources are prioritised in support of critical cluster needs and assist cluster leads in funding actions under “last resort” in those circumstances where the HC can draw on pooled funds.

Implementation of the cluster approach along with the other elements of the humanitarian reform process will require more sophisticated coordination among a wider range of partners. The demands for common systems and services, such as information management tools, advocacy and resource mobilisation will be greater. At the country level, OCHA will need to continue to act as the secretariat body in support of the Humanitarian Coordinator, with a continued focus on four main areas: coordination; information management; advocacy and resource mobilisation; and policy development.

The Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with the Cluster Leads, is responsible for adapting coordination structures over time to reflect the capacities of government structures and the engagement of development partners.

## **10. Financing of clusters**

In an effort to immediately enhance preparedness and build up emergency response capacity at the global level, financial requirements for 2006 were exceptionally included in a “Cluster Appeal” which was launched on 6 March 2006. While the issue is still under discussion, it is expected that in subsequent years recurring requirements will be integrated into the budgetary processes for individual participating agencies.

For ongoing emergencies, any costs associated with the application of the Cluster Leadership approach at the country level should be included in the Consolidated Appeals for those countries or in their mid year revisions. The Emergency Relief Coordinator will advocate with donors for support for the implementation of the cluster approach. Cluster Leads and participating agencies are also expected to actively engage in fundraising efforts.

For new emergencies, cluster/sector plans and financial requirements will be included in Flash Appeal documents. The prompt response element of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is one possible source of funding for the Flash Appeal, to help address urgent unmet needs. This element of the CERF may also be used to assist cases of ‘last resort’ where they occur in rapidly deteriorating crises.

**Annex II to Implementation of the Humanitarian Reform Initiative  
(IASC Principals, DocID: PR/0604/1514/7)**

**Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster Leads  
at the Country Level**

The Cluster Approach operates at two levels. At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by designating global Cluster Leads who are accountable for ensuring predictable and effective inter-agency responses within the particular sectors or areas of activity concerned. At the country level, the aim is to ensure a more effective response capacity by mobilizing clusters of agencies, organizations and NGOs to respond in particular sectors or areas of activity, each cluster having a clearly designated lead, as agreed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Country Team. To enhance predictability, where possible this should be in line with the cluster lead arrangements at the global level.

**The Humanitarian Coordinator** – with the support of OCHA – retains overall responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

**Cluster leads at the country level** – in addition to their normal institutional responsibilities – are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator for ensuring the following:

Identification of key partners

- Identify key humanitarian partners for the cluster, respecting their respective mandates and programme priorities;
- Identify other key partners, including national authorities, peacekeeping forces etc.

Coordination of programme implementation

- Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including national and international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM and other international organizations), as well as with national authorities and local structures;
- Ensure the establishment/maintenance of appropriate sectoral coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the national and, if necessary, local level;
- Ensure full integration of the IASC's agreed priority cross-cutting issues, namely human rights, HIV/AIDS, age, gender and environment, utilising participatory and community based approaches. In line with this, promote

gender equality by ensuring that the needs, contributions and capacities of women and girls as well as men and boys are addressed;

- Secure commitments from cluster participants in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the cluster, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary;
- Ensure that participants within each cluster work collectively, ensuring the complementarity of the various stakeholders' actions;
- Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning as well as prevention and risk reduction concerns;
- Ensure effective links with other clusters (with OCHA support);
- Represent the interests of the cluster in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy;
- Act as focal point for inquiries on the cluster's response plans and operations.

#### Planning and strategy development

Ensure predictable action within the cluster for the following:

- needs assessment and analysis;
- identification of gaps;
- developing/updating agreed response strategies and action plans for the cluster and ensuring that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies, such as the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP);
- drawing lessons learned from past activities and revising strategies and action plans accordingly;
- developing an exit, or transition, strategy for the cluster.

#### Application of standards

- Ensure that cluster participants are aware of relevant policy guidelines, technical standards and relevant commitments that the Government has undertaken under international human rights law;
- Ensure that responses are in line with existing policy guidance, technical standards, and relevant Government human rights legal obligations.

#### Monitoring and reporting

- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review impact of the cluster and progress against implementation plans;
- Ensure adequate reporting and effective information sharing (with OCHA support), with due regard for age and gender disaggregation.

#### Advocacy and resource mobilization

- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the Humanitarian Coordinator and other actors;
- Advocate for donors to fund cluster participants to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging cluster participants to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

#### Training and capacity building of national authorities and civil society

- Promote and support training of humanitarian personnel and capacity building of humanitarian partners;
- Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

Acting as provider of last resort

- As agreed by the IASC Principals, cluster leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort to meet agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard.
- This concept is to be applied in an appropriate and realistic manner for cross-cutting issues such as protection, early recovery and camp coordination.

**Cluster Participants** at the country level are expected to be proactive partners in the elaboration and implementation of the cluster's priorities.

**Annex III to Implementation of the Humanitarian Reform Initiative  
(IASC Principals, DocID: PR/0604/1514/7)**

**Outline of Clusters at the Global Level**

**1 Camp Coordination & Camp Management Cluster**

**CLUSTER LEADS: UNHCR & IOM**

**GAPS**

Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined both in complex emergencies and natural disasters. This lack of clarity prevents immediate response in a crisis.

There has been a gap in and lack of standards, policy and guidelines, and stockpiles, particularly for IDP situations. As such, response is *ad hoc* and camp conditions vary depending on location, the camp manager, and the residents. The lack of standards leads to inconsistent conditions in different camps.

There is a limited number of trained humanitarian professionals in this field. The levels of training need to be strengthened in relation to standards and general expectations in camp management.

**ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

The cluster has identified several ways to address the gaps outlined above. These include: increasing capacity through training; developing policy and standard setting; and developing standard tools for use in camp situations.

The setting of standards, guidelines and policy for camp management in IDP situations is paramount. Building on already existing material such as the Project on Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE) Standards, refugee situations, and best practices, the cluster has started to develop guiding principles and internationally accepted standards to ensure common understanding and uniform implementation in IDP camps.

Building on the Camp Management Toolkit, and revisions made based on developed standards, guidelines, and policy, the CCCM cluster plans to increase the number of country trainings and Training of Trainers (ToT) to increase knowledge and competence in camp management issues and the number of trained experts in camp management. Training on camp management and coordination would also highlight crosscutting themes such as gender, human rights, Human Immuno-deficiency Virus / Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and mental health. As the national authorities have the overall responsibility for their people and thus camps, the CCCM will develop guidelines and training for national actors including national and local authorities, partners and camp residents.

Information Technology (IT) tools corresponding to the Toolkit, for registration and information needs would also be developed to assist those in the field to ensure that standards are met and uniform.

A cluster advocacy strategy at the global level is necessary as the understanding of and the need for camp management varies. Camp coordination and camp management is a new and innovative concept, which requires information and awareness activities.

The global human resource capacity, identified by the HRR as weak, requires strengthening. The training activities and maintenance of rosters will address this problem. UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as co-cluster leads will form a joint support cell for the cluster. While the cluster and its members act as the “board”, the support cell would assist in developing policies, support the website, assist in meetings, advocacy, surge capacity with key partners, and provide technical assistance to field counterparts.

## **2. Early Recovery Cluster**

### **CLUSTER LEAD: UNDP**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of the Early Recovery Cluster is to improve the predictability, timeliness, effectiveness, and efficiency of humanitarian and development-related action from the early phases of the humanitarian response to a crisis. The cluster has defined early recovery as a multi-dimensional process –including the reintegration of displaced people- that aims at stabilising human security in its economic, livelihoods, governance, social and security dimensions and at laying the basic foundation of a transformation process that integrates risk reduction at the very early stages of humanitarian action. Given its unique role in linking relief, recovery, reconstruction, and development, the Early Recovery Cluster (ER Cluster) includes 18 partners from the both humanitarian and development communities. These include FAO, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), IOM, OCHA (including its Internal Displacement Division), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, as well as such non-IASC entities such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Secretariat, the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UN-HABITAT), and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV).

#### **GAPS**

The critical gaps identified by capacity mapping and analysis are: i) planning recovery from the very early stages of a crisis in such a way that it is integrated, inclusive, and based on common analysis in order to facilitate an early bridging of the emergency and recovery processes; and ii) developing joint programming with humanitarian actors including NGOs, in key priority sectors where the impact of development programmes needs to be accelerated. The objective of the ER Cluster is to enhance the global-level capacity for more effectively supporting the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators in strategically planning recovery and integrating risk and vulnerability reduction measures at the very early stages of emergencies. In pursuing this objective, it is expected that the ER Cluster will contribute to the following outcomes: enhanced capacity at field level, particularly in high risk countries for strategically planning early recovery; improved predictability of funding for early recovery; enhanced capacity at field level for strategically planning humanitarian and recovery-related initiatives in a selective number of priority sectors; strengthened human security in crisis situations and increased impact of risk mitigation and vulnerability reduction measures for the greatest number of beneficiaries; and greater predictability, timeliness and comprehensiveness of surge capacity deployment.

### **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

The Early Recovery Cluster plan of action for 2006 focuses on addressing the most critical of the capacity gaps: strategic planning in early recovery. The main activities planned during 2006 include the following:

1. Develop (or improve) common tools and methodologies;
2. Develop and train an inter-agency surge/rapid deployment capacity to improve the predictability and timeliness of mobilisation of technical expertise;
3. Systematise and strengthen knowledge management, through lessons learned, best practice and knowledge products;
4. Put in place (or strengthen) inter-agency agreements, including with non-governmental organisations, necessary to support the improved overall performance in early recovery;
5. Develop (or strengthen) joint planning interface which harmonises and integrates emergency and recovery, focused on “priority areas” that may not fit neatly in the sectors traditionally included in humanitarian response coordination, e.g., livelihoods; community driven approaches for early recovery; housing, land, property, and natural resources; basic social services; rule of law; and disaster risk management and governance.

### **3. Emergency Telecommunications Cluster**

#### **CLUSTER LEADS:**

OCHA is the process owner with responsibility for: overall preparedness; coordination; standards, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and evaluation mechanisms; activation of the response; information management and outreach; and inter-cluster liaison. UNICEF and WFP are service providers for common data services and common security telecommunications services, respectively.

#### **GAPS**

To date the provision of inter-agency telecommunications in emergencies has been reactionary with resources – human, technical and financial – being made available on an *ad hoc* and best-effort basis.

The lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities has negatively impacted the time to implement inter-agency telecommunications. The current combined capacity of the ETC members (UN, NGOs and partners) is insufficient to provide the needed ICT services. The major gaps to ETC implementation are: Inter-Agency coordination staff, preparedness resources, global strategic stockpiles, service predictability and training.

#### **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

The ETC strategy is guided by the principles of preparedness, sustainability, timeliness, predictability, resource mobilisation, standardisation, coordination and continuous monitoring. The 2006 ETC preparedness and response plan clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the ETC members and is critical for the agencies to build the capacity (equipment stocks, preparedness resources, inter-agency coordination staff and training), which currently does not exist, to respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner. The plan is based on existing capacity, augments it where necessary, and ensures availability of core professional inter-agency resources.

The main activities in 2006 are designed to address the existing gaps and include:

1. **Human Resources:** Dedicated staff are required for the cluster lead role as well as coordination, management and preparedness activities at the global and regional levels. The country level resources and activities will be covered by the existing cluster member capacities. The regional capacity will ensure the availability of minimal resources for preparedness activities as well as deployment at the onset of a disaster covering both assessment and implementation. The dedicated resources are essential for successful planning, management, and coordinated implementation of the cluster services, which include assessments, emergency response plans, and development of an emergency response roster, surge capacity, and stronger partner relationships;
2. **Global Strategic Stockpiles:** Essential equipment pre-stock and long-term arrangements with vendors and service providers needed at the onset of an emergency;
3. **Capacity Building and Training:** Training is critical to ensure the requisite level of skills, competencies, and common understanding of policies, procedures and operating principles. This will include: development of a training curriculum for the various technical and operational areas; development of training packages to facilitate emergency simulations as part of an overall preparedness exercise; training to and by standby partners to bring in additional skills to strengthen cluster capacities;
4. **Partnerships:** Develop strong partnerships among humanitarian agencies and standby partners for greater sharing of resources both during preparedness and response;
5. **Response:** Develop and implement a modular approach, including SOPs to provide rapid response during an emergency. This will include: division of response into pre-defined response periods (within 1 week, 3 weeks, 8 weeks, and beyond 9 weeks); define within each phase's specific services and resource requirements to ensure that service requirements are met with the appropriate resources at the right time.

#### 4. HEALTH CLUSTER

##### **CLUSTER LEAD: WHO**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

The strategy of the IASC Health Cluster will be delivered through a *Joint Initiative to Improve Humanitarian Health Outcomes* consisting of a prioritised action package of 20 inter-related measures to strengthen: early warning; preparedness; capacity building; assessments and strategies; country-based management; review, reporting and lesson learning; and advocacy and resource mobilisation.

##### **GAPS**

Though the health sector is not formally a gap area, it can benefit from improved humanitarian response. There are also some relatively neglected sub-sector areas especially in relation to mental health and psychosocial support, management of gender-based violence (GBV), and women's health.

##### **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

Response Planning and Preparedness Measures are included as specific actions in the twenty-point Joint Initiative to Improve Humanitarian Health Outcomes. In particular, recognising that human resources are an urgent and serious constraint, a common international "Health Emergency Action Response Network (HEAR - NET) has been initiated with 32 agencies attending a pilot induction course held in Geneva in November 2005.

Health, Mortality and Nutrition Tracking Service: standardised methods and formats for needs assessments and monitoring are being developed as well as system-wide agreed benchmarks, methods and systems for measuring outcomes and performance.

To overcome the gaps, the Health Cluster has identified 20 priority action areas to be carried out at appropriate levels i.e. globally (defined here as also including regional and sub-regional) and at country level (defined here as also including provincial and local settings). Regional or sub-regional approaches are essential when emergencies have serious effects beyond the country in crisis, for example when people cross borders. At the country level, the health cluster activities are divided in the following areas:

#### **Early warning**

- Background health profiles in a standard format containing essential data for planners and programmers should be prepared, consolidated, and kept updated for all countries in crisis or at high risk of disasters and crises in order to provide the common basis for preparedness and contingency planning;
- A surveillance system should be instituted for all crisis and potential crisis settings in order to pick up early indications of conditions of public health importance;

#### **Preparedness**

- Members of the health cluster should develop and publish their internal "self-improvement" plans and report openly on progress in order to provide an accountable basis for assessing progress;

#### **Capacity building**

- For countries in crises or at high risk of disasters and crises, specific strategies and cost plans for investment in health sector risk reduction, preparedness and response, should be prepared and supported in order to reduce vulnerability and to build the capacity of national and local crisis health responders;

#### **Assessments and strategies**

- For each crisis situation, the development of a common humanitarian health action plan within an agreed timescale should be a norm, so as to provide a reasoned basis for coordination, resource mobilisation, delivery, and the measurement of impact.

#### **Country-based management**

- A dedicated and competent Emergency Health Coordinator with appropriate technical support should be considered for deployment in support of the UN Resident or/and Humanitarian Coordinator and the in-country Country Team, or Disaster Management Team, when justified by the magnitude of specific disasters and crises in order to provide effective capacity and leadership for the health response to crises;
- In specific crisis situations, clear Health Cluster leadership, management and organisational arrangements should be agreed at national and field levels so as to allow health assistance partners to discuss and coordinate their respective responsibilities, resolve technical issues in a timely way, address critical gaps in essential healthcare provision, and establish robust mechanisms for reporting & follow-up.

#### **Review, reporting and lessons learning**

- Common humanitarian health action reporting formats, standards, and timelines should be agreed, drawing on the best of prevalent models, and utilised in a consistent manner in order to reduce transactional costs, and the administrative burdens on hard-pressed operational service providers;
- A systematic joint programme of reviews and evaluations conducted with due transparency and objectivity should be set up so as to foster a culture of lesson learning and accountability (to stakeholders and beneficiaries).

#### **Advocacy and resource mobilisation**

- The emergency health coordination function at country level (see Action Area 14) should include the formulation of the health component of assistance appeals, and the tracking of responses and gaps (including in consolidated appeals, flash appeals, and transitional recovery appeals) in order to facilitate the matching of resources and needs;

## **5. Emergency Shelter Cluster**

### **CLUSTER LEADS:**

UNHCR is Cluster Lead for complex emergencies and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has offered to provide leadership for natural disasters.

### **GAPS**

The Emergency Shelter Cluster has agreed that three key elements must be addressed in order to improve effectiveness and predictability in this sector: a) increasing the number of qualified professionals available for rapid deployment; b) strengthening stockpiles of shelter and related NFIs; and c) developing an emergency shelter strategy and guidelines and tools for assessments, action and monitoring alongside training.

### **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

The initial implementation plan on the key issues to be addressed by the Emergency Shelter Cluster in 2006 include the following

- 1. Develop Emergency Shelter Strategies and SOPs considering the different needs for both natural disaster and complex emergencies**
  - Agree on overall emergency shelter strategy and exit strategy
  - Prepare SOPs and Guidelines, for assessment as well as implementation
  - Define set of intervention criteria and matrix of best response for different climatic and geographical conditions.
  - Establish monitoring indicators to monitor impact, effectiveness etc of response and a clear reporting strategy
- 2. Standard Setting**
  - Review minimum standards, basic items, emergency supply specifications, compatibility across agencies, emerging technologies, standards for site selection and emergency infrastructure and services, etc.
  - Establish a technical working group to review different climatic and geographical condition responses in emergency shelter, building on available texts and tools in the area of humanitarian intervention.
- 3. Shelter and related NFI stockpiles and information database:**
  - Identify existing stockpile locations with respect to the OCHA Central Register which has been recommended by OCHA and adopted by the cluster.
  - Cooperate with the Preparedness sub-group of the Logistics Cluster to up-date and refine the Central Register on Emergency Stockpiles and additional modules to be developed, as necessary.
  - Prepare and agree on a global emergency shelter response strategy, including inter-operability for procurement, stockpiling, logistics and distribution. The Emergency Shelter Cluster will work closely with the Interoperability Sub-group of the Logistics Cluster which has been set up to address the issue of standardization of stocks, agency logos, etc.
- 4. Staff for Emergency Shelter Response**
  - Identify staffing requirements and skills considering both technical expertise and programme/coordination needs at global and national levels (See Annex 6).

- Develop inventory of existing rosters and common roster strategy
- Develop stand-by arrangements with organisations with demonstrated capacity
- Agencies/organizations determine in-house capacity and availability for start-up in new emergencies which may be linked to initial rapid response at emergency outbreak.

#### **5. Training**

- Development of training modules, possibly through a working group, considering shelter-related technical requirements, cross cutting issues and programme/co-ordination activities. Such training will focus on shelter experts, physical planners and shelter coordinators and will focus on building their capacity to operate in emergency situations. Training modules/focus areas relevant to the Emergency Shelter Cluster would include:

#### **6. Risk Mapping:**

- Based on existing mechanisms, strengthen system for early warning/risk mapping/trigger for emergency shelter.
- Establish scope & criteria of emergency.
- On-going assessment of shelter emergency risks (mainly related to natural disasters) to support contingency plan development and maintenance.
- Work with existing mechanisms through the IASC Task Forces and UNDP to provide risk information and risk mapping data

#### **7. Information Management**

- Use the IASC Shelter Portal for sharing information & lessons learned.
- Central Register of Emergency Stockpiles for information on stocks of shelter-related NFIs.
- Link with RESPOND (UNOSAT/European Space Agency/Other partners) and other bodies for access to satellite images.
- Compile a database of satellite images and maps in selected countries to facilitate emergency planning and site selection.

## **6. LOGISTICS CLUSTER**

### **CLUSTER LEAD: WFP**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

With a view to improving surge capacity, predictability, speed and the effectiveness of international humanitarian response, the Logistics Working Group identified areas where improvements were needed, particularly to ensure improved logistics preparedness and response, and to facilitate improved inter-agency interoperability by pooling of resources.

#### **GAPS**

1. **Inter-Agency Contingency Planning:** whilst individual agency contingency planning is relatively strong, integration needs to be enhanced and logistics aspects included;
2. **Humanitarian Response Network:** a lack of a global network of warehouse facilities from which to launch emergency response operations. Currently there is no coordinating body and no easily accessible communications platform to facilitate the exchange of supply-chain information between donors, the UN, International Organisations, NGOs, and the commercial sector;
3. **Stockpile Mapping:** the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) recommended to “expand global mapping of relief stocks” through which agencies are to report on “quantity, values, geographical positioning, availability and access” of stockpiles of relief goods;

4. **Inter-Agency Logistics Response Teams (LRTs):** the onset of major humanitarian disasters are often characterised by a lack of credible information, for example on needs of affected populations and the logistics situation on the ground. Faster assessments of logistics needs are required at the immediate onset of an emergency. Such information can then lead to coordinated and correct actions;
5. **Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA):** there is a lack of awareness within the humanitarian community and with donors regarding the correct use of MCDA. Such assets, if used correctly, can be invaluable to an effective response;
6. **Airfield congestion:** Airfield congestion, caused by an imbalance of arriving aircraft and handling capacity, during large-scale natural disasters is common. The consequent delay in the arrival of rescue teams and relief commodities causes loss of life and wastes resources;
7. Support Cell addressing above-mentioned issues.

#### ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS

1. **Inter-Agency Contingency Planning:** dedicated staff will be required to pursue the logistics aspect, including mapping logistics data, during any inter-agency contingency planning process. Additional staff will be tasked to lead in anticipating requirements for common warehouse and transport assets and logistics capacity assessments, and to feed such information into the inter-agency contingency planning exercise;
2. **Humanitarian Response Network (HRN):** The overall aim is to provide better-integrated supplies information and coordination during both preparedness and response. NGOs without the capacity to build on-site warehouses would benefit from this initiative. The pre-positioning of common pipeline and most urgently needed relief items strategic locations' warehouses will lead to: a) improved response time (<48 hours); b) supply better fitting demand; c) warehouse and freight cost reductions; and d) better procurement of goods;
3. **Stockpile Mapping:** The Logistics Cluster will use the Register of Emergency Stockpiles as a base for stockpile mapping, and will collaborate on reviewing data and including quantities of goods in stocks. The Cluster has also recommended to list in the Register the most frequently stocked items and to establish common non-food items (NFI) denominators for each sector. Each other cluster will be asked to provide their inputs on the common NFI denominators. The logistics cluster will coordinated the preparedness for, and use of, integrated cluster stockpiles;
4. The **Inter-Agency Logistics Response Team (LRT)** concept is based on the need to improve response time. A fully self-sustaining LRT will be deployed within hours of any large-scale emergency and such a team will have the expertise and training to ensure decisive action. In essence, the LRT would start logistics operations by conducting logistics assessment, compiling and analysing logistics information, identifying logistics bottlenecks and recommending possible solutions, producing maps with logistics information, assisting local and national authorities with the management of common transport assets, including air assets, tracking essential relief items and unsolicited commodities, assisting in Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) activities at the operational level, solving customs and border crossing problems, etc. Inter-agency staff in the LRT may be required to undertake activities for which their parent agencies are the cluster lead, concurrent to their logistics related activities. This will ensure streamlined and efficient use of the cluster concept and assist in the inter-operability between the clusters;
5. **Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA):** The need to address the principles of the Oslo Guidelines 1994 and the Complex Emergency Guidelines 2003 is paramount in preventing the use of these assets in an uncontrolled and erratic way. An awareness campaign is needed within the humanitarian community and with donors to recommend the correct use of

- MDCA. The Logistics Cluster recommends that experts to manage MCDA assets be deployed at the onset of a large-scale natural disaster;
6. **Airfield Decongestion:** the Logistics Cluster recommends the establishment of a system and procedures to create a UN Air Management System at the onset of large-scale emergencies. Such a system, necessarily including a strategic air coordination cell, comprising a modular team of air experts, identification of strategic hubs and preparation of agreements with local authorities, requires an adequate number of experts who are trained in the requirements;
  7. **Support Cell:** WFP, as cluster lead, is the agency of last resort, and its role in meeting a logistics gap is not merely to act as a transporter. It must also resolve supply chain problems (excluding procurement) when requested. In order to ensure that the Logistics Cluster is prepared and able to meet any eventuality, the WFP plans to create a support cell. The rationale for such a support cell is that several actions need to be taken (at HQ and field level) in advance of a large-scale emergency and inter-operability between the members of the cluster needs to be established to facilitate a streamlined and efficient response. The cell consists of staff in HQ and the field tasked to: coordinate the Logistics Cluster, develop criteria for applying the Logistics Cluster concept, develop standard operating procedures and terms of reference, devise templates for operational plans and NFI pipeline reporting, integrate the clusters, collate and disseminate information, devise training modules, draft logistics-related agreements and service contracts, build inter-agency and government relations in the field, etc.

## 7. NUTRITION CLUSTER

### **CLUSTER LEAD: UNICEF**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Preventing and managing under-nutrition is the most cost-effective approach to reducing the burden of mortality and under-nutrition in children under 5. The IASC Cluster mechanism provides a momentous opportunity to save countless lives.

#### **GAPS**

1. **Coordination:** a major gap in addressing under-nutrition has been the segmented approach in which action has taken place. Since each organisation often focuses on one distinct underlying cause of under-nutrition —disease, access to food, care, or water, sanitation and environment— often without coordination, the combined impact of these actions has not been maximised. There is enormous potential within the IASC approach to remedy this gap;
2. **Capacity Building:** while pockets of capacity exist within certain organisations and certain regions, a predictable, standardised and sufficient response in nutrition cannot be systematically guaranteed in each emergency. UNICEF, which leads the cluster, must strengthen its own capacity, as well as the capacity of other international and local organisations, including Governments;
3. **Emergency Preparedness and Response Triggers:** Clear and unambiguous internationally accepted criteria to classify the different types of a “nutrition emergency” need further development. Further, once an emergency has been declared, clear standards to guide the response, with transparent processes and accountability, must be endorsed by all actors;
4. **Assessment, Monitoring and Surveillance:** The onset of a humanitarian disaster is often plagued by a lack of quickly available information. Further, once assessments have been undertaken, they are often uncoordinated among agencies and sectors, with varied results. Inter-sectoral assessments focusing on the many underlying causes of under-nutrition, undertaken with a commonly agreed upon methodology, would significantly streamline an emergency nutrition response;

5. **Supply:** A quick humanitarian response is often obstructed by a lack of supplies readily available in countries. Stockpiling supplies, facilitating in-country procurement, and clarifying operational procedures for procurement would greatly remedy this gap. Furthermore, there is a lack of standardisation and quality control of fortified products.

## **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

### **Capacity Building**

1. **Coordination:** The IASC cluster approach provides an important opportunity for the humanitarian community to tackle under-nutrition with a common objective, pooled resources, and a coordinated approach to address all the underlying causes of under-nutrition in any given context. The Nutrition Cluster has already developed a close collaborative working relationship with the WHO-led Health Cluster, and is in the process of articulating the links with WFP in its capacity as lead agency for Food, and FAO as lead agency for Livelihoods and Agriculture. Furthermore, the IASC approach provides a forum for a coordination process that is truly reflective of all actors in the nutrition humanitarian community, engaging relevant UN agencies as well as NGOs vital to an effective nutrition response. A coordination cells is required in order to: a) agree upon a conceptual framework for nutrition which informs and strengthens a collective nutrition response, b) develop and endorse tools and policies that enable inter-sectoral analysis and response to under-nutrition; c) facilitate the development and placement of surge capacity; and d) raise international attention and awareness to global crises of under-nutrition. The coordination cell, hosted by UNICEF HQ, is limited to 2-4 years, and will operate with the overall objective of building institutional and government capacity to provide a systematic, reliable, and predictable response to nutrition in emergencies;
2. **Capacity Building:** The cluster has initially defined building capacity as skilled human resources, application of a common conceptual framework availability of training materials, endorsement and application of common policies and guidelines, etc. To build and sustain effective capacity in nutrition, the cluster proposes a more in-depth capacity mapping exercise. The results of this assessment will further guide the capacity building activities. However, the cluster has prioritised the development and rolling out of standardised training materials as a definite gap. There is a need to provide training in standardised assessment, as well as emergency nutrition response. These training materials will be focused on in 2006;
3. **Preparedness and Response Triggers:** In order to have a systematic response, consensus must be reached on the classification of the different types of “nutrition emergencies.” The cluster has prioritised activities to: a) endorse/expand upon existing indicators and thresholds to classify nutrition emergencies; b) integrate food security, livelihood, health and nutrition indicators into information systems; and c) develop country profiles to identify vulnerable countries and in-country capacity to respond;
4. **Assessment, Monitoring and Surveillance:** In order to determine when and how the humanitarian community must act in order to mitigate the effects of a nutrition emergency, appropriate tools must be available that quickly collect inter-sectoral data, provide guidance for programmes, and subsequently monitor performance. The situation must continue to be monitored and programmes revised as situations evolve. Priority activities within this area include developing an inter-sectoral rapid assessment tool, endorsing or modifying existing nutrition benchmarks, such as those developed under Sphere, and a subsequent monitoring tool to measure performance, as well as joint inter-sectoral evaluations undertaken with the Health Cluster. Sphere standards will be at the cornerstone of monitoring and benchmarking tools;
5. **Supply:** It is critical for relevant nutrition commodities to be readily available during the immediate onset of an emergency. It is a priority to support the development and production of commodities that better address the nutritional needs of the affected population (e.g.

fortified foods, ready-to-use therapeutic foods, multi-micronutrients, etc.) and to develop standardised operational procedures to streamline and stockpile emergency supplies.

It is also intended to establish a **stockpile of** nutrition commodities and non-food items in preparation for one humanitarian emergency with 800,000 beneficiaries.

## **8. Protection**

### **CLUSTER LEAD: UNHCR**

UNHCR will assume primary managerial responsibility and accountability for the protection of the internally displaced persons and affected populations in complex emergency situations. This recommendation is subject to the understanding that UNHCR's involvement in the protection of the internally displaced should not and could not be undertaken in a manner that might undermine the right to asylum or the protection of refugees in countries facing a situation of internal displacement. In such circumstances, the protection-mandated agencies (OHCHR, UNICEF and UNHCR) will consult closely and propose in a timely manner to the HC/RC (through the Country Team) an alternative agency for the assumption of managerial responsibility and accountability for the protection of the internally displaced.

### **Protection in natural and human-made disasters and in regard to other situations/groups requiring a protection response**

The WG considered it important that a mechanism be established for the protection of all persons displaced as a result of, or affected by, natural and human-made disasters as well as for populations/persons facing acute protection needs that require an international response (even if no displacement has occurred). In such situations, the WG recommends the following options:

- Under the overall leadership of the HC/RC, the three protection-mandated agencies will consult closely and agree which of the three would assume the role of Cluster Lead for protection, either on the basis of existing arrangements or after conducting a common assessment to determine the required operational capacity.
- In the unusual event that none of the three protection mandated agencies are able to assume the lead role, the fall-back option would be to strengthen the capacity of the HC/RC to define an overall strategy and programme to enhance protection, in close collaboration with the focal point agencies (see below).

The WG recognizes that the relationship between the accountability for the protection of internally displaced persons and affected populations in complex emergencies and accountability for the protection needs of other populations may pose coordination challenges at the country level that will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The protection cluster will strive, in so far as is possible, to avoid the duplication of cluster structures and in principle agree to have one protection cluster lead that will coordinate the overall protection response for all populations with the assistance of the other protection-mandated agencies.

### **“Areas of Responsibility” and “Focal Point” Agencies**

In the interests of further ensuring predictability and accountability, the WG agreed that the protection response would benefit from being divided into overarching and generally applicable “areas of responsibility” under the coordination of the cluster lead. The WG has defined nine such areas and their associated activities.

The WG also agreed that, under the coordination and primary responsibility of the cluster lead, it was important to identify “focal point” agencies (including in some situations the cluster lead) that would assume responsibility and accountability for these specific areas of responsibility in

accordance with their expertise. Under the coordination of the cluster lead, the “focal point” agency would be responsible for ensuring an effective response, in its particular area(s) of responsibility, in collaboration with other participating agencies.

## **9. WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH) CLUSTER**

### **CLUSTER LEAD: UNICEF**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The growing number, frequency, and severity of emergencies have highlighted the critical importance of water, sanitation, and hygiene during humanitarian response. Ensuring a judicious mix of water, sanitation, and hygiene actions in any crises is critical to overall public health; good nutrition; children’s education (especially that of girls); women and girls’ privacy, dignity, and safety; reducing tensions among affected populations and protecting the environment. Water, sanitation and hygiene also help to create an enabling environment for those who carry out humanitarian programmes.

The WASH cluster working group identified the key areas and gaps that need to be put into place or filled to create an effective response capacity through sound planning, effective collaboration and co-ordination, and providing greater coherence to a worldwide system approach.

#### **GAPS**

1. **Assessing Sector Capacity:** There are an increasing number of agencies operating in the water and sanitation sector. While many more-established agencies have strong operating presence backed up by experience and equipment, many of the newer, smaller ones do not. There is a need to look at the capacity of all the key agencies and improve interagency planning;
2. **Strengthen Surge Capacity:** At the moment each agency develops its own capacity to respond to emergencies depending on the country and the resources available. For many agencies this is a hit and miss process depending on availability of technical staff and donor support;
3. **Strengthen Coordination:** With the increasing range of complex emergencies and number of agencies in the WASH sector, providing a coherent range of services across the sector has become difficult. In the last five years there has been considerable criticism by the donors and international community about the lack of coordination within the sector;
4. **Development of Supply Assistance:** Many agencies over the years have developed their own equipment and use this as part of their response. Knowledge about the amount of equipment and its specifications needs to be shared and reviewed in terms of compatibility. Equipments need to be standardised, and new technologies developed;
5. **Training and Orientation:** Emergencies over the past few years have shown that there is a critical need in the WASH sector to upgrade and increase the skill level at the international, regional, and national levels. Training options need to be developed at these levels in order to build sector preparedness and response capacity. There needs to be a particular focus on the importance of Hygiene;
6. **Standard Setting and Performance Indicators:** With such a wide range of operating partners, many with little emergency experience, there is a need to improve service delivery and suitability through greater understanding of technical performance standards and ensuring their consistent use. SPHERE standards were developed 10 years ago and upgraded

in the last few years. It is necessary to review the use of SPHERE with existing WHO standards and clarify clearer operating standards;

7. **Monitoring and Advocacy:** Some of the larger agencies have good monitoring mechanisms in place to measure and review impact. However, many agencies have yet to monitor sufficiently;
8. **Resource Mobilisation:** It is important that the resource needs are identified and that funding strategies are in place to raise the required resources on time;
9. **Dedicated Cluster Support Team:** To address the above issues a dedicated team in New York and Geneva will be needed.

#### **ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE GAPS**

1. To identify available and deployable resources in the WASH cluster, including mapping where and how to fill critical gaps and weaknesses. A dedicated staff member, based in Geneva, will be required for this activity;
2. To ensure preparedness for rapid deployment of technical expertise. This includes establishing an emergency personnel roster and developing standby arrangements;
3. To ensure that agreements on the coordination function and requirements are in place during any humanitarian crisis and matched with core competencies for an effective and coordinated response. This requires developing a close relationship with all the key agencies;
4. To research and share information on emergency supply specifications and performance, including standard items and equipment kits for compatibility and product development. This includes: a) a review and assessment of all stocks of emergency water equipment; b) an assessment of cooperation with commercial companies; and c) an appraisal of emerging new technologies with potential for application in emergencies;
5. To identify where the greatest needs and skill upgrading is required at the international, regional, and national levels. To build and develop relationships with international institutions to assist in putting relevant training options in place to build sector preparedness and response capacity;
6. To work with the key agencies and institutions in order to better understand and agree on the use of SPHERE and WHO standards;
7. To work with all key partners to ensure that appropriate monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure and review impact against implementation plans;
8. To ensure that the sector has the resources and funding strategies in place to meet the needs of the beneficiaries in times of crisis;
9. None of the above will be possible without a support cell. This dedicated team is the key driver and engine behind this cluster. Its job is to bring relevant agencies together to work in the same direction and collaborate in addressing the issues and gaps already high lighted. The lead agency is also the agency of last resort: this requires more trained staff, and better regional and national structures.