

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOPIC: Emergency Shelter Coordination Meeting (ESCM)

DATE: 26 November 2007, 3:00 pm

LOCATION: UNHCR Meeting Room, Colombo

ATTENDEES:

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Chris Nixon | SCC / UNHCR (chair) | Shelter Coordinator / SCC Coordinator |
| Axel Bisschop | UNHCR | Senior Programme Officer |
| Chris Bleers | Norwegian Refugee Council | Project Manager / SCC Shelter Co-ordinator |
| Shaun Scales | Norwegian Refugee Council | SCC Shelter Co-ordinator |
| Matej Novak | People In Need | Head of Mission |
| Philippe Barragne-Bigot | UNICEF | WASH Coordinator |
| David Evans | UN Habitat | Chief Technical Adviser |
| Suranga Mallawa Arachchige | UNOPS | Assistant to Director |
| Aarathi Nithiananthan | UNOPS | Programme Associate |
| Horst Indorf | Help of Germany | Head of Mission |

APOLOGIES:

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| Annelise De Bruin | Zoa Refugee Care | M&E Coordinator |
| Mathias Anderson | Solidar | Shelter Coordinator / SCC North Focal Point |

| REF | ITEM / DETAIL | ACTION |
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| 1. | Acceptance Of Previous Minutes – ESCM 29 October 2007 | |
| 1.1 | The previous minutes of meeting were accepted. | |
| 2. | Action Items From Previous Minutes | |
| 2.1 | (3.4) – CHAP – UNHCR has followed up with all agencies and secured CHAP inputs. This will be discussed in detail under a separate meeting item. | |
| 2.2 | (5.1) – Northern Contingency Site Assessments – Jaffna – UNHCR FO in Jaffna continues to urge agencies in Jaffna to commit time to site assessment. JSAC has completed building assessments in Uduvil and Sandilipay divisions. SOLIDAR has expressed interest in assessing communal buildings in Kopay division. | |
| 2.3 | (5.3) - Northern Contingency Site Assessments – Mannar - Solidar has agreed to take over the Zoa assessments but has resource / vehicle constraint currently and SCC is seeking support to Solidar to complete. (advised by UNHCR, as Solidar could not attend) | |
| 2.4 | (5.4) - Northern Contingency Site Assessments - Kilinochchi: Agencies are slow to supply missing data and Solidar are continuing to follow up (advised by UNHCR, as Solidar could not attend) | |
| 2.5 | (7.3) Follow-up on camp decommissioning and compliance to SCC guidelines in Batticaloa - NRC advised that the survey by rapid response teams and WASH had not yet progressed as resources had been committed on recent returns and also it was felt better to survey after the returns, when more consolidation had been completed. A outcome is expected in about 1 ½ to two weeks. | NRC |

- 2.6 UN Habitat indicated that the draft recommendations to GOSL are being undertaken by UN Habitat UN Habitat for SCC after the initial SCC / UNHCR inputs as UN Habitat moves the Early Recovery initiative forward - see later minute item. The drafting of the recommendations are still pending but should be ready in approx a week and will be circulated by UN Habitat to the sector and meeting called to finalise.
- 2.7 (8.3) – GoSL Policy Recommendations - The TWG met at UN Habitat on 7 November and UN Habitat to finalise the recommendations. (See Item 2.6 above).
- 2.8 (10.6) – Advocacy on shelter / fire / site safety and size to GoSL Mannar - Agencies in general and Zoa, IOM as the most advanced were asked to provide site data on safety / sphere compliance. No information received from agencies to date. Refer to later minute item.

3. CHAP 2008 Progress of Submissions to Date

- 3.1 There will be a meeting at UNHCR on 27 October of agencies making CHAP proposals to discuss the way proposals will be presented and which proposals should go forward.
- 3.2 Although the submission date was 12 November, late proposals and project sheets are still being received.
- 3.3 UNHCR is attempting accommodate the agencies but stresses that UNHCR must send all CHAP details to OCHA on Wednesday 28 November. Therefore Wednesday 28 November 2007 is the absolute latest that proposal project summaries can be accepted and they must be absolutely complete as no time for amendment. Details and amounts of proposals (even if project sheets are to follow, must be with UNHCR prior to CHAP meeting, latest midday 27 November.
- 3.4 To date agencies have indicated 21 projects (excluding UNHCR), and two project sheets are still yet to be submitted.
- 3.5 At present the total CHAP for shelter is about \$36 million with about \$32 million being requested for funding.
- 3.6 At present the total CHAP for shelter is approx 50 percent to north and similar to the east. This may need to be addressed in the Tuesday meeting as the expectations are of increased activity and needs in the North.
- 3.7 In the meeting agencies indicated some more and revised sheets were yet to be submitted. UNHCR urged agencies to finalise soonest.
- 3.8 UNICEF indicated the WASH CHAP had been finalised already , having received 29 project proposals of which 10 are being retained totalling approx \$4.2 million

4. Contingency & Preparedness For The North

- 4.1 It was noted by the UNHCR that the Phase I assessments for the Northern Contingency plan are barely moving forward at this time and this is a concern. Resourcing constraints within the agencies are understood, but agencies are asked to try and free at least some resources to advance this initiative, particularly in the light of expectations of a very large displacement of people being probable in the near foreseeable future.
- 4.2 NRC commented that WFP has a large stockpile in Vavuniya and that it understood that their trucks can be sealed and pass through checkpoints without unloading
- 4.3 UNHCR clarified that the current assessments are not an end to the initiative, they are only the start. In fact this is the first phase of the contingency planning. Subsequent phases include:
- Obtaining GoSL sign off in advance to use assessed sites
 - Obtaining additional sites to make up shortfalls
 - Assessing host family absorptive capacity in each area
 - Identifying necessary contingency preparedness measure (site clearing in readiness, etc, ???)
 - Identifying available inventories and resources that can be mobilised by the agencies in the north and even accessible from the east
 - Pre-positioning stocks of essential materials
 - Ongoing reassessment of sites availability, condition, security, etc and reassessment of resources and stocks available from time to time
- 4.4 It was highlighted to the meeting that this initiative had grown from lessons learned in the East that availability of land for sites at short notice was a very major challenge.
- 4.5 It has been proposed that (preferably in December subject to resources and parallel commitments) a NRC small workshop will be held to capture lessons learned in the East and consider their suitability in the

- North. NRC are taking the lead in the workshop for SCC and key participants / leaders are expected to be Jake Zarins and Shaun Scales NRC / SCC East.
- 4.6 The issue of including schools in the planning and assessments has been discussed in various District and Colombo meetings previously but was raised for clarification on policy as the GAs typically include a lot of schools in the lists of sites and traditionally schools are occupied by IDPs. The SCC policy currently being promoted and implemented in the assessments is that:
- It is accepted that schools will be used though at most this should be very short term
 - Once people are in schools it may be very hard to relocate them
 - Use of schools will always disrupt the schooling and do considerable damage to the schools and facilities that may constrain or prohibit their future use until repairs / refurbishment is done
 - The GoSL also tends to try and move people from schools when the school term is starting
 - It is better if possible to avoid the use of schools and associated secondary displacement
 - Assessing of schools which is too high profile can cause alarm in communities
 - Where information can be obtained by low profile means or existing records or from Zonal Education Authorities, such information for shelter, WASH and other uses should be carefully indexed and retained for future use
 - School sites should not be included in the formal contingency planning as this may be taken as endorsement of their use and furthermore weakens the humanitarian community's advocacy for additional sites, which may be alternatives to schools
- 4.7 NRC also made the point that while WASH and other shelter related / supporting facilities are being provided in schools, these facilities are not available in other sites which may be longer term. Consequently the use of schools even for transit, reduces and slows the availability of key facilities in the sites where they are most needed.

5. Camp Consolidation, Upgrades, Decommissioning

- 5.1 UNHCR updated that with recent returns there are currently 26 camps in existence in Batticaloa. Upgrades in all of the identified "longer term" consolidation camps are well in progress.
- 5.2 Significant returns to origin are occurring from some of the "longer term" consolidation camps and there continues to be the difficulty of moving people to these camps before they are looted, consequently even some of the longer term camps are being partially decommissioned.
- 5.3 It has been agreed that IDPs must have right of choice not only to return to origin, but also if they wish to relocate to upgraded "consolidation sites".
- 5.4 It is a difficult issue for agencies where they have upgraded a site for longer term use and then as some of the shelters are vacant they must be decommissioned and the materials salvaged for re-use or the looters will "decommission" the site and remove materials for their own use or sale.
- 5.5 Looting results in even the longer term camps being decommissioned since these camps have the materials in better condition, especially after upgrade.
- 5.6 The issues of recent returns and both the voluntariness of return and the sustainability of return to origin in some locations were discussed. It was agreed that voluntariness of return and safety at origin are central rights for the IDPs involving protection. UNHCR provided a public statement made in Geneva the previous Friday regarding such matters. No GoSL response had been recorded at the time of meeting.
- 5.7 The meeting discussed recent returns to origin in which IDPs had then returned to camps and could not be re-registered as IDPs and found their shelters decommissioning. The question of re-registration is being addressed by protection staff, and shelter agencies are seeking to address the risks of people returning to decommissioned sites because it is not feasible to leave sites vacant.
- 5.8 Where possible beneficiaries need to be involved more and earlier in the options to move camps and the camp consolidation, though this is difficult with short notice from the GoSL authorities. Reference was made to concerted efforts to involve beneficiaries in consolidation and this needs to continue. It was suggested that the list of consolidation sites be reviewed, though acknowledged that there was limited opportunity to substitute sites where many had been or where being up[graded]
- 5.9 The issue of longer term IDPs whose properties are within the HSZ was discussed for v which so far there seems no conclusive solution. The meeting was told the GoSL had at one point offered a relocation site at Raulkuli and to build pilot shelter types, though it seems that this has not progressed and anecdotal information is the IDPs do not wish to relocate to Raulkuli.
- 5.10 The issue of IDPS whose homes in Trincomalee had been taken as a military camp was raised. Some agencies are unable to assist due to their mandates and it is recognised that providing assistance may reduce the effects of advocacy for either return or compensation. GoSL has stated

the people have been offered alternative land, but it was confirmed the IDPs feel the land is too remote and too close to jungle and not safe and have rejected. It is confirmed that initiatives are in progress in Trincomalee for agencies that are able, to give minimum humanitarian assistance while advocacy continues

6. Early Recovery Update

- 6.1 UN Habitat updated on early recovery developments in Batticaloa and on the preparation of recommendations to GoSL on early recovery policy which UN Habitat have now taken over from the UNHCR / SCC TWG and which soon should be concluded.
- 6.2 UN Habitat, with funding assistance from UNHCR shortly expect to commence their early recovery core housing . Ultimately UN Habitat with additional funds plan to build 4000 to 5000 houses . Initially they plan to start approx 100 houses within 2 months. Cost of the initial phase of the core house will be approx LKR 100,000. These would be in initially Velavelli, and later 3 other divisions
- 6.3 Help of Germany is proposing to build core houses in West Batticaloa. The costs for the core house will be 200,000 to 250, 000 LKR. The local government has approved the construction of about 100 houses. The approval of the GA was given and then later withdrawn. Help is now expecting the approval of the GA within the week commencing 3 December.
- 6.4 UN Habitat has stated that there are approx 20,000 to 25,000 damaged or destroyed houses in the area, of which it is estimated NEHRP may have capacity for approx 3,000. Consequently there is seen to be a lack of agencies involved in early recovery housing, in addition to which many NGOs do not have access to the areas.
- 6.5 Regarding the recommendations for GoSL policy on early recovery, UN Habitat apologised for the delay and indicated that the draft would be complete in approx one week and would be circulated to shelter organisations to convene the TWG and finalise the document for delivery to the GoSL.

7. Mannar & Manthai West Developments

- 7.1 UNHCR updated the meeting on progress and issues as follows:

Currently, the construction of emergency shelters is ongoing in Nanaddan (692 shelters), Mannar Island (145) and Manthai West (1,415). These shelters are mainly to assist displaced since intensification of the conflict in September 07.

Both parts of Mannar District are increasingly affected by shortage of construction materials. The problem in Manthai West is widely known and is the same as in other parts of Vanni, but the GoSL controlled part of Mannar is also facing significant problems. This is partially due to increased demand, but also due to the very restrictive procedures introduced by the forces trying to minimize smuggling of materials, especially cement, from Mannar Island to Vanni.

- 7.2 **Manthai West:** The security situation is rapidly deteriorating and causing further population displacement in Manthai West, lately mainly secondary displacement. There is still a tendency of people, especially farmers, to try to stay as close as possible to their homes. Mostly farmers displaced during the first wave of movement in/into Manthai West in September/October. Recently there was a significant movement of fishermen from the costal zone, moving north to coastal villages that were so far hardly affected. This created gaps in shelter assistance which was planned in October. Some of the gaps will reportedly be addressed by newly established programmes of OXFAM and CARE, but there is still shortage of a few hundred shelters.

The gaps in provision of shelters are mainly due to the limited funding, but also capacity of agencies to respond – material shortages, delays in material supply, security situation, access issues, etc. In some locations, unresolved water supply issues became limiting factor for further shelter assistance.

- 7.3 **Nanaddan:** For identified needs for emergency shelters in Nanaddan, responsibilities were divided between agencies operating in the district. ICRC is assisting camps and others are working in host communities. Agencies started their activities depending on their capacity in the field. Agencies previously doing shelters – IOM and ZOA, promptly responded, while for others needed to put systems in place. Construction is in different stages – some procuring materials, others finished or close to finishing.

The main problems are related with land availability, since only limited areas were acceptable to SLA. Moreover, Nanaddan district is a low land area, so drainage remains one of the main problems.

8. Current Concerns In Mannar

- 8.1 Shortage of land in Mannar resulted in inevitable reduction of clearance between shelters for firebreaks, drainage, access and health considerations. Planned advocacy efforts, that would make them responsible in case of fire outbreak since they were not able to provide more land, required inputs from agencies after field assessment, but some of the agencies (ZOA and IOM) have yet to provide inputs and some agencies are just finishing assessments.

Delays with advocacy with local government will make the effort less effective now when some shelters are already constructed and construction of the rest is in progress.

- 8.2 Also of concern are quite significant variations in shelter design, ranging from 160 to 234 sq ft, use of different materials (where tin sheets are preferred by the beneficiaries) and various methods of labour payments, ranging from no payments to 7,000 rupees pre shelter) and a wide range of total values in shelters.

All of these factors raise concerns about equity and sustainability, particularly if the projected mass displacement in the North occurs.

These factors have caused and continue give continuing concern for problems in the field and, consequently, in coordination.

- 8.3 A number of participants at the ESCM expressed concerns at these issues and their impacts on health, safety, disease control and equity aspects of the Mannar displacement and the negative impacts on coordination and response.

- 8.4 It was confirmed that these coordination challenges and parallel / duplicated coordination was not only affecting the Shelter sector but also WASH were encountering challenges from the same aspects.

- 8.5 NRC spoke specifically to the fact that while incomplete compliance to Sphere and other internationally recognised guidelines was not acceptable, but could be understood in the context of the early stages of a rapid tent response, it was unacceptable to perpetuate such practices with the replacing shelters - apart from fire and drainage aspects, an out break of measles or similar would also spread rapidly in such congested sites.

- 8.6 UNHCR clarified the sources of standards and requirements for minimum firebreaks for differing materials.

- 8.7 UNHCR confirmed that UNHCR FO and UNHCR /SCC have raised the issue of land unavailability and unsuitability in Mannar with the GoSL representatives on a number of occasions. Reportedly ICRC have also raised the matter.

- 8.8 UNHCR clarified and a number of the meeting participants endorsed that that it was necessary that the GoSL authorities be clearly advised of the shelter, and protection implications and risks in the current sites and that agencies were being forced to implement in a manner they felt on some sites to be unsatisfactory and unsustainable and contrary to recognised practices.

- 8.9 It was agreed in the meeting that without proper advocacy and informing the GoSL authorities, the agencies might be held accountable if fires or health outbreaks occurred. The GoSL might suggest that they had no knowledge of the implications and that agencies who were expert had progressed the shelter construction. Participants suggested that it is up to agencies to provide information in order that robust advocacy can be made on behalf of the agencies and IDPs.

- 8.10 UNHCR stated that recently they had funded the attendance of the Mannar PD at an internationally conducted Sphere Shelter training workshop in Colombo to raise awareness

- 8.11 Various participants expressed concern that the SCC / UNHCR quiet diplomacy with agencies (that did not seem to contribute on the advocacy, equity, etc on such serious issues) did not seem to be effective. Participants suggested asking agencies to clarify their position in the National Shelter Coordination Meeting.

UNHCR indicated that further efforts to secure consensus with the agencies operating in Mannar will

be sought, and it will be suggested that perhaps their Colombo offices could provide additional oversight, especially where national staff from Mannar may be facing local challenges or a holistic approach to the Sphere / International standards and norms may be absent, and /or in matters of coordination, equity and the potential downstream consequences.

9. Harmonisation & Terminology

- 9.1 UNHCR explained the difficulties associated with variances in terminology associated with shelter and the impacts for donors, agencies, beneficiaries, equity of shelter delivery and coordination.
- 9.2 Previously SCC has sought to get inputs from all shelter agencies and areas to identify the scale of the challenge and potential for harmonisation which has been requested by various parties. An initial matrix has been developed
- 9.3 Participants of the meeting supported clarity and harmonisation of terminology and requested the UNHCR matrix be sent to all shelter agencies for input. UNHCR to send out the matrix as soon as possible

10. Statistics & Reporting

- 10.1 UNHCR highlighted the need for accurate statistics and reporting for the benefits of coordination, input and support to funding initiatives such as CHAP and for advocacy to donors and GoSL.
- 10.2 Some agencies are thorough and regular with reporting,, though terminology (as above) sometimes confounds accurate reporting. Other agencies consistently decline or fail to produce statistics
- 10.3 As the conflicts and displacements in the north escalate there will be an increasing trend away from large sites where management and statistics are readily measured to many scattered small sites with, as occurring in Manthai West, gaps, or overlaps. Accuracy and timeliness in reporting is essential.
- 10.4 UNHCR requested agencies to please instruct their district offices to provide accurate and timely statistics with clearly defined terminology - a reporting matrix is in use for UNHCR offices and projects which has been quick and effective to use. UNHCR / SCC is open to constructive suggestions from the sector
- 10.5 Participants expressed the view that agencies that elect not to participate in and support the coordination process should not expect its benefits and support.

11. Any Other Business / Items by Participants

- 11.1 NRC indicated that they will be meeting with representatives of WASH to discuss development of new WASH lesson plans for Camp management Training.
- 11.2 UNHCR queried and NRC responded on whether traditional camp management practices are appropriate for the "new generation" of mini sites (5 to 10 shelters on a site).
NRC felt that that for training and follow-up small mobile units and mobile teams will be required and this is already being planned
In terms of the sites NRC feel that small sites will appoint a leader / spokesman in and in may aspects they will be able to have better knowledge of the site and if they know the focal points / agencies for particular interventions this will work efficiently

12. Date Of Forthcoming Meetings (Emergency Shelter and Early Recovery)

- 12.1 The date of the next TWG (subgroup - GoSL policy recommendations) will be advised when UN Habitat have completed and disseminated to recommendations. To be advised by UN Habitat
- 12.2 The date of the next Emergency Shelter Coordination Meeting was not set at the meeting but post meeting it has been agreed due to the Christmas period to reschedule to 3 pm at UNHCR on Thursday, 20 December 2007