

Water and Sanitation Emergency Task Force (ETF): Sri Lanka conflict emergency

Meeting Minutes

Date: 21 January 2008
Venue: UNICEF Colombo
Time: 2.00pm

Agenda:

1. General Situation Update
2. Agency's plans for emergency WASH implementation and contingency planning updates (each agency to give an update)
3. Update on CHAP
4. Open discussion on role of ETF and future considerations, comments on Terms of Reference and frequency of meetings
5. Any other business

Present at meeting: UNICEF, Oxfam, IOM, IRD and ICRC

The meeting was opened by Mr. Philippe Barragne-Bigot, who welcomed participants and explained that it is a good opportunity for a meeting as the situation is intensifying in the north, therefore WASH agencies should be sharing contingency and response plans and to brief each other on available capacities. Mr. Barragne-Bigot introduced Leslie Morris who has started the new post in the last weeks as WASH Emergency Coordinator based in Colombo, who then facilitated the meeting.

1. General situation update

- UNICEF distributed the Emergency WASH monitoring indicators, which were updated in the previous week by UNICEF emergency focal points in each of the affected districts. According to the matrix there are close to 200,000 IDPs in the north and east, at more than 77 camps (with additional host family locations).
- The general situation was discussed where there the emergency situation in the north has intensified considerably, with the expectation that this will continue
- Many IDP locations are not meeting Sphere standards, particularly in the north in areas where there are access problems. UNICEF highlighted that in Manthai West in particular there are 529 persons per toilet. There are also many problems related to the fact that in these areas IDPs are now in "mini sites" or with host families which creates particular challenges for the WASH sector to address needs

2. Agency plans – general update

IRD

- The main project carried out by IRD is SODIS project, which was started in July 2007, with the distillation of water from public wells by solar disinfection. 250 awareness programmes have been carried out, and 5000 individuals have already been reached. Private wells and schools in Batticaloa and Ampara are being targeted within the next three months, and will be expanded to resettlement areas. SODIS programme is starting in Jaffna with MoH in 2 areas.
- UNICEF inquired whether any consideration has been given to whether SODIS could be carried out in IDP camps, and requested for IRD to forward information to the group on any data on acceptability of SODIS in emergency. IRD said that it was carried out mainly in resettlement areas, and results are dependent on the physical and chemical tests performed. IRD is transporting SODIS PET bottles to Batticaloa with help from Ministry of Health, around 10,000 bottles per months. Trying to find means to transport to Jaffna as well.

UNICEF

- Main activity at the moment related to taking responsibility for coordination in most districts, including necessary advocacy with NGO and government partners. There is an exception in Mannar and Killinochchi due to staff issues which we hope to resolve accordingly.
- No construction activity is being carried out at the moment due to funding. However 200-300 hygiene kits are now being weekly transported to Jaffna by plane; and hygiene kits this week are being sent to Vavuniya, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalle in addition to other limited supplies (soaps, buckets, chlorine testers)

Oxfam GB

- Hand outs were distributed regarding the activities carried out by Oxfam.
- In Killi and Mullaitivu, there are current activities are in hygiene awareness, as well as training for public health promoters on emergencies and trainings water quality and environmental sanitation for school health clubs. There are major problems related to security and restriction of movements.
- Oxfam feels that the phasing out in Batticaloa needs close monitoring and this is being considered at the moment. No current commitments in Trincomalee.
- There are no further activities/commitments in the east with the exception of the 2 water treatment plants
- From the Vavuniya office, the programme is targeting areas in Mannar although it is difficult to access

ICRC

- A new Wat-Hab section has been opened in Vavuniya, which also covers Mannar. It has been so far mainly involved in shelter assistance for the Musali IDPs and in the installation and rehabilitation of cooling units in the Vavuniya hospital mortuary.
- In Killinochchi and Manthai West: ICRC is assisting IDPs in Manthai West (donation of material for 160 shelters in the last month), is involved in construction works in health infrastructures and continues to repair hand-pumps. Hygiene kits are also distributed through the Ecosec department.
- In Jaffna, ICRC is in charge of maintaining watsan facilities in 36 Welfare Centers.
- In Trincomalee, ICRC deals with assistance for returnees (shelters), construction/cleaning of water points and construction of semi-permanent latrines in high security area.
- In Batticaloa, ICRC is assisting returnees with shelter material and continues to maintain watsan facilities in two camps.
- In Ampara, repair of hands pumps and upgrade of shelters is taking place.
- Country wide: Contingency Planning is being carried out. Three tier maintenance system with UNICEF and NWSDB will take place in 2008 for the East.
- ICRC briefed that they have been trying to transport emergency latrines to Killinochchi.

IOM

- Were not prepared to give an update, although said most activities are being carried out in the North East and supply in stock in the districts. IOM will give full update at next meeting.

General Issues discussed:

Supplies: Getting humanitarian supplies to the Vanni is becoming increasingly difficult and agencies shared information.

3. Update on CHAP

The CHAP launch is to be held next week. There is a total of 4.5 billion dollars and 11 agencies involved. Agencies involved in the WASH CHAP appeal are: UNICEF, Oxfam, IRD, IOM, Care, Archenova, CCCD, ZOA, Solidar, Solidarites and UNOPS.

4. ToR of the ETF and Future Considerations

UNICEF discussed that it is more beneficial to meet regularly due to escalating crisis in the north, additionally as UNICEF is briefing the National Water and Sanitation Coordination Meeting on the

emergency situation and status of response, which is chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry. It would be good to have an approach where WASH emergency agencies can feed information into this regularly.

A discussion ensued and it was agreed that monthly meetings will be carried out. Revision of ToR will take place in the next meeting

Action: Leslie to share the previous year TOR with members.

3. Any other business

- Oxfam briefed that **Hygiene training is going to be field tested in Vavuniya** towards the end of February by Oxfam and UNICEF. This training will help the global cluster to harmonize and standardize hygiene material and will build capacity of hygiene partners in Vavuniya.

Action: Tom (Oxfam) to ensure relevant info distributed in advance of training to those concerned.

- UNICEF briefed about a new initiative, the “**Emergency WASH Hand book of options**”. The Handbook will serve as a basis to share information and experiences on WASH emergency options to be implemented in Sri Lanka. There is an element of sharing lessons learned from the east. As a part of this a cost survey should be carried out. UNICEF requested that all agencies share information to contribute to the manual, including emergency toilet designs and any other relevant information. This would also be requested through district coordination groups.

Action: Leslie (UNICEF) to send outline to members of the ETF; All WASH agencies to share designs for the handbook

Next meeting: Thursday 21st February 2008, 2 PM at UNICEF (Note: changed due to scheduling conflict)

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