

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOPIC: Technical Working Group (TWG)
DATE: 25th January 2008 at 2.00 p.m.
LOCATION: UNHCR Meeting Room, Colombo

ATTENDEES:

Charles Campbell	SCC / UNHCR (Chair)	Shelter Coordinator / SCC Coordinator (National) - Incoming
Chris Nixon	SCC / UNHCR	Shelter Coordinator / SCC Coordinator National -outgoing
Leslie Morris	UNICEF	WASH Specialist
Jonathan Hunter	SCC / Solidar	SCC Shelter Coordinator (Vanni)
Jean Guittet	ICRC	Water and Habitat Delegate
Giovanni Cassani	IOM	Shelter Coordinator
Nilkanthi Naranpanawe	SCC / UNHCR	Shelter Assistant

APOLOGIES:

Maja Zotovic	SCC / Solidar	SCC Shelter Coordinator (Mannar / Vavuniya)
Julie Pharand	ICRC	Water and Habitat Coordinator

REF	ITEM/DETAIL	ACTION
1.	Introduction To the TWG	
1.1	Participants introduced themselves and a warm welcome was extended to all at the 3 rd TWG session.	
1.2	It was agreed the agenda for this meeting would comprise the issues from Item 2.2 and 2.3 not discussed in the last TWG of the 4 th Jan 08..In the absence of new items from the participants the proposed agenda was accepted.	
1.3	The meeting was informed of the Shelter sub cell coordination meeting held in Vavuniya to which the National Shelter Co-ordinators were invited, a presentation was given of the SCC and its role in the sector at the national level; the meeting received the information very well. There had not been Shelter sub cell meetings in Vavuniya for several months so this was very welcome by the National SCC coordinator and he promised support by attending the meetings as and when it was possible.	
1.4	The Vavuniya Sub cell meeting was updated on the two TWG meetings held in UNHCR Colombo on the 14 Dec 2007 and 4 th January 2008 on lessons learnt from the displacement in the North and as a result the policy guidelines formulated and agreed by the sector. Copies of both minutes were distributed to the meeting and it was noted that in future it is hoped that Agencies' Colombo offices would share the minutes with their Field offices to encourage information sharing and eliminate gaps in field implementation.	
1.5	The next Shelter coordination meeting in Vavuniya was tentatively set for 6 th February but it might clash with some RedR training so it will need to be confirmed. Agency Colombo reps in the AOR at the time are encouraged to attend.	

2. Previous Meeting's Minutes

- 2.1 Minutes of the previous TWG Meeting held on 4th January 2008 were accepted
- 2.2 The action items from the previous meeting minutes were reported on by the relevant Agencies
- 2.3 The results of the participatory S.W.O.T analysis to be written up by NRC was completed, however it was decided that in the absence of further details that would aid understanding for people who did not attend the workshop, the results would not be added to the website. However as it was a very valuable piece of work it would inform analysis and decision making within the Sector.
- 2.4 The keynote presentation given by NRC at the Workshop had inadvertently not been handed over before the departure of the SCC Coordinator in Batticaloa. NRC have indicated that they would contact him and have him send it to over. NRC
- 2.5 The input received from Agencies on the revalidation of emergency shelter costs was very disappointing and it was agreed that the information received so far was not sufficient to make a robust decision on a revised cost. Therefore it was agreed by the meeting that:
- UNHCR/SCC contact Agencies individually soliciting their support for this initiative, specifically existing emergency shelter costs or spare Engineering capacity to undertake the costing exercise in districts where they are active
 - UNHCR/SCC contact NRC, since they had completed the re-costing exercise in Vavuniya, they might share with other agencies any tools, e.g spreadsheets, they used to facilitate the process
 - As IOM indicated they may have spare Engineering capacity to undertake the re-costing exercise in another district if a BOQ or spreadsheet of materials was provided, UNHCR/SCC would explore that possibility with IOM.
- 2.6 The outgoing UNHCR/SCC coordinator reported on his contact with RedR who promptly provided a schedule of their training courses for the next 3 months which was emailed to the TWG membership. He also reported that RedR had various levels of sponsorship and for GoSL Agencies the training could be free, but Agencies would need to pick up the bill for travel and daily subsistence allowance. Agencies
- 2.7 It was also reported that a request had been made by the UNHCR for tailor made courses from RedR and a quotation had been sent by RedR with indicative costs. Agencies were encouraged to consolidate resources and order such courses from RedR and the cost can be shared among several Agencies when similar training needs are identified. The SCC/UNHCR agreed to send the quotation and accompanying explanatory email to all members. UNHCR
- 2.8 Inputs received on suggestions for capacity building of Staff from NGOs and the Government was compiled and shared with Agencies. Agencies were urged that with the RedR training schedule received they could identify courses and sponsor both their staff as well as GoSL staff. UNHCR
- It was suggested that the sphere standards were now available in Sinhala and Tamil and if the copyright position was clarified they could be ordered and distributed to both NGO national staff and GoSL staff.
- 2.9 It was also suggested that in the interest of it not being perceived that SCC were endorsing a particular Training Agency, namely RedR, information on other Agencies offering training courses in international standards and the like, either in English or local languages, could be notified and contacted. Agencies
- 2.10 The outgoing UNHCR/SCC confirmed the acceptance of the CBSM consultant to brief the next ESCM meeting on the CSM (Confidence Building and Stabilisation Measures) initiative, how far the implementation had progressed and how it could assist the Shelter sector in achieving its objectives in terms of Site investigation etc. The meeting was asked to come with any issues/queries they had relating to the subject.
- 2.11 The outgoing SCC/UNHCR briefed the meeting on the harmonisation of reporting and the process of reaching the stage that we now have an accepted reporting format with many comments and suggestions from different UNHCR/SCC focal points incorporated and many misunderstandings cleared. The form would be used for the January reporting period and has already been sent out.

3 Agenda Items

- 3.1 The TWG discussion then followed the agreed agenda items as in 1.2 above.

4 Appropriateness of more expensive emergency shelters (TWG session 1 - Item 7.8)

- 4.1 It was agreed that it would be the responsibility of Agencies to evaluate carefully and determine the potential longevity of a particular situation/scenario and make a decision as to whether it was agreeable to go for more expensive longer term shelters on the assumption that they would be reused.
- 4.2 However it must be realised that the use of more expensive shelters potentially creates equity issues and Agencies must aim to stay within a reasonable cost range above the agreed cost of an emergency shelter.
- 4.3 In the event shelters cannot be reused as is common in protracted displacement this investment potentially represents a loss in benefits for the displaced, as more shelters could potentially have been bought at the lower agreed cost of the emergency shelter (now \$300 but in process of being revised).
- 4.4 It was also recommended that in planning for a potential displacement (as in the contingency planning exercise) Agencies interested in pre positioning shelter materials could procure based on unified designs and place common orders (e.g for GI pipe framed shelters). This would be more cost effective, this system lends itself to interchangeability of parts in case some parts get missing or damaged during transportation and the cooperation of Agencies in the Sector becomes very visible to the beneficiaries as well as other sectors.
- 4.5 Conversely after a displacement it was more realistic to envisage a situation where Agencies have variable designs with different materials and sizes so as not to create artificial shortages and drive prices higher as can normally happen in emergencies.

5. Enhance bilateral communications between Colombo and Field Offices (TWG Session 1 – Item 7.9)

- 5.1 It was explained that although this occurs in many Agencies, what was being sought were checks and balances that would ensure that if a situation arose where communication between a Country office and its Field office broke down there would be a system through which the problem would be picked up and the SCC coordination both in the Field and in Colombo could support a solution if necessary.
- 5.2 It was agreed that Agencies at Colombo level would be encouraged to request for and read the minutes of Shelter sub cell meetings held at the field so they would be aware of what is discussed and agreed at field level.
- 5.3 At the field level the coordinators would be encouraged to provide detailed minutes reflecting major issues and agreements that would be distributed in a timely manner to Colombo offices to enhance information sharing and communication.
- 5.4 The SCC Coordinators would facilitate the field offices to tap into the wider perspective to have an overview of what is happening across agencies within the sector in order to enhance meaningful dialogue with field offices.

6. Cost impacts of skilled labour (TWG Session 2, Items to follow-up – Item 12.4)

- 6.1 It was agreed that there was not a significant need for skilled labour in constructing individual emergency shelters for the following reasons:
- An emergency shelter by definition is a simple shelter that lasts 6-9 mths,
 - It is not very robust and does not employ permanent construction nor is its construction employing complicated engineering principles
 - It was pointed out that traditionally Sri Lankans are very good house builders
- 6.2 It was agreed that in order to demonstrate to communities how a shelter was constructed a demonstration shelter can be constructed for an EVI under the normal supervision of Agencies

- 6.3 The point was reiterated that as the cost of a shelter has been defined as the all inclusive cost of material labour and transportation if the labour component was reduced or eliminated this would result in better shelters for the beneficiaries

7 Items to follow-up

- 7.1 The pocket book proposed in TWG session 2 of 4th January 2008 was discussed briefly and it was agreed that another TWG would need to be convened to define the items to be included in addition to those listed in Item 10.1. The invitation to the TWG would be extended to the TWG session 1 members. Agencies/TWG

8. Date Of Subsequent TWG Meeting

- 8.1 Next TWG Meeting will be held on 8th February 2008 at 2.00 p.m. at the UNHCR Meeting Room, Colombo.