

# HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN SOMALIA



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

## The Global Humanitarian Reform

Over the past years, the international response to humanitarian emergencies demonstrated that the system did not always meet the basic needs of affected populations in a timely and predictable manner. With varying responses from crisis to crisis, existing capacity levels are often insufficient to adequately meet key emergency needs in major crises. In order to better understand and correct such deficiencies, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), in 2005, commissioned an independent Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) of the global humanitarian system. The HRR identified a three-pronged reform programme to improve the predictability, timeliness, and effectiveness of humanitarian response:

- 1) **Strengthening humanitarian response capacity:** This sees the adoption of a cluster approach which encourages the effective use of expertise and technical know-how of mandated organizations in the particular sectors to fill identified gaps in humanitarian response, to ensure accountability with strengthened leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and to bolster coordination and synergy of efforts.
- 2) **Strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System:** This sees the establishment of an Inter Agency Standing Committee mechanism at the field level, engaging the broader humanitarian community including NGOs making proactive use of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan as a strategic planning instrument.
- 3) **Ensuring predictable funding:** Strengthen the existing Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to allow for an immediate response to an emergency. Approved by the UN General Assembly on 15 December 2005 and launched on 9 March 2006, the modernized CERF grant facility targets to make US\$ 500 million available from additional voluntary contributions. OCHA will administer the CERF and disburse loans and grants within 3-4 days. Somalia has already benefited from the CERF with a grant of around US\$ 3 million.

## The Somali Context in early 2006

By the turn of 2005, southern Somalia was experiencing the consequences of the worst drought in over ten years. Around 1.7 million people country-wide are in need of critical assistance until mid 2006, not including up to 400,000 IDPs already identified by the aid community at high risk and vulnerability. The worst hit regions are Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, and areas of Bay and Bakool, with northern Gedo and riverine areas in the Juba regions identified at moderate risk of a famine. Immediate causes of the crisis are a severe drought combined with localised conflicts. Crop production for this year is reported to be 50% of the post war average – the lowest cereal production in over ten years. Cattle deaths in the worst affected areas could reach 80% by April. Depletion of water and pasture is resulting in significant movements of people toward riverine areas or urban centers. Families are splitting in search of resources, leaving women and children to fend for themselves. Resource-based conflict has been reported in many locations and will likely increase as the situation aggravates during the dry spell.

Climate predictions issued in March 2006 suggest a significant possibility of poor rains for the upcoming *Gu* (short) rain season lasting from mid April to June. In the event that this worse case scenario materializes, the number of vulnerable populations will increase to 2.2 million between July and December 2006. While seemingly not such a large increase, it does include a major shift in severity, with a nearly 40% increase in the number of people facing Humanitarian Emergency or Famine conditions.

Although the drought has affected a number of countries in the region, the situation in Somalia is of particular concern as the country has endured fifteen years of armed conflict and generalized violence, which has resulted in widespread human rights abuses, the destruction of public infrastructure, and the disintegration of basic health and social services. Within this ongoing complex emergency, the failed 2005 *Deyr* (short) rain season debilitated livelihoods and aggravated already difficult living conditions in southern Somalia.

## Coordination Mechanisms in Somalia

**Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC):** Following consultation with partners and in compliance with the Global Humanitarian Reform, the Somalia IASC was established in January 2006 and first met in early February. The group meets on a monthly basis. The IASC membership includes OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, ICRC, CARE, Gedo Health Consortium, DRC, NOVIB and Concern. The NGOs were selected by the Somalia NGO Consortium to represent the NGO community. FAO/FSAU and FEWS/NET will act as technical advisors, while a seat has remained vacant to be filled by a Somali representative. On a monthly basis, the Somalia IASC also meets with donors.

**Clusters:** As a result of the Global Humanitarian Reform, in Somalia, seven clusters have been identified together with respective cluster leads and co-leads from UN Agencies and NGOs: i) food aid; ii) agriculture and livelihood; iii) water and sanitation; iv) health and Nutrition; v) access; vi) protection; vii) education. Cluster leads are accountable for and expected to prepare sectoral response plans, including identifying key partners, strategizing and planning, standard-setting, coordination of programme implementation, and reporting. Cluster co-leads will provide support to the cluster lead.

**Humanitarian Response Group (HRG):** Originally set up within the framework of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB), the HRG meets to discuss arising humanitarian issues needing urgent attention, and mobilise effective and timely response plans. Since the humanitarian reform and the setting up a Somalia IASC, the HRG has evolved to become an inter-sectoral working group composed of the cluster leads and co-leads, as well as UN and NGO representatives, reporting to the Somalia IASC and updating the SACB Executive Committee. In January, an HRG/Drought Working Group was created which meets on a weekly/bi-weekly basis.

**Field Coordination:** Field coordination remains critical in the response design and identification of gaps. Partners have doubled-up coordination activities which are taking place with increased frequency and in more locations. Wajid has developed to become the central coordination hub for southern regions and some agencies have reinforced their presence there to strengthen programming and monitoring. OCHA is also establishing coordination meetings in Gedo and the Juba regions.

**Coordination with the Authorities:** In early January 2006, the TFG established a Ministerial Disaster Committee to liaise closely with the aid community on the drought response. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister (Minister of Finance) and interacts on a needs basis with the aid community. Consistent sharing of information with the Committee is ensured.

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**SACB:** In order to ensure linkages, coherence and sharing of information on the drought response, cluster leads are invited to the respective SACB Committees meetings.

## The Role of OCHA

Despite the progress achieved in the political process and the relocation of the Transitional Federal Institutions back into Somalia in mid-2005, humanitarian needs in Somalia abound and require urgent and sustained assistance. Improved coordinated humanitarian assistance is thus crucial.

In 2006, in collaboration with local authorities, UN agencies and aid partners, OCHA will continue to conduct and lead inter-agency assessment missions, identify priority needs, and facilitate the planning of common responses to identified needs of affected populations. OCHA will support the implementation of the humanitarian reform in Somalia, including reviewing projects submitted to the CERF. To achieve these objectives, OCHA will endeavour to improve coordination at the field level through an even more strengthened field presence (both international and national), especially in the more difficult operating environments of southern and central Somalia to better support aid partners in the delivery of assistance. OCHA will carry on negotiating humanitarian access, promoting humanitarian principles and supporting grass-root local reconciliation initiatives - where they promote humanitarian access - in collaboration with the appropriate government structures, local leaders, and others. Further, it will continue to assume an important coordinating role to support UN agencies and aid partners in their efforts to strengthen the protective environment in Somalia, particularly in setting up protection monitoring networks throughout the country. Last, but not least, the Office will pursue its resource mobilisation efforts to improve the timeliness and capacity of preparedness and intervention responses of the humanitarian community. Part of this will entail advocating at different levels, locally and internationally, on the dire humanitarian situation of a population neglected for so many years.

Specifically, OCHA Somalia has the following priorities for 2006:

- i) Increase sustainable access to basic humanitarian services for vulnerable populations identified within the 2006 Somalia Consolidated Appeal in either a state of humanitarian emergency, acute food and livelihood crisis or displaced (see section on the CAP);
- ii) Enhance the protection of and respect for the Human Rights and dignity of displaced and vulnerable communities;
- iii) Enhance preparedness of aid partners as well as the local capacity to respond to natural disasters or complex emergencies;
- iv) Support the shift from emergency to recovery in zones in transition;
- v) Enhance advocacy activities and resource mobilisation.

Specific coordinating tools available include:

### Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)

Created in 1991 (General Assembly Resolution 46/182), and coordinated by OCHA, the CAP is an inclusive annual programme cycle to analyse the humanitarian context, assess needs, identify strategic priorities and plan programmes for humanitarian response. In short, the CAP is a coordinating, planning, advocacy and fund-raising tool at the disposal of the aid community in close cooperation with national and local authorities.

The 2006 Somalia CAP (launched on 14 December 2005) was focused on a targeted group of almost 1 million people. However, with the onset of the drought the number of people in need of critical humanitarian assistance in 2006 has more than doubled to 2.1 million, requiring a revision of the Appeal. Focusing on the most immediate emergency needs in the country, the majority of which remain in central and southern Somalia, the revised Appeal addresses heightened needs of around 710,000 people in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, 915,000 experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency and up to 400,000 internally displaced. The revised 2006 Somalia Appeal requests US\$ 326,718,040 in support of 92 projects.

### Humanitarian Response Fund for Somalia (HRF)

Administered by OCHA Somalia and in existence since early 2004, the HRF aims to improve the timeliness and appropriateness of aid assessments and responses through the provision of a flexible funding resource that can be drawn on quickly by aid partners. Working through an Advisory Board, the Fund supports rapid response projects that are developed in the first phase of an emergency and before mainstream responses come into play. The HRF is being recognised by partners as a key mechanism through which assessed humanitarian needs and gaps can be addressed. In light of the developing humanitarian situation, the Fund will continue to play this key role and develop to become an even stronger strategic tool. By mid-March 2006, the HRF registered pledges for around US\$ 3.3 million.

### Cluster Leads and Co-Leads in Somalia

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