

Summary of the interventions
36th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Agenda item: “UNHCR’s Expanded Role in Support of the Inter-Agency
Response to IDP”
27 June 2006

Colombia

- ❖ Noted Colombia’s extensive policies and legal frameworks for providing assistance to IDPs.

United Kingdom

- ❖ Strongly supports UNHCR’s expanded role at the HQs and field level, and previously urged UNHCR to take a stronger role under the “collaborative approach.”
- ❖ Noted that coordination across clusters is essential, particularly for natural disasters and information management, in order for Humanitarian Coordinator and humanitarian community to make informed strategic decisions.
- ❖ Stated that it is important to include NGOs as partners at the country level. UK is encouraging NGOs it funds to engage constructively in the process.
- ❖ Recommends increased information sharing with non-UN actors, including donors.
- ❖ Welcomed the invitation to the Shelter Project, which the UK funds, to join the Emergency Shelter Cluster.
- ❖ Noted UNHCR’s need for additional financial resources to carry out the lead role. UK has given money for DRC, Liberia and Somalia. Future assistance will be given on the basis of properly assessed and prioritised needs, and joint working arrangements and pooled funding, where possible. UK will also give money for the global cluster activities.

New Zealand

- ❖ While welcoming UNHCR’s role, was concerned that expanded role could spread the organisation too thin. Concerned that UNHCR is trying to do too much on its own, rather than through implementing partners.
- ❖ Welcomed strengthened relations with other UN partners, and noted that improved coordination is important to enhance protection.
- ❖ Would like to have an update at each Standing Committee on UNHCR’s expanded role on IDPs.
- ❖ Welcomed question and answers document for UNHCR staff, but wondered what other means are in place to ensure UNHCR staff understand UNHCR’s role in the cluster approach, and particularly how UNHCR is to work with implementing partners.
- ❖ Asked when standards and impact/performance indicators would be developed for UNHCR’s engagement with IDP populations.
- ❖ Asked if strategies to manage risks of IDP programs impacting on refugee programs had been developed.
- ❖ Appreciated UNHCR’s work in East Timor.

Netherlands

- ❖ Noted the importance of UNHCR’s expanded role.
- ❖ Stated that separate budgets for IDP programs are not sustainable, and that they should be mainstreamed into their regular programs.

Uganda

- ❖ Expressed support for the cluster approach for IDPs, and UNHCR’s formal involvement.
- ❖ Asked for clarification of paragraph 43 regarding the phrase “make or break.”

Norway

- ❖ Welcomed the conference room paper, and UNHCR's lead role, which needs to work towards greater predictability and accountability.
- ❖ Noted that OCHA retains the overall coordination role in support of the Humanitarian Coordinator system, which needs to be further strengthened.
- ❖ Highlighted that Norway has provided USD 6 million for cluster countries, and USD 3.6 million for the Global Cluster Appeal. Encouraged other donors to give more.
- ❖ Noted UNHCR's important role in the Camp Management/Camp Coordination cluster, and that Norway had provided funds to update NRC's tool kit and training capacity for camp management.
- ❖ Stated that clusters need to be adapted to local circumstances. Uganda: Three Acholi districts need stronger clusters for camp coordination. Somalia: UNHCR's role is important, and would like an update on the situation, noting that other have stronger capacity at the field level than UNHCR. Colombia: Looking forward to IASC cluster mission, and note that UNHCR has solid operations base to improve the inter-agency response to IDPs.
- ❖ Noted the importance of bring NGO partners on board.

Canada

- ❖ Commended UNHCR in its leadership role. Noted that this role will require an adjustment in attitude and improved coordination.
- ❖ While it support expanded IDP role, stated that UNHCR must have a risk mitigation strategy to protect refugees.
- ❖ Noted that the management and leadership skill set required for the cluster leadership role should be developed in UNHCR staff. Also noted that cluster leadership means UNHCR has a responsibility to ensure things get done, not that it has to do everything itself.
- ❖ Would like clarity on the "provider of last resort," and UNHCR's strategy for working with non-UN actors.
- ❖ Welcomed UNHCR's role in Uganda, and would like to know more about its activities on the ground
- ❖ Welcomed improved coordination with UNICEF, OCHA, OHCHR and the NRC MoU.
- ❖ Wondered how UNHCR intended to address SGBV and child protection concerns in its expanded IDP role.

United States

- ❖ Appreciated update, and would like to have a regular update at each Standing Committee meeting.
- ❖ Supports UNHCR's expanded role and has provided USD 8 million for its IDP efforts. However, noted that UNHCR must maintain the level of care for refugees.
- ❖ Reinforced that governments are primarily accountable for the protection and care of IDPs and that the international community supplements when needed.
- ❖ Noted that UNHCR has eight supplementary budgets for IDP operations, and said that UNHCR should show caution in the number of countries in which the cluster approach is applied until it is clear how useful the approach is.
- ❖ Requested that guidance provided on the clarification of the "provider of last resort" provision is shared with donors.
- ❖ Would like clarification on UNHCR's responsibilities under the Camp Management cluster, and what the lead responsibility entails.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

- ❖ Noted that internal displacement is an ongoing concern for DRC, and thanked UNHCR and all institutions involved in the new cluster approach.

- ❖ Stated that if sufficient funds are available, believes that UNCHR can make a significant contribution to the response.
- ❖ Requested UNHCR to work with the Early Recovery cluster to facilitate returns and provide specific programs to returning IDPs.

Japan

- ❖ Noted that primary difficulty with current cluster operations is a lack of understanding of the cluster approach, and sufficient coordination. Stated that attention needs to be made to ensure staff in the field understand their responsibilities.
- ❖ Would like a full evaluation of the pilot countries before the approach is expanded to other operations.
- ❖ Would like to know if there are criteria to determine future applications of the cluster approach.

Switzerland

- ❖ Welcomed UNHCR's role, but still noted some uncertainties in the cluster approach, namely: responsibility for security and access, the need for improved inter-cluster coordination, communication between agencies, and the need for improved overall analysis.
- ❖ Concerned about predictability in item 47 and how UNHCR will address the "pick and choose" problem.
- ❖ Would like additional information about pooled funding.

Sweden

- ❖ Supports the clusters and UNHCR's role, and recognised UNHCR's need for additional funding to carry out this role.
- ❖ Agrees with the need for non-UN and NGOs to participate in the cluster approach, as well as the need to ensure inter-cluster coordination.
- ❖ Need to ensure that the cluster approach results in more field level protection, rather than more meetings.
- ❖ Stated that interim arrangements should be made to fund IDP programs.

Nigeria

- ❖ Requested hearing about useful lessons from UNHCR's experience in Liberia.
- ❖ Requested information about positive results of UNHCR's collaboration with IOM.

Denmark

- ❖ Supports the cluster approach and UNHCR's role, and will provide financial resources at the field and global level.
- ❖ Encouraged the active involvement of NGOs, particularly at the field level.
- ❖ Requested that clear targets and indicators be developed with other partners to assess the performance of the cluster approach. Welcomed an OCHA led evaluation process.
- ❖ Requested more information to explain how UNHCR relates its work to the Early Recovery Cluster.

Belgium

- ❖ Support UNHCR's role in the cluster approach and noted that the added value of the cluster approach is to improve predictability and accountability, and to reduce overlap and gaps in the humanitarian response.
- ❖ Need to clarify the "provider of last resort" provision. Main challenge is to keep the process manageable, while noting that some increase of meetings is an inevitable consequence of improved coordination.
- ❖ Noted that UNHCR is best placed for camp management and emergency shelter, but would like more information about UNHCR's collaboration with ICRC in the protection cluster.

- ❖ Urged caution in rolling out the cluster approach in more countries. Would like to know more about DRC, and noted that the cluster approach should be flexible enough to be adapted to each situation.
- ❖ Stated that IDP funding should be mainstreamed within the unified budget, while ensuring that UNHCR keeps its focus on refugees.

ICVA

- ❖ Welcomed the cluster approach and progress that has been made, but noted challenges remain.
- ❖ Noted that during the rollout there was a lack of understanding of the cluster concepts and the role of the cluster leaders. While this has been addressed in guidance notes, clarity is still lacking in the “accountability of cluster leads” and the “provider of last resort” provisions.
- ❖ Requested increased NGO participation in joint assessments and the development of strategies. Noted that the Camp Management cluster benefited from NGO participation, and that genuine participation will ultimately help improve NGO’s accountability to the cluster coordination process.
- ❖ Noted that NGOs need to ensure that IDP responsibilities do not undermine their independence.
- ❖ Welcomed a discussion of impact indicators to assess the cluster approach.
- ❖ Liberia: NGOs included, but challenges remain to ensure sustainable IDP returns.
- ❖ DRC: Clusters are still in their formative stage. Noted positive collaboration with NGOs in advocacy efforts.
- ❖ Uganda: NGOs concerned about returns to Lira, and note that UNHCR should focus more attention on protection in Acholiland, and improving NGO participation. Noted confusion about OCHA’s role and wondered how UNHCR planned to improve inter-cluster coordination.
- ❖ Noted the need for UNHCR staff to have leadership, strategic development and coordination skills in their cluster leadership role.
- ❖ Noted strong potential for cluster approach, but that information exchange, capacity building and improved coordination with NGOs is needed.