

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response	
Evaluation title:	Evaluation of UNHCRs Level 3 Emergency Response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe
UNHCR evaluation reference:	ES/2021/01
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	Evaluation Service
Due date for Management Response	30 April 2021
Date Management Response completed	31 May 2021
Coordinator of the Management Response	George Woode (Senior Transition Coordinator)
Management Response Cleared by	Raouf Mazou (AHC-O)

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>The evaluation of UNHCR's Level 3 emergency response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe pinpointed critical "policy-implementation gaps" concerning the organizations' engagement in climate-related disaster displacement in non-conflict situations. Importantly, recommendations emerging from the evaluation have been instrumental in helping refine UNHCR's preparedness for and response to natural disasters, and climate action in general. The evaluation's initial recommendations influenced the construct of UNHCR's Strategic Framework on Climate Action, and the final recommendations have been incorporated into regional climate action plans which focuses on preparedness, coordination, and disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>Overall, the evaluation succeeded in identifying lessons that can be extrapolated to other disaster responses and in providing valuable inputs into UNHCR's ongoing reflection about climate change and disaster induced displacement. Perhaps the one area for consideration would be on how future evaluations could be undertaken in a manner that would contribute towards "strategy course-correction" of an ongoing emergency response.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:	<p>UNHCR's response to Cyclone Idai and (non-response to cyclone Kenneth) reveals a critical "policy-implementation gap" concerning its engagement in climate-related disaster displacement in non-conflict situations. The organization was not able to fully implement its own policies concerning emergency and IDP responses, or the internal guidance documents and international orientations on climate change, disasters or risk reduction. UNHCR's lack of engagement in the response to cyclone Kenneth illustrated the long-standing and unresolved debate on how to intervene in disasters in non-conflict situations. Not only the contradictions in the engagement to respond to Kenneth but also the shortcomings in the response to Idai impacted on the reputation of the organization as a credible and predictable actor in situations of natural hazards, disasters, and climate-related internal displacement.</p>
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		Recommendation 1: Integrate existing policies and guidelines ¹ containing relevant provisions on the organization's directions and actions in disaster related displacement into guidance on UNHCR's engagement in disasters, clarifying when UNHCR will engage, how (long) it will engage, and what role operations and bureaux will have across the different phases of a disaster response (from preparedness, response, to recovery). Provide clarity on decisions regarding resourcing, external relations, engagement, and responsible disengagement				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		Suggestion: SET in consultation with DESS, DIP, DRS, DER, OSACA (and clusters)				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Revise the Emergency Policy to include disaster guidance and response	DESS, as convening Division with full involvement of other Divisions	<p>The Emergency Policy is scheduled for revision in 2022, with revision drafting planned for late second semester 2021. This Evaluation as well as the Climate Action Strategic Framework necessitates that disaster preparedness and response be incorporated in the Emergency Policy. Additionally, the guidance packages for displacement and refugees will be aligned, collated, and simplified. This includes the revision of the Emergency Handbook which is done on continual basis.</p> <p>DESS will play a convening role with other Divisions and entities to propose a coherent recommended policy related to resources, external relations and engagement preparing for, during and immediately after a disaster. (This policy exercise will <u>not</u> address medium/longer-term post-disaster considerations).</p> <p>Note: DESS has requested one additional staff to support/reinforce preparedness including climate action in 2022 financial submission.</p>	End-2021, for SET decision-making and once endorsed dissemination in 2022		

¹ The main documents referred to here are: i) Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response, UNHCR/HCP/2017/1/Rev.1, August 2019, ii) Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, UNHCR/HCP/2019/1, 18 September 2019, iii) Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement, Version 1, September 2019, iv) UNHCR Preparedness Package for IDP Emergencies (PPIE), January 2020.

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RECOMMENDATION 2:	<p>Policies and plans need to be budgeted, resourced and monitored to quantify and realize the financial and operational implications of their implementation, to assume organizational and individual responsibilities and to be accountable to internal and external stakeholders. The magnitude of both climate change challenges, and displacement deserve a profound analysis to balance policies and ambitions with UNHCR's constantly limited resources. The following recommendation is geared towards bridging the policy-implementation gap, by focusing on planning, budgeting, and implementation procedures at the regional and country level.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> Develop regional/country operational action plans linked to the proposed guidance on UNHCR's engagement in disasters and UNHCR's Strategic Framework on Climate Action, which offer a framework for risk assessment, resourcing, monitoring and evaluation, engagement with UNCT/UNHCT and other partners, and implementation modalities for operations in the event of a natural hazard or disaster.</p>				
Management response:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):					
Unit or function responsible:	Suggestion: SET (AHCO) in consultation with OSACA, regional bureau, and DSPR and DESS and DRS/DIP (for cluster coordination GPC/Shelter/CCCM) as well as DER (for resources/fund-raising) and ERM				
Top line planned actions	By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
				Status	Comments

1	Development of regional Plans of Action to guide and inform the operationalization of the Strategic Framework for Climate Action (SFCA) at regional and country levels, particularly in relation to objective 2.3 on strengthening preparedness and response to displacement in disaster contexts	Led by the seven regional bureaux with support from OSACA, DRS, DFAM, DIP and other relevant HQ entities	<p>The Regional Climate Action Plans will identify possible disaster risks and hazards for which preparedness is necessary. Regional Bureau will engage with UNCT/HCT in contingency planning coordination mechanisms for disaster preparedness including for cluster coordination and operational delivery.</p> <p>Timing for completion will be dependent on alignment with UNHCR, UNCT and other regionally-relevant planning cycles to accommodate timely consultations, while the process, including strategic and operational risk assessment, should commence as soon as possible and incorporated in Situation Analysis, while continuing and strengthening support to existing actions that support the SFCA.</p>	4 by end 2021; 3 by mid-2022.	Discussions begun/ongoing	
2	<p>Incorporate disaster hazards in the High Alert List for Emergencies</p> <p>Strengthen the integration of SFCA objectives in the RBM approach and system (COMPASS), including the results framework and supporting guidance and tools for monitoring and evaluating progress in relation to the results of climate action.</p>	<p>DESS (involvement of also ERM)</p> <p>Led by DSPR, with support from OSACA.</p>	<p>The Preparedness Portal and High Alert List maintain a watching brief of potential emergencies. For countries identified at heightened risk, DESS support Bureau/operations with contingency planning support.</p> <p>DESS is revising, simplifying, and streamlining the preparedness system, which will include disaster risks, preparedness, and response.</p>	<p>Fourth quarter 2022.</p> <p>Early 2022 (in time for 2023 planning)</p>	Ongoing	
3	Enable financial and human resource mobilisation for climate action and its absorption or deployment for operational programmes	DER, HR, DSPR, Regional Bureaux	Building increased flexibility into internal budgeting processes to enable absorption of climate-related funds, including allocations for required human resource support at regional and country level, and increasing access to capacity development opportunities	n/a	ongoing	

RECOMMENDATION 3:		<p>The limited involvement of COs in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) prior to Idai hampered its ability to participate in key UN decision-making forums when Idai hit. The COs were working on regular refugee programmes, almost in isolation from the broader development context and without stable and well-established relations with the UN system and national actors. Amidst a large-scale emergency, UNHCR struggled to timely articulate its interaction with other agencies and, particularly, to identify new implementing partners to support the operational response on the ground. Overall, Idai and Kenneth revealed the challenges for small COs in switching from regular and development-oriented programming to emergency responses. With a global perspective, UNHCR engagement in international initiatives and platforms on disaster-induced displacement, DRR or preparedness should have a local translation at COs level.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 3:</u> Reinforce UNHCR's participation in UN country team coordination systems, and take an active role under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with the aim of participating in preparedness actions, mainstreaming protection across the humanitarian-development nexus and broadening relations with relevant public bodies (other than refugee agencies) and civil society organizations (CSOs) in selected disaster-prone countries</p>				
Management response:		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p>				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		SET (AHCO) in consultation with regional bureaux and country representatives				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Development of regional Plans of Action to guide and inform the operationalization of the Strategic Framework for Climate Action (SFCA) at regional and country levels, particularly in relation to objective 2.3 on strengthening preparedness and response to displacement in disaster contexts	Led by the seven regional bureaux with support from OSACA, DRS, DFAM, DIP and other relevant HQ entities	<p>The Regional Climate Action Plans will identify possible disaster risks and hazards for which preparedness is necessary. Regional Bureau will engage with UNCT/HCT in contingency planning coordination mechanisms for disaster preparedness including for cluster coordination and operational delivery.</p> <p>Timing for completion will be dependent on alignment with UNHCR, UNCT and other regionally-relevant planning cycles to accommodate timely consultations, while the process, including strategic and operational risk assessment, should commence as soon as possible and incorporated in Situation Analysis, while continuing and strengthening support to existing actions that support the SFCA.</p>	4 by end 2021; 3 by mid-2022.	Discussions begun/ongoing	

RECOMMENDATION 4:		<p>Climate change and disasters are vast fields of intervention, from both a humanitarian and a development perspective, that involve a broad spectrum of expertise, skills, and approaches and, therefore, require pooling efforts and capacities. As part of its partnership development efforts, UNHCR's engagement strategy should be informed by the many ongoing inter-agency and multi-stakeholder initiatives in relation to DRR, climate change and resilience (e.g. Platform on Disaster Displacement, the UNFCCC, and the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda).</p> <p>Recommendation 4: Reinforce UNHCRs commitment to climate action initiatives and develop further partnerships with agencies and global initiatives on disaster-related displacement, especially in the field of disaster risk reduction, preparedness, anticipatory actions, and durable solutions for IDPs.</p>				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		SET in consultation with OSACA, DESS, DER, and DRS				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Continued engagement as part of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and the Task Force on Displacement under the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage related to the adverse effects of climate change.	OSACA Led by OSACA, in close collaboration with DIP		n/a	Ongoing	
2	DESS will continue to engage in the inter-agency Early Warning horizon scanning at the technical level. DESS will also identify if there are regional, situational equivalent inter-agency scanning mechanisms for	DESS		n/a	underway	

	<p>which Regional Bureau would equally participate.</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships with hubs of expertise or communities of practice at global to national levels to support the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in humanitarian action, preparedness and anticipatory analysis and approaches.</p>	OSACA, DESS, DRS, DIP, DFAM, Regional bureaux and country offices				
3	Unlocking solutions for IDPs: Key Considerations for UNHCR.	DRS	The document which is widely promulgated introduces seven (7) key considerations for UNHCR's planning and implementation of solutions programming. The considerations are based on UNHCR's operational experience in seeking and finding solutions for and with IDPs. They are broad in scope, inter-related, and span from the necessity to achieve a greater understanding of contemporary internal displacement dynamics and the solutions needs of IDPs to establishing an adequate operational response with actors across the humanitarian, development, and peace spheres. The document also suggests expanding socio-economic data on internal displacement to understand the benefits of inclusion and costs of exclusion.	Completed	Completed	
4	Strengthening of area-based lively programming with a focus on solutions.	DRS, DIP, regional Bureaux	Starting with Mozambique, DRS in collaboration with pertinent Regional Bureaux, Divisions and entities are developing and strengthening area-based livelihood programme linkages to UNHCR-led cluster interventions and solutions outcomes.	4 th Quarter of 2021	ongoing	

RECOMMENDATION 5:	<p>UNHCR was one of the least-funded agencies through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) mechanism, and the budgets allocated to the Protection Cluster in the HRP in the three countries were small, despite protection having been recognized as a central element of the response. Time was lost in coming to a decision on whether to engage, rather than engaging early on with counterparts on the ground and mobilizing resource and communication staff to the area.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: Develop a consistent narrative to support communication, fundraising and donor-related actions, as part of the strategic reflection about UNHCR's positioning on climate action and disaster-related displacement. In many cases, investing in the early deployment of communication officers, together with reporting and external relations profiles, may lead to positive returns in terms of funding, especially in highly competitive and crowded humanitarian responses to large-scale disasters.</p>
Management response:	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree</p>
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	<p>DER agrees with the advisability of deploying external relations officers (communication, reporting, donor relations at the P2-4 levels) early on in an emergency. However, communications and resource mobilization narratives will be determined by whether and how UNHCR engages in situations of disaster-related displacement, and it is therefore essential that those questions be answered in a timely manner both in general and in relation to any new situation. A narrative for a sudden onset natural disaster requires both policy and budgetary decisions. As noted in the recommendation these contexts are highly competitive in terms of media coverage and funding; indecisiveness or lack of clarity on UNHCR's role and objectives delays the development of a public narrative and can be very costly, impacting both public and private sector funding no matter the capacity of staff.</p> <p>It is therefore important for UNHCR to have a standard and consistent response to climate-related disasters and a more flexible communications and fundraising mechanism, which can be immediately unlocked as and when an emergency hits. DER should be alerted and involved from the beginning in the emergency preparedness/response, and pre-approved holding statements by senior management and public messaging (briefing notes, press releases) should be issued from the onset of the emergency, to be part of the overall media coverage and to support fundraising efforts, given the direct correlation between media coverage and fundraising. This should happen even before deploying external relations/comms staff to the field, which will in any case take some days (unless someone is already on the ground or in the region).</p> <p>As documented in DRRM's note on lessons learned for the Idai Cyclone, the inability to mobilize resources was due in large part to the time taken to increase the operational budget, recalling that in 2019 (pre-revised RAF) CERF allocations went towards existing budget space and did not generate automatic OL increases, as at present. In terms of fundraising, it would therefore be important for UNHCR/Bureaux/DER to put in place a more flexible mechanism to raise funds broadly earmarked to the region/operations affected by the emergency or to 'general emergencies', even before a comprehensive response plan with clear budget needs is developed. It is key that public and private donors are informed and stewarded even before clear asks can be made. In terms of private sector fundraising, PSP received the green light to fundraise from the Bureau on 19 March and immediately launched an emergency appeal, with a generic ask for support based on the limited information available. With initial fundraising messaging and content, PSP was able to leverage the media moment in the immediate aftermath of the disaster but not to sustain efforts. Joined-up and more timely communications and fundraising efforts – with private as well as government donors – would increase overall results and allow UNHCR to better serve persons of concern. PSP fundraising efforts for Idai were also undermined by the lack of UNHCR response to the subsequent Cyclone Kenneth emergency (25 April 2019) that hit Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique, which made UNHCR look inconsistent and lose credibility vis-à-</p>

		vis our supporters. This may have also weakened our position/footprint compared to other organizations in Cabo Delgado when the IDP/conflict related emergency deteriorated in 2020-2021.				
Unit or function responsible:		SET in consultation with DER and regional bureaux				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Set up of a nimble communication and fundraising mechanism.	Bureaux/DER/EO	Set up a nimble communications and fundraising mechanism including alert system, pre-approved holding statements, public comms, and fundraising messaging to position UNHCR and mobilize support even before clear response plans/budget needs are developed. Timing is of the absolute essence for comms, private and public fundraising.	End 2021		
2	Emergency deployment	Bureaux/DER	Ensure deployment of External Relations/Communications Officers from HQ/regions in similar situations, to work closely with DESS and Bureaux	n/a	underway	
3	Capacity building	Bureaux/DER	Train regional/country level colleagues to fully participate and leverage inter-agency processes and seize local/global fundraising opportunities (e.g. CERF)	n/a	ongoing	

RECOMMENDATION 6:		<p>Although UNHCR made an important effort to mobilize senior staff to be deployed as soon as possible, the first ERT members arrived with a certain delay to the field. Additionally, UNHCR's reliance on international staff resulted in a high rotation of ERT members, discontinuity, and gaps in coordination roles. The lack of human resources also resulted in ERT members assuming double or triple roles, a blurring of functions, an inability to perform properly and limited knowledge of, and interaction with, the local context. Although COs had responded, in a reactive manner, to previous disaster situations over the past decade, they did not have the financial capacity and technical expertise to invest in emergency preparedness, even in a region that has traditionally been exposed to natural hazards.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 6:</u> Reinforce disaster response capacities through training of staff involved in emergency responses and upskill national staff to enable them to lead and coordinate preparedness and emergency responses locally.</p>				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		DESS in consultation with GLDC				
Top line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Disaster preparedness and response will be streamlined in existing emergency preparedness and training.	DESS	DESS Emergency Capacity Building prepares and supports delivery of content (in coordination with GLDC) including for the WEM, Senior Roster, Situational Emergency Training (SET) and functional rosters. Disaster preparedness and response will be streamlined in these training activities.	1 st Quarter 2022 for the critical audience (ERT/SCER, etc)		