



JOINT PERMANENT HOUSING, SHELTER/ NFI SECTOR MEETING

Thursday, 24 November 2011 at 16.00 hrs, UNHCR Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Laurent Raguin	UNHCR	David Evans	UN HABITAT
Per-Erik Stafanson	NRC	Sri Kandarajah	UNOPS
Janani Thambaiyah	NRC	Nimmi Ariyaratne	SDC
Dr. S. Keethaponkalan	Caritas Sri Lanka	Keshiya Leitch	ASB
A. Quintus	Caritas Sri Lanka	Eranga Amunugama	CARE
Dave Navindra	LEADS	Dawn Marie Vont	UMCOR
Tony Senewiratna	Habitat for Humanity	Giuseppe Loprete	IOM
A.C.M. Razik	Ministry of Resettlement	Elilini Hoole	ZOA
Leslie Jesuranjan	European Union	Jackson Selliah	UNHCR
Ruwani Hettiarachchi	UNHCR		

Issues to be discussed:

1. News on JPA
2. Situation in the North
3. General briefing on housing
4. Policies related to Indian Housing project

1. JPA

It was pointed out that discussions are on-going with the Presidential Task Force on the statistics pertaining to beneficiary numbers for 2012 JPA. The number of beneficiaries in Manik Farm has been agreed upon by all parties; however, there still remains a question on the number of IDPs living with Host Families and the number of protracted IDPs. While RD/HC is convening a meeting to analyse the figures provided by different agencies, the submission of the JPA will take more time. The JPA however is not a mere funding document for Sri Lanka, but a paper that outlines all the key issues and critical challenges that are faced in the phasing-out process. Notably, from a permanent housing perspective, only five Agencies responded to the JPA.

2. Situation in the North

a. Settlement in Kombavil

All elements related to the debate over whether the UN would support the settlement of IDPs in Kombavil were communicated to RC/HC. It was conveyed that 79 IDP families from Vavuniya have been moved to Kombavil. Based on the confirmation received from the Ministry, the moving has been done voluntarily. However, it was agreed that the voluntariness should be evaluated against a certain number of criteria.

Further, it was noted that from a UNHCR standpoint, this move should not take place due following reasons;

- a) Site was flooded

- b) Infrastructure was not proper
- c) Unclarity on the demining situation
- d) Absence of a Government plan
- e) Lack of information accessible by IDPs on their lands

It was suggested that the GoSL follows some guidelines on providing information to the people regarding their medium and long term resettlement plans. It was reiterated that until RC reverts with clear instructions on the above issue, the Agencies shall refrain from working in this area.

b. Land Circular litigation and developments

The deadline for the people from the North and East to register their lands was 20 November 2011. Nevertheless, the matter has been taken over by the Court of Appeal and will be heard at the Supreme Court thereafter.

4. General briefing on permanent housing

Out of the estimated 165,000 houses, which have been damaged, around 110,000 to 120,000 will have to be rebuilt. Remaining is expected to have been completed by the people themselves. Approximately 75,000 houses have been committed by Donors. This includes the 40,000 houses funded by the Government of India. An overview of the progress of the construction of new houses as well as repairs to partially damaged houses was shared by UNDP¹.

Constraints faced in terms of housing in the North include high rains in the areas and consequent threat of floods and damaged roads; scarcity of sand; increase in the prices of building materials; fluctuation of prices quoted by suppliers; massive scarcity of skilled labour.

5. Policies related to Indian Housing project

In total, the number of houses committed by the Government of India is 49,000, out of which 1,000 is earmarked for emergency, while another 8,000 is for hill country Tamils and for families who will be displaced due to the construction of the Trinomalee power plant (around 400). The remaining 40,000 is meant for the IDP returnees in the North.

It was noted that IDPs have not yet moved into the Indian houses. It has been insisted by India that the project should be home-owner driven, rather than contractor driven. Therefore, the question as to whether a certain percentage can be allocated for contractor or not is still being debated over. The time frame of the project will change according to this shift of implementing methodology. It is expected that a technical team will arrive from India to work on this project. In the meantime, the Indian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka will call for proposals in the next two months. It is thus envisaged that the commencement of this project will not take place before July 2012. This project is a four year project in total with a plan to complete 10,000 houses per year.

The price of an Indian house is approx LKR 500,000-600,000 which meets the minimum standards. However, it is solely upto the IDP the IDPs opt to improve and modify their houses. It was reiterated that Agencies should be cautious while involving in the clearing of wells in the return areas of North. UN Habitat has been informed that in every one tenth (1/10) of wells are contaminated.

¹ Please see attachment for statistical tables.