

SHELTER/NFI SECTOR MEETING

Thursday, 07 January 2010 at 15 hrs, UNHCR Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

Laurent Raguin	UNHCR
Jennifer Joseph	Norwegian Refugee Council
Uthpala Gunathilake	Internews
Sanja Saputantri	Care International
P. Bala	Oxfam GB
Mil Illangasinghe	IOM
Amenthi Jasinghe	World Vision
T. Priyadharshani	UMCOR
K. Vyasak	Internews
P. Krishnakumar	Save the Children
Alejandro Ruiz-Acevedo	UNOPS
Deirdre Kiernar	UNICEF
Jorine Lout	ZOA
Natasha Yatawara	Relief International
David Evans	UN- HABITAT
Lisa Luginboul	SH – Swiss Labour Assistance
Mithsiri L S Dias	Caritas Sri Lanka
Dinesh Thalpawila	UNHCR
Michelle Berman	UNHCR

Appraisal Team from Headquarters:

Jeff Crisp	UNHCR HQ
Vicky Tennant	UNHCR HQ
Andreas Graf	UNHCR HQ

1. Briefing of the Inter cluster Meeting held on the 6th of Januray, 2010

- A briefing of the discussions held with UNOCHA and the Government of Sri Lanka on CHAP 2010 resulted in manifesting two main pillars which were, The Return Pillar and the Relief Pillar. Thus, more emphasis was upon the Return Pillar.
- A total of USD 341,000,000 was requested for all programmes under CHAP 2010 valid for 24 months.
- A discussion of a common letter to be drafted by the Resident Coordinator's office of the UN to be shared with the Government containing UN perspectives on decommissioning such as removing the logo if leaving semi permanent buildings etc
- A guiding document containing of zones of return and their mine risk situations was split in to several groups indicating safe zones and danger zones for operation of actors (document shared by mail and during the meeting)

2. Transitional Shelter Design for 2010

A briefing from the representatives of IOM & UNOPS stated that several sphere standards were exercised, and uniformity should exist in building up these transitional shelters. Currently the parameter used for a shelter accommodates one family of 4 to 5 persons (Roughly 140 to 198 square feet).

Construction is already in progress and currently UNOPS has procured materials for a total of 900 temporary shelters.

The GoSL has requested for a new design (including standards) of core housing as transitional shelters.

Therefore, it was decided to:

- Form a Technical Group from the Shelter Cluster
- Map out all shelter activities
- Coordinate with the Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Jaffna clusters
- Finally, agree on common standards to be implemented taking into account the requests made by the government

3. Coordination with Mullaithivu and Kilinochchi

According to a question raised by the representative of ZOA it was stated that the Vavuniya inter-cluster will coordinate with Mullaithivu and Kilinochchi activities. Also hopefully, Jaffna could play that role after the full opening of the A9 road.

4. Updates on the NFI / Shelter Grant Distribution

A total of 26,545 returns forms distributed within Vavuniya (963), Jaffna (18,053), Mannar (2,495), Kilinochchi (1,935) and Mullaithivu (3,099).

A total of 37,207 NFI kits were distributed in Vavuniya, Jaffna, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaithivu, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

5. Discussions on the Shelter Grant with the Appraisal Team from HQ, Geneva

INTRODUCTION - Currently the return form is issued to each family head inclusive of Rs. 5,000 of the Shelter Grant of Rs. 25,000 at the point of return. The balance Rs. 20,000 will be granted after handing over the return form to the respective Bank of Ceylon Branch. Currently UNHCR has disbursed USD 6,000,000 to the Bank of Ceylon. (Contrary to what Laurent Raguin shared during the meeting)

Monitoring of the cash grant is done via cross checking with the weekly reports sent by the Bank of Ceylon against the distribution of the return form.

Ms. Vicky Tennant started with the introduction of the ToR and objectives of the mission. Thus, upon a request made by UNHCR Colombo, the appraisal/ evaluation team mission is to;

- Find out whether the cash grant serves its purpose?
- Does the Shelter grant help in fulfilling the basic needs of the returnee?
- Is the local market strong enough to provide materials to the allocated grant amount?
- Are all vulnerable returnees benefiting and if not, why?
- Evaluate the mechanisms used by UNHCR and how effective it is?
- To measure the pros and cons of the shelter grant in general.
- To come up with alternate decisions and recommendations which are more accessible and user friendly.
- Find durable solutions for IDPs with a long term perspective

- Categorization of IDPs
- Protection impact of the shelter grant and dealing with disputes within families

A report will be published in the Public Web Site of UNHCR upon the completion of the evaluation of the mission. (<http://www.unhcr.org>)

The following points were put on the floor during the discussions held between the mission and the cluster.

- Currently UNOPS and IOM are utilizing teams to construct semi permanent houses for the IDPs who do not like to give their cash grant for this purpose
- There is a general understanding that the IDPs do not utilize the shelter grant for shelter purposes.
- General local market prices are high, thus resulting the shelter grant not being sufficient for the said purpose
- There were issues in Jaffna when the bank charged a commission to each distribution of the shelter grant
- Many locations in Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu do not have access to such shelter materials
- Unavailability of unskilled labour
- The shelter grant creates a situation which makes room to exclude INGOs/NGOs from such operations (especially the protection issues would not be addressed)
- Vulnerable families (eg: Women headed house holds) do not get the opportunity to utilize the grant properly
- The initial position of the GoSL was to focus on the Cash Grant only, but as a result of advocacy negotiations GoSL agreed that the grant is not sufficient enough and would require assistance from INGOs/NGOs to construct Transitional shelters
- Thus, a duplication of the purpose could create problems
- There were fears within the cluster, that the GoSL would not recognize the shelter need, if the shelter Grant continues
- Some had the idea that the shelter grant does not fulfill the needs of the IDPs
- Practicality is less when the IDP does not get the money and other materials such as tin sheets at the exact time. (It is recommended that 16 tin sheets are to be distributed per family)
- To find out whether an IDP staying with a host family is eligible for shelter grant at that stage?
- Since access is the main concern, donor funds could be limited and operating of local organizations too could be effected at a later stage (currently Local organizations are constructing shelters through the funds allocated by INGOs/NGOs.