

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF UNHCR's RESPONSE TO THE SOMALI REFUGEE INFLUX IN DOLLO ADO, ETHIOPIA, 2011

UNHCR's MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Introduction

As captured in the Terms of Reference, the review of the emergency response to the refugee crisis in Ethiopia focused on the high levels of mortality and malnutrition among Somali refugees in the Dollo Ado refugee camps in Ethiopia during the acute phase of the emergency in the period February through November 2011. Therefore, it does not cover developments since then in the operational response, actions taken to stabilize the situation and enhanced preparedness measures for possible new refugee influxes into Ethiopia.

The report captures in a concise and comprehensive manner the operational response to the Somali refugee influx in Dollo Ado in 2011. It summarizes in a balanced manner the main findings in the Conclusions, capturing both the positive elements of the response as well as the shortcomings. Based on its findings, the Report contains 11 specific forward-looking constructive recommendations, of which some are focused specifically at Ethiopia and others are 'system-wide'.

As the report indicates, UNHCR and its partners have made strides forward since the response in 2011 and significant lessons learning has been incorporated in current practices, both at Ethiopia level as well as corporate level.

The following is a summary of the response and comments made by the UNHCR Representation in Ethiopia to the main findings of the Independent Review:

The UNHCR Ethiopia Operation was faced with an acute refugee emergency in 2011. The massive numbers of refugees that arrived in Dollo Ado came from a country that had experienced a vicious civil war that had gone on for over 22 years. This meant that the refugees arriving in Dollo Ado had not benefited from any kind of common services that are taken for granted in other countries, including basic medical services, such as vaccinations against common diseases such as measles that in Dollo Ado became a major threat to life as the refugees arrived and settled.

The situation in Dollo Ado has long changed and moved on for the better. During 2012, UNHCR Ethiopia has recorded several key achievements. Its continued emergency responses in several locations, including Dollo Ado and Gambella, were consistently coordinated and managed. Indeed, during 2011, UNHCR Ethiopia responded to simultaneous emergencies in Dollo Ado and in Assosa, where Sudanese refugees flowed over the border fleeing from insecurity and violence in Blue Nile State, Sudan. Lessons learned in Dollo Ado were taken to Assosa. During 2012, to respond to ongoing new arrivals to Dollo Ado, UNHCR Ethiopia developed a 3-pronged approach, which includes 1) expanding existing camps to accommodate new arrivals, 2) cross-border assistance in Somalia, which UNHCR is currently exploring with its partners both in Ethiopia and regionally and 3) developing a 6th camp.

Key indicators regarding mortality and malnutrition collected in the Dollo Ado and other camps in Ethiopia during 2012 show and reflect a dramatic improvement from 2011.

Further, seven contingency plans were developed for different locations in Ethiopia, which are constantly updated according to developments both in Ethiopia and in neighbouring countries. The plans can be activated at any time should the circumstances change in Ethiopia's neighbouring countries, causing an influx of refugees into Ethiopia. Additionally, a Framework Strategy for 2012-2013 was drafted and shared with partners. This document, which shares UNHCR Ethiopia's vision, was well appreciated by the donor and diplomatic community in Ethiopia and is now being updated for 2013-2014.

Coordination mechanisms have also been improved. Continuous high attendance at the Addis Ababa Refugee Task Force nearly two years after the emergency also reflects the importance of this forum for our partners, while inter-agency meetings are also held at the field level. During 2012, UNHCR Ethiopia also established and regularly organised a Donors' Forum and an NGO Forum. Both fora allow for information sharing and informal discussions of issues in a politically sensitive environment. During 2012, UNHCR also signed new Letters of Understanding with both ILO and UNICEF, reflecting increased cooperation between the agencies. We have developed a very strong donor and diplomatic support base and regularly take Ambassadors to the refugee camps to familiarise them with the refugee situation in the country.

UNHCR Ethiopia aims to enhance the self-reliance of refugees, thereby achieving sustainability and leading to the refugees becoming contributing members of society both in the camps and in the home countries in the event of future voluntary return. Transitional shelter continues to be an important part of UNHCR Ethiopia's vision and programmes, as such shelters provide better protection for refugees and are more economical than costly emergency tents which have a short lifespan in Dollo Ado's harsh weather conditions. Looking forward, in the event of future returns to Somalia, the shelters could be dismantled at the time of voluntary repatriation and the refugees would be able to take the materials with them back to Somalia to help re-establish themselves.

The following matrix summarizes the recommendations with a short description of comments and progress made in implementing these recommendations.

Recommendations	Comments and action taken/to be taken	Implementation deadline
<p>1. Define the roles and responsibilities of ARRA and UNHCR in acute crisis situations</p> <p>In order to ensure a more predictable and accountable response it is advised that roles and responsibilities of ARRA and UNHCR individually and vis-à-vis each other are clearly defined, particularly regarding the range of sectorial activities to be implemented by ARRA vs. other partners. These should be communicated within the rank and file of ARRA and UNHCR, as well as within the humanitarian community, in order to pre-empt potential confusion in the advent of application in an emergency.</p>	<p>Several actions have been taken with regard to defining the roles of responsibilities of ARRA and UNHCR in acute refugee emergency situations, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Accountability Matrices, which have been developed for all locations, clearly delineate roles and responsibilities in all sectors, also including partners. ii) The establishment of Letters of Understanding with other UN agencies, including UNICEF and ILO, facilitating an enhanced understanding of the different roles played by UN agencies and ARRA. iii) ARRA is regularly co-chairing the fortnightly Refugee Task Force in Addis Ababa. iv) ARRA is also engaging in a process to clarifying their role: for example, in discussions on the opening of the 6th camp in Dollo Ado, 	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>2. Emergency response partners should be jointly pre-identified by ARRA and UNHCR</p> <p>The evaluation findings reviewed the poor nutrition sector service delivery and coordination and described the implementation of the Government of Ethiopia led ‘vertical programming’ initiative whereby one implementing partner is designated as responsible for one sector in one camp. Building upon the recognized need to get the right capacities in place at the right time, ARRA and UNHCR should jointly pre-identify qualified emergency response partners per sector in order to put into place rapid clearance of business procedures.</p> <p>3. Emergency response activation guidance for refugee response, including a common set of triggers, should be jointly developed by ARRA and UNHCR</p>	<p>ARRA made it clear that the Government is the body to give the final clearance for land for the camp, not UNHCR or other partners.</p> <p>v) Several other meetings regularly convened by UNHCR, including the Donors’ and NGO Fora, are more informal sessions, allowing for allow for discussions of issues in a politically sensitive manner.</p> <p>The development of contingency plans for seven different locations has assisted in the pre-identification of emergency response partners. The accountability matrices have also assisted with identification of partners as matrices have been prepared also for new camps, for example, the yet to be opened 6th camp in Dollo Ado and 4th camp in Assosa.</p> <p>This is an ongoing process, as Contingency Plans are updated as the situation develops.</p> <p>Actions related to this recommendation are currently under discussion. It has been decided that a small Working Group would be needed to decide on the common set of triggers (to include, for example, as a</p>	Ongoing

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<p>Thresholds should be identified for the declaration of an emergency that exceeds the existing capacities of operational and implementing partners. A common set of triggers should be outlined and agreed upon. These could, for example, include a combination of maximum limits for life-threatening indicators such as mortality against an analysis of the scale of the emergency. There are a number of well-developed analytical tools¹ that can be looked to for guidance.</p>	<p>basis rising malnutrition rates and the condition of new arrivals). The Working Group would be led by the Health and Nutrition team, and include also other technical experts. The findings would then be integrated into the contingency plans as well.</p>	<p>Done (April 2013).</p>
<p>4. Develop interagency contingency plans for refugee response Effective emergency response requires collective action and contingency planning is a management tool that provides a common overarching framework to guide this action. The process of contingency planning establishes working relationships that can be critical during a crisis. Pre-defining strategies and management and coordination mechanisms can save valuable</p>	<p>As noted above, the development of seven contingency plans for several locations in Ethiopia is in progress. They are revised on an ongoing basis to take into consideration developments in the neighbouring countries and Ethiopia.</p>	

¹ For example, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System (IPC) is currently being introduced within Ethiopia. The IPC is a standardized scale that integrates food security, nutrition and livelihood information into a clear statement about the nature and severity of food insecurity and implications for strategic response.

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<p>time to pave the way for a coherent and timely response.</p> <p>5. Sectoral preparedness should be further developed and maintained Building on the Interagency Guidance Notes on Nutrition and Food Response², as well as a federally produced Nutrition Implementation Guide³, efforts should be made to collectively agree on harmonized standards, criteria, program implementation details, and information systems for general application in possible future acute refugee responses in order to minimize confusion and enhance performance.</p> <p>6. Systemically operationalise UNHCR’s Emergency Policy and Procedures Guidance Implement an action plan with measurable indicators to ensure that UNHCR staff, especially senior management, are sensitized to the new emergency policies and procedures directives concerning emergency response activation, coordination procedures, inter-agency partnership, information management, staffing,</p>	<p>While this recommendation is accepted and efforts are ongoing to implement it, further time is needed to achieve this fully.</p> <p>Various actions related to this recommendations have already been implemented, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two briefing sessions with the Regional Bureaux - Summary of the Emergency Policy and Procedures Guidance in a 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Main parts implemented already and will continue to be implemented / adapted as called</p>

² Joint UNHCR/WFP/UNICEF/ARRA/Implementing Partner Guidance Note on Nutrition And Food Response in the Dollo Ado Refugee Program, September 2011

³ Federal Government of Ethiopia Nutrition Implementation Guide for Dolo-Odo Refugee Operation. ARRA, 2011.

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<p>emergency appeals processes, and resource allocation. This could be a combination of awareness raising efforts, varying workshops from senior management level to relevant sectoral engagement, development of training packages (for example around emergency finances) or integration of guidance into ongoing training efforts, with planned evaluations of future emergency response efforts within the new guidance framework.</p> <p>7. Evaluate the structured transition (2+6+1) emergency staffing policy</p> <p>Capacity to adequately respond is linked with the availability, skills and experience of staff. To this regard, the UNHCR emergency staffing policy, and in particular the 2+6+1 model, should be formally evaluated to determine if it is sufficiently appropriate to deliver a coherent response.</p>	<p>short, user-friendly booklet, which was shared with all staff through a message from the AHC-Operation. Offices in the field were also encouraged to use the guidance notes for internal training and briefing of staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are incorporated in existing emergency preparedness training, such as the Workshop on Emergency Management and the Snr. Emergency Leadership Programme. -Further detailed guidance on specific topics, such as the Toolkit for Information Management in Emergencies, has been finalized. - The implementation of the various Guidance Notes is reviewed regularly and revisions and/or additional notes will be made as called for. <p>Review of the various elements of the 2 + 6 + 1 has already started, which also takes into consideration the overall staff capacity for the various functions. An internal stocktaking of the fast track mechanism has been conducted, resulting in further simplification and streamlining of the process. This has been implemented since early 2013 and received positive feedback from the emergency operations concerned. A similar stocktaking of how temporary assignments have been</p>	<p>for.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>8. Develop systemic responses for rapid large-scale refugee influxes</p> <p>In order to prevent operational malfunction, such as the bottleneck at the transit centre in Dollo Ado, systemic responses should be developed and institutionalized for a predictable scenarios in rapid large-scale refugee influxes. When activated, these systemic responses should set into a train of motion responses that would mitigate extreme circumstances in a timely manner.</p> <p>9. Ensure adequate support to senior management in acute emergency responses</p> <p>The UNHCR senior management and the Representative in country leads response including, among other things, the assessment of needs, ensures appropriate sectoral leadership, establishes appropriate coordination mechanisms, exercises UNHCR's international protection functions, and advocating and</p>	<p>managed in the context of recent, multiple emergency response activities is also under consideration. Such a stocktaking would look at the extent of recruitment and reassignment and the timeliness of meeting the various types of temporary staff needs.</p> <p>While appreciating the underlying rationale for this recommendation based on the Dollo Ado experience, it does not give sufficient consideration to the different operational contexts in which refugee emergency responses take place. Standards and general guidance exists but how to achieve them, requires a wide variety of implementation methodologies and approaches, depending on the operational context.</p> <p>UNHCR continues to deploy a significant number of staff to emergency operations, further supported by deployees from Standby Partners. Such deployments include reinforcement of the support to senior management. This is under consistent review to learn lessons and to determine where and how we could further strengthen this for future</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>fundraising on behalf of refugees. At times the senior management may need additional support to fulfil all of the required functions to best capacity. As a starting point, provisions for support to senior management are laid out in UNHCR's Emergency Response Policies and Procedures and should be systemically applied as needed.</p>	<p>emergency operations.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>10. Emergency preparedness measures, with attached predictable resources, should be institutionalized. Emergency preparedness, with contingency planning, should be encouraged and safeguarded by the availability of predictable resources. For example, an allocated percentage of an emergency reserve fund could be made available for high-risk preparedness measures in order to ensure a basic minimum of supplies are positioned and staffing levels as sufficient.</p>	<p>Emergency preparedness, including timely and adequate contingency planning with all partners involved, is indeed very important and requires due attention and priority. To strengthen this further, DESS launched in early 2013 an initiative to update its contingency planning guidance for refugee situations, which will result in a user-friendly and practical "Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies".</p> <p>To what extent operations would require additional resources in the context of adequate preparedness, would need to be established in the context of the specific situation. It should also be kept in mind that UNHCR maintains a Core Relief Items stockpile in seven strategic locations, allowing it to respond to the Core Relief Items needs for</p>	

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<p>11. Modernize coordination protocols within an enhanced partnership framework</p> <p>Effective service delivery in humanitarian response is increasingly the result of inter-agency efforts. As UNHCR leads the response in refugee emergencies it is increasingly important that UNHCR improves its inclusiveness of stakeholders through transparent information sharing and strategic leadership of operational and implementing partners. Successful coordination is paramount in this interagency environment and UNHCR could benefit from some of the coordination advancements made in the last years with the cluster approach and other humanitarian coordination mechanisms, as recognized in the new UNHCR Emergency Guidance Notes.</p>	<p>600,000 persons, with the first response within 72 hours of the request.</p> <p>As already indicated in the recommendation, the importance of good coordination and partnership has been fully recognized and also captured specifically in the Emergency Guidance Notes, such as the Notes on “Inter-Agency Partnership” and “Information Management”. This guidance was drawn up with recent emergency experience in mind, on the basis of consultation with partners as well as UNHCR colleagues. Expectations around good leadership, coordination and partnership in refugee operations were prioritised and addressed jointly with Representatives at the biannual Global Representatives Meeting in February 2013.</p>	Ongoing