

Nepal Inter-Cluster Support Mission *July 20th-26th 2010*

Background

An Inter-Cluster Support Mission to Nepal took place from 20th – 26th July 2010 in response to a request from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) for support from the global level, in line with the HCT's plan of action and priorities for 2010. The mission schedule included meetings with the Government of Nepal (GoN), strategic discussions with the RC/HC and HCT, bilateral meetings with the 8 clusters currently operational in Nepal, a meeting with OCHA on inter-cluster and cross-cutting issues, a meeting with the INGO Consortium AIN, a workshop with Cluster Coordinators and humanitarian partners, a workshop with GoN technical line Ministries, a sub-national workshop in Nepalganj with district GoN and humanitarian/development partners, and a briefing for the in-country donor community. Mission participants¹ included representatives of all clusters currently active in Nepal².

Mission Objectives

Although the humanitarian operation in Nepal is, to some extent, gradually phasing down following the end of the conflict and the ongoing peace process, humanitarian needs, not least a rising food insecurity crisis, remain prevalent. Chronic vulnerabilities are endemic, and new emergencies or a confluence of external factors could result in increasingly urgent humanitarian needs arising across all sectors. In addition to these vulnerabilities, Nepal faces risks from devastating floods and landslides on an almost annual basis, and is at significant risk of a high magnitude earthquake. It is also worth noting that there are an estimated 70,000 internally displaced persons whose special needs are yet to be fully addressed. Given the unique operating context in Nepal, the mission's objectives were not limited to sensitization on humanitarian reform issues, the assessment of the functioning of the clusters, and the identification of global support needs, as has been the case in previous inter-cluster support missions, but encompassed also a forward looking exercise of a strategic nature on the future role of the clusters in a *sui generis* transition situation, touching on certain policy issues as yet under-explored at the global level. It will be important to ensure that the lessons and issues identified through the mission are strategically used to support the development of policy and operational guidance for clusters at global level, specifically guidance on the role and functionality of clusters in transition contexts, and the role of government in cluster coordination architecture.

The mission aimed to:

- (a) strengthen understanding among Cluster Lead Agencies, Cluster Coordinators, and GoN partners regarding their roles and responsibilities to coordinate effective humanitarian action
- (b) identify constraints, challenges, and gaps in this response capacity, and explore possible support options from the regional/global levels
- (c) engage in a strategic dialogue with the RC/HC and HCT as to the current and future role and functions of cluster coordination mechanisms in the 'transition' context in Nepal, and the potential capacity of the GoN to possibly play an expanded role in such mechanisms

Issues identified in advance of the mission for strategic dialogue with humanitarian partners include:

- whether the clusters are an appropriate coordination mechanism in the current Nepal context
- how the clusters work with GoN counterparts, and the potential future role of the GoN in clusters
- how clusters operate in the current 'transition' context and between emergencies, particularly focussing on strengthening preparedness capacity
- strategies for strengthening partnerships with civil society, and between development and humanitarian actors
- understanding the inter-cluster coordination dimension and opportunities in the Nepal context
- the financial sustainability of cluster operations, and the type of support which could be provided from the global level, as well as the critical issue of mobilising funding for preparedness activities
- understanding the envisaged role for the joint RC/HC Office in support of the humanitarian coordination system following the transition and down-sizing of the OCHA office

¹ Participants included Daniel Lopez-Acuna (Global Health Cluster/WHO/Team Leader), Jeff Tschirley (Global Agriculture Cluster/FAO), Marianne Ward (Global Food Security Cluster/WFP), Lea Matheson (Global CCCM Cluster/IOM), Leonard Zulu (Global Protection Cluster/UNHCR), Felix Devries (Global Shelter Cluster/IFRC), Noel Zagre (Global Nutrition Cluster/UNICEF), Bhuvanewari Mahalingam (Global Education Cluster/SCF Sweden), Richard Luff (Global WASH Cluster/UNICEF), Maha Muna (GBV Protection Cluster AOR/UNFPA), Aoibheann O'Keeffe (Humanitarian Coordination Support Section, OCHA HQ)

² WASH, Health, Shelter, CCCM, Protection, Nutrition, Food Security, Education (Logistics & Telecommunications are currently 'dormant')

Key Observations³

(a) Defining the 'Humanitarian Agenda' and Context

There are conflicting views on the extent of the current humanitarian agenda in Nepal, with differing interpretations as to what should be considered a 'development' issue - ie. a chronic underlying problem - or a 'humanitarian' concern (examples include the food security issue and the recent diarrhoea outbreak)⁴. While it is important to emphasise that humanitarian-transition-development is a continuum which should not be artificially divided into neat phases, it is nonetheless clear that the lack of a common identification of what should be considered 'humanitarian' has contributed to the challenges facing humanitarian actors in strategically defining the basis for their activities. With residual needs from the conflict period, vulnerable populations (including the IDP caseload) requiring support, a growing food security crisis⁵, pockets of humanitarian needs scattered across the country, seasonal emergencies related to health and food security, conflict issues still evident (28 cantonment sites of ex-combatants, armed groups operating in the Terai, small arms proliferation, child protection concerns, widespread GBV), and extensive vulnerability to various natural disasters, many humanitarian actors in-country would go as far as to question whether Nepal should even be considered to be in 'transition'.

There is clearly an outstanding, and unfinished, humanitarian agenda, and the HCT and humanitarian partners are unanimous in this regard. And yet, there are significant changes afoot within the humanitarian community in Nepal, with some internal confusion and mixed signals being delivered even from the perspective of the key humanitarian actors in the country. With OCHA downsizing and reducing its presence (see (d) below) and the RC/HC deciding not to develop a CAP in 2011 (see (e) below), some of the critical instruments for inter-cluster coordination in humanitarian emergencies will soon no longer be visible. Meanwhile, some of the larger operational INGO partners, including Concern, IRC, NRC, MSF, and ACF, have recently closed down their Nepal operations, primarily due to resource constraints, and others have indicated that they are winding down operations⁶.

The donor community in-country (with the exception of ECHO and OFDA) seem unanimous in their view that humanitarian issues are not a major concern, and in their related disengagement with the humanitarian agenda. The GoN, although clearly aware, at least at the central level, of the urgent need to strengthen preparedness for emergency response (particularly for a high magnitude earthquake in the Kathmandu Valley), is also quite focussed on moving forward in the post-conflict context with an emphasis on peace and development, and has publicly stated that nothing in Nepal can be considered 'humanitarian' other than the refugee caseload and food security concerns.

Considering this backdrop, many senior humanitarian actors in-country feel that it is imperative to ensure that the humanitarian agenda is comprehensively articulated, and that advocacy is conducted at all levels, with the GoN, donors, and major development actors, to maintain the urgency of humanitarian response and preparedness priorities on the agenda of all stakeholders. This is particularly pertinent given the down-sizing of the OCHA office and the RC/HC decision not to lead a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for 2011 (more on these issues in (d) below). Many humanitarian actors in Nepal feel it is important not to be locked into 'traditional' definitions or to fall into the temptation to strictly classify needs according to the development or humanitarian dichotomy. Several believe that an over-emphasis on natural disasters has resulted in a limited view of humanitarian needs, which neglects issues related to internal displacement and protection. According to one HCT member, the humanitarian imperative dictates that wherever it is possible to save lives, then humanitarian actors should act.

This is important to bear in mind in a context such as Nepal, where some humanitarian actors are ceasing/scaling down operations and development actors have not acquired the 'sense of urgency'

³ This chapeau document will not include cluster-specific details in terms of observations or recommendations. Suggested recommendations for individual clusters can be found in the annexed notes from the bilateral cluster meetings.

⁴ While not unique to Nepal, the needs derived from chronic under-development have been also the underlying root causes of the conflict in the country. The decades-long conflict and still incomplete peace process have contributed to a lack of, or insufficient service delivery in many areas of the country.

⁵ 5 million people currently receive food aid and nutrition is viewed as a 'silent emergency'

⁶ Although it should be noted that the INGO Consortium, AIN, has 95 active members, albeit the majority engaged in development activities

needed to respond effectively to chronic underdevelopment problems – there is a danger of a ‘no man’s land’ emerging where critical needs are neglected, thus contributing to new humanitarian emergencies. While efforts have begun to establish an Early Recovery Network linking the early recovery efforts of the different clusters, this needs to be developed in tandem with ongoing humanitarian activities, and should not be perceived as a replacement for humanitarian action. The challenges facing Nepal clearly require both a development and a humanitarian response, and actors in these sectors should not be ‘let off the hook’, to quote the RC/HC. Ultimately, intensified development action is clearly required in Nepal, and system strengthening of GoN capacities is key. In support of this, synergies between the humanitarian and development agendas should be identified, dovetailing to the extent possible with GoN priorities, while constantly ensuring that the humanitarian agenda is not subsumed under other, more high profile, issues in a post-conflict environment.

(b) Cluster Operations

Although the process of establishing clusters in Nepal was initiated in mid-2008⁷, the clusters *de facto* only became fully operational in response to the Koshi River floods, which occurred in August 2008. As a result, while the remit of operations of the clusters was quite clear for the purposes of the flood response, many now seem to lack a clear identity and ‘concept of operations’, with confusion regarding cluster priorities, the framework for their work, and the extent to which they should engage in response, preparedness, and capacity-building activities. Many of the clusters have clearly not adequately developed strategic plans or engaged their sectoral partners to the extent that they could, and potentially parallel initiatives – such as a Task Force on Disaster Management led by AIN members, and disaster preparedness processes at district level led by UNDP – have therefore been established without cluster involvement. In this respect, while the mission had intended to focus on reviewing the specific role of the clusters in the transition context, and to assess the possibilities for handover and/or adaptation of clusters, in fact it is clear that the context is not yet ready for this.

While there is a lack of clarity on what many of the clusters are (and should) be doing, there is clear agreement among humanitarian actors not to ‘de-activate’ them (and in the process to handover to national counterparts)⁸. This is not only due to the continuing humanitarian agenda, but also a feeling that the clusters have in fact added value (including through ensuring that humanitarian issues remain on the agenda, that actors engage in joint mapping of needs, share information, and pool response capacities, and as a means of bringing sectoral partners together). Due in large part to their activities in the Koshi flood emergency response in 2008, the clusters are considered very positively by the GoN as useful entities for supporting the coordination of large-scale emergency response, and indeed the GoN has even formally incorporated clusters into the national Disaster Risk Management Strategy. To the GoN and other stakeholders, the clusters represent sectoral focal points with emergency know-how which can be scaled up as required for a large-scale emergency (critical considering Nepal’s vulnerabilities), and no-one wishes to have to start ‘from scratch’ if and when an emergency strikes. Clusters are also seen to have well-established coordination mechanisms and partnership structures with which the GoN has engaged (albeit in a limited and ad hoc manner⁹), and indeed are viewed by many as the *only* well-functioning sectoral coordination structures. In this regard, while there remains some confusion regarding the identity, remit, and humanitarian priorities of the clusters, all stakeholders seem adamant that they should continue to exist, and indeed be supported to strengthen their capacity.

There is a clear and urgent need for the RC/HC and HCT to help the clusters to re-define their framework of operations, to focus specifically on assessing and responding effectively to current needs, strengthening emergency preparedness activities, and building the capacity of GoN counterparts (see (c) below), while constantly maintaining a readiness to rapidly and efficiently scale up as required for large-scale response. It is important to recognise that, in the context of re-orienting the scope of work of the clusters, not all clusters will be identical in nature, and it will certainly not be ‘business as usual’. Some clusters should be more focussed on responding to needs identified, while others will by definition have a greater emphasis on preparedness, stockpiling, and contingency

⁷ Nepal being a HC country and therefore committed to establishing cluster coordination structures as per global guidance

⁸ In fact, structures are still being strengthened, with an Early Recovery Network currently in the process of being established

⁹ GoN sectoral ‘Focal Points’ were only recently agreed and are now beginning to engage with their cluster counterparts

planning¹⁰. All clusters should, however, strengthen their capacity-building and active engagement with GoN and civil society counterparts as a central priority - although care should be taken not to present the clusters as the only locus for GoN capacity-building, as they are simply one small part of a much broader agenda in this regard, with development actors firmly in the driving seat¹¹.

The RC/HC Office and cluster lead agencies (most HCT members) will have a critical role to play in ensuring that adequate resources and capacity are allocated to the agency's cluster coordination responsibilities, to ensure that the clusters can function effectively within the remit of their newly-defined scope of work. This will be challenging in a context where resources for humanitarian activities are clearly diminishing (see more in (e) below). Another area which will need greater definition and strategic thought is exactly how the national clusters can and should support humanitarian activities (both response and preparedness) at regional and district level. Arguably, with a very limited number of humanitarian partners active in the districts, there should not be a push to automatically establish sub-national clusters simply for the sake of it. However, national clusters need to consider how they can best support sectoral partners at district/regional level – and more importantly district level authorities – to engage in strengthening emergency preparedness and to ensure a coordinated and well-resourced response when and if required¹². Global cluster lead agencies will likewise need to review the support functions they currently play vis-à-vis clusters in Nepal, specifically with a view to strengthening the cluster capacity to engage more pro-actively in emergency preparedness activities and to in turn build the capacity of GoN and civil society counterparts as a longer-term priority investment.

(c) GoN and the Clusters

The mission observed widespread confusion within the GoN with regards to their future role in cluster coordination mechanisms. At a technical level, many GoN partners seem only to be aware of and understand the cluster function in 'active response' mode, with many references to their role in the Koshi floods. At the more senior level, the GoN seems fixated on a 'national cluster approach' (although it is unclear what this might entail in practice), and clearly views the priority for the humanitarian community to be the provision of support - resources, technical know-how, enhancing capacity – in order to strengthen the 'national cluster approach'. GoN response planning also seems quite limited in scope, focusing on natural disasters rather than considering other potential humanitarian scenarios.

In essence, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) - the key GoN counterpart for humanitarian action - seems keen to coordinate closely with humanitarian stakeholders, has requested support specifically for emergency preparedness, is engaged in the 'sensitisation' of other Ministries on emergency preparedness and response, and has instructed district level authorities to work closely with UN and INGO partners 'according to the cluster approach and in coordination with the District Disaster Relief Committee'. While this is positive and welcome, the clear misperceptions regarding the so-called 'nationalisation' of the clusters – and what this might mean both for GoN capacity development in emergency response and GoN engagement with the clusters in the current context – is somewhat problematic. The GoN clearly needs to organise itself better between its own line Ministries to ensure a coordinated response capacity, while also engaging much more actively at the technical level – through the recently-assigned Focal Points - with the clusters. Central to this is a strengthening of accountability, with better clarity *within the GoN* as to which entities are responsible for what – and linked to this an adequate monitoring and implementation capacity. This may ultimately move towards a situation whereby GoN partners are co-chairing cluster meetings (as appropriate to each cluster context), engaging in joint sectoral planning, and other such joint initiatives, which would be a

¹⁰ Some clusters, such as the Logistics and Telecommunications Clusters, will in fact continue to remain 'dormant' until they need to switch into response mode

¹¹ Which is why it is equally urgent that development resources and activities are likewise re-aligned accordingly, although this issue is beyond the scope of the mission's remit

¹² One way in which this might be done is through establishing a network of cluster focal points at district level, something which has already been initiated at country level.

welcome development¹³. However, with the exception of some clusters wherein this is already happening, this seems a somewhat distant reality¹⁴.

As a result, the widespread misperception that as of January 2011, the GoN will 'takeover' the clusters (the so-called 'nationalisation' process¹⁵) is potentially damaging to the cluster mechanisms (which themselves are in urgent need of strengthening and of developing greater clarity of identity). The mission fully supports the approach for the clusters to systematically strengthen GoN capacity-building, to increase their active engagement with cluster activities, to gradually hand over cluster tools, databases, and other resources to GoN counterparts¹⁶, to actively engage in joint planning, strategising, needs assessments, etc, and in the medium-term, to encourage GoN leadership of their own national sectoral coordination mechanisms (technical working groups), into which the clusters would ultimately merge (although retaining the capacity to scale up again as required for larger-scale emergency response operations). It is also critical that humanitarian principles such as those relating to principles of partnership and humanitarian access are integrated into GoN systems going forward.

However, it is simply neither feasible nor desirable for the GoN to be under the illusion that within 5 months, the clusters as they are will be handed over wholesale to GoN management, and that these instruments – in essence, international coordination mechanisms and processes – will replace the national systems and practices. It is important to recall that the clusters are a very particular mechanism, established under the humanitarian reform agenda, which have definition and instrumental weight within the IASC agencies, and entail clear commitments at the global level in terms of support, resource mobilisation, etc as well as clear lines of accountability at both field and global levels. Such mechanisms cannot be simply handed over to government leadership, in any country context, and instead the emphasis should be on exploring opportunities for transition and support to GoN-led national structures which would, *inter alia*, absorb cluster functions. While this may appear a semantic and somewhat philosophical argument, mission members strongly believe that a concerted effort must be made to change the current misperceptions among GoN partners in this regard.

Ultimately however, as part of the overall transition planning process for the country, there does need to be a clear and agreed roadmap for the longer-term 'adaptation' / 'transition' of the clusters, which would outline what each cluster should aim towards in terms of the gradual handover of cluster tools, databases, and other resources to GoN counterparts and the eventual merger of the cluster into broader GoN-led sectoral mechanisms (recognising that this will not occur at the same pace for each, and that some – such as Protection – may never be able to contemplate this). Ideally, this longer-term roadmap should be an integral part of the immediate action plan to re-define the cluster framework and scope of operations and plans to strengthen capacity-building activities and engagement with GoN counterparts.

(d) Joint RC/HC Office

Following extensive consultations, and an agreed 'transition' and phase-down process¹⁷, OCHA has opted to close its country office in Nepal, and to handover most of its current functions in support of the wider humanitarian community to what will be an expanded 'joint RC/HC Office'. Many humanitarian stakeholders, including some senior HCT members, have voiced concern that OCHA is downsizing prematurely, and that the joint RC/HC Office will not be in a position to provide the much-needed support for cluster operations. Much of this concern seems to be related to the fact that with OCHA reducing its visibility, and a decision to no longer have a consolidated appeal for response and preparedness activities (see (e) below), then this is a very clear statement that there is no longer a humanitarian agenda in Nepal, and that the humanitarian situation has been 'downgraded'. This does not correspond to the reality described above, where there is clearly a continuing humanitarian agenda and a related need for cluster and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms.

¹³ However, it is important to ensure that co-chairing (of cluster meetings and other activities) is not confused with co-leadership of the cluster *per se* (the former being a welcome development, while the latter could result in more misperceptions regarding the 'cluster nationalisation process').

¹⁴ Not least due to the constant GoN turnover, with no less than 5 governments in the past 4 years

¹⁵ Which is outlined in the HC Compact with the ERC

¹⁶ Where possible and appropriate - perhaps the Protection Cluster excluded for example

¹⁷ Whereby it will sustain a diminishing presence, downsizing from a Country Office to a Humanitarian Support Unit (HSU) with staff situated within the joint RC/HC Office, over the next 24 months

Clearly, the challenge for the joint RC/HC Office is to ensure that it can effectively continue the critical inter-cluster coordination functions which OCHA has played heretofore in support of humanitarian actors in Nepal, including humanitarian advocacy, providing strategic guidance for multi-sectoral concerns, providing appropriate information management support to the humanitarian operation, supporting protection activities through ProCap deployments, providing guidance on GoN and civil society capacity-building to strengthen response capacity, leading inter-cluster strategic planning processes, coordination of resource mobilisation initiatives, ensuring the inclusion of cross-cutting issues, and both strategic and operational inter-cluster coordination. The joint RC/HC Office is already planned and approved, and funding has been secured for its operations through the RC/HC's Transition Strategy. Recruitment has been slower than expected, however, and there will not be sufficient opportunity for handover with OCHA¹⁸. There is a clear need for strategising how the Office will function in practice, and humanitarian actors have expressed a need for greater clarity as to what they can expect in terms of actual support functions. With field presences ('UN Field Coordination Offices' - UNFCOs) anticipated in 4 sub-national locations¹⁹, and a central hub at Kathmandu level, which merges the various elements of the joint Office (humanitarian, development, peace-building, etc), this is an ambitious and laudable project for a 'transition' context, which could potentially be replicated elsewhere.

However, from the perspective of the humanitarian stakeholders, it will be critical to ensure that the remit and objectives of the joint Office and the various UNFCOs are fully clarified, and that there will be adequate scope and space to support and advocate for humanitarian issues within the broader focus on development, peace, and security. This is particularly relevant in a context where not only the GoN, but also the donor community and development actors are increasingly emphasising the post-conflict development agenda, and seem unwilling to consider humanitarian needs potentially arising from a context linked to a renewal of the conflict, ethnic clashes, or social unrest. Humanitarian issues, whether conflict-related, disaster-related, or simply linked to chronic vulnerabilities, could easily be subsumed under the' agendas of peace and security, but it is critical that they remain clearly on the table. There will be an increasing need for strong humanitarian leadership, vision, and advocacy to ensure that this happens.

As a direct result of the establishment of the joint Office, the mission hopes that there will be a renewed effort to bring development and humanitarian actors closer together, and to ensure that the strategic planning processes of each group are better intertwined. Currently, there appears to be a disconnect between the various simultaneous processes which are being implemented under the overall leadership of the RC/HC, including for example the newly-established DRR Consortium, the Peace and Development Strategy, plans for the UNDAF later in 2010, and humanitarian operations (as embodied in the Humanitarian Transition Appeal for 2010). These linkages will become more and more critical as the 'transition' phase moves forward. The central role of the RC/HC in providing leadership, vision, and guidance on the above-outlined challenges is critical. As part of the strategic discussions on the expanded role of the RC/HC Office, particularly in assuming many of the humanitarian coordination responsibilities previously held by OCHA in Nepal, there should be a reinforcement of the *HC* functions – and a related engagement by the ERC – to ensure that the necessary humanitarian leadership is provided. Meanwhile, it is incumbent on the RC/HC himself, specifically in his dual-hatted function, to draw together the humanitarian and development communities to identify synergies, to jointly engage in strategic planning processes, and to eventually look towards a transition/adaptation/handover of mechanisms as appropriate.

(e) Strategic Planning & Resource Mobilisation

To resolve the questions surrounding the definition of the humanitarian agenda in Nepal, and in order for clusters to better define their priorities and scope of work (helping them to create a strategic roadmap and action plan for their operations), ultimately what is required is a common humanitarian strategic planning process. Heretofore, this process has crystallised around the annual CAP, but as a decision has been taken not to develop a CAP for 2011²⁰, many humanitarian actors have expressed

¹⁸ Although the expanded Office has in fact recruited some of OCHA's former staff, and is absorbing wholesale OCHA's IM Unit for example

¹⁹ UNFCOs are currently established in 2 of the 4 planned locations, with OCHA staffing 1 FCO until the end of 2010

²⁰ Not least due to intense GoN opposition to the concept, and clear donor apathy in relation to funding humanitarian action

a concern that joint inter-cluster strategic planning will no longer be a priority. The mission firmly believes that this is a pivotal activity on which the expanded RC/HC Office must take the lead, guided by the HCT - without this many of the clusters will continue to flounder in terms of their identity and framework of operations. A common strategic planning process and platform (along the lines of a CHAP), involving all clusters, relevant humanitarian and GoN stakeholders, and critically also the development community, would go a long way towards identifying the humanitarian agenda, clarifying the priority needs, linking residual needs with current vulnerabilities and emergency preparedness elements (including cluster readiness capacity), and overall, helping to define the humanitarian agenda. This platform would act as the glue to hold together the various elements of the humanitarian architecture in Nepal, particularly in the absence of both OCHA and a CAP²¹. It would also be a concrete step towards engaging the development actors in Nepal in the humanitarian agenda, an imperative action in a transition context wherein both entities must work hand-in-hand to identify and respond to needs.

However, it may be somewhat challenging to encourage humanitarian actors to mobilise around a common planning process without the ‘carrot’ of a consolidated appeal to encourage them to engage. Resource mobilisation is a critical concern of many humanitarian stakeholders, not only to ensure funding for cluster operations responding to current humanitarian needs, but also to support emergency preparedness activities²². It should be noted that certain larger agencies (notably WFP) would be likely to receive funding regardless of whether or not a common appeal is developed²³, but all humanitarian actors see the distinct advantage in a joint appeal for funding - not least as a means of collectively engaging the GoN and donors, and presenting a united front on jointly-defined humanitarian strategy and needs. Despite the apparent ambivalence of the in-country donor community on the existence of a humanitarian caseload and agenda in Nepal, some humanitarian actors believe that funding does exist for humanitarian interventions – the issue is to jointly strategise on how best to access it, and to ensure that all identified needs are catered for²⁴.

Given that the decision not to develop a CAP in 2011 appears to be definitive²⁵, a major challenge for the RC/HC, HCT, and expanded RC/HC Office will be to explore alternative options to mobilise resources for humanitarian action in Nepal, whether that is through creating opportunities through potential funding mechanisms, utilising advocacy channels such as the Peace and Development Strategy and DRR Consortium, or identifying other options, such as a pooled fund managed by the RC/HC Office or access to the underfunded window of CERF²⁶. It should be noted that there is currently a small Emergency Response Fund in Nepal, funded by Sweden and managed by OCHA – there will also be a need to clarify how this fund will be managed henceforth, and for what purposes it will be utilised. Either way, there is clearly extensive funding available on the development side for Nepal, and it will be critical to explore how some of this funding could potentially be channelled to support humanitarian activities and the future preparedness and capacity-building emphasis of the clusters²⁷. In deciding not to develop a CAP for 2011, resources will have to be secured in an alternative way to ensure that adequate funding is accessed in support of ongoing and future humanitarian action in Nepal.

Mission Recommendations

	Recommended Action	Responsible Entity	Suggested Timeframe
--	--------------------	--------------------	---------------------

²¹ The departure both of OCHA and the CAP has led some to question the value of maintaining clusters, advocating instead for agencies to simply revert to following their mandated functions

²² Preparedness activities being so often under-funded in many countries, but yet central to the humanitarian operation, particularly in a context such as Nepal

²³ Indeed the majority of CAP funding received in 2009 was for the food security component

²⁴ Emphasising that the humanitarian community in-country is the best-placed entity to jointly determine critical needs, rather than allowing donors to choose selectively according to what they determine the most expedient use of their resources

²⁵ Although it should be noted that many humanitarian partners, both at the country and global levels, disagree with this decision

²⁶ Nepal did receive \$2 million through the under-funded window from the CERF in July 2010, but how this could happen in the future in the absence of a common appeal needs to be communicated

²⁷ It is, however, important to note that the GoN is particularly concerned about potentially ‘diverting’ funds to international agencies which should rightfully be given to the GoN. The approach heretofore has been that the international community should focus on fund-raising ‘off-shore’ (ie. identifying funds that might not have come to Nepal), but not to divert GoN funds.

1	Lead common strategic planning process, including undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment, involving all humanitarian stakeholders and relevant GoN counterparts, to jointly & definitively identify Nepal's 'humanitarian agenda'	RC/HC, HCT, RC/HC Office	September 2010
2	Support individual clusters to develop strategic roadmap for each sector & related action plans to re-define framework for cluster operations (ensuring clusters fully understand their purpose & remit) – linked to this, ensure that Global Cluster Lead Agencies are in agreement on common objectives & revised strategic approach of clusters in Nepal	RC/HC, HCT, RC/HC Office, Global Cluster Lead Agencies	October 2010
3	Identify strategies for strengthening capacity-building with GoN counterparts, both within and across clusters – including strengthening relationship with GoN 'Focal Points', advocating for joint planning, initiating transfer of certain mechanisms/tools to GoN & considering strategies to counteract turnover in GoN	Clusters (with support from RC/HC Office)	Immediate & ongoing
4	Re-define messaging for GoN on concept of 'cluster nationalisation', to remove current misperceptions & pave way for strengthened GoN engagement in clusters, plus engage more systematically (cluster & cross-cluster) with GoN planning processes	RC/HC, HCT, Clusters	Immediate & ongoing
5	Identify synergies between humanitarian & development actors, and explore ways to ensure each is engaged in the other's strategic planning processes (UNDAF, DRR, PDS, contingency planning, disaster preparedness, humanitarian planning platform)	RC/HC, RC/HC Office, HCT	Immediate & ongoing
6	Strengthen engagement with stakeholders in the development sector, including civil society actors, and find practical ways to encourage their participation in cluster activities (as relevant) – including through strategic discussions on strengthening community resilience and linkages with NNGO Federation & more systematic information-sharing	Clusters (with support from HCT & RC/HC Office)	Immediate & ongoing
7	Based on humanitarian strategic plan & related needs identified across all sectors, identify concrete ways to access adequate resources to fund humanitarian action– including through tapping into early recovery financing mechanisms, investigating how donor development 'envelopes' can be accessed, and engaging in discussions with the Nepal Ministry of Finance	RC/HC, RC/HC Office, HCT	September 2010
8	Clarify responsibilities & remit of joint RC/HC Office vis-à-vis support to humanitarian community (ie. OCHA functions as outlined), particularly on how UNFCOs will operate in practice & issue clear messaging to humanitarian partners at national & sub-national levels	RC/HC, RC/HC Office, OCHA HSU	Immediate
9	Reinforce the HC functions, to ensure that appropriate and sufficient humanitarian leadership, vision, and guidance is provided to the humanitarian community. Build on the advantages of the 'double-hat' of the RC/HC to draw humanitarian and development actors together for the purposes of joint planning & strategising. Specifically engage with GoN entity responsible for conflict-related issues (IDP caseload, etc).	RC/HC (supported by ERC)	Immediate
10	Strengthen advocacy with in-country and external donor community on funding for humanitarian action & with GoN and development actors to ensure humanitarian issues remain a priority in Nepal (including through regular briefings with in-country donor community)	RC/HC, RC/HC Office	Immediate & ongoing
11	Review support to district/regional level humanitarian action, particularly focussing on capacity-building of district authorities & DDRCs and engagement in CP processes – consider how to provide support without presence of sub-national clusters	Clusters (with support from HCT & RC/HC Office)	Immediate & ongoing

	(training, tools, etc) & develop agreed SOPs for emergency response (including for smaller, localised emergencies)		
12	Strengthen inter- and intra-cluster IM, with a particular emphasis on vulnerability mapping, capacity mapping (humanitarian presence, stockpiles, warehouses, etc), and engaging GoN & civil society through sharing of IM tools & databases	RC/HC Office, Clusters	Immediate & ongoing
13	Support establishment of cross-cluster ER network (and define its focus and remit) & ensure it is linked to the re-orientation of all clusters towards strengthened capacity-building initiatives and emergency preparedness activities	RC/HC Office, Clusters, UNDP	Immediate & ongoing
14	Re-evaluate humanitarian contingency planning process to (a) ensure that it is not conducted in isolation of other disaster preparedness & CP initiatives, including those led by GoN at district level and bilateral and NGO-led initiatives and (b) that scenarios do not exclude those related to possible conflict or social unrest	RC/HC Office	Immediate
15	Ensure maintenance of cluster capacity (including for 'dormant' clusters) to rapidly scale-up as required for large-scale emergency response (including planning for additional human resources & dedicated coordination capacity as required)	HCT, Clusters (with support from Global Cluster Lead Agencies)	Immediate & ongoing
16	Ensure prompt follow-up on actions identified through individual cluster bilateral discussions, particularly in terms of global/regional support required (linked to definition of cluster activities & framework of operations)	Global Cluster Lead Agencies	Immediate & ongoing
17	Identify appropriate processes at global level through which to share mission recommendations specifically related to the concept of 'clusters in transition' (IASC WG, UNDG-ECHA, etc), and utilise observations to provide a basis for development of operational guidance for clusters	Global Cluster Lead Agencies, OCHA HQ	4 th quarter 2010
18	Review usefulness of tools utilised (including workshop materials, guiding questions for cluster bilaterals, etc) for Inter-Cluster Support Missions in general, and explore (through IASC Task Team & GCC) whether standard tools should be developed in this regard	Global Cluster Lead Agencies, OCHA HQ	4 th quarter 2010
19	Provide concrete feedback & recommendations to IASC Task Team regarding mission participation, ideal size, and how to ensure adequate representation without necessarily involving all clusters	Global Cluster Lead Agencies, OCHA HQ	4 th quarter 2010
20	Engage with donor-cluster group at global level specifically to discuss issue of how to access funding for emergency preparedness, and how to ensure that humanitarian priorities continue to be supported in 'transition' contexts such as Nepal, particularly in a post-CAP environment	OCHA HQ, Global Cluster Lead Agencies	4 th quarter 2010 & ongoing