



## *Bahamas Dorian – Protection Working Group - Meeting*

### Minutes

<http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/field-support/field-protection-clusters/bahamas/>

Protection Coordination Meeting - Sept 18 2019

Present: IOM/UNICEF/UNHCR/UNFPA/OHCHR/ECHO/ISRAID

#### **OCHA**

- Provided an update regarding the CERF proposal which will focus on areas only : Shelter and GBV response with recommendation that funds be channeled through two agencies only with a maximum of \$600,000 available and necessity to submit no later than Thursday.

Action: IOM and UNFPA to develop the proposal for sharing asap

#### **UNFPA**

- Have undertaken two focus group discussions however were exposed to some restrictions when visiting shelters

Actions : UNFPA to share results of FGDs

#### **UNHCR**

- IOM were recently informed by the Government that they were requesting assistance to create two camps in Abaco, one for 2,000 families and one for workers (1,100). Considering the costs that would be associated with such a development which also has a timeframe associated (4 weeks) shelter will be proposed to be considered as the greatest priority noting however the concerns over having a male only camp

Action : IOM to share an outline of what has been requested by the Government with the group. IOM to articulate in CERF proposal that such a shelter proposal will necessitate additional costs for more wider protection mainstreaming efforts and activities.

Agreement : Messages regarding camp establishment to be developed and shared as part of overall protection advocacy messages which will be used by all agencies

#### **IOM**

- Shared updates on meeting with Government, where they discussed registration and DTM possibilities and requested to cover needs assessments/registration in addition to facilitating missing/family reunification.
- Govt. appears concerned over issue of having sensitive data in the public, or even readily available within the humanitarian community. Intimated they did not want to be criticized on shelter/services in shelters/presence of Haitians in shelters/perception and resistance from the Bahamian society.
- IOM made recommendations on how to overcome this – either running data by Govt. to be cleared, or by sharing within closed groups.



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- IOM is trying to get approval before the end of the week to begin its registration exercise.

Agreement : Considering the sensitivities from the Government side and concerns over raising expectations agreement was reached to agree on joint needs assessment

Action point : IOM to share format being used with the protection coordination group

### **UNICEF**

- Updated on the inter-ministerial meeting they observed and noted that they had secured agreement to undertake registration efforts with Ministry of Social Services with various Ministries involvement. Process is ongoing.
- Noted the move toward using standardized and harmonized tools in the registration process, outlined that the basis for them was a case management and could review how this tool could be interoperable with registration
- Looking at all cases of separation and unaccompanied children. Noted that in addition to shelters there are 36 other locations run by churches
- Will be establishing child protection working group which will report to protection working group
- Currently putting together a detailed 120 work plan to share with the Govt.
- UNHCR raised the issue of 53 unaccompanied minors in the Ranfurly Home and questioned whether there was social services framework. UNICEF confirmed they were aware and actively following up on these cases and would share updates with the PCG. UNICEF further confirmed that there is an existing system for alternative care arrangements, but the concern was that institutional care should be a last resort.

Action : UNICEF will share tools to ensure that one tool can be developed and agreed and promoted as a tool by UN protection sector with agreement that it will facilitate ease of referrals once referral mechanisms are established.

Agreement : Consent for sharing of information will have to be included as a key component to facilitate referral system

### **UNHCR**

- Noted the importance that the group develop key messages, and that all those impacted/affected – not just those in shelters – needed to be protected and have access to services on an equal basis
- Noted a system for the joint needs assessment needs to be prioritized and jointly agreed
- Recommended that in conducting same people should have recommendations and be sensitized to those they are talking to, some of whom may not have had an opportunity to talk about their circumstances

Action : Key advocacy messages to be developed and used by all agencies.

### **OHCHR**



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- Noted most of those in shelters are Haitian and include large number of children and women
- Raised the issue of lack of documentation, whether there may be waivers given for people to replace their documents or extension of the time frame for the application process
- Highlighted the need for awareness raising on this and with affected community
- Noted key messages should focus on citizenship, xenophobia, a freeze on repatriation and verification of all cases before any decisions are made

Action : IOM to provide social media update

Action :OHCHR to develop some key advocacy messages on issues related to discrimination as part of overall messaging

#### UNHCR

- Noted highlighted the process of identification of dead bodies for benefits, collection of DNA, but noted the issue of recompense, and moving forward with documentation in light of challenges

Action : UNHCR offered to provide an overview of documentation issues in future meeting

#### IOM

- Raised the issue of a need for interpreters at shelters especially in the context of psychosocial support

Action : Gaps highlighted need to be fed into the system to secure response

UNHCR raised a question on new information shared by IOM relating to the question of relocation to camps in Abaco (2000 +1100) and whether there was information regarding who will be eligible? Highlighted protection concerns with this plan. IOM noted Govt had shared a site plan and would be meeting with Immigration Minister in the morning. Solicited input for key messages for the meeting.

UNHCR questioned how was this request for camps opened? IOM noted they were asked to provide inputs on planning and noted that their messaging would include affected population was their key priority and that any decisions related to the population should be done in consultation with affected population.

Point was made that people in shelter are unaware of any proposals or plans concerning their future. It was noted that family unity must prevail and that these should be included in any talking points. OHCHR noted the rights of people in the shelter including regarding voluntary return and the importance of making an informed decision. Further noted the right to nationality and the non-discrimination in the access to services should be emphasized.

Concerns were raised about persons hiding in Abaco and the message that they are concerned about their human rights and afraid to be deported. The Dutch army who was on the ground in Abaco made a point to speak with a rep from OCHCR regarding their protection to share their observations on the ground.



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They will leave Abaco shortly, OCHA will leave Sunday and UNHCR raised question regarding whether IOM will have a presence on the group before other groups pull out noting the importance of protection by presence.

#### **ISRAID**

- Noted that there were areas in Grand Bahama that were not being discussed where people were not receiving assistance, including a small cay after McClean cay. The Government had asked them evacuate however they refused.

Action: More details to be shared for followup

#### **UNFPA**

- Will be setting up a GBV working group which will report to protection cluster

Action : UNHCR to share proposed TOR for working group

Next meeting Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September tentative time 13:30