

NFI COMMON PIPELINE FOR DARFUR

ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

23RD NOVEMBER, 2011

MINUTES

Date:	Monday 23 rd November – 14:00 p.m. to 15:30 p.m.
Location:	OCHA– Conference Room
Chair:	WFP Logistics Coordination Unit (Chris Clark)-OCHA (Stella Ajwang)
Executive Board:	OCHA, WFPLCU, UNICEF, IOM, RCO
Panel Members:	USAID, DFID, ECHO, NGO Forum Representative, RCO,
Invitees	UNHCR, CIDA (chair – Humanitarian Donor Working Group), WFP

Apologies: Trond Jensen – OCHA, Yassine Gaba - ECHO, Juliette Prodhan - DFID,

Participants:

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Chris Clark - Chair	WFPLCU	Douglas Osmond	UNHCR/ WFPLCU
Stella Ajwang- Co Chair	UNOCHA	Jill Helke	IOM
Oumar Mbarek	USAID/OFDA	Jadranko Bjelica	IOM
Naoko Akiyama	UNICEF	Nevins Saeed	WFPLCU
Jeff McMurdo	UNOPS	David Wemyss	WFPLCU
MdShah Alam	WFPLCU		

1. Introduction

Chris welcomed all and thanked participants for attending and Stella for co-chairing the meeting. Chris advised although the meeting had been planned for the beginning of December, it was brought forward to allow partners and donors to discuss the issues and possible ramifications of the request **by UNHCR to WFP on 10th November to extend the mandate of WFPLCU to 31st March 2011**. This despite the assurances in the UN High Commissioner's letter of 9th May to WFP that UNHCR would be ready to take on the project effective 1st January 2012 with some changes to the funding model, beneficiary identification and assessments, and transportation, with procurement to be taken over without delay.

The request by UNHCR to extend the project has placed WFP in an invidious position. Planning began in September 2011 to ensure a smooth close out at the end of December: all staffing contracts and service provider contracts were geared to this date. The processes have to be reversed to accommodate the extension. Staff extensions are pending, since funds are depleted. Funds required for the additional three month period are estimated to be around **US\$765,111**

Since the last meeting, WFPLCU has continued with the preparation for the transition and close out of the project, written the Sector Response Plan; prepared the UNHCR (WFPLCU/IOM) budget sheet for the 2012 HWP; prepared the 2012 procurement plan in collaboration with UNHCR; started the winter season replenishment distributions, and

arranged and facilitated NFI Coordination meetings in the Darfurs, and in Khartoum for ROS. The Sector Lead is currently reviewing CHF proposals for the TRG meeting scheduled for the 28th of November.

Key activities and actions are outlined in the handouts and on the power point presentation (attached for reference).

2. Matters arising from the Meeting of 22nd September 2011

Chris asked if there were any issues from the minutes of the previous meeting of 22nd September that required clarification or amendment.

UNOPS requested that the reference to their role in the UNHCR takeover of the NFI & ES Sector be changed to read administration rather than management of the Sector.

There being no other comments, the minutes were accepted with the change.

3. Operational Overview

UNICEF advised the Panel that they still have US\$ 200,000 of the 1.8 m provided by OFDA for procurement of NFIs and were awaiting specs from UNHCR to procure transitional shelters for the transitional areas.

USAID asked if UNICEF had used up all donor money for the Common Pipeline procurement.

UNICEF confirmed there are five consignments of NFIs for the CP pending, which are expected to arrive soon. Shelter kits would be locally procured with the remaining funds. UNICEF will clear all outstanding consignments and handover to the CP before closing out of the CP Core partners' partnership.

UNHCR stated that US\$ 8,560,044 had been requested in the 2012 HWP for transitional shelters. No procurement plans have been made against that.

USAID stated an interest in providing funding to the Sector for transitional shelters.

UNHCR did not envisage the Sector as a fund manager for NGOs, but would like to include some shelter kits in the Common Pipeline.

IOM informed the Panel that 75% of winter distributions were complete, and the agency expected to have sufficient funds to finish the winter distributions. Funding for the first quarter of 2012- approximately US\$ 500,000 - had been requested from CHF first round (proposal submitted). However, it was likely that the full request would not be granted; this could affect pre-positioning for the rainy season replenishments for 2012.

IOM had utilized part of the referendum-related contingency funds for transporting NFIs to Kadugli, Kurmuk, and Damazin. Remaining funds would be sufficient to cover the 119,000 HHS outlined in the Sector Contingency Plan.

IOM stated that it had not seen the letter from UNHCR advising the ERC of their taking over the Sector. WFPLCU explained that they had had no authority to share the letter which was forwarded to them by OCHA. UNHCR asked WFPLCU to share the letter with IOM, and OCHA requested it be shared with the HCT as well, as the issue had been tabled at the last HCT meeting.

Action Point: WFPLCU (Chris) to scan the letter to Stella (OCHA) for circulation to the HCT

IOM further stated that it had received confirmation in September from UNHCR that it was going to continue to use IOM as transport partner, but in recent days this seemed to be being called into question. Indeed everything HCR had said it was going to do seemed to be going into reverse, from taking over from WFPLCU, to common fund-raising, to using IOM for transport. This was not an easy environment in which to work effectively.

WFPLCU (ROS Coordinator) provided a brief overview of NFI & ES Sector activities in the Rest of Sudan and the looting of Common Pipeline NFI & ES items pre-positioned in the GOAL and Samaritan's Purse warehouses in Kurmuk. The replacement of the lost items would cost around US\$133,000 (ROS tracking sheet attached for reference)

WFPLCU (Pipeline manager) gave a brief overview of NFI & ES items distributed in the Darfurs and current stocks available (attached for reference), and advised that UNHCR planned to borrow some stock for the CP for 2012, from their other operations.

WFPLCU (Pipeline manager) confirmed that a summary of requests for SKS & BNS, assessment reports, reasons for turning down a request etc., had been shared with donors and other stakeholders since the last meeting, when this had been requested by OFDA.

4. Transition to UNHCR

UNHCR (Douglas) explained that the ES & NFI Sector was globally placed under UNHCR, and discussions on its transition in Sudan had been ongoing for a few years. He provided an overview of the current state of affairs, beginning with the letter from the High commissioner to the Emergency Relief Coordinator in May, following a high-level delegation to Sudan in April when a final decision was made by UNHCR to take over the Sector. He highlighted the fact that 20 to 30 % of the WFPLCU staff time is dedicated to the CP, which does not exist under the ES & NFI Sector anywhere besides Sudan, and hence a new operation for UNHCR.

Funding

UNHCR did not approve of the funding model used by CP i.e. separate fundraising for each segment and the original thinking had been to seek funding for the CP as a whole (also recommended in the Strategic Review Report of June 2011). This has not yet been clarified, as UNHCR has been unable to identify budgetary space for the full amount required, and may consider reverting to the original model.

USAID clarified that the USG, USAID/OFDA goes not fund UNHCR, USG funding to UNHCR comes from the Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration - BPRM. USAID and UNHCR are looking at ways that would allow USAID/BPRM to fund UNHCR in Sudan for the ES/NFI Sector. One possible option would be for USAID/OFDA to fund UNOPS.

OCHA advised that CHF funds would probably not be distributed until mid – February.

USAID advised that since 2012 was US election year, even though the US Government pledged funds, in reality, not much would be actioned before the 2nd quarter of the year.

UNHCR is planning sub-agreements with IOM for transportation (not yet confirmed), and UNOPS for administration. The latter has been confirmed, and UNHCR HQ is providing US\$ 400,000 to sign a start-up agreement with UNOPS. UNHCR is also seeking an advance from its emergency NFI stocks in Dubai and Tanzania to supply the CP.

UNHCR Strategy

UNHCR is looking at changing the model of distributions for seasonal replenishments to IDPs, in Darfur and hopes to be able to further reduce replenishment distributions for long-term IDPs through further refinement of the ABCD targeting system perhaps to the 10% level. The idea is to provide transitional shelters, as it is becoming clear that most IDPs will not go back to their original homes and are set to stay where they are. However, the issues to consider are land ownership, town planning, availability of water points, health clinics, schools, etc.

In the case of ROS, although the CP handed ROS over to the GoS at the end of 2009, the Sector still has the responsibility as 'provider of last resort' to provide assistance in the case of emergency to newly displaced populations at the request of GoS.

5. WFPLCU Close-out

Based on the UNCHR letter of 9th May, WFPLCU planned to close out and transition the project no later than 31st of December 2011. Following the extension request by UNHCR and approved by WFP Regional Director, the transition is in all reality 6 months overdue.

Ramifications of the delay in transition

- The project has had to reverse all the transition and close out issues, such as external warehouses, staff extensions.
- Staff members on Break in service have not been offered new contracts, as a six week contract was deemed neither cost nor time efficient. This has resulted in an overload of functions to the dwindling number of remaining staff.
- Funds had been identified and forecasted through to the end of December 2011; hence, we are short of money for the 3-month extension.

Staffing will require extension of the nine international and 24 national staff (in Darfur and Khartoum), persons of high caliber and steeped with institutional memory of the Sector, to maintain the present status quo. The number of international staff takes into account the R&R cycles in the Darfurs (6 weeks).

Funding requests have been submitted to the 2012 CHF and ECHO, whilst discussions are ongoing with OFDA for critical short term funding to cover 3 months staff salaries for nine international/ 24 national staff extensions into 2012.

Should sufficient funding not be secured, a contingency plan B would be to put the operation into a 'holding mode'; Minimum staff to cover the basic functions to ensure that all operations and support structures are maintained albeit in a hibernation mode; not an ideal situation but a fall back plan. The aim being to ensure that the distribution of NFIs to vulnerable beneficiaries is uninterrupted through the network of implementing partners. This may well require some juggling of staff to ensure that all posts are adequately covered for an efficient transition.

UNHCR advised that UNOPS would try to pick up the contracts ASAP into 2012, to avoid having to move to Plan B.

WFPLCU reminded UNHCR that the Common Pipeline Guiding principles needed to be revised to reflect UNHCR policy for the management of the CP.

6. AOB

USAID asked why donor attendance was so low at these meetings.

WFPLCU suggested one reason could be that not many decisions have been taken at the past few meetings, especially with regards to the issue of the transition.

USAID asked UNHCR to shed some light on transitional shelters strategy.

UNHCR advised that a shelter person has been brought on staff and discussions are ongoing with UN Habitat.

Next meeting

Early March 2012 to coincide with a planned high-level mission to Khartoum, comprising UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, and WFP ROME, to review the transition.