| **Mission flash report** |
| Inter-Agency Visit to Mandera County Government - 15th April 2014 |

Background

Decades of marginalization and underdevelopment of Mandera County -a long neglected region - has translated into poor transport and communication infrastructures, extremely limited access to basic services such as water, healthcare and markets. Additionally, this area is prone to recurrent disasters such as droughts and insecurity.

The population pays a high toll, and poverty have led to a continuous but salient humanitarian crisis: (i) The maternal mortality rate, at 3,795/100,000[1] in Mandera County is significantly higher than the national average of 495 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, and among the **worst globally**; (ii) Malnutrition rates remain the worst in the country and year-long above emergency thresholds; (iii) 90% of the population is illiterate and secondary school enrolment is far behind national average.

The humanitarian and development presence is limited by security constraints, particularly in the Eastern side of the county, along Somalia border where Mandera town is located. No international, UN or INGO mission has taken place in Mandera town since August 2013 when an Inter-agency (UNICEF, WFP and UNDSS) security assessment mission, together with a representative from OCHA, visited Mandera County.

In this context, ACTED, ECHO, UNOCHA, and other members of the informal Nairobi-based partners group on Mandera organized a one-day inter-agency visit to Mandera town on 15th April 2014, with the expressed support and protection of the Mandera County Government. Mission participants included UN, donor, and INGO agencies.[2] The objective of the mission was **to enhance coordination and effective collaboration with Mandera County Government** through better understanding of (i) the strategic sector priorities, challenges and opportunities of the County based on the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and of (ii) the security dynamics and how the County and National Government can ensure enabling environment for access by development and humanitarian partners in the County. The mission consisted essentially in a meeting with the County Governor and members of the County, and in a meeting with local NGOs.

1.   Strategic sector priorities, challenges and opportunities

The County Governor briefed the inter-agency mission on the priorities as per the CIDP.

a. Food Security

The County Government plans to develop a two-fold approach to address food insecurity:

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[1] *Policy Brief No. 38, October 2013:*The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) & The Population Studies and Research Institute ((PSRI), 2013)

[2] See annex 3 below for full list of represented agencies

⇨ Developing irrigation infrastructure for the exploitation of a potential 15,000 ha additional to the 4000 ha already under irrigation in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone.
⇨ Developing the livestock value chain, encompassing all aspects of livestock; from production and veterinary services to markets by building a regional abattoir and tannery and smaller abattoirs in all five sub-counties.

Social protection remains a national responsibility and is a needed cushion while the county is developing. Commodity prices were also noted as an important factor of food insecurity and food aid delivery modalities should be better designed to prevent the market distortion witnessed in the last few years.

b. Health

To tackle infant and maternal mortality, the County Government is launching an ambitious plan where short-term measures require urgent support to complement commendable achievement in recruitment of health staff, i.e. increase from 6% to 15% health staff coverage.

Short term measures for one objective is reduction of the 10 most common causes of Morbidity and Mortality[3]

⇨ Emphasis on staff recruitment
⇨ Training of community health workers and health workers on the provision of preventive services
⇨ Upgrading local health facilities to offer maternal and child health services

Long term measures include establishing maternal hospitals in all administrative wards.

c. Water and sanitation

39.6%[4] of the county population have access to safe water. To address water scarcity, the County government plans to increase the water supply through:

⇨ The maintenance of the existing water supply – county technical team is already operational
⇨ The exploitation of the potential of rainwater harvesting
⇨ The drilling of new boreholes after technical feasibility study - underground water mapping

These described measures will decrease the need for water trucking, a very expensive and unsafe (for humans) water delivery system. However, the development of the boreholes network has to take into account not only the technical dimension but be based on a sound natural resources management plan. Indeed the risk of conflict around the precious water resources remains. Effective collaboration with communities is key to success owing expansion of settlements is controlled.

d. Education

While access to primary education is close to the national average, illiteracy level (90%) remains at an alarming stage. Secondary education lags behind while lack of access to education due to poverty, low

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[3] The five most common diseases in order of prevalence are Disease of Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI), Malaria, Pneumonia, Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) and skin disease (CIDP)
[4] 14.5% lower than the national population who have access to safe water (2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census)

performance rates among other factors, has led to low transition rates from primary to secondary then even lower transition from secondary to tertiary institutions. As a result, the youth are not qualified and are unemployable while the county does not produce the skilled workforce it requires, e.g. teachers, nurses, plumbers, electricians, etc. Furthermore, the county government has identified youth un-employment as one of the key causes of insecurity.

The county government plans to focus on vocational training through developing technical education and establishing a public university by September 2014. Retention of staff is a recurrent issue for all sectors.

e. Disaster risk reduction - the drought dimension of the county plan

The County Government has worked closely with stakeholders and county departments to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction strategies in all sector plans. As a result, drought is factored into planning and the required focus on increasing access to water is prioritized. The development of the water supply is a potential trigger for conflict and should be looked at as such when planning.

Regarding other disasters, the county government is working closely with the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) to develop an Integrated Disaster Management Plan for the county.

2. <u>Security dynamics and access challenges</u>

Insecurity in Mandera County is heightened by its location and history - proliferation of small arms, proximity to the Somalia and Ethiopia borders, and inter-clan conflicts. Consequently, the Mandera triangle experiences bouts of sporadic clan and terrorist-led attacks which has undermined significant economic progress and investments in the area. This has given the county a bad image and unfriendly UN Security Level Rating, which the Governor is appealing to be revised. Currently ACTED and IRK are the only INGOS based in Mandera town and present throughout the county. On the other hand, no UN agency is located in the county, but continuously operates in the western side of Mandera from the Wajir office. The UN maintains the same security level for Mandera as the rest of the areas in the former North Eastern Province, though a separate Security Level Area was created due to the security environment having some particular characteristics. The UN office in Mandera was directly attacked twice in 2013, complicating staff deployment, but the UN continues operating in the county with the exception of the eastern route and without overnight stays allowed in either Mandera town or Elwak.

The County Government has seriously acknowledged the need to address insecurity by:
- ⇨ Setting up a Ministry of Public Service, Conflict Resolution, Cohesion and Integration to deal with inter-clan conflict prevention and resolution. The County Government has also allocated a substantial budget for peace work.
- ⇨ Dealing proactively with security issues: the County Government has established an excellent working relation with the representatives of the national government (County Commissioner and County Police Commander) on the ground. Thus, the county is the first in the country, which has established common understanding of making security a 'shared' function. Currently, the county is piloting an innovative approach to community policing – where they have taken steps to professionalize the Kenya Police Reservists (KPR) in collaboration with the National Police Service. The County has put about 140 KPRs from the different clans under a common command and control structure, provided monthly allowance (Kshs 10,000 per month), uniforms and patrol vehicles (8). This has greatly motivated the KPRs and improved security in the restive Mandera

town. The county also plans to locally recruit community members to be part of a community intelligence system to counter radicalization, crime and cross-border terrorism.

⇨   Ensuring a continuous dialogue with both neighboring country authorities to address cross-border issues.

⇨ Additionally, the County government has set aside land within the 15 acres for construction of the County offices, which can be used by UN, and INGO agencies who intend to set up offices in Mandera Town.

Thanks to the County's efforts, 80% of the population displaced due to inter-clan conflict in 2013 has returned to their original homes. Livelihood opportunities for those who remain displaced are a major challenge. Additionally, there is a growing concern of recruitment of unemployed local youth by Al-Shabaab. The county intends to establish Mandera University for Science and Technology and will sponsor the first 300 students to take up technical courses. Such investments will empower the youth and curtail the risks and impacts of radicalization in the country.

3. <u>Expectations from the county government</u>

Mandera County has been neglected for years leaving a population and administration used to limited external support. Acknowledging this fact, the county government is proactive and began to address the most urgent issues such as water supply. It has to be noticed that Mandera County received the third highest contribution from the national government after Nairobi and Turkana.

The Governor and the executives stressed two major needs: (i) revision of the security rating of the county and (ii) alignment of **external support with the CIDP priorities**. A transparent dialogue on funding will be required to ensure best use of resources. Indeed the coordination should not only include information on what is funded (government and agencies) but identify gaps and priorities. Due to the access limitations to Mandera, coordination mechanisms could be further looked at: teleconference, rotation of meetings in sub counties, etc. Finally the governor highlighted a willingness to set up a vetting process for local NGOs.

4. <u>Main recommendations from the mission</u>

To UN agencies and donors
- UNDSS to consider the conditions of a UN presence in Mandera through regular security assessment beginning in May;
- All agencies to work in partnership with the County Government on the Resilience agenda moving beyond humanitarianism to economic development:
  - Align development and humanitarian interventions to the County Integrated Development Plan;
  - Ensure the county efforts for preparedness are complemented ;
  - Advocate and assist in resource mobilization to address the silent humanitarian crisis in this county. However, the focus should be on resilience building and economic development of the county. First steps to include press release to be issued on this mission as a first advocacy action and proposition to prioritize Mandera county in UNDAF;

- UN workings through the UNDAF framework and in collaboration with other partners to assist in taking forward the Resilience Agenda and assist with long-term development programming in line with the provisions of the CIDP;
- Assist in deepening local peace structures and networks in collaboration with IGAD.

To NGOs

o All agencies to work in partnership with the County Government on the resilience agenda:
- Share programmes information with the county government and ideally design project in coordination with the related Ministries;
- Support the county government for preparedness in all sectors;
- Feed the advocacy on the salient humanitarian crisis in this county.

To County and National Government

o To implement the security approach described and facilitate access of agencies to unsafe parts of the county ;

o To integrate conflict sensitivity to the implementation of county plans ;

o To partner with agencies, donors and the civil society in a transparent manner to ensure best use of scarce resources:
- To ensure coordination mechanisms in the county are effective in not only sharing information but also setting priorities;
- To use effectively the wealth of resources on drought management documented in the Horn of Africa to inform planning;
- To develop the disaster management plan involving all stakeholders ;
- To establish and devolve peace infrastructure to the county level and assist with cross-border peace and dialogue issues.

Useful links:

a) **Annex 1: Mandera County Integrated Development Plan:**

https://www.dropbox.com/s/ntx4507ommxleke/final%20Mandera%20First%20County%20Integrated%20%20Development%20Plan%202013-2017.pdf

b) **Annex 2: KIRA secondary data on Mandera:**

https://www.dropbox.com/s/kifkun67l5cmvsd/Mandera%20KIRA%20Secondary%20Data%20Review.pdf

c) **Annex 3: List of participants to the mission:**https://www.dropbox.com/s/05l8q5bk7rrmsid/participants%20Inter-agency%20visit%20to%20Mandera%20%2015th%20April%202014.docx

d) **Annex 4: Policy Brief No. 38, October 2013:** The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) and the Population Studies and Research Institute (PSRI) , 2013
https://www.dropbox.com/s/fseoi9xg8artpvx/PSA%20POLICY%20Differential%20Maternal%20Mortality%20in%20Kenya.pdf