

HCT Meeting Minutes, 3/11, 2pm

Return of RC/HC:

- The RC/HC (Chair) thanked Ziad Sheikh, (Representative, UN Women) for his support as RC/HC a.i. during his absence.

Briefing:

1. Update on current political development-

- The RC/HC made references to current political developments. The parliament successfully elected and filled all the 5 posts (President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Speaker, and Deputy Speaker) as per the new Constitution, during the past 3 weeks.
- The Chair further made reference to the media reports regarding the ongoing talks and discussion on the expansion of the Council of ministers. The induction of new cabinet ministers from CPN (UML) as well as other coalition partners is expected soon. For Reconstruction works, one of the most important advisors to the GoN would be the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) CEO.
- The Chair then made references to the 28 October deal done by GoN with China on oil supply which has been hailed as an important step with long term importance. Nepal signed a historic oil trade deal with China. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) and China National United Oil Corporation (PetroChina) in Beijing to supply petroleum products to Nepal, ending a four-decade supply monopoly of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).
- On 31 October, The Chinese government asked NOC to send 12 fuel tankers at the Kerung-Rasuwadhi border point to take delivery of fuel that China had promised as grant (total 1000MT). NOC sent the tankers on 1 Nov. On 2 Nov: The 12 tankers carrying fuel gifted by China (coming from Kerung border arrived at Thankot depot (in Kathmandu) yesterday evening. It has reportedly brought in around 80,000L of petrol in the first lot.
- However, considering the current crisis, this limited supply may not make much difference in the short term and he noted that fuel import from China will not be able to meet Nepal's needs and roads are precarious.
- As per 3 Nov morning news, the NOC has decided to distribute petrol to private vehicles for 3 days starting Thursday (5 Nov).
- He then added that at this mornings' Logistics cluster meeting, NGOs participating in the meeting inquired whether the UN can open a "humanitarian corridor" to import adequate supply of fuel for humanitarian operations, particularly as we are facing some serious shortage of supply of materials to the affected population. Such fuel importation for humanitarian purposes would have to take into consideration the needs of a) winterization, b) food distribution, c) other time-critical interventions, d) health – provision of fuel to transport drugs, oxygen and other supplies to Government-operated hospitals. It is difficult to draw a line between humanitarian fuel requirements and the needs that should be covered (but are not) by the Government.
- The HC opened floor for discussion and sought views from members but noted it was difficult to advocate for humanitarian corridor as the current situation is more one of discomfort and that the whole notion of the 'humanitarian corridor' has not been discussed, but he was ready to do so if required.
- He added that we would have to be careful in terming it as a 'humanitarian corridor; as the supplies sent through the corridor could be misused. There would also be the need to proceed with care on how to police the corridor and ensure that the goods are not diverted, but distributed to the intended locations.
- OCHA Inter-cluster coordinator suggested rather to advocate for a 'pipeline of fuel supplies' that are coming in a recurrent basis and of streamlining the process. He suggested that the branding of it would be counterproductive as at the end of the day it is importation of fuel.
- The meeting decided to drop the idea of the humanitarian corridor but talk about prioritizing the needs and support required.

- The HC informed that the IDPG meeting scheduled for 4 Nov will discuss fuel crisis and its impact on humanitarian and on ongoing possible reconstruction. The idea is to have a meeting by key donors with the Prime Minister soon to express the concern on these issues.

2. Health Indicators update

- The Chair then requested WHO/Health Cluster Coordinator to update on the health indicators considering the winterization and to explain the monitoring system on how the surveillance system functions but more critically to have an articulation of what can realistically be delivered.
- WHO/Health Cluster coordinator shared as follows:
- Syndromic based disease surveillance system has been in place in EQ affected districts since May 2015 and is still continuing, the system is hospital based. Syndromic based means diseases are identified based on “symptoms” such as fever with rash, or fever without rash, fever with diarrhea etc.... Respiratory tract infections (which tend to increase during winter) is already part of the current surveillance system
- The Ministry of Health & Population has a robust surveillance system in place and preparations are in place to expand the current system including to the Terai region
- So far, the incidence of Respiratory tract infections is comparable to that of last year – and active monitoring will continue.
- On the impact of fuel on health services, there are two areas to consider – health care services and ambulance services. Ambulance services has been slightly impacted so far as fuel is being prioritized for them to have. On health care services, we are still in the process of collecting information through MoHP especially for emergency surgeries and also through District Support Officers placed in all the affected districts. So far, shortage of medicines have been reported due to the problem of transporting medicines/supplies from KTM to the districts.
- Should the fuel shortage continue, this would have a significant impact on availability of services and medicines/supplies

3. Joint Food Security, Livelihoods and Early Recovery assessment update

- The Chair shared some updates as from the Food Security colleagues- on the joint assessment that was jointly carried out by UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNDP, OCHA) in conjunction with Food Security, ER Cluster and Nepal Red Cross Society and GoN - including NPC and 3 Ministries;
- Data collection for the joint assessment was completed on 12 October with an initial findings workshop held on 19 October to establish a joint approach to interpretation and analysis.
- A first draft of the report has since been circulated among the relevant clusters with extensive feedback and comments provided. This draft report is now under further review with a results sharing workshop planned with the government for Friday, 6 November. The final report is expected to only be officially endorsed and released the week commencing, Monday 16 November once the consultation process with the government has been completed;
- Data collection for the joint assessment took place between 16 September and 12 October and covered the same 11 districts – Dhading, Gorkha, Rasuwa, Kavre, Nuwakot, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Ramechhap, Makawanpur, Sindhuli and Okhaldhunga – as the May baseline survey. Overall, some 4,184 households were sampled (four times larger than the May assessment).
- The Food Security Cluster representative added regarding preparations for the 6 Nov meeting
- HC requested FS cluster to provide an overview of the final report/results in the next HCT

Action point: The FS cluster will provide an overview of the final report in the next HCT meeting

4. Shelter Assessment Report update

- The Chair then invited the IFRC/Shelter Cluster to brief regarding the assessment findings.
- Shelter cluster distributed a 3-pager handout report titled ‘ Nepal Earthquake Shelter Recover Monitoring Assessment’ to the members and also briefed highlighting some of the results.

6. UNHAS cost waiver system endorsement

- The HC said that the cost waiver had been discussed twice in the previous HCT meetings (6/10, 13/10). The ICC meeting (2 Nov) had endorsed the ‘UNHAS transportation waiver request form’ as presented by Logistics cluster
- The HC then sought member’s views and also for HCT endorsement (the form was circulated at the meeting). HCT Members agreed to endorse the cost waiver form.
- DFID inquired if OCHA would be involved in vetting the requests of cost waiver. OCHA HoO said that the waiver committee had been set up by UNHAS/Logs and the waiver would be granted based on criteria, established by OCHA (as is indicated in the form, page 1)

Action point: The HCT meeting endorsed the ‘UNHAS transportation waiver request form’

7. CERF Grant approved (\$1.2 million) for UNHAS services:

- The Chair informed the members that following the last HCT (13 Oct) endorsement of WFP/UNHAS led CERF application of \$1,200,000 on behalf of the HCT to the CERF Rapid Response window secured approval of the grant on 30 Oct, under the project titled “*Aviation Services for the humanitarian community in response to winterisation needs in earthquake-affected Nepal.*”
- WFP Country Director shared regarding reconciliation of the resources for UNHAS and the status of flights: i.e. there will be 2 Mi-8 helicopters till the end of 1st week of December and one Mi-8 helicopter until end of Dec
- The HC reiterated that that this was not a request specifically for WFP but a request to service the entire HCT

8. Transition of humanitarian coordination structures

- The Chair noted regarding the 2 November Inter-Cluster Coordination (ICC) meeting, which discussed several issues including the cluster transition matrix in view of the fuel crisis and its impact, the transitioning of clusters etc..
- There have been delays in the humanitarian operations in the last week due to fuel crisis.
- Ten clusters shall be deactivated at the end of the year. OCHA shall be closing by end of year and coordination functions shall revert to the Working Groups of IDPG, supported by RCO.
- At the three hubs, coordination arrangements are in place with a government lead and INGO co-lead, as of 30 Sep 2015.
- The action points from the ICC meeting included that -Most clusters shall transition into the Government led clusters that existed before the EQ. The Clusters are to update any changes to the contact lists to include Government actors.
- The OCHA Inter-cluster coordinator further shared that at yesterday’s meeting all humanitarian clusters noted that they plan to stick to the earlier timeline (from Sept 15). Thus he announced that all Earthquake clusters would stick to the timeline and transition matrix as adopted in Sept end and so far it is as it is.
- AIN shared that regarding its works and trying to organize one system to support District Lead Support Agency (DLSA) and that it had been difficult to coordinate after the phasing out of the ER cluster from the district level and thus absence of interlocutor with Government.
- The Chair noted the importance of minimum support for coordination e.g. Government liaison support, IM etc in the districts for coordination and to ensure consistency at a minimum.
- ER coordinator (UNDP) clarified that district support mechanism continues in 3 (Chautara, Gorkha, Charikot) but it is not called as ‘ER cluster’ and this support will continue until April 2016
- The Chair requested ER to present in the next HCT as to how the district level coordination looks like across these 3 hubs/locations (above) and centrally, in a mapping or PowerPoint format

Action point: ER will present district and national level coordination structure (mapping) in the next HCT

General Information/AOB:

CERF Reporting reminder- draft report submission deadline by 16 November, to OCHA

- The Chair then reminded the Agencies on the CERF reporting deadlines.

- CERF Rapid Response reporting is a priority, as OCHA will close as of 31 December. The majority of CERF projects completed in October, so I would kindly ask relevant agencies to complete your draft submissions by 16 November. OCHA has already sent an email to your reporting focal points, highlighting the 3 sections where your inputs are required. The first is lessons learned (for both the CERF Secretariat and the Country Team), but the two most important are Template 8 (project results) and Annex I (funds disbursed to implementing partners). OCHA will lead on the draft, prepare the narrative section, and consolidate your inputs.
- I thank you for your attention and commitment to this matter. We would like to finalize reporting before the end of the year to ensure a comprehensive response.

Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP)

- OCHA Head of Office shared regarding the arrival of Hannes Google from the OCHA Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP) who has been working on the IASC emergency response preparedness as of January 2015. He will be meeting number of cluster agencies and partners this week.
- He noted that OCHA ROAP is trying to see how the lessons from the Earthquake (EQ) could be integrated into the Earthquake response preparedness as this was the plan at the beginning of March, before EQ.
- This continues and this will also lead into how the preparedness support continues from the Regional office (OCHA ROAP) in 2016 to the country based actors.
- The HC briefly added regarding the OCHA Internal After Action Review (AAR) held in Sept and it would be shared with HCT members- either by briefing at the regular HCT or through a separate meeting.
- The HCT members would be informed of this soon after OCHA debriefs RCO.

Closure of WFP accommodation camps in hubs:

- WFP Country director shared that the MSB camps (Charikot, Chautara) were handed over to WFP last month. An assessment was done on their needs. The plan is to dismantle the WFP supported accommodation camps (used by humanitarian actors) in Charikot in November as there is plenty of good accommodations available in Charikot. Whereas the accommodation camps in Chautara will remain for the time being.

Next HCT meeting will be held on: 17 November 2015