



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



**A Review of the Philippines Typhoons Shelter Working
Group**

December 2006 - March 2007

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The views expressed in this review are those of the consultant, and not necessarily those of the IFRC

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Summary and Recommendations

This review of the Mozambique Floods Shelter Working Group (MSWG) is the second review¹ commissioned by the Shelter Department of the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) Secretariat. This learning is intended to inform future field experiences in Shelter activities and Shelter Cluster Coordination. As described in the Terms of Reference (TOR- [Annex 4](#)) this review is intentionally very IFRC-centric in its focus; while its contents will contribute to the critical engagement and advocacy the IFRC maintains towards the broader Cluster process/UN system, this is not the primary goal of this review. The focus is very much on the mechanics of the Emergency Shelter Coordination function and the service this entails. This report is hoped to be a concise, constructively critical document that can feed IFRC reflection.

The objectives of the PSWG review are to:

1. review and analyse the experience of the International Federation with respect to the establishment and operation of the PSWG, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;
2. provide a foundation for establishing policy and guidelines for emergency shelter coordination (cluster) leadership at a national level, including identification of the appropriate mechanisms and procedures to support shelter leadership at the national level within the Secretariat; and
3. provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination (cluster) activities both at global and at national levels.
4. examine if there were aspects of the Federation's cluster leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

The report is structured as an accessible working document. The short introduction provides background and some indications of the in-country capacity pre-typhoons. A chronology of events is presented to help situate the shelter-related decisions, discussions and deployments. The section on findings re-structures the review's objectives, scope and key issues into a series of hypothesis that were then tested in the course of the review. The hypotheses provide a series of expected outcomes of the SWG, and lead to recommendations on how these might be achieved in future. The conclusion brings together the broader issues of the review and suggests some ideas for the way forward.

¹ Previous reviews examining the IFRC contribution to Shelter Cluster Coordination in Yogyakarta and Mozambique.

A snapshot of how the Philippines SWG was appreciated (developed from the [survey](#)):

The Shelter Cluster is seen as a priority forum for its stakeholders. Stakeholders were somewhat reserved in their satisfaction with the SWG: their expectations were higher than their levels of satisfaction.

When asked to rank their expectations of the SWG, respondents portrayed the SWG as a highly strategic forum, with little interest in technical issues. IM, Coordination, Cross-cluster Issues, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization were the highest ranked functions. This fits well with the Philippine context, where many applauded the SWG for being a forum that 'motivated' them to try and deliver answers on action points.

When asked to evaluate the performance of the SWG, stakeholders gave its lowest marks to the more strategic functions of the SWG- Strategy Development, Resource Mobilization, Identification and Mobilization of Partners. This performance snapshot is a reflection of where the Philippines Shelter Working Group (PSWG) was able to add value in ensuring the required mechanics to its stakeholders (IM, Coordination, Technical Advice) but wasn't able to influence broader issues of poor donor response and an emergency response that at times lacked a sense of urgency.

In terms of overall satisfaction, and despite the schism between expectations and performance, respondents were categorical in their ranking: 92% were satisfied with the IFRC contribution to the PSWG.

Finally, the neutrality and independence of the Movement in the Philippines was not jeopardized by the IFRC contribution to the UN-led Cluster approach. That said, stakeholders have great difficulty understanding the distinct roles and mandates amongst RC/RC actors (including the SWG), with most suggesting that the intent of fire-walling the SWG from the rest of the RC/RC Movement is unclear, and few noting overlap.

Broad Conclusions

Is the IFRC having an impact on the effective provision of emergency shelter?

Was the Philippines a successful example of the IFRC contribution to assuming a lead role in the provision of emergency shelter in natural disasters?

The 'yes' vote:

While there was a great deal of introspection and self-critique on the part of SCCT members, stakeholders were unanimously satisfied with the IFRC contribution to the Shelter Working Group. The IFRC was seen as fast, robust, and professional. While staff turnover was identified as an issue, even this was mitigated by the consistent approach to meeting planning, management and minutes providing. IFRC was seen as exemplary amongst Cluster-Leads

agencies responding in the Philippines. Stakeholders suggested that IFRC was unique in that the SCCT members were not staff with long term missions in the Philippines, as was predominantly the case with UN agencies.

The positive evaluation situates the SCCT contribution against a horizon of factors that were beyond the control of the SCCT members, the IFRC and the RC/RC Movement as a whole. These factors include the overall relevance of the Cluster approach in the Philippines, the limited number of participants responding to the emergency shelter needs involved in shelter coordination forums, a slow emergency response, and very weak international interest and contributions.

The 'no' vote:

Measured in terms of the contribution to effective emergency shelter provision, the IFRC contribution to the Shelter Working Group was not successful. As of 02 March 2007, roughly **7% of emergency shelter needs were met, or would be met**. More precisely, little of the emergency needs had in general been met, and some four months after the final typhoon struck, solutions were orbiting between transitional and longer-term reconstruction approaches, government financial commitment had not been secured, and issues on land tenure, risk reduction and preparedness for the upcoming typhoon season were still under discussion. While it can be argued that these issues lie beyond the purview of the IFRC and its contribution to emergency shelter, this aspect of serving victims cannot be wholly dissociated from the SCCT contribution.

Were Clusters Really Necessary in the Philippines?

Who polices compliance with the Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Assistance? Should the IFRC assess the relevance of the Cluster rollout on a case-by-case basis? Is the Shelter Department ultimately responsible for the success of the broader Cluster rollout?

The Cluster Rollout in the Philippines had seemingly little to do with the needs on the ground. There were little spirit of transparency, or compliance with the Guidance Note. IFRC attempted to prompt discussion on a Cluster deployment in early December, only to be told that there would be no rollout, only to discover- partly by chance- that 'Clusters Lite' and 'Varying degrees of Clusterization' would eventually be deployed. The overnight deployment of a SCCT was partly useful, as it took days to find other Cluster Leads for discussion, and further days/weeks for Government agencies to decide who would take what roles. The Government of the Philippines has to be applauded for its spirit of openness in adopting the Cluster approach. They decided to adapt their existing structures and processes to the UN Cluster system as an experiment.

While the IFRC, as an IASC member, participated in the rollout of the Clusters, it clearly had limited influence on the decision itself. There was little evidence of there having been an assessment on the relevance of Clusters in the Philippines. The IFRC delegation participated to what discussions did take place, as did the Secretariat.

There is a genuine concern of 'guilt by association' for the IFRC contribution to the UN-led Cluster approach. While the Secretariat and Shelter Department are not responsible for the success of the broader Cluster rollout, it is impossible to *dissociate* the IFRC from the perceived successes and failures of the process. While speed has been identified as a key factor in SCCT deployments, the IFRC should put more emphasis on assessing the needs and developing a clear Shelter Working Group operational plan before taking the decision to deploy a robust Coordination team.

The mechanics of the SWG- developing 'triggers' and criteria for deployment

When does the IFRC decide to deploy a Shelter Coordination Team? What are the basic criteria for such deployments? At what point should this responsibility be handed over to UN-HABITAT? Under what conditions would IFRC refuse to deploy a SCCT? What kind of models and structures should be considered?

The Shelter Department, in discussion with its partners and stakeholders, must develop a clear, simple and concise checklist of factors that need to be considered in deploying a Shelter Coordination Team. It should be clear why- or why not- the Secretariat responds, with what kind of team, and for how long. The deployment of a Coordinator with the appropriate P5/10 years experience to do an initial assessment would allow the Shelter Department the time to fully consider the needs and realities, and would permit the drafting of an operational plan with financial and human resources needs, and timelines for deployment and handover.

The *ad hoc* nature of deployment and decision-making is not helping the cause of the Shelter Department. While the IFRC SCCT speed of response to the Philippines rollout was applauded by the UN system, it is not evident how decisions were made to deploy and maintain a 3-month commitment to certain aspects- coordination, technical advisor- and not others- IM for only one month. While any 'rapid deployment' will have an *ad hoc* character, the Shelter Department should be able to present and account for their investment, possibly through their own 'Shelter Appeal' for the given crisis. The sustainability of such deployments has to be considered, both as a function of capacity building for the national society, and to bolster regional delegations in their shelter technical capacities. Finally, future deployments should consider a coordinator for both the capital *and* field level responses.

The capacity of the Early Recovery partner should be considered in future. Could IFRC provide ongoing support to UN-HABITAT in the

event that they are unable to mobilize further resources? Is it enough to simply handover the SWG underlining that the IFRC contribution is limited to the *emergency* shelter provision?

Focusing future learning

What was the intent of the SWG? Impact? How is it measured? What should we learn?

To date, the Shelter Department has commissioned reviews of its SWGs. While this is a fast means of getting structured feedback, future efforts should take a different form. One approach would be the more comprehensive views, if the Shelter Department introduces more rigorous planning, benchmarks and outcomes in deployments. This would allow for *evaluation* of outcomes, intended and unexpected.

A second approach would be to re-orient towards a lighter and more participative approach. Instead of the traditional approach of interviews with stakeholders, the review could be a facilitation of stakeholders in a day-long workshop, identifying what worked, what didn't, what was overlooked and what should become fixed practice. Such a process would be faster (2 days of interviews, 1 day of facilitation, 1 day of write-up, 2 days travel) and could be deployed while the SCCT is still in-country.

Acronyms Used

BTC	Basic Training Course
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
DM	Disaster Management
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team
HoRD	Head of Regional Delegation
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDCC	National Disaster Coordination Council
NSWG	National Shelter Working Group
OCD	Office of Civil Defense
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDCC	Provincial Disaster Coordination Committee
PNRC	Philippines National Red Cross
PNS	Participating National Society
PSWG	Provincial Shelter Working Group
RC	Resident Coordinator (UN)
RC/RC	Red Cross/Red Crescent
RDCC	Regional Disaster Coordination Committee
RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
SWG	Shelter Working Group (IFRC equivalent for Shelter Cluster)
SCCT	Shelter Cluster Coordination Team
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
WFP	World Food Programme

I Introduction

This review of the Philippines Typhoons Shelter Working Group (SWG) is the second review² commissioned by the Shelter Department of the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) Secretariat. This learning is intended to inform future field experiences in Shelter activities and Shelter Cluster Coordination. As described in the Terms of Reference (TOR- Annex 4) this review is intentionally very IFRC-centric in its focus; while its contents will contribute to the critical engagement and advocacy the IFRC maintains towards the broader Cluster process/UN system, this is not the primary goal of the review. The focus is very much on the mechanics of the Emergency Shelter Coordination function and the service this entails. This report is hoped to be a concise, constructively critical document that can feed IFRC reflection.

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² Previous reviews examining the IFRC contribution to Shelter Cluster Coordination in Yogyakarta and Mozambique (April 2007).

The report has five annexes that complement the review. Annex 1 describes the methodology for the review. The relevant reporting and background documents on Philippines Clusters and Shelter are listed Annex 2, and a list of the interviewees Annex 3. This was supplemented by an anonymous online survey that attempted to take a snapshot of how the IFRC role in convening the SWG is perceived (Annex 5- Survey Results).

Background to the Philippines Typhoons

In the latter part of 2006, the Philippines was severely affected by a series of typhoons, the last and most destructive, Typhoon Durian, striking the western coast on 30 November 2006. These typhoons caused extensive damage over a widespread area in 62 of the country's 79 provinces, of which five have been affected by more than one typhoon. Typhoons are not uncommon in the Philippines and communities affected are accustomed to dealing with their impact.

The 2006 typhoons were, however, different: the scale and frequency of this year's storms left many people struggling to recover. High winds and heavy rains caused massive flooding and landslides in the provinces. Whole villages were buried by mud. A number of schools, hospitals, houses, water refilling stations and municipal water supply chains were damaged. The communications and power networks across central Philippines were also badly affected. These effects were in turn multiplied by repeated typhoons, over a period of months, the assessment of whose damage was complicated by the disrupted communications networks. The typhoons season of 2006 was in its ironic sense, 'the Perfect Storm'- the confluence of the most damaging and *cumulative* effects, measured over months, overwhelming the coping of local populations, and robbing many of their livelihoods.

The damages of these typhoons included an estimated 2,700 people killed or unaccounted for, and many left homeless. The total number of households originally affected was estimated at 649,829 i.e., over 3m people (source: National Disaster Coordination Council - NDCC, 14 December 2006). Affected households were sheltered in evacuation centres established in government buildings, schools and churches. Families and friends accommodated others. As of 12 December, close to eight million people were affected to varying degrees. Cumulative economic losses are estimated at US\$ 300 million. Estimated damages arising from earlier disasters before the four deadly typhoons is \$439million. Overall estimated losses to the country for 2006 amount to US\$ 1.614 billion.

Already by the third quarter of 2006, the Philippine Government had exhausted its National Calamity fund of nearly \$20 Million US. The emergency needs greatly overwhelmed national and local resources. It was only in December that the President declared a state of national calamity. It was in December that the international response, in coordination with national authorities, finally began.

Despite the scale of the typhoons and the resulting needs, the international response was rather weak.

The Humanitarian Response

On the basis of data provided by the Government and the UN's rapid assessment, the UN's Typhoon Appeal sought \$48 Million US to meet the urgent relief and recovery needs of the most vulnerable persons affected by the Typhoons until end 2007. The appeal has achieved [coverage of 11.3%](#)

The Shelter Department of the IFRC Secretariat began discussion on offering shelter support and floating the idea of a Shelter Working Group as early as 04 December. By 09 December, the Secretariat was informed by OCHA that the UN Country Team (UNCT) had decided not to deploy the Cluster approach for the Philippines Typhoons. By 18 December, the term Cluster was found in the UN Philippines 2006 Typhoon Appeal, and terms including 'Cluster Lite' and 'varying degrees of Clusterization' were being used in Manila, Geneva and New York. After some very short discussion the IFRC undertook its commitment to convene the Emergency Shelter Working Group in the Philippines.

An IFRC Shelter Coordinator and a Shelter Technical Advisor were deployed on 25th December 2006 in the Philippines to establish the Shelter Working Group, augmented by an Information Manager in early January. A National Shelter Working Group (NSWG) was established in Manila, and support provided to the Provincial Government to establish a provincial level shelter working group (PSWG). The IFRC Shelter Working Group Coordinator also represented the Shelter Working Group in cluster leads meetings convened by UN OCHA, and in liaison with the Government. This commitment, with varying staffing levels, was maintained until 13 March, 2007, when the SWG was handed over to UN-HABITAT, with its focus on recovery and reconstruction.

II Chronology of Events

The following chronology is presented to give context to the flow of events, and not as a definitive version of events. The pre-deployment chronology can be found in its entirety in the [IFRC Emergency Appeal](#) of 20 December 2006. Accent is put upon the attempting to situate shelter-related decisions, discussions and deployments. It is well understood that the RC/RC response participated in numerous formal and informal meetings, beyond those listed, over the course of their deployment. Bold, italics and colour were added for emphasis. While the chronology is lengthy, it is deliberately so to underline that cumulative effects of the multiple typhoons, and the stuttering lift-off of the Clusters approach in the Philippines.

25 September - 1 October, 2006

A low pressure area develops into a tropical depression and is named: Xangsane or Milenyo in Filipino language. It intensifies into a tropical storm on 26 September and into a typhoon on 27 September.

The fury of the typhoon is felt in Metro Manila on 28 September where power and communication grids become seriously disrupted. A state of emergency is declared over Southern Luzon province. Torrential rains cause flooding and trigger landslides in the province of Laguna, Cavite, Quezon. Disaster forces thousands of people into various public facilities as evacuation centres.

Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) deploys its volunteers and staff to support the evacuation of families and assist some of the most vulnerable through hot meals and emergency food items. Multi-sectoral assessment teams are dispatched from the headquarters to the most affected regions. The Federation's disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) allocates CHF 100,000 (USD 80,000 or EUR 63,291) to support the national society's emergency response efforts. A new tropical storm is expected and people in large areas of the Philippines brace themselves for yet more havoc.

2 October: The urgency of the need and complexity of the logistics, as a consequence of the sheer size of the affected areas, **do not allow the waiting for final results of the assessment teams and the Federation.** Following consultations with the PNRC, a preliminary emergency appeal is launched for CHF 5,704,261 (USD 4,563,408 or EUR 3,610,292) to assist 126,000 beneficiaries for three months. The immediate priority includes mobilizing international resources to support the national society in meeting emergency food, health and psychological needs of the affected population. The full impact of the typhoon, however, remains unclear as several regions cannot yet be reached. Communication networks and electricity grids are seriously damaged by the typhoon.

19 October: Donor response to the preliminary appeal remains very low reflecting inadequate attention by national and international news media, partly a result of major disruptions in the electricity grid and telephone systems following the disaster, and the absence of an explicit request for international assistance by the Philippine authorities. By now, communication with some of the affected regions has been re-established. Red Cross gathers more information and a more accurate (but also more worrying) picture starts to emerge. *Assessment teams conclude that the actual damage caused by Xangsane is far higher than originally expected and well beyond the coping capacities of the local communities and authorities. The Federation issues a revised emergency*

appeal extending the timeframe of the operation for another six months.

27-29 October:

A month after typhoon Xangsane, the country is hit by another typhoon, of category 5. This super typhoon emerges on 27 October as an active low pressure in the east Bicol region. The storm intensifies into a typhoon on 28 October and makes landfall over the southern Isabella province. Several *barangays* (villages/administrative units comprised of 100- 1,000 families) in Aurora province are cut off as roads and bridges are destroyed. Large areas are left without communications. Red Cross distributes emergency relief items. *The national society's efforts are supported by the regional disaster response team (RDRT), mobilized by the Federation following the PNNRC's request.*

12 November: another typhoon **Chebi** (local name Queenie) batters the same areas as those hit by Typhoon Xangsane and Cimaron. *Thousands more families are seriously affected. Many are injured. Crops, livelihoods and buildings including health centres and schools are destroyed. Several roads are blocked by mudslides, debris and broken bridges. Red Cross is on a high alert. PNNRC, supported by the RDRT delivers emergency aid to the affected families and establishes a tent camp in the city of Calamba to accommodate 87 families. In parallel, **distribution of construction materials to the families affected by the Typhoons Xangsane and Cimaron is ongoing.***

30 November: Another typhoon, **Durian** (local name Reming), carves a path of destruction across central Philippines, especially in the areas of Catanduanes, Camarines, Sorsogon, Albay, Mindoro, Marinduque, Batangas and Laguna. *Early estimates indicate that at least 300 people are killed, almost 400 are missing, more than 500 are injured and unknown numbers of residents are trapped in the homes. It is estimated that at least 600,000 people are affected by Durian, as well as previous storms over the past two months. The full scale of the disaster is yet unknown as communication lines are disrupted and some areas are inaccessible.*
PNNRC sends out its staff and volunteers to offer first aid and conduct rescue operations. The Federation, which is closely monitoring the situation, deploys two disaster response and assessment teams and releases additional CHF 100,000 (USD 80,000 or EUR 63,291) from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Philippine Red Cross in initial rescue, assessment and relief distribution activities.

03 December: **President Arroyo declares a state of national calamity.**

04 December: **First emails and discussions between Shelter Unit and IFRC Head of Delegation on shelter issues, and provision of recommendations.**

- 04 December:** The Federation re-launches the appeal for CHF 8,833,789 (USD 7.3 m or EUR 5.5m) to take into account the fourth successive typhoon that wreaked havoc in the country in a span of two months.
- 05 December:** As the scale of the disaster becomes apparent, the PNRC asks the Federation for more support. On 5 December, *the national society is joined by a Federation 18-member FACT team to help with assessment of emergency and longer term community needs.* The team is made up of specialists from around the world, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Finland, Thailand, the United States, Iceland, India, Nepal, and Georgia.
- 06 December:** further Shelter technical/material guidance provided by Secretariat level.
- 07 December:** email exchange with FACT team (Jyri Rantanen), suggested Secretariat provide remote technical support ex- Geneva.
- 09 December:** sector coordination discussion with UN: UNCT does not plan to implement cluster approach, and UNDP and OCHA will act as focal points for shelter sector, with UN-HABITAT conducting a shelter field assessment.
- 10 December:** Yet another typhoon **Utor** (local name Seniang) hits the country, the fifth this year. It affects over 100,000 people in nine provinces destroying over 10,000 homes and damaging close to 15,000. Scheduled field visits by RDRT/FACT are hindered. Assessment is on hold as the flights to the affected provinces are cancelled. Weather conditions force team members in Manila to delay their departure while other two Federation assessment teams are grounded in the provinces and communication with them is disrupted.
- 10 December:** note entitled 'Notes and Early Recovery Info for all Clusters' provided by UNDP BCPR-Scott Cunliffe (info note).
- 12 December:** In consultation with the PNRC, the Federation drafts a preliminary plan of action for shelter that represents approximately 80 percent of the total appeal.
- 13 December:** As soon as the weather conditions permit, the Federation re-assumes the assessment. Teams are sent to work with the PNRC in Albay, Quezon, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur, Marinduque and Mindoro - the worst affected areas - to look into further needs in health, water and sanitation. The PNRC continues to effectively support populations affected by the devastating storms.
- 15 December:** After consultations with the PNRC and based on their recent findings, FACT and RDRT members finalize the operation plan of action on which this appeal relaunch is based.
- 15 December:** UN launch Typhoons appeal, with reference to 'the Cluster approach in the spirit of humanitarian reform'.

18 December: Emergence of term 'cluster lite' ex- UNDP Geneva, Kayo Gotoh
 Rollout to be discussed at field level? References to 'differing degrees of clusterization'

19 December: Invitation to Shelter Group Meeting (UNDP Manila)
 Email F. Nielsen clarifying goal of mtg, posing questions about what discussions had taken place 'below the radar' since IFRC stood down its shelter coordination team in early December, decisions to be taken at Secretariat level.
 Msg S. Johnson to M. Wahlstromm- highlights lack of cluster readiness in Philippines, clarification on activation process, exclusivity of the cluster decision-making process.

20 December: Shelter Group Meeting in IFRC offices
 Email M. Johansson (OCHA) explaining that cluster decision not yet taken

21 December: Teleconference IFRC GVA/Manila, OCHA GVA/Bangkok, UN RC, UNDP BCR GVA/Bangkok: outcomes:
 - RC to decide on clusters and advise
 - IFRC ready to assume Shelter Cluster lead
 - OCHA will mobilize staff

22 December: RC confirms 'cluster lite' arrangements in Philippines by email

24 December: Arrival M. Johnstone (interim Shelter Coordinator)

25 December: Arrival D. Hodgkin (Technical Advisor)

28 December: UN DMT confirm the decision to implement Clusters

01 January/07: Debut of googlegroup
 Arrival M. Werdmuller (Technical Advisor)

19 January: Departure D. Hodgkin

23 January: Departure M. Johnstone
 Arrival M. Fischer (Coordinator)

07 February: Departure N. Bauman (IM)

10 February: email exchanges on handover of cluster lead to UN-HABITAT, advocacy at all levels

12 February: email HoD Manila with comments and excellent overview of process.

18 February: Arrival R. Rana (Coordinator)

19 February: Confirmation of handover of PSWG to UN-HABITAT
 Cluster Leads move to bi-weekly meetings
 IFRC announces handover to UN-HABITAT and distributes note on modifying Emergency Shelter Cluster (no comments)

22 February: Departure M. Fisher

27 February: Departure M. Werdmuller

Early March: IOM Provides a first comprehensive set of figures on needs

07 March: Start of review process

15 March: Handover to UN-HABITAT

18 March: Departure R. Rana

Late March: IASC meeting to review cluster process

Mid- April: Donor Meeting

Some observations from this chronology:

- o Shelter only becomes a priority quite late in cumulative emergency- only on 04 December, the Shelter Department starts discussion with the Manila delegation.
- o With some irony, some described the 2006 typhoons as being 'the least urgent emergency ever'- the state of national calamity was only declared in early December, a UN emergency appeal followed some weeks later, the Clusters (in reality) only began their rollout in January. This lack of urgency could be measured months later, when in March plans for construction were beginning to materialize, and government reconstruction funds yet to be committed.
- o IFRC committed to +6 million CHF in shelter programming in mid-December without any comprehensive shelter advice
- o The IFRC contribution to the SWG: IM specialist was for only 1 month, after which IOM became the IM 'clearing house' for almost all Clusters; Technical advisor over 2 months (2); Shelter Coordinator for a total of 3 months (4 people including interims).

III Findings

The reviewer took a certain liberty in re-structuring the objectives, scope and key issues defined by the [TOR](#). This re-structuring was undertaken to find a means to *measure* the success of the SWG in the Philippines. Given the absence of clear benchmarks or outcomes against which to measure the PSWG's success, the requirements of the TOR were re-grouped and are re-written as a *series of hypotheses*. Each of these hypothetical statements frames the 'expected' outcomes of the SWG. The outcomes themselves are an interpretation what the SWG should achieve, derived from the Terms of Reference (generic) that exist for the positions of Coordinator, Information Manager and Technical Advisor, and the (draft) Shelter Manual. The expectations also reflect the findings of the online survey, and from interviews with key stakeholders.

As such, the findings of the review process can be seen as a means of supporting or refuting what might have been expected from the PSWG, and lead to potential recommendations that would allow the IFRC in future to meet these expectations.

Challenging Critical Hypotheses

1. The SWG was appropriately equipped and funded.

The Manila based SCCT was adequately equipped to undertake their task. In any case, any lacking equipment could be procured locally, and there are few administrative hurdles that SCCT members couldn't handle themselves. There was an open question of whether the SCCT should have re-located to the PNRC, or even taken up IOM or UNDP on

offers of office space.³ It might have added value in creating closer links with the PNRC/IFRC of the UN system, but there was not the impression that this would have substantially changed the effectiveness of the SWG venture. It could be argued that SCCT staff wasted valuable time in organizing their travel, visiting hotels or purchasing office supplies; it could equally be argued that the time saved by being located centrally, and working with a light footprint was adapted to the context.

One could assume that the light footprint of the SCCT was a key reason that they did not undertake any extensive field assessment missions. The provincial level support was limited to Legaspi in Albay Province and its immediate surroundings. It is surprising that the SCCT- and in particular, the Shelter Technical Advisors- did not make further field visits. The FACT team that deployed in December is quite possibly the sole group to have made a comprehensive field assessment of affected areas. It was difficult to find how this assessment was shared (beyond the 15 December *FACT Plan of Action*), let alone how such an ambitious shelter program was developed without professional shelter support. As one respondent wrote: *'Although we had the support of several RDRTs and even a FACT, we learned more from a couple of hours of discussion with the Shelter people than from a massive, one month internal assessment and planning process.'* See hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 for further details.

Funding was not seen or considered as a constraint for the PSWG in the course of the review. That said, the deployment of the team, largely composed of consultants, was an expensive venture. It has to be assumed that funding of the SCCT is a factor involved in the decision to accept/refuse a SWG deployment for Cluster activation.

Recommendations:

- o Consider early on the advantages and disadvantages of co-location with the IFRC, National Society or even UN agencies.
- o Find a way to take advantage of FACT/PNS/Delegation/Regional Delegation resources, particularly to have shelter technical advisors integrated or supporting RC/RC assessment teams in the field.
- o Field deployments of the SCCT could be seen as country-specific means to finance the Global Programme Shelter Appeal, if not the specific country SWG.

2. The support and staffing of the SWG by the Secretariat was timely, relevant, appropriate and effective.

³ One of the key factors in decision making was simply the traffic- the PNRC office was located 30-45 minutes away from Makati, where the UN agencies are based, and where the SCCT decided to stay, and also for its proximity to the military base for Government meetings were held.

The support provided to the SWG by the Secretariat was relevant and appropriate. Of the total 6 personnel deployed over the SWG lifespan, 2 were permanent Secretariat staff. The only impediment to overall effectiveness was the continual turnover of staff, unavoidable, as the IFRC cannot be expected to maintain a standby team. One interviewee illustrated the issue best: *'The only criticism would be that it would have been better if you were one team for three months- in any case, you all offered the same quality of contribution to the Cluster, so even that isn't a criticism.'*

Initial support was immediately deployed, with an interim coordinator, and a consultant as technical advisor. These two arrived on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and lost days trying to find anyone in the UN system with whom to speak, despite the Clusters having been activated a week before. The next technical advisor played the role of interim coordinator, until a full-time coordinator deployed for one month. That coordinator was in turn replaced by a final coordinator for one month. There was an IM specialist for one month, January-February. Interviewees expect the Coordinator to be an experienced humanitarian operator, something along the lines of the P5/10 years experience defined in the Shelter Toolkit.

In terms of effectiveness, the SCCT and its members contributed appropriately in accordance with their lengthy generic Terms of Reference. Given the turnover of staff, there was the inevitable loss of memory and shift in focus from one staff member to another. While stakeholders complimented the consistent mechanics of the SCCT (organizing meetings, agendas, minutes, populating the GoogleGroup with material) they also did note that the IFRC was unique amongst the agencies in being newly arrived outsiders. The context-specific contribution that the SCCT could make was thus not as historically- and culturally- adapted as that of the Filipino representative of, say, UN-HABITAT or OCHA, who in addition came from long careers in Government service. Finally, the sustainability and capacity-building aspect of the SCCT was weak, as the SWG was conceived and managed as a stand-alone entity, distinct from the rest of the Movement.

While the Shelter Department did its utmost to ensure handovers and consistent staffing, the chronology of events does ask whether there were other models for deployment. In early December the Shelter Department had pre-emptively assembled a SCCT for what they imagined would be a Cluster rollout. Even though the UN decided to not deploy the Clusters (then) the IFRC should have simply deployed this team- in at least to support the FACT/RDRT/PNRC who were logically facing significant shelter needs following the typhoons. The RC/RC Movement would likely have found themselves much further ahead as a whole had this been the case.

It was not always clear what the rationale for staffing decisions had been. The case of the IM specialist is a good example. The initial assessment was that there was a dearth of data, and

relatively little effort being made to improve. The absence of a significant international response meant that the SWG did not benefit from data collection by international NGOs, that might have served as a counter-point to government figures. When IOM proposed to develop an IM capacity, IFRC shifted their efforts to supporting them and fast-tracking for departure. Although remote support was offered by the IM to IOM, it had predictably poor results.⁴

Recommendations:

- o The first deployment should be of a coordinator with the requisite 'P5 level/10 years experience' (defined in the Shelter Manual) who can assess the needs and propose an operational and advocacy plan for the potential IFRC SWG.
- o The Secretariat should consider a pre-emptive deployment of a SCCT in situations they feel merit a Cluster rollout, where they perceive important Shelter needs, and where they can discharge their strategic priority of developing technical and operational shelter capacity in the RC/RC partners.
- o Maintaining a Shelter Coordinator on retainer- or ensuring that the Shelter Department has permanent staff that fit this P5 profile- would facilitate emergency deployments.
- o While speed is a necessary quality for the SCCT deployment, more time should be taken to assess the real needs for Clusters in general and the Shelter Cluster in particular, before taking the final commitment.

3. The Shelter Coordination role was understood and supported in the Philippines by the IFRC delegation and the PNR, and by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat understood and supported the Shelter Coordination role. There was concerted and unanimous support and advocacy from the level of the Director of Operations to call the UN system to order in how they didn't- and then did- rollout the Cluster approach in the Philippines. Within the Secretariat the focus on Shelter was largely on leading the Shelter Cluster, and not on the broader priorities of the Shelter Department.

The Shelter Coordination role and the implication of the Cluster rollout was initially not understood, and consequently weakly supported by the IFRC delegation in the Philippines. The investment in discussions between the Head of the Shelter Department and the Head of Delegation was complemented by the appreciated contribution the SCCT made to PNR/IFRC/FACT efforts. Once the respective roles and relations were established, the SCCT worked as

⁴ By early **March** IOM had taken the lead for IM on behalf of almost all clusters, having received CERF financing to do so. A first glimpse of the quality of data was only possible at this point. It was found that there were still significant gaps in data, and that there would be roughly 6% coverage of emergency shelter needs .

a standalone entity, to the satisfaction of all RC/RC stakeholders. The SCCT link to PNRC/IFRC operations was maintained largely due to the team's Technical Advisor who was almost exclusively serving RC/RC needs.⁵

The PNRC showed little interest in the SWG, being simply too busy with the emergency response and lacking resources to further engage or contribute. Given that the PNRC is also a member of the NDCC at the political and strategic level, they were *de facto* linked to the Cluster approach, albeit at other levels.

Recommendations:

- o Continue efforts to disseminate the role, mandate and capacities of the Shelter Department at the regional and national levels.
- o Produce Q&A-style documents on Clusters, Humanitarian Reform, the IFRC Role in Emergency Shelter Coordination, and an Introduction to Emergency Shelter.
- o Produce concise, standard PowerPoint presentations on above subjects with clear and complete speaking notes and tailored recommendations for FACT Teams, PNS, ONS and Regional delegations.
- o Ensure that the pros and cons of a standalone approach to the SCCT are considered by all RC/RC partners at the outset.

4. The structure and composition of the SWG was appropriate to the context.

The structure and composition of the SCCT deployed by the IFRC roughly corresponded to the needs on the ground. The deployment of a full team, based in the capital, seemed very much based on the experience of previous deployments. There was the risk of a one-size-fits-all approach to deployment, despite the realities.

The Government took the Cluster deployment as an extremely serious decision, and at times could be praised for having embraced the Cluster concept more creatively than the international partners who introduced them to it. Though criticized for engaging with Clusters too slowly, they can be applauded for having given the matter thought. That the OCD/NDCC co-led the Shelter Cluster was a high honor, given that such a senior figure/department would champion the Shelter 'cause'.

The IFRC influenced the relevant international agencies to participate, and enjoyed regular participation of UN agencies. There were few international NGOs present and responding to the needs created by the typhoons. The government authorities

⁵ Given that the National Society had imposed an expatriate staff ceiling on the IFRC delegation, the SCCT was exploited as a means of bringing in a Technical advisor that the Movement would otherwise not have been able to do.

influenced their counterparts to participate, as necessary, and their success was limited by the political realities of their government system. By the time of departure of the IFRC SCCT- three months after the Cluster rollout- the composition of the NSWG at the National level had finally reached its ideal. The PSWG had a similar composition, and those actors not present in Manila were often present in Legaspi.

The structure seemed partially adapted to the context. At the level of the capital, the IFRC had a robust capacity to engage shelter stakeholders other clusters and government authorities. At the field level, where other clusters had a presence, or supported their cooperating partners in the role of cluster lead, the SCCT/SWG was only present part-time.

The SCCT attempted to use one team to support national and provincial structures. The weeks were structured such that Monday-Tuesday the SCCT participated to the Cluster Leads meetings, chaired the NSWG, and then could spend the remainder of the week in Legaspi. The Legaspi support was less clear than that of Manila: in Manila, the SCCT had a clear co-lead in the meetings, while in Legaspi the approach was one of 'supporting' the PSWG. Support was provided in input to meetings, suggestions on managing meetings, influence on meeting composition. There was a serious gap between policy discussions in the capital and the realities in Legaspi- a gap it was difficult to influence. While the provincial participants were making the best of things, one respondent summed it up: *'What was lacking in Legaspi was a strong central figure to hold it together.'* It is a mystery why so few Clusters set up parallel structures in both Manila and Legaspi, nor why UNDP/OCHA didn't deploy appropriate staff at the provincial level to bolster the coordination and response.

An alternative approach would have been a two-coordinator approach, providing equal measures of support at national and provincial SWGs. Heavy though this approach might have been, it would have allowed a more in-depth engagement with authorities and agencies and allowed the IFRC greater influence and visibility.

Recommendations:

- o Consider a two-coordinator setup in future deployments, giving equal weight to the national and provincial/field Shelter Cluster contribution.

5. The SWG was made stronger by the perception and reality of neutrality and independence it achieved vis-à-vis the rest of the RC/RC Movement in Mozambique.

The SWG was not made stronger by the perception and reality of neutrality and independence that it maintained towards the Movement. This is largely the result of the fact that stakeholders and other

Clusters had a difficult time understanding what the difference was, or if the difference was important.

The concept goes that the SCCT needs to maintain operational and financial independence from the RC/RC Movement, in order to nurture confidence amongst the SWG stakeholders that it acts as a neutral, independent and impartial lead for the Cluster.⁶ To bolster this esoteric definition of neutrality and independence, the IFRC has developed its own terms to reinforce its distinction from the UN-led Clusters. They have adopted the term 'Shelter Working Group' as the equivalent of 'Shelter Cluster' and speak of 'convening' and not 'coordinating' their Cluster/Working Group. The added value of this linguistic subterfuge is dubious at best, as it only seemed to add to the confusion and misunderstanding of the IFRC role by UN, RC/RC partners and Cluster stakeholders.

Stakeholders of the SWG were unclear on how there could (let alone should) be a difference between the IFRC that coordinates the shelter Cluster and the IFRC that was undertaking such large-scale shelter programs in the field. If we follow this issue of linguistic subterfuge, stakeholders were equally unclear why the organization coordinating *emergency* shelter was involved in the construction of *transitional* shelter.

A final glimpse of questions of neutrality and independence is that of the Seville accord in the Philippines. It could have been imagined that a natural disaster that also affected zones of conflict would have triggered lengthy discussion on questions of lead agency. This was not the case. Despite this potential scenario, only recently have IFRC-ICRC-PNRC discussions begun on how to categorize lead agency issues. For the 2006 typhoons, the ICRC organized and supported FACT assessment missions in conflict areas where they maintained the lead, and went so far as to provide their own stocks to the Movement response. The ICRC had little interest in the potential risks to neutrality and independence that the IFRC-led Cluster might entail, admitting that they had very limited participation to the IASC in general, and were roughly unaware of the presence of the SCCT.

Recommendations:

- o Shelter Department needs to re-visit the language and *de facto* policies that have developed around the SWG concept: re-visit

⁶ A further complication: this notion of 'neutrality and independence towards Cluster members' is a confusing interpretation of the Fundamental Principles of Neutrality, Independence for the RC/RC Movement. Much of the early criticism of the IFRC having taken on the Shelter Coordination role was the argument that the IFRC's independence and neutrality (real and perceived) is potentially put at risk through participation to the Cluster Approach, and the closer relation with States and the UN system it implies. These two understandings of the neutrality and independence complicate Movement discussion on Clusters.

this fire walled model of the SWG from the rest of the Movement, which risks becoming more dogmatic than pragmatic.

- o Reference to Neutrality and Independence should be framed within the definitions found in the Fundamental Principles, and not an esoteric intra-Cluster sense, for sake of clarity.
- o In terms of preparedness activities, IFRC/ICRC delegations should ensure repartition of responsibilities and lead agency role for situations where natural disaster could strike zones of conflict, accounting for an eventual deployment of an IFRC SCCT.

6. The Shelter Working Group had a positive impact on the PNRC, IFRC and other Movement members in the Philippines.

Seen from the perspective of technical support to an ambitious shelter program, given that this technical support came from the SCCT, then the SWG had a positive impact on the PNRC and the IFRC. SWG stakeholders also associated the IFRC/PNRC shelter program with the IFRC's Shelter Coordination Team, thus, the positive impact worked in both directions.

Otherwise, the IFRC and PNRC were frank in stating that the SWG didn't have any further impact, positive or otherwise. All parties were satisfied with the partition of responsibilities in the Philippines. It might have been interesting to engage both in the SWG more actively from the onset, if only to develop their staff for future coordination roles. It's not as if this wasn't discussed, but IFRC, PNRC and the SCCT didn't make this a priority. As the IFRC was handing over the lead of the SWG to UN-HABITAT, there were finally PNRC/IFRC participants to the SWG. At the provincial level, there was the same absence of RC/RC participation to the PSWG, again a problem of lack of resources.

Recommendations:

- o Consider integration of the SCCT hierarchically and functionally into the Movement presence in country, allowing it to benefit from the Movement's resources, assessments and support.
- o Develop a partnering model where the Shelter Coordinator becomes a key counter-part of the FACT team and the National Society in representing the Movement at the Cluster Leads level, and in acting as the Movement's 'window' towards the UN system.

7. There was a clear exit and handover strategy, discussed and clarified from the arrival of the SCCT with their early recovery partner, UN-HABITAT. Special emphasis was made by the IFRC on the transition from meeting emergency shelter needs to permanent housing and resettlement.

The Shelter Department discussed the handover and transition with UN-HABITAT from the onset of the IFRC lead of the SWG. These

discussions continued at Geneva and Manila levels, with UN-HABITAT admittedly not being able to mobilize supplemental resources. The IFRC communicated its intent to the Cluster Leads more than one month before departure. No comment from Cluster Leads or the RC was received on the proposed assessment and rationale for handing over the lead of the SWG.⁷

In terms of emphasis on the distinctions and transitions between emergency shelter and mid-term oriented reconstruction/resettlement, there is no categorical response. There were emergency needs, but these went largely unmet, particularly given that the emergency began in September, and only in late December did a Shelter Cluster standup. The most visible evidence of emergency shelter needs were those families that were grouped in Evacuation Centres and Transit Camps- which were in any case the purview of the IOM led Camp Management Cluster. As such, from the onset the approach was *urgently provided transitional solutions*- the IFRC shelter program being a prime example. Despite the three month commitment of the IFRC to lead the SWG, it could still have been argued that given the transitional needs still existing, and with the next typhoon season hardly 3 months away, that the IFRC could have maintained their lead. While this might seem an exaggeration, the commitment might have been used to develop further human resources for the Regional Delegation, the Shelter Department and to draw lessons from the IFRC shelter project being undertaken with the PNRC.

The more important aspect was that of the transition from IFRC to UN-HABITAT lead. HABITAT was well placed to take on the more mid-term advocacy and oversight issues that were dogging the reconstruction process. The organization's existing programs, and the background of their officer were perfectly attuned to these challenges. That said, HABITAT did not equip itself with the luxury of the IFRC, namely, supplemental staff to focus solely on the SWG. Could the IFRC have provided some support to HABITAT after the departure of the SCCT? Perhaps this might have been possible, but it wasn't discussed. In the absence of a shelter delegate nationally or regionally, nor of a new-built shelter capacity in the PNRC, this would have been a difficult commitment to make.

Recommendations:

- o Consider more flexible models for the handover/transition, specifically in finding means to support UN-HABITAT when it assumes the lead of the SWG.
- o While the IFRC-OCHA MoU gives the Federation the right to decide on criteria for withdrawal, more emphasis needs to be made on capacity building and transition to the early recovery partner in future SCCT deployments.

⁷ Despite repeated efforts, it was not possible to meet with the Resident Coordinator for this review, nor had she participated to a Cluster Lead meeting during the author's tenure as Coordinator.

8. The SCCT ensured effective and professional links with other Clusters, the UN system and the Philippines Government.

The SCCT was seen as a professional contribution to the Cluster rollout. The team members were accessible and maintained links with other Clusters, the UN system in general and the government appointed counter-parts in relevant ministries and departments.

Observed weaknesses are more commentary on the issues beyond the influence of the SCCT/SWG. The relevance of the Cluster rollout was doubtful, given the existence of Government structures and processes; it was a gracious experiment by the Government to adapt *its* structures and sectors to the Cluster approach. Quantitatively, the response to the natural disaster, nationally and internationally, was quite weak and as such negated the added value and necessary investment of Clusters in the Philippines.⁸ The investment and success of the various Clusters was extremely varied, with some based either in Manila or Legaspi, others having hardly met twice over three months, and still others proposing to close down by March. In this framework, it was unclear why the decision was made by the Resident Coordinator to maintain the Clusters as a year-round effort in the Philippines. The IFRC contribution to ensuring effective and professional links were limited by these constraints.

Recommendations:

- o The relevance of the Cluster approach to the existing capacities in-country should form part of the IFRC assessment and decision on whether to deploy a SCCT at all.
- o Commentary and informed criticism on the relevance of Clusters from the field perspective should feed IFRC participation to strategic debate at the IASC level.

9. The IFRC, as an IASC member, actively participated to the Cluster Activation process (according to the OCHA Guidance Note), and ensured that the cluster rollout complemented the in-country capacities in an adapted and appropriate manner in support of Government coordination mechanisms.

The IFRC attempted to prompt a Cluster activation discussion in early December when the scale of the emergency became clearer. The UNCT and OCHA within days stated that they would not deploy the Cluster approach. In a disjointed manner, that had no link to the Guidance Note, there was a fragmented deployment (decision found by chance in the UN Typhoons Appeal document), to which IFRC was

⁸ This comment is based upon the concept that the Cluster approach is oriented towards linking up the international response with the Government capacity and structures. In the absence of international responders in the Philippines (beyond a handful of INGOs and the UNCT) were Clusters truly necessary?

convoked, resulting in a stumbling deployment of Clusters *in the days before Christmas*. It was at best mid-January by the time the Cluster approach took any real form and inertia (see [Chronology](#)). The Philippines Government was not introduced to the Cluster concept in a coherent manner, and devoted some weeks to interpreting and conceptualizing how they would adapt to it. Overall, the rollout and relevance of the Cluster approach in the Philippines could be rated as weak.

As an IASC member, the IFRC attempted to influence the decision, but was ultimately washed away in the rollout. In terms of the OCHA Guidance Note (and the spirit of Humanitarian Reform), there seems to be no adaptation of the Clusters to the existing capacities of government and agencies. Clusters were rolled out as a one-size-fits-all product. Not only did the Clusters not complement in-country capacities, they obliged Government structures to adapt to them.

SCCT members expressed some doubt on whether they as individuals, or the IFRC as convener of the SWG, truly added value to the disaster response, or to Shelter Coordination and provision. This statement is an interesting counter-point to stakeholder satisfaction with the IFRC lead: stakeholders were categorically satisfied with the contribution, found the IFRC to be generally well adapted, and found their leadership constructive and useful. The way that the added value was perceived was interesting. A government respondent suggested how he valued the IFRC contribution: *'I liked that I had to 'report' to the Cluster- it put me under a certain pressure to deliver results on action points we had promised the week before.'* Another respondent articulated the IFRC contribution in an interesting manner: *'You were there to champion the cause and importance of Shelter. That was useful to us, to have that international perspective and contribution- what did we know about Clusters three months ago? Now, it's probably time that you go and we get back into the lead.'*

Recommendations:

- o Consider defining minimum conditions for deployments (checklist).
- o Advocacy on the broader strategic issues of Cluster deployment need to be informed by the field experiences, but conducted by the Inter-Agency Cooperation Department. The IFRC needs to decide how critical of the process and approach it intends to be; focused research might be necessary if a strong position is intended. *Why not an editorial style, public IFRC communication looking at Humanitarian Reforms and the Cluster Process, 2 years on?*

IV Survey Results

An online survey was drafted to take a snapshot of how the IFRC's role in convening the Philippine's SWG was perceived and appreciated. The raw output is presented in Annex 5. The results provide a reliable indicative glimpse, with the respondents in number and demographics representative of the SWG's composition.

Demographics: In terms of how respondents interacted with the SWG, 8 were members of the NSWG, 8 were members of the PSWG, 12 from Cluster Leads Meetings, 9 were subscribers to the Googlegroup and 3 were SCCT members. 89% of respondent's organizations considered participation to the SWG as a priority.

Stakeholder expectations of the Shelter Cluster: potential SWG functions were ranked in importance as follows (most to least): IM, Coordination, Cross-cluster issues, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization, Strategy Development, Identifying Partners, Technical Advice, Application/Development of Standards, Technical Standards, Application/Development of Standards.

Comments: Interesting that Information management was identified as the top priority, particularly given that the IFRC contribution in the domain ended after 4 weeks- do respondents consider minutes of meeting and the Googlegroup as a form of IM? Equally interesting that technical advice and standards scored so low. The Philippines example suggests a very strategically minded stakeholder. The spread of responses was very narrow, i.e. stakeholders were very much in agreement with the importance of their expectations.

Stakeholder rating of Shelter Cluster performance: performance by function was ranked as follows (descending order of satisfaction): Coordination, IM, Technical Advice, Cross-cluster issues, Technical Standards, Application/Development of Standards, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization/Identifying Partners/Strategy Development, Capacity Building and Training.⁹

Comments: Performance evaluation was roughly one grade below stated expectations. The top 3 functions were roughly consistent between expectations and performance, excepting Technical Advice where stakeholders were quite satisfied. RC respondents were disproportionately satisfied with Technical advice, Standards and Application/Development of Standards, most likely linked to the *de facto* integration of the Shelter Advisor into the IFRC/PNRC program. The performance-based reality is rather less strategic than that of the expectations. This schism is an accurate reflection of the

⁹ Red Cross respondents rankings: Technical advice, Coordination, Technical Standards, Application/Development of Standards, Cross-cluster Issues/Information Management/Capacity Building and Training, Identifying Partners, Strategy Development, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization.

SWG's achievements: advocacy, strategy and mobilizing partners were not the successful components.

Overall satisfaction: respondents were categorical. 92% were satisfied with the IFRC contribution.

Perceptions of the RC/RC Movement: do stakeholders understand the intended distinction between the Movement at large and the SCCT/SWG? Only 1 respondent replied that the distinction was clear. 50% considered the distinctions simply unclear, and 38% observed some overlap between Movement bodies. Overall, 73% felt that the IFRC participation to the Cluster approach did not compromise the independence and neutrality of the RC/RC Movement, while only 1 did state that it did. A remaining 20% included those not in country, and one stating that it simply did not matter.

The Snapshot of the Philippines SWG:

The Shelter Cluster is seen as a priority forum for its stakeholders. Stakeholders were somewhat reserved in their satisfaction with the SWG: their expectations were higher than their levels of satisfaction.

When asked to rank their expectations of the SWG, respondents portrayed the SWG as a highly strategic forum, with little interest in technical issues. IM, Coordination, Cross-cluster Issues, Advocacy and Resource Mobilization were the highest ranked functions. This fits well with the Philippine context, where many applauded the SWG for being a forum that 'motivated' them to try and deliver answers on action points.

When asked to evaluate the performance of the SWG, stakeholders gave its lowest marks to the more strategic functions of the SWG- Strategy Development, Resource Mobilization, Identification and Mobilization of Partners. This performance snapshot is a reflection of where the Philippines Shelter Working Group (PSWG) was able to add value in ensuring the required mechanics to its stakeholders (IM, Coordination, Technical Advice) but wasn't able to influence broader issues of poor donor response and an emergency response that at times lacked a sense of urgency.

In terms of overall satisfaction, and despite the schism between expectations and performance, respondents were categorical in their ranking: 92% were satisfied with the IFRC contribution to the PSWG.

Finally, the neutrality and independence of the Movement in the Philippines was not jeopardized by the IFRC contribution to the UN-led Cluster approach. That said, stakeholders have great difficulty understanding the distinct roles and mandates amongst RC/RC actors (including the SWG), with most suggesting that the intent of fire-walling the SWG from the rest of the RC/RC Movement is unclear, and few noting overlap.

V Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions of this review attempt to take a step back from the findings and survey results, and make more global comments on the Philippines Typhoons experience that can inform the development of the Shelter Department and its policies. The recommendations found in section III provide more detailed recommendations in response to the TOR's objectives. The following provide some broad strokes commentary on core issues of the review.

The 'snapshot' of the SWG developed from the stakeholder survey leads us towards a question that could be considered central to this review:

Is the IFRC having an impact on the effective provision of emergency shelter?

Was the Philippines a successful example of the IFRC contribution to assuming a lead role in the provision of emergency shelter in natural disasters?

The 'yes' vote:

While there was a great deal of introspection and self-critique on the part of SCCT members, stakeholders were unanimously satisfied with the IFRC contribution to the Shelter Working Group. The IFRC was seen as fast, robust, and professional. While staff turnover was identified as an issue, even this was mitigated by the consistent approach to meeting planning, management and minutes providing. IFRC was seen as exemplary amongst Cluster-Leads agencies responding in the Philippines. Stakeholders suggested that IFRC was unique in that the SCCT members were not staff with long term missions in the Philippines, as was predominantly the case with UN agencies.

The positive evaluation situates the SCCT contribution against a horizon of factors that were beyond the control of the SCCT members, the IFRC and the RC/RC Movement as a whole. These factors include the overall relevance of the Cluster approach in the Philippines, the limited number of participants responding to the emergency shelter needs involved in shelter coordination forums, a slow emergency response, and very weak international interest and contributions.

The 'no' vote:

Measured in terms of the contribution to effective emergency shelter provision, the IFRC contribution to the Shelter Working Group was not successful. As of 02 March 2007, roughly **7% of emergency shelter needs were met, or would be met**. More precisely, little of the emergency needs had in general been met, and some four months after the final typhoon struck, solutions were orbiting between transitional and longer-term reconstruction approaches, government

financial commitment had not been secured, and issues on land tenure, risk reduction and preparedness for the upcoming typhoon season were still under discussion. While it can be argued that these issues lie beyond the purview of the IFRC and its contribution to emergency shelter, this aspect of serving victims cannot be wholly dissociated from the SCCT contribution.

Were Clusters Really Necessary in the Philippines?

Who polices compliance with the Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Assistance? Should the IFRC assess the relevance of the Cluster rollout on a case-by-case basis? Is the Shelter Department ultimately responsible for the success of the broader Cluster rollout?

The Cluster Rollout in the Philippines had seemingly little to do with the needs on the ground. There was little spirit of transparency, or compliance with the Guidance Note. IFRC attempted to prompt discussion on a Cluster deployment in early December, only to be told that there would be no rollout, only to discover- partly by chance- that 'Clusters Lite' and 'Varying degrees of Clusterization' would eventually be deployed. The overnight deployment of a SCCT was partly useful, as it took days to find other Cluster Leads for discussion, and further days/weeks for Government agencies to decide who would take what roles. The Government of the Philippines has to be applauded for its spirit of openness in adopting the Cluster approach. They decided to adapt their existing structures and processes to the UN Cluster system as an experiment.

While the IFRC, as an IASC member, participated in the rollout of the Clusters, it clearly had limited influence on the decision itself. There was little evidence of there having been an assessment on the relevance of Clusters in the Philippines. The IFRC delegation participated to what discussions did take place, as did the Secretariat.

There is a genuine concern of 'guilt by association' for the IFRC contribution to the UN-led Cluster approach. While the Secretariat and Shelter Department are not responsible for the success of the broader Cluster rollout, it is impossible to *dissociate* the IFRC from the perceived successes and failures of the process. While speed has been identified as a key factor in SCCT deployments, the IFRC should put more emphasis on assessing the needs and developing a clear Shelter Working Group operational plan before taking the decision to deploy a robust Coordination team.

The mechanics of the SWG- developing 'triggers' and criteria for deployment

When does the IFRC decide to deploy a Shelter Coordination Team? What are the basic criteria for such deployments? At what point should this responsibility be handed over to UN-HABITAT? Under what

conditions would IFRC refuse to deploy a SCCT? What kind of models and structures should be considered?

The Shelter Department, in discussion with its partners and stakeholders, must develop a clear, simple and concise checklist of factors that need to be considered in deploying a Shelter Coordination Team. It should be clear why- or why not- the Secretariat responds, with what kind of team, and for how long. The deployment of a Coordinator with the appropriate P5/10 years experience to do an initial assessment would allow the Shelter Department the time to fully consider the needs and realities, and would permit the drafting of an operational plan with financial and human resources needs, and timelines for deployment and handover.

The *ad hoc* nature of deployment and decision-making is not helping the cause of the Shelter Department. While the IFRC SCCT speed of response to the Philippines rollout was applauded by the UN system, it is not evident how decisions were made to deploy and maintain a 3-month commitment to certain aspects- coordination, technical advisor- and not others- IM for only one month. While any 'rapid deployment' will have an *ad hoc* character, the Shelter Department should be able to present and account for their investment, possibly through their own 'Shelter Appeal' for the given crisis. The sustainability of such deployments has to be considered, both as a function of capacity building for the national society, and to bolster regional delegations in their shelter technical capacities. Finally, future deployments should consider a coordinator for both the capital and field level responses.

The capacity of the Early Recovery partner should be considered in future. Could IFRC provide ongoing support to UN-HABITAT in the event that they are unable to mobilize further resources? Is it enough to simply handover the SWG underlining that the IFRC contribution is limited to the *emergency* shelter provision?

Focusing future learning

What was the intent of the SWG? Impact? How is it measured? What should we learn?

To date, the Shelter Department has commissioned reviews of its SWGs. While this is a fast means of getting structured feedback, future efforts should take a different form. One approach would be the more comprehensive views, if the Shelter Department introduces more rigorous planning, benchmarks and outcomes in deployments. This would allow for *evaluation* of outcomes, intended and unexpected.

A second approach would be to re-orient towards a lighter and more participative approach. Instead of the traditional approach of interviews with stakeholders, the review could be a facilitation of stakeholders in a day-long workshop, identifying what worked, what didn't, what was overlooked and what should become fixed practice.

Such a process would be faster (2 days of interviews, 1 day of facilitation, 1 day of write-up, 2 days travel) and could be deployed while the SCCT is still in-country.

Annex 1- Methodology

The methodology of this review included the following elements:

Clarification of the review's objectives in discussion with Head, Shelter Department and key stakeholders in Geneva and Manila;

Desk review of available and relevant documents (Bibliography);

Interviews with key stakeholders in Manila, Legaspi and IFRC Secretariat (Annex 3), with some interviews being conducted by telephone;

In addition, an anonymous **online survey** was employed to collect perceptions of the IFRC's service in coordinating the shelter cluster (Annex 5); and,

Field visit to Legaspi allowed for interviews with key stakeholders at the field level.

Very little had been done in terms of constructing temporary shelters, and thus beneficiary interviews were a tangential part of the review.

The review was undertaken while the author was still occupying the position of Shelter Working Group Coordinator, and as such cannot be considered as complete, (in terms of time) nor independent, review.

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Terms of Reference:

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Emergency Shelter Technical Advisor- Typhoon Durian Response Terms of Reference

UN OCHA, *Concept Paper- Database and Information Management Strategy, Philippines Typhoons 2006*, 22 February 2007.

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UN OCHA, Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator, 11 December 2003.

Annex 3- List of Interviewees

Government

Milosil Edles Cruz, Chief, Special Projects and Concerns, Project Management Bureau, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

Maria Olsen, Correspondent in East and South-East Asia, Rapid Response Coordinator, ECHO, Bangkok

Engineer Macrio M. Pavia, Albay Provincial Planning and Development Office, Chair PSWG

MGEN (ret.) Glenn J. Rabonza, Administrator, OCD/NDCC Executive Officer

RC/RC Movement

Michael Annear, Head of Regional Disaster Management Unit, South East Asia, IFRC Regional Delegation, Bangkok

Neil Bauman, IM Consultant, IFRC

Roger Bracke, Head of Delegation, IFRC Philippines

Felipe Donoso, Head of Delegation, ICRC Philippines

Martin Fisher, Shelter Coordinator Consultant, IFRC

Thomas Gurtner, Deputy Director DM, NSFS Division, Secretariat, IFRC

Dave Hodgkin, Technical Advisor, IFRC

Malcolm Johnstone, Shelter Unit, Secretariat, IFRC

Robert Mister, Inter-Agency Coordinator, Secretariat, IFRC

Flemming Nielsen, Operations Support Coordinator, Secretariat, IFRC

Graham Saunders, Head, Shelter Unit, Secretariat, IFRC

Marc Werdmuller, Technical Advisor, Shelter Unit, Secretariat, IFRC

Benjamin B. Delfin II, Acting Manager, Disaster Management Service, PRCS

United Nations

Juan Blenn B. Helgas, Disaster Management Specialist, UN-HABITAT

Ronaldo Reario, Coordination Officer, UN OCHA

Nileema Noble, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP (unable to meet)

NGO/Other

Ida Mae Fernandez, Project Officer, IOM

Sister Mercelyn Galicia, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

Medatrix V. Villanueva, Ayuda Albay

Annex 4- TOR

Terms of Reference for: A Review of the Philippines Typhoons Shelter Working Group

Background to the Philippines Typhoons Shelter Working Group Review

Under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding between IFRC and UN OCHA,

“subject to available resources, constitutional limits, and the rules and regulations of the Federation, the Federation will assume a coordination role for emergency shelter in specific emergency operations within an agreed coordination system”.

In the latter part of 2006, the Philippines was severely affected by a series of typhoons, the last and most destructive, Typhoon Durian, striking the western coast on 30 November 2006. These typhoons caused extensive damage over a widespread area in 24 provinces, of which five were affected by more than one typhoon. Reportedly 2,700 people were killed or unaccounted for, and many left homeless. Affected households were sheltered in evacuation centres established in government buildings, schools and churches. Others were accommodated by families and friends. The total number of households originally affected was estimated at 649,829 i.e., over 3m people (source: National Disaster Coordination Council - NDCC, 14 December 2006).

Through meetings convened by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and involving UNDP, UN OCHA and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (“the International Federation”), it was agreed to establish a ‘Shelter Working Group’ lead by the International Federation with UN Habitat to assess and support the meeting of emergency shelter needs.

An IFRC Shelter Coordinator and a Shelter Technical Advisor were deployed on 25th December 2006 in the Philippines to establish the Shelter Working Group, augmented by an Information Manager in early January. A National Shelter Working Group was established in Manila, and support provided to the Provincial Government to establish field level shelter working groups. The IFRC Shelter Working Group Coordinator also represented the Shelter Working Group in cluster leads meetings convened by UN OCHA, and in liaison with the Government.

It should be noted that deployment of such a co-ordination team is not an arrangement foreseen in the rules and regulations for international Red Cross / Red Crescent activities. The rules and regulations that have been agreed within the International Federation assume that all activities are centred on supporting the

National Society's operational activities or, as the case might be, supplementing the efforts of the National Society. The co-ordination teams, in contrast, are meant to provide a service to the overall humanitarian community - a service which in the context of other aspects of an international response the International Federation receives from others.

Objective of the Philippines Typhoons Shelter Working Group (PSWG) Review

The objectives of the PSWG review are to:

5. review and analyse the experience of the International Federation with respect to the establishment and operation of the PSWG, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;
6. provide a foundation for establishing policy and guidelines for emergency shelter coordination (cluster) leadership at a national level, including identification of the appropriate mechanisms and procedures to support shelter leadership at the national level within the Secretariat; and
7. provide recommendations with regard to the International Federation's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination (cluster) activities both at global and at national levels.
8. examine if there were aspects of the Federation's cluster leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

Scope of the Review

The review will encompass, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- The activation of the cluster process and the extent of involvement and influence of the Federation, as an IASC member, in the decision-making process;
- the understanding and support of the Federation's shelter coordination role within the in country delegation, the region and Geneva;
- the impact of the PSWG on the Federation Delegation and the Philippines National Red Cross;
- the design and implementation of the PSWG, including factors and determinants which provided the PSWG's strengths and weaknesses;
- the value of linking and/or separating the PSWG and the Federation's relief operation;
- the design and implementation of the exit/handover strategy;
- relations with other clusters, the UN system and the Government;
- the staffing of the PSWG and the support provided from the Secretariat;

- the equipping and funding of the PSWG;
- the involvement of the PSWG in the transition from meeting emergency shelter needs to permanent housing and resettlement;
- issues with regard to visibility for the International Federation.

Methodology

The methodology employed by the reviewer/s in gathering and assessing information should include:

- A field visit to Manila and the affected areas;
- Review of available documented materials relating to the start-up, planning, implementation, and impact of the PSWG;
- Interviews with key internal stakeholders within the Secretariat, Delegation, and National Society (PMI);
- If feasible, interviews with other key stakeholders, such as relevant Ministries, International Organizations, NGOs, United Nations, etc.;
- If feasible, interviews with beneficiaries (beneficiary perceptions regarding the extent to which the shelter response and the cluster approach is fulfilling their needs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in planning processes).

Proposed Timeline

The exercise will be implemented over a period from March 2nd to March 17, 2007, during the time the consultant is in the Philippines.

Outputs

1. Concise, written document with key recommendations and supporting information. This document should be of use for discussing the IFRC experiences of the cluster process internally and also with key donors and other stakeholders.
2. Additional notes, summaries of interviews etc. as appropriate, or supporting documentation.
3. Summary of review activities undertaken, including interviews, visits, documents reviewed etc.

Key reference documents provided:

1. IFRC-UN OCHA Shelter MoU
2. IFRC Shelter Working Group Coordination Team ToRs
3. All documents (meeting minutes, strategy documents etc.) from the PSWG website.

Annex 5- Survey Results

1. My organization would be defined as:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Government	20%	4
United Nations	25%	5
International Organization	20%	4
Red Cross Movement	35%	7
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	15%	3
Other (please specify)	10%	2
Total Respondents		20
(skipped this question)		0

2. Our relationship and experience with the IFRC coordination role in the Shelter Cluster included:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Member of NSWG	42.1%	8
Member of PSWG	42.1%	8
Cluster Leads Meetings	63.2%	12
Subscribed to Googlegroups	47.4%	9
Other (please specify)	15.8%	3
Total Respondents		19
(skipped this question)		1

3. In considering the potential priorities of the Shelter Cluster, please rank how important you consider each function to be:

	No Importance	Little Importance	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Response Average
Advocacy and Resource Mobilization	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	38% (6)	56% (9)	4.50
Application/Development of Standards	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (2)	59% (10)	29% (5)	4.18
Capacity Building and Training	0% (0)	0% (0)	19% (3)	62% (10)	19% (3)	4.00
Coordination	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (2)	88% (15)	4.88
Cross-Cluster Issues	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)	29% (5)	65% (11)	4.59
Identifying Partners	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (2)	38% (6)	50% (8)	4.38
Information Management	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	29% (5)	71% (12)	4.71

Strategy Development	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (2)	35% (6)	53% (9)	4.41
Technical Advice	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)	50% (8)	38% (6)	4.19
Technical Standards	0% (0)	11% (2)	0% (0)	61% (11)	28% (5)	4.06
Total Respondents					18	
(skipped this question)						2

4. Please evaluate the following statement: My organization considers participation in the Shelter Cluster/Working Group to be one of our priorities.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Agree	88.9%	16
Neutral	11.1%	2
Disagree	0%	0
Total Respondents		18
(skipped this question)		2

5. In the Philippines, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement is represented by the Philippines National Red Cross, the delegations of the IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Shelter Working Group/Cluster convened by the IFRC. How did you perceive the distinction between these different members of the RC/RC Movement?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Distinct bodies, with clear roles and mandates	7.1%	1
There seemed to be some overlap	35.7%	5
No difference	7.1%	1
Unclear	50%	7
Unimportant	0%	0
Total Respondents		14
(skipped this question)		6

6. In your eyes, did participation to the Philippine's Cluster Approach compromise the IFRC's independence and neutrality?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	6.7%	1
No	73.3%	11
Other (please specify)	20%	3
Total Respondents		15

(skipped this question) 5

7. How would you evaluate the IFRC's contribution to the success of the following functions to the Sheltering Working Group/Shelter Cluster?

	No Value	Little Value	Indifferent	Useful	Very Useful	Response Average
Advocacy and Resource Mobilization	0% (0)	15% (2)	15% (2)	62% (8)	8% (1)	3.62
Application/Development of Standards	0% (0)	15% (2)	23% (3)	38% (5)	23% (3)	3.69
Capacity Building and Training	0% (0)	15% (2)	38% (5)	38% (5)	8% (1)	3.38
Coordination	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	54% (7)	46% (6)	4.46
Cross-Cluster Issues	0% (0)	0% (0)	31% (4)	46% (6)	23% (3)	3.92
Identifying Partners	0% (0)	0% (0)	46% (6)	46% (6)	8% (1)	3.62
Information Management	0% (0)	8% (1)	15% (2)	31% (4)	46% (6)	4.15
Strategy Development	0% (0)	15% (2)	15% (2)	62% (8)	8% (1)	3.62
Technical Advice	0% (0)	0% (0)	31% (4)	38% (5)	31% (4)	4.00
Technical Standards	8% (1)	8% (1)	23% (3)	23% (3)	38% (5)	3.77
				Total Respondents		13
				(skipped this question)		7

8. Please evaluate the following statement: My organization is satisfied with the IFRC contribution to the Shelter Working Group/Cluster.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Agree 	92.3%	12
Neutral 	7.7%	1
Disagree	0%	0
	Total Respondents	13
	(skipped this question)	7