

EMERGENCY SHELTER CLUSTER : Key Things to Know

I. Designated Global Cluster Lead:

UNHCR leads the Emergency Shelter Cluster in the area of conflict generated IDPs while IFRC is convener of the Emergency Shelter Cluster in natural disasters. At the global level, the Emergency Shelter Cluster is co-chaired by UNHCR and IFRC. For more information about the Emergency Shelter Cluster, contact Yoichiro Tsuchida, UNHCR, Geneva tsuchida@unhcr.org or Graham Saunders, IFRC, Geneva, graham.saunders@ifrc.org or visit our website at www.humanitarianreform.org.

II. Main partners at the global level:

IOM, UN-HABITAT, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, NRC, DRC, OXFAM, Care International, Shelter Centre, RedR.

III. Main partners at the field level:

Local and National Governments, IOM, UN-Habitat, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, NRC, DRC, OXFAM, Care International, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), other NGOs involved in Emergency Shelter.

IV. The concrete support and tools that we provide to the ESC cluster in the field are:

- *Training for Emergency Shelter Coordinators and Technical Experts.* These trainings are currently being developed, and the first training sessions will be held for both groups in the spring 2007.
- *Surge capacity of Shelter Coordinators and Technical Experts.* The co-chairs have rosters of available staff which will be enhanced by the current training programme. Shelter and coordination experts have been deployed to several emergencies, including Pakistan, Lebanon, Indonesia (Yogyakarta), Somalia and Mozambique.
- *Stockpiles of shelter material and NFIs.* UNHCR is increasing its stockpiles to be able to serve emergency shelter action involving 500,000 persons.
- *Tools for Emergency Shelter under development, including standard setting, guidelines for climatic variations, early warning/risk mapping, early recovery needs and assessment guidelines, and guidelines on environmental impact.* These tools are under development as part of the global clusters workplan for 2007.
- *Expertise in site planning to ensure protection risks are minimised.*

V. At the field level, it is especially important that we work closely with the following other clusters/sector groups if we are to have the desired impact:

- *Water & Sanitation.* Populations in need of emergency shelter support will in most cases also require WATSAN interventions. Close coordination and sharing of information about the status and needs of the impacted population should be undertaken.

- *Camp Coordination and Camp Management.* Provision of shelter material and NFIs to planned and spontaneous camps needs to be closely coordinated with the CCCM cluster.
- *Protection.* The impacted population will often be vulnerable as a consequence of the disaster, whether caused by man or by nature.
- *Early recovery.* In natural disasters Early Recovery planning should be included in the emergency shelter interventions from the outset, with focus on salvaging usable material, providing support that can be reused for reconstruction etc.
- *Logistics.* Shelter interventions require large scale logistical support to make available shelter material and NFIs. Therefore, close cooperation with the logistic cluster is necessary in order to facilitate a smooth logistical chain.

VI. Our cluster lead at the field level should be able to provide fellow cluster/sector groups with:

- *Participation in joint assessments.*
- *Focal point for all emergency needs.*
- *Link to national government on shelter and site planning policy.*

VII. Overview of sector goals and priorities

Importance of emergency shelter in emergencies:

- **Survival.** Shelter is a critical determinant for survival in the initial stages of a disaster.
- **Security and safety.** Shelter is necessary to provide security and personal safety, protection from the climate and enhanced resistance to disease.
- **Human dignity and sustainment of social life.** Shelter is also important for human dignity and in order to sustain family and community life in difficult circumstances.

Objectives and activities of emergency shelter response:

- **Maintenance of health, privacy and dignity.** The most individual level of response to the need for shelter and the maintenance of health, privacy and dignity is the provision of clothing, blankets and bedding. People also require basic goods and supplies to meet their personal hygiene needs, to prepare and eat food, and to provide necessary levels of thermal comfort. Disaster-affected households and those displaced from their dwellings often possess only what they can salvage or carry, and the provision of appropriate non food items may be required to meet essential needs.
- **Support coping mechanisms.** Shelter and associated settlement and non-food item responses should support communal coping strategies, incorporating as much self sufficiency and self-management into the process as possible. It is as important HOW relief is provided as WHAT is provided.
- **Minimise environmental impact.** Any such responses should also minimise the long-term adverse impact on the environment, whilst maximising opportunities for the affected communities to maintain or establish livelihood support activities.
- **Adaptation to local needs.** The type of response required to meet the needs of people and households in an emergency is determined by key factors including the nature and scale of the disaster and the resulting loss of shelter, the climatic conditions and the local environment, the political and security situation, the context (rural or urban) and the ability of the community to cope.

- **Indirectly impacted population and population at risk need to be considered.** Consideration must be given to the rights and needs of those who are secondarily affected by the disaster, such as host communities. Any response should be informed by the steps taken by the affected households in the initial aftermath of the disaster, using their own skills and material resources to provide temporary shelter or to begin the construction of new, longer-term dwellings.
- **Incorporation of Early Recovery.** Shelter responses should enable affected households to incrementally upgrade from emergency to durable shelter solutions within a reasonably short time and with regard to the constraints on acquiring the additional resources required.

