

DRAFT
Shelter & NFI Coordination Meeting
Held at UNHCR on 12th November 2009

Participants:

Christopher Bender	ACTED	Country Director
Matthew Todd	ASB	Country Director
Matthew Todd	ASB	Country Director
Irene Fraser	CARE	Programme Director – North
M.L.S Dias	Caritas	Assistant Manager
Vareeswaran	Caritas Sri Lanka	Consultant
Lashi Maliyadda	CHA	Programme Officer
Joanna Arulraj	CHA	Monitoring & Evaluation
Massimiliano Beneveleu	DRC	Emergency Coordinator
Olivier Brouant	ECHO	Technical Assistant
P. Rubenthiran	FORUT	Humanitarian Coordinator
Tony Seneviratne	Habitat for Humanity	National Director
Giovanni Cassani	IOM	Head of Emergency
R. Sivasuthan	Oxfam GB	Humanitarian Coordinator
Petr Drbohlav	PIN	Head of Mission
Natasha Yatwara	Relief International	Programme Assistant
Ines Pankrath	SAH	Country Representative
Harin Abeyratne	Save the Children	Head of Logistics
Kaushalya Navaratne	Sewalanka Foundation	Director Programmes
Chamida Perera	UMCOR	National Programme Coordinator
David Evans	UN- HABITAT	Chief Advisor
Laurent Raguin	UNHCR	Senior Programme Officer (chairing)
Deirdre Kiernan	UNICEF	Chief Field Operator
Alejandro Ruiz-Acevedo	UNOPS	Project Development Officer
Dubravka Pem	World Vision	HEA Director
Jorike Looij	ZOA	Management Trainee
Gerard Hooiveld	ZOA	Donor Account Manager
Sarah Wimaladharma	UNHCR	Executive Assistant
Dinesh Thalpawila	UNHCR	Shelter Coordination Cell Liaison Officer

The meeting was opened by the chair at 15.10.

A discussion on the position paper on the shelter grant by the Shelter Cluster – Vavuniya was added to Any Other Business on the request of DRC.

1. CHAP 2010 submissions

Two documents in relation to the CHAP 2009 & 2010 were circulated.

It was requested that agencies verify the information in the tables related to the CHAP 2010 and send any amendments to submitted projects to UNHCR (Dinesh Thalpalwila) by Friday, 13 November, 10am in order for the consolidated tables to be submitted to OCHA.

The GoSL has requested OCHA to update the CHAP 2009 project implementation table with funding information (e), donors (f), results achieved (j) and budget spent 2009 (k). This information should also be sent directly to UNHCR (Dinesh Thalpalwila) by Tuesday 17 November for consolidation to be sent to OCHA.

A question was raised by CARE whether projects outside of CHAP funding can be included in the 2009 implementation table.

UNHCR responded that these tables are usually mixed and it would not be detrimental to include projects funded outside of the CHAP as they would reflect more accurately what projects have been implemented by the shelter cluster.

It was reported that due to inconsistencies in the definition of CORE housing vis-à-vis the Early Recovery Cluster, project submissions should be changed for the purposes of the CHAP 2010.

Shelter cluster agencies should review their project proposals and amend them to include CORE housing as a component of a more general shelter assistance project rather than a stand alone project. Amended project sheets should be forwarded to UNHCR.

ACTION: ALL

OCHA has agreed to split total shelter assistance budget to also include shelter assistance in the Early Recovery pillar of the CHAP in order for shelter assistance to feature in all the three pillars of the CHAP (Return, Camp assistance & Early Recovery). This will ensure agencies are able to implement CORE housing projects if necessary.

ASB indicated that the total number of beneficiaries exceeds the total number of IDPs to be assisted.

UN-HABITAT responded indicating that beneficiary numbers overlap due to the type of assistance provided by certain agencies. Additionally, since some projects may not be funded through the CHAP and receive outside funding, it ensures that those that do receive funding through the CHAP will be able to cover the needs of all the IDPs.

To conclude on this topic, UNHCR indicated it would be responsible for compiling the Narrative 2009, 2010 Analysis, Strategic Framework Logframe. Contributions from shelter cluster members on any of these sections are welcomed

ACTION: UNHCR

2. Care & Maintenance in IDP Camps

UNHCR reiterated the need for care & maintenance of the existing shelters in the IDP camps. It was reported that polythene sheets had been used to repair some shelters and feedback on the utility was requested.

A discussion regarding the conversion of site 6B to a surrendee site was discussed at length with regards to the facilities & structures which have been provided for by the humanitarian community which will now be used for other purposes.

CARE informed that funding was received to implement on the condition that the site will be used by IDPs and not used as a detention/rehabilitation centre. In addition, ICRC does not have access to the site. As a result, CARE will endeavour to recover the items from the site with the agreement of the authorities prior to it being used as a site for rehabilitation/detention.

ZOA indicated that it had been difficult to recover shelter materials as SLA did not give authorisation for removal.

ECHO informed that as a donor, it would also not support the use of structures/facilities built with their funding for other purposes than those specified in the contract with their partners.

It was recommended by ECHO that a common position should arrived at with the shelter & other clusters such as WASH with regards to this issue and it be communicated, which will ensure that should it not be possible to recover items in time, all parties concerned are informed of the common position.

ECHO further mentioned that there needs to be clarity on the types of assistance to surrendeers giving WFP food rations as an example.

UNHABITAT suggested that consideration should be given to include particular conditions on assistance to detention/rehabilitation sites such as ICRC access etc when a common position is elaborated.

ASB suggested that decommissioning of sites (removal of structures) should take place immediately after sites are emptied, this could ensure that sites are not used for other purposes.

IOM mentioned, that it may become possible in the future, when significant decongestion has taken place, that IDPs can take shelter materials when they return. DRC mentioned that this may not be viable for the near future, since blocks are being consolidated as returns are taking place, reducing further the number of shelter for the remaining IDPs, which may not allow IDPs to take shelter items with them.

DRC indicated that the Shelter cluster – Vavuniya would discuss the issue of site decommissioning in their next meeting.

UNHABITAT indicated that the Shelter cluster Vavuniya should provide a paper on issues with regards to decommissioning of sites (restoration of site to original state) which could be utilised as basis for discussion at Inter-Cluster meeting.

ACTION: SC-Vavuniya

World Vision indicated that a comprehensive decommissioning plan & standards should be discussed & elaborated at the Inter-Cluster meeting.

UNHCR ensured that decommissioning of sites and common position of site conversion as well as legal status of persons in the sites would be taken up at the next Inter-Cluster meeting

ACTION: UNHCR

3. Drainage of Sites

It was reported that drainage works seem to be effective and any issues should be reported to the Shelter Cluster as they arise.

ACTION: ALL

4. Shelter Assistance for Returnees

In a recent development, the GoSL has recognised that that shelter grant is insufficient for returnees and has approached IOM & UNOPS to provide additional shelter assistance following extensive advocacy from UNHCR. This development is seen as positive, given that until now the GoSL has insisted on the shelter grant as the only shelter assistance to be given.

IOM & UNOPS updated the meeting that the Ministry of Resettlement & Disaster Relief Services (MRDRS) has requested them to provide shelter assistance for 3300 families (3000 Manthai West, 300 Jaffna) and has proposed a design which includes the Indian tin sheet donation (15 sheets in Mannar, 12 sheets Mullaitivu & Kilinochchi). The design proposed it of a higher standard than that agreed in August by the Shelter-Cluster in Mannar for the Vanni.

The design provided by MRDRS is what is generally considered a transitional shelter (200 sq. ft.), with a wooden frame, tin sheets (Indian donation), 2 layers of bricks and a cement floor (approx. 1,000 – 1,500 USD). The design previously agreed is approximately 750 USD, and considering the tin-sheet donation stands at 400 – 450USD. Discussions are underway with MRDRS to agree on the most appropriate design & costing.

IOM & UNOPS reported that they were presently able to carry out some of the initial request but that more actors will have to become involved in time. It was suggested that NGOs – who have previously not been able to provide additional shelter assistance – to either partner IOM/UNOPS or request to provide shelter assistance which could ensure access to the Vanni in the future. It was suggested that those agencies present in Jaffna should look into opportunities for providing shelter assistance.

As some agencies are not all aware of the shelter standards previously discussed it was agreed that UNHCR would send out the Shelter Taskforce Working Group minutes related to this.

ACTION: UNHCR

5. Shelter Grant Position Paper – Shelter Cluster Vavuniya (SCV)

Representing the Shelter Cluster Vavuniya, DRC informed that the SCV still request the Shelter Cluster Colombo to comment on the finalised Position paper on the shelter grant since the response received following the meeting on 22 October was inadequate as no common position was arrived at in Colombo. Specifically, SCV wanted to reiterate that a unilateral decision was made by UNHCR without consultation of the Shelter Clusters (Colombo or Vavuniya) to provide the shelter grant without any other shelter assistance provided to returnees. As the position paper had not been finalised until 29 October, another specific request to table it and a vote in favour or against the position be taken at this meeting was made.

UNHCR informed that at the meeting in Colombo on 22 October, the UMCOR representative shared the letter, read out the points made and comments were made at the meeting. Furthermore, it was noted that since 13 August, the issue of the shelter grant has been discussed regularly and at length at each shelter cluster meeting in Colombo. There had been general agreement in Colombo that the shelter grant of Rs. 25,000 was insufficient if not supplemented by additional shelter assistance and that advocacy with the GoSL was required to ensure that such was granted. Given the most recent developments (see Point 4) it seems redundant to discuss the issue, since the GoSL has acknowledged the need for additional shelter assistance beyond the shelter grant.

CARE indicated that perhaps at the meeting on 22 October, not a sufficiently in-depth discussion was held since it had only been a working document at the time.

FORUT agreed that SCV had not finalised the document at the time of presentation at the Colombo meeting and therefore a consensus could not be reached, which now given the paper is finalised should be done as requested.

UNHCR informed that only minor changes are in the finalised document when compared to the one which was presented by UMCOR on behalf of SCV on 22 October.

ASB agreed that numerous discussions on the shelter grant have taken place in the Colombo meeting since the issue came up and there was general agreement that the grant was not adequate as stand-alone assistance which one reason why it had been agreed at this meeting to include shelter materials as part of the return NFI kits. ASB reiterated that since the GoSL had now conceded that the grant was insufficient (point 4.) it is not necessary to re-discuss the issue.

ASB felt it was important given the new developments to discuss whether the tin sheets from the Indian donation would be sufficient to cover all the needs of the returnees and what types of additional assistance will be required from agencies to ensure additional shelter requirements are met.

UNHCR reiterated that it was agreed by all parties that the amount of the cash grant (Rs. 25,000) would certainly not be enough to cover shelter needs of returnees and appropriate advocacy was conducted.

DRC emphasised that in this instance, the assistance requirements were formulated around the shelter grant rather than determining the needs of the beneficiaries first and subsequently defining assistance package. In addition there is no information on how this shelter grant will be administered/distributed how long it will take to obtain etc. There was no consultation whether the shelter grant should be supported through the CHAP or in fact whether this modality of assistance should have been agreed to in the first place. Given the likelihood of the cash grant to be used for purposes besides shelter, the utility of it is questionable. It is therefore necessary for the Shelter Cluster Colombo to vote on whether the shelter grant is an appropriate tool for shelter assistance or not.

ASB reiterated that it is not possible to discuss the principle of the appropriateness of the grant, however if a discussion was to take place it should be on whether the grant is the only form of assistance and whether the amount is sufficient. In both cases it has been mentioned that there was agreement the shelter grant could not be implemented in isolation of other forms of shelter assistance and that the amount of the shelter grant was not sufficient to cover the shelter needs of the beneficiaries.

DRC requested that it be minuted that the approval of the shelter grant was not a consultative process and it was unilaterally agreed between UNHCR & the GoSL without approval of the cluster. In the event that no vote was carried out on the position paper, it implies the Colombo cluster agrees that the grant is the proper/appropriate tool to support IDPs as stand alone assistance.

UNHCR noted that the amount of the grant is not sufficient and is commonly agreed upon, but the grant as a tool is deemed appropriate and has been used in several refugee returnee situations. In Sri Lanka, the grant has been somewhat imposed by the GoSL on agencies, however UNHCR has always advocated that complementary assistance was needed to respond effectively. UNHCR again noted that in August 2009, when the issue of the shelter grant was first discussed, the PTF/GoSL was clear that no NGOs would be allowed into the Vanni and that the grant would be the only shelter assistance to be provided. The fact that MDRDS has requested agencies to assist shows that PTF approval for this additional shelter assistance has been given, which in turn can be seen as opening the way for other agencies especially NGOs to provide shelter assistance in the future.

ZOA suggested it is minuted that the position paper and views of the SCV were raised in this meeting, that the effectiveness of the shelter grant as stand alone assistance was discussed and the meeting has requested UNHCR to report on the methodology of disbursement/implementation, effectiveness, gaps and how monitoring of the grant will be ensured. It was further suggested that all agencies agreed that the amount of Rs. 25,000 was deemed insufficient as stand alone shelter assistance.

UNHCR informed the meeting that in each district standard operating procedures are in place to implement that shelter grant. UNHCR started initially by filling out the forms to returnees however due to the pace of return, the task of completing the forms has been handed over to the GS/GN. UNHCR remains in a supervisory role at the sites. UNHCR explained the form has about 4 security features to avoid duplication and are serialised. The form needs to be signed off by the Head of the Household, Government officer and UNHCR and will enable each family to receive NFI & shelter grant. There are 4 copies of the form for the head of household, bank, GA office & UNHCR. The forms are filled out at the point of arrival in the district of return and the Bank of Ceylon has agreed to waive all administration costs to ensure that each family receives the complete 25,000 grant. The fact that UNHCR retains a copy of the form ensures that return monitoring activities can be carried out by partners & UNHCR to verify returnees have received NFI/shelter. UNHCR admits there have been some hitches in the implementation as the return has taken place so quickly, however remedial action is taking place.

When asked whether persons staying with host families will also receive the grant, UNHCR answered that all IDPs returning to districts of origin will receive the shelter grant. However, based on the document of categories of UNHCR's caseload circulated, such persons would remain IDPs until a durable solution is found. As a result, further assistance will be required when such persons do actually return to their place of origin. The latter will have to be discussed with the GoSL and will probably be part of the next 3 year plan.

UNHCR informed that the Bank of Ceylon is aware of the procedures as it has been involved in disbursement of funds previously. In addition an audit firm has been engaged that will report to UNHCR every 2 weeks on expenditure.

IOM requested that UNHCR provide briefings on the progress of the shelter grant (numbers of registered persons, disbursement etc.) and provide more information in a dedicated meeting regarding the implementation of the grant.

CARE also requested to have more information on the process of shelter grant implementation and indicated there was a general lack of information on how it is to operate.

UNHCR informed a paper was being written on this and it was able to provide further information in a separate meeting.

ACTION: UNHCR

DRC once again indicated that a decision needed to be made on the position paper to determine that this form of assistance (shelter grant) given the issues surrounding freedom of movement, lack of markets etc. as detailed in the position paper is not an appropriate form of assistance as requested by SCV.

ASB suggested to go through the document once again to comment on the contents, even though current events make this exercise redundant.

To Point 1: There seems consensus that the lack of information on the shelter grant has generated confusion. It was also agreed that UNHCR will at the earliest opportunity share operating procedures and progress with the clusters.

To Point 2: There is agreement that the sum of Rs. 25,000 is insufficient as stand alone assistance. However this does not mean that the principle of giving shelter grant as a form of return assistance is inappropriate. Providing beneficiaries with a cash grant, allows the person to decide for him/herself on what to use it for and therefore ensures ownership. It is clear that most often a cash grant will not be used for the purpose of shelter, however, the grant itself can be used to meet the most urgent needs of the returnees/IDPs. The shelter grant itself is an appropriate tool for shelter assistance the amount of the grant can be debated.

DRC disagreed with the suggestions given by ASB.

IOM suggested the following points be made in relation to the shelter grant:

1. Shelter cluster agencies have expressed reservation to the utility of the shelter grant
2. Additional information has been requested from UNHCR to be presented at the next meeting.
3. The process of agreeing to implement the shelter grant was not conducted in a consultative manner with the cluster which should be rectified through information exchange.

DRC disagreed to this position and reiterated that the meeting should agree that

1. UNHCR unilaterally, without consultation of the cluster, agreed to implement the shelter grant
2. The cash grant is not appropriate without additional assistance.

World Vision explained that the shelter grant issue had been on the table since August 2009 as indicated earlier in the discussion and by the time the first tabling of the position paper from SCV took place on 22 October the MoU had already been signed. Hence the discussion on the appropriateness of the shelter grant cannot be discussed at this stage. In any event, as mentioned earlier in the meeting it appears that the GoSL has conceded that the grant in itself is not enough and supplementary assistance has already been requested. It is in this light the position paper is no longer relevant.

As mentioned several times before, it can be agreed amongst the agencies that the process was not consultative and this should be taken as a lesson learned for the future rather than dwell on matters that cannot be changed at this stage.

ASB reiterated that UNHCR would have to provide more information on the implementation of the grant including monitoring measures.

UNHCR agreed to provide this information at the next meeting

ACTION: UNHCR

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded at 17.30.

The next meeting will be held on 19 November 2009