The Rakhine Coast One month after Giri. Photo courtesy of Solidarities International and National Compassionate Volunteers.

Shelter and NFI Cluster Evaluation Cyclone Giri Response, Myanmar October 2010 to January 2011

July 2011
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Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre le Faim
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
ENA	Emergency Needs Assessment
ER	Early recovery
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ES/NFI	Emergency Shelter and Non Food Times
ESC	Emergency Shelter Cluster
ESCT	Emergency Shelter Coordination Team (Coordinator and Information Manager)
GoUM	Government of the Union of Myanmar
HoD	Head of Delegation (IFRC)
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IM	Information Management
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRA	Initial Raid Assessment
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MNGO CPWG	Myanmar NGO Contingency Planning Working Group
MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
MSF-H	Medecins San Frontiers Holland (locally known as AZG)
NCV	National Compassionate Volunteers
NFI	Non Food Items
NS	National Society
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RS	Rakhine State
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
SCT	Shelter Coordination Team (used interchangeably with ESCT, see note below)
SDF	Swanyee Development Fund
SWG	Shelter Working Group
TWG	Technical Working Group

Note on terminology: Since 2-3 years, the global cluster is called Global Shelter Cluster (SC). The word emergency has been removed as it can imply the SC limits its mandate to only emergency products. As recovery starts on day one, the SC and IFRC cannot only focus on emergency aspects. However there remains confusion, even with IFRC, as it is IFRC who often coordinates during the emergency phase. This was an issue in Myanmar where the term ESC or Emergency Shelter Cluster was repeatedly used by the HCT, the ESC itself and the ERC. This is further elaborated in the evaluation. However for consistency with the Myanmar SC, the term ESC is used in this report.

The author would like to acknowledge the outstanding support she received from the IFRC Myanmar and Kuala Lumpur offices, and a network of Myanmar development and humanitarian professionals who helped me organize meetings with local stakeholders, including the formation of a field team who were trained and deployed within days. My thanks to the field team who spent 7 days in Rakhine villages: Ma Myat Myat Moe, Saw Chit Thet Tun, Ma Nan Kan Yone, Ma Ei Ei Brown, and Ma Ya Min Aye. The brief summary of findings presented here does not do justice to the in-depth discussions that they had with the Rakhine people.

Executive Summary

Comparable in strength to Cyclone Nargis, Cyclone Giri, category 4, made landfall in Rakhine State at 8pm, Friday, 22 October 2010. Two days prior the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and Government began the early warning and evacuation of most residents either to higher ground, conveniently located within kilometers of the coast, or to strong buildings located close by. This early action most likely dramatically reduced the loss of life which was less than 100 persons - compared to over 100,000 only two and a half years before in Nargis. Immediately after the cyclone, the Government allowed MRCS, local NGOs and in situ INGO national staff, to make assessments and provide humanitarian assistance. However, similar to Nargis, international staff and new INGOs were not allowed to visit the area until nearly 2 months after (mid December).

Cyclone Giri hit an impoverished and politically sensitive area 2 weeks before national elections. The Government asked the UN to keep a humanitarian operation 'low profile'. Thus the Humanitarian Coordinator (simultaneously the Resident Coordinator) requested the implementation of an 'informal' cluster system in Yangon. Thirteen days after Giri, when more information became available regarding the extent of damage and persons affected (260,000), the cluster system was officially activated with a letter sent to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Seventeen days later application was made to the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) and a month later a general appeal made to donors (22 Nov). However, the UN never made an international "Flash" appeal for funds. Similarly, at the request of MRCS, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) did not make an appeal. The 'low profile' approach to the disaster made a more transparent humanitarian operation difficult, resulting in delays in information, funding and action. It also had an impact on what to expect from clusters in terms of their normal roles and responsibilities.

In this context, within 3 days of Giri, IFRC convened the first 'informal' Emergency Shelter and NFI cluster (ESC) and managed for 3 weeks with existing in-country international staff with some previous ESC experience. When the clusters were formally activated, IFRC sent for another 2 months, two Myanmar staff with international ESC experience as information managers. IFRC was the only organisation to send a dedicated team, while other agencies used existing senior and information management staff, and in at least one case some added capacity.[1] In January, nearly 3 months after Giri, the ESC was phased out and handed over to the Shelter Working Group led by UN Habitat who has a relatively strong presence in country, given their Nargis recovery programme.

With regards to performance, in general the IFRC was quick to take responsibility for Emergency Shelter (and NFI) coordination, working with existing human resources. When the cluster system was formally activated, and at the same time the Delegation realised existing staff would not be enough, the Delegation and Global Shelter Cluster acted quickly to provide additional support. Basic coordination responsibilities with regard to emergency shelter were met in terms of reducing gaps and duplications and promoting a quality response. Despite delays in funding and an even more challenging terrain than the Delta, basic shelter materials were distributed to 70% of the affected population by the end of January (3 months). However the quality and coverage of non-food items (NFI) was less successful with more 40-50% of affected villages still requiring additional NFI assistance in February. Inter-cluster coordination in this regard, with WASH and Health, could have been much better. The ESC succeeded in being able to report on basic emergency shelter needs, and resource shortfalls. However confusion due to the combined reporting on

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[1] UNICEF redeployed from Eastern Europe a Myanmar national with WASH cluster experience as assistant lead.

emergency shelter and NFI kits and between emergency and early recovery needs created early misperceptions that overall shelter needs were met. As a result donors, who were reportedly disinterested in funding early recovery, were slow to fill in the gap for transitional and more permanent shelter materials. Information management was negatively impacted by some agencies poor information systems and lack of participation in the ESC by important shelter and NFI actors, including some UN agencies. The ESC's (and other clusters') job was further complicated as OCHA/MIMU did not always use and reinforce the cluster as the primary source of information contrary to established Guidelines.

The terms of reference for the ESC were minimised to information management and setting standards for shelter and were never revisited, contributing to different expectations by cluster members. ESC participation was mixed with at first a very few (3) active agencies leading on shelter kit distribution and later a few early recovery actors ensuring transition was on the agenda. However, the latter with mixed results given a lack of an initial and adequate needs assessment. ESC leadership structures could have been more robust, enabling as a cohesive group, more strategic decision making, advocacy, timely action and problem solving, the latter particularly to avoid problems of poor information exchange, poor township-regional-national communication, and the timely mis-en-oeuvre of early recovery. There was no significant 'co-leadership' or a strategic advisory group. Later activities of the ESC team focused almost primarily on tracking and reporting actual distributions. While the discussion and advocacy around the sheltering process and the importance of a timely transition to semi-permanent and permanent structures was delayed. UN Habitat was an active participant throughout the lifetime of the ESC but only took a more proactive role in month two, when it co-led the implementation of a comprehensive shelter assessment that later informed an early recovery strategy. Having said this, transition to early recovery was much timelier than in Nargis and the Shelter Working Group has since made up for this delay by effective lobbying with donors.

The ESC team sent to Myanmar, comprised of Myanmar nationals, was an important precedent. Regardless of nationality, when an ESC team is sent without considerable coordination experience additional support is needed both by global and regional shelter cluster experts but also by the Head of Delegation, to whom the ESC team is also accountable. In the case of Myanmar, strategic action by the Delegation without being time consuming could have made the ESC more effective, particularly in inter-cluster meetings with the RC/HC and other heads of missions and in interactions with the MRCS. Having a team that knows the country and can speak the language has advantages, in terms of involving local actors and information exchange. However the ESC's effectiveness was compromised when it was not permitted to travel to affected areas because of MRCS' concerns. It is also clear that the international system for coordination of humanitarian assistance is in fact very foreign and those who do not know the lexicon, mechanisms, and nor work in the same style as that of the international humanitarian community are prejudiced against. As 'nationalising' disaster management and response is the only correct and sustainable option, building more national capacity is the responsibility the humanitarian community. This is particularly true in Myanmar, where the way disasters are managed is changing, as exemplified in the Tachilek earthquake where the Government and other national actors, e.g. the MRCS, had very prominent roles in coordination. Recommendations are further detailed at the end of the report.

Methodology

The evaluation mission to Myanmar (11-21 May) was able to meet or speak with more than 50 persons including IFRC Geneva Shelter Cluster, Kuala Lumpur Regional Shelter Cluster (team) and Regional Director, Myanmar IFRC staff including Head of Delegation, the second Shelter Cluster Coordinator for Giri (Organisational Development staff), the Shelter delegate, Head of Operations, and the two consultants hired for the Shelter Cluster (Coordinator and IM), other cluster coordinators for Giri (Food and WASH), UN Habitat, UNHCR, MIMU and OCHA staff (Regional Officer deployed during Giri, Heads of Office past and present, Deputy Head who facilitated the inter-cluster meetings for Giri, and Sittwe international field staff), local NGOs participating in the IFRC-led Shelter Cluster, the local NGO Contingency Planning Working Group and the LNGO shelter cluster, INGO Liaison and 6 INGOs who actively participated in the shelter cluster, and two important donors for Giri (DFID and ECHO). A full list of interviewees is in Annex 1.

Not least, a field team of 5 nationals including staff from local NGOs and consultants visited 15 villages in the affected area and interviewed villagers on their opinion of the emergency shelter intervention. The villages visited were selected to ensure representation from worst affected townships and include 2 villages in Pauktaw, 4 in Minbya, and 10 in Myebon. The interview methodology was adapted from the Collaborative Development Associations (CDA)'s Listening Project which allows villagers to speak openly about what is most relevant to them about the emergency response, rather than a structure or semi-structured questionnaire (Annex 3)[2] After the villagers told their "story", they were asked about any accountability measures put into place by external agencies, such as to what extent they participated in the design, targeting and distribution of aid, information and degrees of transparency of agencies and knowledge of beneficiaries, and opportunities to provide feedback and complain if necessary.[3] Upon analysis, the interview team grouped responses according the framework proposed in the Cluster Evaluation II, i.e. the coverage (quantity), quality, appropriateness, timeliness and any issues relating to 'do no harm'. The team also interviewed the Regional government in Sittwe and township representative in Myebon and met with UNDP, CARE and UN Habitat representatives in Sittwe. The questionnaire used for the village interviews and the villages visited are in Annex 4.

Finally, the mission reviewed IFRC strategic documents, and IASC guidelines on humanitarian coordination, previous ESC evaluations, Myanmar specific documents such as Nargis lessons learned, and other evaluations, Giri specific documents such as Humanitarian Country Team meeting minutes, and OCHA sitreps, and assessments as well as Myanmar ESC documents such as meeting minutes, assessments and strategic documents (Annex 4). The information management working group, WASH and the Food Security Cluster also conducted lessons learned exercises related to cluster performance were reviewed and referenced here. And MRCS' own lessons learned documents with specific attention paid to issues of coordination and information sharing.

The structure of the report includes a background to the emergency and a timeline (Annex 2), performance of the ESC with regards to its Terms of Reference, and other issues related to accountability, lesson learning and deployment of coordination teams in small and medium size emergencies, and finally Recommendations. Throughout the report there are bullet points which include key findings and detailed recommendations which are then summarized in the final Recommendations.

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[2] The Listening Projects (implemented in over 10 countries) one of which was implemented in Myanmar in 2009 after Nargis and throughout the country, including Rakhine (CDA, 2010).
[3] Adapted from the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) principles and consistent with IFRC's own Accountability Framework (www.hapinternational.org).

Limitations

The evaluator has 3 years experience working in Myanmar before, during and after Cyclone Nargis (2007-2009) as a UN and then INGO worker, during Nargis in information management, NGO liaison, and facilitator of the Accountability and Learning Working Group and later during recovery as a manager of a local NGO-led recovery project. This perspective is both an attribute and a limitation, as certain prejudices developed during Nargis, particularly the observation of a lack of participation by local actors in mainstream coordination, a lack of systems for downward accountability, and a healthy suspicion of resource-intense coordination mechanisms. To counter these biases, many people were listened to (over 50) representing different stakeholders (villagers, MRCS, MNGOs, INGOS, and UN) who had a wide range of opinions. A special effort, with the help of a rapidly assembled and trained field team, was made to get villagers opinions to 'ground check' any impressions based on information from internationals largely based in Yangon.

I.   Background

The cluster system is part of a three pillared response to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. The fourth pillar, added in 2007, is partnership - embodied in the Principles of Partnership, a "declaration of commitment to working together"; the UN, international NGOs, and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies but also Local NGOs and host governments, the latter when willing and capable.[4] The first three pillars are in essence temporary measures until such a time a country, its government and people, are capable of implementing their own humanitarian response without external assistance (ref. Gujarat earthquake China). But at the minimum are meant to ensure that international humanitarian assistance, or more importantly, those who provide it – are accountable for how they use often scarce but important resources.

The cluster system has been evaluated formally, twice in what are commonly known as Cluster Evaluation I and II (CEI and CEII).[5] The evaluators found that the cluster system has probably improved the coordination of international humanitarian assistance, increasing coordination primarily between the UN, international NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in an emergency. While unable to systematically measure from a beneficiary's perspective if aid is being provided more effectively as a result, the evaluators were confident that there has been most likely an increase in predictability, partnership and effectiveness, the latter defined by improved quality through standards, coverage through the reduction of gaps and duplications, appropriateness - through among other strategies - coordinated and often joint needs assessments, and timeliness. Criticisms still remain however regarding the degree of partnership with local communities, local NGOs and government and the lack of systematic feedback from affected persons themselves, through greater efforts to formulate, implement and measure what is commonly called 'downward accountability'.[6] In addition evaluators noted that the clusters cannot be evaluated as measure separate from the other two – humanitarian leadership and predictable funding.[7] Particularly regarding the former, there remains considerable doubt as to any significant improvement, not least because there has been no external evaluation of the performance of Humanitarian Coordinators however a recently published study by Overseas Development Institute may answer some questions.[8]

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[4] Knudsen 2011, Partners in Principle, Partners in Practice. ODIHPN Humanitarian Exchange 50.
http://www.odihpn.org/documents/humanitarianexchange050a.pdf
[5] http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/thematic-areas/evaluations-of-humanitarian-response/reports
[6] Ibid.
[7] http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/WhatistheCERF/EvaluationsandReviews/tabid/5340/language/en-US/Default.aspx
[8] http://www.odi.org.uk/events/details.asp?id=2690&title=humanitarian-partnerships

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are, in partnership with the rest of the humanitarian community, committed to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, while respecting their mandate and principles. Under the 'Enabling Action 2 pursuit of humanitarian diplomacy', the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) through their General Assembly of national societies has accepted the responsibility for 'convening' the emergency shelter cluster.[9] They are the only 'lead' agency that is not a UN agency, while international NGOs in some clusters such as education, are globally recognised as co-leads. Due to the unique origins, structure, mandate and principles of the IFRC, in their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), they are not 'accountable' to the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) who is meant to contribute to greater leadership and they do not benefit from the Common Emergency Relief Funds (CERF) that are meant to contribute to predictable funding. Instead the Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC), team is accountable to the IFRC Head of Delegation (HoD) for "issues such as security, administration, HR, etc. and to the IFRC Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator for technical coordination issues" (IFRC Kuala Lumpur, 2011: Annex 10). The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (RCRCS) benefit from their own version of CERF which is called DREF (Disaster Relief Emergency Fund).

Evaluations of the ESC have noted the advantages and disadvantages of being the only non-UN agency leading the cluster system, not least for its perceived neutrality and lack of vested interests in funding. The IFRC approach is also influenced by its way of working, i.e. its role in 'building strong national RCRCS' (Enabling Action 1). Unlike the UN agencies who simultaneously coordinate and directly implement or sub-contract often with members of their clusters, the IFRC does not implement directly. Neither would it circumvent the National Society unless by working with a National Society, the IFRC would risk compromising Red Cross principles.

In Myanmar, this latter point (working in support of a National Society's response) has particular nuances given that the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) does work in close collaboration with the government. The government has not always been open to international humanitarian interventions. In the case of Cyclone Nargis (2008), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) intervened with the GoUM encouraging them to accept international assistance and facilitating increased access to affected areas for UN and international NGOs.[10] Whereas the fact that the MRCS is an 'auxiliary' to government, MRCS has been the first responder in many of the more recent humanitarian disasters in Myanmar.[11] And through their close relationship with the IFRC, the MRCS has been able to contribute significantly to the increased understanding by the international community of humanitarian needs in Cyclone Nargis, Cyclone Giri and most recently in the earthquake in Tachilek.

On 22 October 2010, a category 4 cyclone struck the Rakhine Coast in Myanmar, with winds of 177kph and a tidal surge of 7 to 8 meters destroying public and private infrastructure and livelihoods.[12] While the magnitude of the cyclone was similar to Cyclone Nargis two and half years before, there were important differences as well, not least a dramatic reduction in the loss of life. The MRCS in coordination with the GoUM effectively warned populations along the coast to evacuate to higher ground conveniently located within kilometers of the sea. The numbers of people missing or dead were reported to be less than a

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[9] See the IFRC Strategy 2020: saving lives changing minds and the Memorandum of Understanding between IFRC and OCHA
[10] Belanger and Horsey (2008) Negotiating Humanitarian Access to cyclone-affected areas of Myanmar: a review. www.odihpn.org/report.asp?id=2964.
[11] Featherstone et al (2009) Review of the RCRC Movement Response to Cyclone Nargis.
[12] OCHA 2010. Situation Report 29 October.

hundred vs. hundreds of thousands in Nargis; one immediate benefit being that communities and families were not devastated or traumatized to the same extent. Within days any temporary displaced camps or facilities were dismantled and people could go home.

However, Rakhine State (RS) is different from the Delta in other important ways. It is socioeconomically and politically complex with a history of ethnic tension (Bamar-Rohingya-Bengali). A large percentage of its people are not recognised as Myanmar citizens, the Rohyinga[13], and the large number of Bengali economic migrants are not officially registered. It is an economically depressed area, with electricity, transport and communications severely underdeveloped.[14] Access to the area by international agencies, like other States (vs. Divisions), is notoriously difficult; only 7 international agencies had Memorandum of Understanding for operations in *Northern Rakhine State* prior to Giri and not the area affected by Giri.[15] Importantly the area affected by Cyclone Giri is also the focus of intense investment by the Chinese who are developing a deep sea port and natural gas pipeline in Kyaukphu.[16]

A. Preparedness

One criticism of the Nargis response was the lack of effective disaster preparedness which resulted in among other things a high death toll.[17] The Giri response demonstrated a significant improvement in preparedness on behalf of the GoUM and MRCS, who effectively assisted in the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from the Rakhine coast to higher ground and strong buildings in situ.

At the same time, while the Cyclone was known by the humanitarian community days in advance, very little was done collaboratively by the humanitarian community to prepare for its potential impact.[18] While OCHA staff began tracking the cyclone, a Humanitarian Core Group meeting the day Giri struck (Friday, 22 October) only noted in its minutes 'to prepare' while no mention was made of activating the IASC Contingency Plan, or notifying and coordinating with humanitarian agencies operating in the area for emergency telecommunications. There were no inter-agency plans made for rapid response including deployment of assessment teams if through the course of the night and on Saturday morning it was realized that Cyclone Giri might have an impact that would require international humanitarian assistance. It was noted by interviewees that agencies with ongoing operations in Rakhine were not at the HCT Core Group meeting. UN staff (UNHCR, UNDP and WFP) in the area was warned and some were evacuated. Independently agencies including MRCS/IFRC, WFP, MSF-Holland and Save the Children made an inventory of available humanitarian stocks, largely undistributed assistance for Nargis affected areas. Paung Ku, an inter-agency consortium project to support civil society, active in Nargis, packed suitcases full of money and readied teams to depart the next morning. MRCS, with the assistance of IFRC, actively maintained duty to collect information all night long from volunteers with CDMA phones in the affected townships.

A detailed Timeline can be found in Annex 2.

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[13] 700,000 out of 3.1 million in GoUM and UNDP (2011) Integrated Household Living Standards Survey.
[14] GoUM and UNDP (2006 and 2011) Integrated Household Living Standards Survey shows that Rakhine State (along with Chin State) have the highest levels of poverty and the worst living conditions in the country. Although the data suggests gradual improvement in the country across all indicators, this is not the case in Rakhine.
[15] GRET, Malteser, Action Contre le Faim, Medecins san Frontiers, Save the Children, WFP, UNHCR ; the latter having only just received approval of their MOU but had not actually set up operations yet.
[16] Paung Ku (2011) Reflections from the Giri Response.
[17] IASC 2008, Real Time Evaluation Cyclone Nargis.
[18] Note Cyclone Giri went from a category 2 to 4 in the period of one day (Friday 22 October) however, so did Nargis.

B. The first week after Giri

Saturday, October 23 (D+1)

When humanitarian agencies woke up on Saturday morning, "common sense"[19] regarding the impact of a category 4 cyclone on a largely poor population living in bamboo huts along the Rakhine coast, prompted the INGO Forum to call a meeting. IFRC, observers to the Forum, also attended as did representatives of Myanmar NGOs Contingency Planning Working Group (MNGO CPWG) and donors (ECHO) to share information and coordinate immediate action. At the same time, the acting Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) contacted the Relief and Recovery Department (RRD) within the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) and was told that humanitarian agencies already operating in Rakhine were welcome to provide humanitarian assistance, but that no international staff, nor new agencies nor an international appeal for humanitarian assistance would be necessary. It was a "local disaster" and agencies were to keep a "low profile".[20] The same day the acting RC/HC communicated this message to the Humanitarian Forum (an all inclusive inter-agency meeting).

In the meantime, agencies unilaterally deployed emergency assessment teams with limited relief supplies and cash. Within 24 hrs teams were reporting back that while the GoUM was providing emergency assistance, additional humanitarian aid was immediately necessary. The Rakhine Regional Command was also reported to have acted in coordination with local representatives of humanitarian agencies, including indicating priority areas for immediate intervention and working immediately to facilitate access by clearing roads, waterways, etc.[21] The areas targeted were largely Myebon township but also Kyauk Phyu, Minbya, and Pauk Taw townships (see Map in Annex 5).

Sunday, October 24 (D+2)

On Sunday, the Humanitarian Country Team[22] 'informally' activated the cluster system, respecting the GoUM's request to remain low profile, but needing at the same time to start information sharing regarding needs and immediate response. The MRCS in coordination with local authorities started collecting information regarding numbers of people affected. Four (4) INGOs (MSF-H, SCF, ACF and Merlin) began a series of daily meetings that were to last two weeks.[23] And the MSW called the MNGO Contingency Planning group and requested they officially activate their contingency plan, i.e. become active in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

- *IFRC, in its Enabling Activity 2 Humanitarian Diplomacy, "to promote international cooperation frameworks and systems that will improve the fairness, harmonization, quality and accountability of international assistance" (S2020:27). This can include advocating for joint emergency preparedness and response protocols with roles and responsibilities clearly defined and an activation of those protocols when necessary. While it is clear that IFRC Myanmar's first priority is to support the MRCS for preparedness and rapid response, nonetheless the Delegation remains active in inter-agency*

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[19] To quote an IFRC delegate

[20] A 'local disaster' is one defined by the UK Civil Contingencies Secretariate that local resources - human, financial, technical and logistic – are sufficient to handle the needs of affected persons (MKC-EPU/AWGB at www.mkweb.co.uk/emergencyplanning/documents/NationalorLocalv1_1.pdf). By this definition, Giri was not a 'local disaster'.

[21] Note that this is prior to the 7 November elections which saw the election of civilians into the Government (25%).

[22] The Core Group of which IFRC is an observer

[23] Most humanitarian agencies including the clusters and OCHA were not aware of these meetings.

contingency planning and coordination. Given resource constraints to do much more, at a very minimum, through describing the proactive measures taken by MRCS/IFRC in the days preceding Giri, it might have stimulated others to do the same. (See Recommendation 1)

On Tuesday, 4 days after the cyclone, the first official meeting wherein the impact of Giri was discussed was at the monthly meeting of the Humanitarian Partnership Working Group (HPWG), including UN, NGOs and donors. Donors perceived the situation 'chaotic' with insignificant information being provided by the UN. It was explained again that while the GoUM would allow access for agencies already active in the Rakhine region, the GoUM did not see the need for expatriate staff to be deployed, joint needs assessments to be implemented, or international appeals for funding to be announced. Donors at this point were on standby and ECHO, for one, failed to inform their headquarters of a humanitarian disaster and therefore secure funds for immediate use. Without clear humanitarian leadership, agencies continued their bilateral and parallel coordination systems (INGOs and Myanmar NGOs) and started to approach donors bilaterally.

In this context IFRC convened its first 'informal' emergency shelter cluster meeting.

- *IFRC must advocate for stronger emergency response protocols that cannot be compromised and stronger humanitarian leadership when deciding to respond in a disaster, this may include advocacy for a separation of humanitarian and resident coordinator functions where the effective delivery of the two important functions are in conflict and a strengthening of the humanitarian coordinators' pool (R1).*

C. The Emergency Shelter Cluster - the crisis stage

IFRC accepted to convene an informal shelter cluster at the request of the RC/HC and did so within 4 days of Giri. However the Delegation itself had been depleted of human resources. The Nargis operation (70million CHF) employed some 13 international delegates, almost all of whom had been forced to leave Myanmar due to visa issues. This meant that the smaller annual appeal team comprised of 6 delegates was already stretched undertaking normal activities, plus Nargis, and eventually the Giri Response. With no alternative, IFRC delegated the role of 'cluster coordinator' to Nargis international logistics staff in country with some experience with the ESC. His first act was to clarify to a group of 30-odd participants that considering the cluster had not been formally activated, the terms of reference (TOR) of the ESC would be limited to information sharing and management in a minimum attempt to ensure coverage, identify gaps and duplications, and setting standards for emergency shelter. Development of an official strategy, contact with the press, resource mobilization and coordination with local authorities would "be difficult".[24]

IFRC was able to share information received from MRCS regarding persons affected and damages but a joint assessment by the humanitarian community or the shelter cluster was not implemented.[25] By the second meeting (day 6 after Giri) a ESC technical working group (TWG) had identified the components and prices of a minimum household emergency shelter kit, including two tarpaulins, a rope and a hammer, and community kit, the latter to be distributed one to each 5 households. No technical specifications were given for a non-food items (NFI) kit.

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[24] ESC Minutes 26 October
[25] In the first inter-cluster meeting the need for a joint assessment was discussed and discarded given political sensitivities and the hope that several ongoing assessments would provide enough information. Assessments were done by UNDP, ACF, Solidarites and the WASH cluster, the latter who planned on using an assessment being implemented by a local partner but was later disappointed by its quality.

The primary providers of crisis stage shelter and NFI kits were MRCS, Save the Children and MSF-Holland, the latter working with ACF and Merlin stocks. Participating agencies immediately shared information regarding in-country stocks largely consisting of kits with only one tarpaulin. The GoUM also started distributing locally available tarpaulins as did agency-specific assessment and early response teams.

After the second ESC meeting, the IFRC logistics officer left Myanmar due to expiration of his visa, and two existing core staff of IFRC, the Organisational Development (OD) and Disaster Management (DM) delegates stepped forward to offer their assistance. As the DM delegate was to support MRCS in its emergency operation, the OD delegate who had some involvement in the ESC in Pakistan and Bangladesh was given the task, working closely with an experienced national information manager.

Triangulating GoUM, MRCS and UNDP data, by the end of week one the figure of 55,000 affected households (260,000 people) was used for planning and resource mobilization (52,000 HH requiring shelter materials). By 3 November (10 days after Giri), the first indication of ES and NFI needs based on members reports was released. The perceived gap, given confirmed funding, was supplies for approximately 10,000 households or 2.2 million USD. The table was distributed to ESC members on 3 November with a request for feedback by 5 November. No feedback was received.

While the ESC repeatedly requested more detailed descriptions of NFI kits, the information was only acquired a month later once the dedicated information manager deployed by the IFRC actively sought out the information. In the meantime, the emergency shelter and NFI kits were combined in the table with some significant detail lost. The IFRC were perceived to be overly focused on tarpaulins to the default of a more clear understanding of the composition of NFI kits and a lack of inter-cluster coordination; a joint responsibility of the ESC, WASH and Health coordinators and OCHA who facilitates and ensures inter-cluster coordination. As kit coverage was relative high (80%) it reportedly sent the message that "shelter needs were met". Early recovery stakeholders felt this was misleading. Made further complicated by the fact that those distributing the minimum emergency shelter kit were not those who would respond later in the 'sheltering' process and so divergent interests among shelter cluster participants.

In sum, there was an early commitment, quick action and relatively little turnover of IFRC shelter cluster staff. The TOR for the ESC was discussed from the beginning and an agreement among stakeholders on a reduced set of responsibilities given limited capacity and the 'informality' of the cluster. There was prompt determination of emergency shelter standards, identification of partners, initial needs, resource mobilization and initiating distribution of a minimum shelter kit. The ESC team did the best it could to reconcile the divergent interests of ESC members, the majority of which at this early stage were distributing emergency shelter and NFIs. Without any information on early recovery needs, the best IFRC could have done was to clearly state that these were emergency needs being met with temporary materials, i.e. tarpaulins, that would need to be replaced in early recovery interventions.

D. Activation of the Formal Emergency Shelter Cluster

On 1 November, the RC/HC wrote to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Valerie Amos requesting to formally activate the clusters. The same day the IFRC Head of Delegation (HoD) wrote to Geneva regarding the request for activation stating that it would not be possible to continue convening the ESC without additional support. Within 24 hours Geneva in coordination with Kuala Lumpur (IFRC Regional Office)

identified two Myanmar individuals that could be deployed within the week; a preference given their experience with the ESC and extreme difficulties of getting visas for international staff.

According to OCHA and the RC/HC, the difference between informal clusters and formal activation was artificial and in fact was only a "normal delay". However it did cause some confusion among cluster coordinator agencies, NGOs and donors. The delay or initial convening 'informally' had several impacts; a) per donors it sent the message that the magnitude of the disaster did not require additional resources for coordination and therefore was not that severe, b) some NGOs were not sure if it was then necessary to participate in clusters and some did not start until several weeks later, c) without an appeal no resources can be mobilised to fund additional coordination capacity, d) many lead agencies did not dedicate full time cluster coordinators but instead used existing staff, and e) the cluster coordinators, in the case of IFRC, reduced their terms of reference to a bare minimum. When the cluster became 'activated' the TOR were not reviewed or revised, which later left some members/stakeholders with unmet expectations particularly in the area of strategy development and resource mobilisation.

- *There is no system set up to support 'informal' activation. IFRC will always have to assess whether it can add any value to coordination based on what is necessary and if it has the capacity to provide it. Saying clusters are informal only creates confusion for stakeholders including participating agencies and donors. IFRC will have to advocate a 'do or don't' approach to clusters to avoid unclear and therefore unmet expectations (R1).*
- *It is appropriate that TORs are modified in agreement with the ESC members but the TOR should be periodically reviewed, normally in the Strategic Advisory Group, and updated as needs and capacities change (R4).*

II.　The Terms of Reference for the Shelter and NFI Cluster

A. More efficient and effective emergency response

As noted in the Cluster Evaluation II (CEII), the ultimate goal of improved coordination is a more effective humanitarian response. If this is the case, then views of affected and recipient communities are essential to understanding if the humanitarian community is in fact delivering aid better. Unfortunately, rarely do cluster evaluations consider beneficiary views, not least as it is difficult to attribute any improvements in humanitarian response to the cluster system.[26] However using the framework suggested in CEII and methodology promoted by the Listening Project, communities can 'tell their story' and informed interviewers (or listeners) can listen for evidence of any views regarding the **coverage (quantity), quality, appropriateness, timeliness and any issues relating to 'do no harm'** - the latter as how aid is distributed in villages in Myanmar (and elsewhere) has previously caused inter and intra village conflicts.[27]

Almost uniformly, the villagers noted adequate distribution of tarpaulins, the main component of the household emergency shelter kit, in a coordinated and timely manner. Villagers noted that all households more or less received 2 tarpaulins of good quality with the exception of the first distributions which might have included locally-purchased tarpaulins from Government and initial rapid assessment and response teams. They also provided examples of where one agency would distribute one tarpaulin to a family and

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[26] Group URD/GPPi 2010.
[27] World Bank 2008 and 2009.

later another agency would distribute a second, an indication that the 2-tarpaulin rule was being respected and that agencies were in general coordinating with each other. Village reports are consistent with ESC reporting in Yangon (Figure 1).
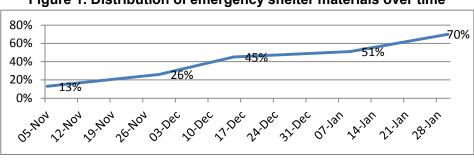
Figure 1. Distribution of emergency shelter materials over time

Distributions were slowed by an even more complicated terrain than the Delta. Travel through labyrinthine water ways required local knowledge to navigate. MRCS built make shift jetties to unload relief items. Cultural and language barriers meant that it required awareness raising even before local people were willing to assist in the delivery of relief items.[28]

On the other hand, the distribution of community shelter kits and other NFI kits was not viewed as either appropriate, well coordinated, or as adequate. Information and participation was low as to how to distribute or share kits therefore most kits were either auctioned or given away in a lottery (a common problem in Nargis). NFI kits were different from village to village and sometimes from house to house. In particular, kitchen kits with pots were in short supply compared to needs according to villagers. Communal use was not practiced for a number of reasons (culturally inappropriate, poor information, lack of participation of beneficiaries in targeting and distribution). This did cause some problems for village leaders who were blamed and noted some community disturbances (throwing rocks) as a result.

The reports from the village are consistent with the comprehensive WASH assessment which reported only 24 % of the affected villages were reached by agencies distributing WASH emergency items. At the time of publication (February), the assessment estimated a need to distribute hygiene kits, water storage containers and soap to 40-50% of the villages.[29] The survey, which the ESC chose not to participate in as they were already in the process of developing their own comprehensive joint shelter assessment, also asked households and communities if they received NFIs such as family kits, clothing, tools and shelter kits (Table 1). Shelter materials, largely tarpaulins, were reported received in 70% of the villages. The WASH assessment also demonstrates that agencies prioritized Myebon, the worst affected township, with 86% coverage of tarpaulins (and similarly higher coverage of WASH and medicine distribution), while Pauktaw villages received comparatively more NFIs (78%).

However the coverage of NFI's is misleading as NFI's are grouped and if the village said they received at least one NFI item it was considered a positive response. A more detailed distribution of NFIs is in Table 1.

Table 1. Data on distribution of Tarpaulins, Shelter kits and selected NFIs (WASH Assessment)

Tarpaulins	Tools	Family Kits	Clothing

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[28] MRCS 2011.
[29] WASH Early Recovery Action Plan, 2011.

Villages	%	Villages	%	Villages	%	Villages	%
78/112	70%	7/112	6%	22/112	20%	21/112	19%
Compared to ESC report of estimated overall coverage as of 9/1/2011(' is 000's)							
HH	%	HH	%	HH	%	NR	
43'/51'	83%	4'/51'	8%	6'/52'	13%		

Note: These are dated data (January) and much has been done since then with Save the Children alone having distributed full NFI kits to 15,000 households and MRCS to nearly 14,000 households.

When compared to Nargis, villagers were more informed of who was distributing what. However villagers reported no public or published information distributed or posted, no beneficiary targeting lists for transparency, no complaints mechanisms for feedback, and very little to no consultation or participation in the way goods were distributed. For example, in at least one case, the targeting criteria by one INGO were blatantly ignored and once the INGO had left the village the villagers re-distributed the kits.

However some NGOs and indeed, MRCS, are focusing on beneficiary communication and accountability, e.g. Save the Children had complaints mechanisms in place and used feedback to improve the NFI kits.[30] Yet no discussion of accountability measures or standards was ever held in the ESC nor in inter-cluster coordination.

- *Clusters either in an inter-cluster meeting or other mechanism, must also look to promote downward accountability to populations not only by providing clear guidance on participatory methods, but discussing minimum and locally-appropriate accountability measures, e.g. information sharing on humanitarian activities with beneficiaries and complaints and feedback mechanisms. This will be further discussed in the IASC review of the cluster TOR in 2011 (R4).*

B. Standards Setting

Households in the field research done for the evaluation consistently reported on the high quality of the tarpaulins received. There was the impression, validated to some extent by village interviews, that while the technical specifications of the emergency household shelter kits was quickly adopted and by in large respected by agencies, the standards, coordination and distribution of NFI (and community shelter kits) was less clear. There were no examples of technical specifications for NFI kits which included kitchen kits, hygiene kits, family kits and children's kits, and no inter-cluster meetings with WASH or Health to agree on these standards. However there are clear Sphere NFI standards. Neither UNICEF nor WHO participated regularly in the ESC cluster. Nor the ESC in the WASH or Health cluster. Inter-cluster meetings were largely for information exchange and not for this important task. MRCS also noted in its own lessons learned exercise, a need to review the contents of its NFI kits.

Problems encountered in the Nargis response were similarly seen in the Giri response. While auctions, "lucky draws" or lotteries of 'shared' or 'community' kits were common,[31] a more appropriate or effective way of distributing these items was not discussed in the ESC or other clusters. Similarly, there was the problem of clearly communicating the difference between emergency shelter standards and early recovery shelter standards.[32] A misperception was created during the emergency phase from an early ESC

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[30] Save the Children 2011, 6 Months after Giri.
[31] Social Impacts Monitoring I, Cyclone Nargis, World Bank, 2008, Social Recovery and Community Participation Working Group, Early Recovery Cluster 10 July 2008, Myanmar, and Accountability and Learning Working Group, Minutes 23 October 2008,
[32] UNHabitat 2009, Lessons Learned in the Nargis Shelter Response.

statement (3 November) that 85% of emergency shelter needs have been satisfied through the provision of emergency shelter kits. While not meant to imply that emergency shelter kits provide adequate medium to long term shelter, it was it was willingly perceived by donors that "shelter was taken care of". Later a comprehensive shelter assessment and advocacy by the ESC, Shelter Working Group and RC/HC in Decemberand January worked to significantly increase understanding of the issue and consequently funding for shelter recovery.

Finally, setting standards was limited to technical standards on emergency kits and eventually transitional shelter. There was no standard setting on method of delivery including using participatory methods or any other standards for increasing the accountability of the shelter (or other) intervention.

- *In Myanmar, strategies for community kits both for shelter and NFI need to be reviewed considering the common practice to either auction or lottery the items and not to share them. At a minimum there needs to be more participation by communities in the targeting and distribution. Given not everyone loses everything in a cyclone, more flexible cash grants should be considered (R4, R5).*
- *ESC coordinators need increased awareness of the 'sheltering process' and the importance of clear messaging on the difference between emergency and early recovery shelter standards and requirements particularly in natural disasters where the time lapse between then the emergency and early recovery can be much shorter (R7).[33]*
- *NFI standards (and distribution) have to be treated with the same attention as emergency shelter materials. Global Shelter and NFI training and reference documents have to reflect this equally important aspect of emergency response (R5).*
- *The Local Resource Centre has translated the Sphere shelter and NFI standards in Burmese. These should have been made available. The sheltercluster.org website should include various language versions of the Sphere shelter standards (R5).*

C. Participation

The first line in the TOR of the Cluster is "ensure inclusion of key humanitarian partners for the sector". In general participation in the cluster was good. MSF-H was an active participant throughout the cluster implementation and essential for information sharing as was IFRC and through them MRCS. UN Habitat and Solidarites, while not active in emergency shelter but in recovery, were nonetheless active in the ESC and sent relatively senior staff to participate. Save the Children sent less senior staff. Perhaps unrelated, Save decided later to not respect the ratio of households to community shelter kit (supposed to be 5 families for one kit) deciding instead to target more individual vulnerable households. Local NGOs were active (discussed in Involvement of Local Actors) and INGOs noted good networking with local NGOs through the ESC. Other UN agencies active in shelter interventions included UNDP, IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR, the latter the 'co-coordinator' of the ESC.[34] Initially UNHCR was an active participant but eventually stopped attending ESC meetings.

However important actors such as UNICEF for shelter and NFI distribution, UNDP for shelter interventions and later UNHCR who distributed kits through Save were not active participants. In the case of UNDP, this

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[33] One suggestion from an interviewee was to qualify statements such as "emergency shelter kits won't meet Sphere standards for shelter through the next monsoon."
[34] UNHCR is co-lead at the global level and not normally co-lead at the national level. However both the letter to the ERC and minutes of the ESC note UNHCR introducing and explaining themselves as co-lead. Discussed further in Management.

was due to a perceived conflict in approach being promoted by the ESC and perhaps UNDP's capacity to participate. Given there appeared to be more materials available for self-reconstruction, UNDP preferred to give technical assistance and cash grants for retrofitting. Their participation could have contributed to a diverse but appropriate range of approaches given local circumstances. Instead, their lack of participation created mistrust and the perception of a lack of transparency particularly when UNDP received CERF funds and later could not promptly distribute them.

D. Coordination with other Coordinators

1. Inter-cluster Coordination

Cluster stakeholders consistently find inter-cluster coordination "badly defined".[35] However there is a Guidance note in draft that should help.[36] In Giri, inter-cluster coordination did not benefit from senior humanitarian leadership (neither the RC/HC nor OCHA), was not strategic, and did not serve the function of holding the clusters to account for their performance in any constructive way (discussed in Holding the Cluster System to Account). At times its chairmanship style was not "consensual and facilitative" nor the membership style "collaborative and constructive".[37] It did not serve to ensure participation by UN agencies in relevant clusters, e.g. UNDP in the ESC nor important inter-cluster coordination between ESC-WASH-Health. And in fact created problems between participating agencies, e.g. UNDP and ESC, by allocating responsibilities to them without prior discussion (see Field and Central Coordination). CERF discussions were reported as lacking leadership, teamwork, and transparency. Without these, shared views on priorities given actual needs and available funding were not achievable. And decisions made regarding the CERF allocations were not satisfactory to those involved nor those who observed.

Instead inter-cluster coordination focused on information exchange for OCHA situation reports and repeated requests for field coordination without looking to creative solutions for lack of information flows between the field, regional offices (Sittwe) and Yangon – another common problem in Nargis and in general.[38]

- *"The modus operandi of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group is governed by the Principles of Partnership"[39] and therefore demands teamwork, working in a supportive and collaborative manner to identify problems and solutions (R2, R3).*
- *Inter-cluster coordination demands strategic leadership and a leader who will hold clusters to account for performance and the Principles of Partnership. When the inter-cluster environment starts to degrade, it is the responsibility of the RC/HC to intervene (R2, R3).*

2. Field and Central Coordination

There was evidence of informal and formal coordination of emergency shelter and NFI materials at all levels, village, township, Sittwe (regional) and Yangon (national). However, common in many emergencies, the 'centre' was not seen to be responsive to the 'periphery'.[40] Staffed based in Sittwe (regional) and the townships including the OCHA representative, felt that coordination would have benefitted from at least

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[35] Group URD/GPPI 2010 and ESC 2010a.
[36] http://www.icva.ch/doc00004238.html
[37] Ibid.
[38] Group URD/GPPI 2010, IASC 2008, Alexander 2009.
[39] http://www.icva.ch/doc00004238.html
[40] Group URD/GPPI 2010, Alexander 2008, IASC 2008.

occasional visits by the ESC team (and other clusters), not least for advocacy with local officials on the importance of shelter needs and an appreciation for the problems being faced locally. While asked repeatedly (and minuted), the ESC members felt that additional field coordination would not have improved reporting, while local coordination teams felt that there were problems that were not being addressed at the Yangon-level due to poor communication (township-regional-national).

While reporting and information management was probably sufficient at the Yangon level (given the degree of accuracy and detail of ESC reports), without regular contact with field offices there was the impression (whether valid or not) that the Yangon-based ESC did not have up to date information. While WFP set up internet access in November, it was reportedly not widely available to humanitarian actors. When twice the ESC team tried to travel to Sittwe this was not approved by MRCS and the Delegation who according to standard protocol must approve travel (further discussed in Coordination with MRCS).[41] This most likely did compromise Yangon-field communication and the decreased effectiveness, if not at a very minimum, decreased confidence in the information being distributed at Yangon level.

Eventually, bypassing minuted discussions of the ESC members, OCHA requested UNDP to convene shelter coordination in Sittwe who did so reluctantly. But without UNDP participation in the ESC at Yangon level, and no communication flows clearly decided between the ESC Yangon and UNDP Sittwe, this additional field coordination had little value-added.

- *Better communication can substitute for allocating additional staff additional responsibilities, e.g. field coordination. But information flows need to be better defined between OCHA, UNDP or NGOs who often take on additional coordination responsibilities, and the ESC (and other clusters) (R4).*
- *With or without delegated field coordination, field visits by cluster coordination teams are a must and IFRC (in Myanmar) will need to do what it can to ensure ESC teams can travel (see discussion on Coordination with MRCS). Without field representation, a visit every two weeks would have been sufficient according to field based stakeholders (R12, R13).*

3. Parallel coordination systems with Local and International NGOs

As mentioned, from day 1 after Giri, 5 large INGOs held almost daily coordination meetings to exchange information and coordinate their activities, largely due to a perceived lack of urgency within the UN and to coordinate INGO advocacy issues. These agencies also participated in clusters. Similarly, Myanmar NGOs had planned in their Contingency Planning Working Group (CPWG) their own cluster system and shelter cluster, however in Giri the local NGO 'cluster coordinator' Swanyee Development Foundation (SDF), did not have the capacity to conduct regular meetings. Instead SDF was a regular participant in the ESC but they did not represent Myanmar NGO viewpoints nor provided operational information to the cluster; "they came and left". The Local Resource Centre (LRC) played a coordination role in the Nargis operation but this was largely to be replaced by the MNGO CPWG in Giri. Still the LRC had the Sphere shelter and NFI standards in Burmese. These should have been made available and put on to the web.

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[41] There appears to be some confusion regarding government-imposed travel restrictions at the time that limited the travel of *international staff*. While the ESC staff who were nationals made arrangements to travel to the affected area, upon learning of their travel plans, the Delegation insisted on informing and seeking agreement from MRCS who did not reply to the request. MRCS it has to be said was also under pressure to reduce the number of volunteers in the Giri area.

Parallel coordination systems are not necessarily wasteful or unconstructive if they serve a purpose to those participating in them, and as long as they are not duplicating the efforts of the cluster. If they are, the cluster is not doing its job and needs to discuss with stakeholders how it can do better.

- *The ESC needs to define its relation to parallel coordination systems (as do the other clusters and OCHA) and work together particularly with local NGOs to see how relevant information, representation, and advocacy issues, can flow easily between them. In this regard, the capacity of a Myanmar ESC team to communicate easily with local NGOs is (and was in Giri) an attribute (R8).*

4. Coordination and relationship with MRCS

While information was shared with MRCS regarding the arrival of an ESC team for coordination in Giri, the Myanmar ESC team never actually met with the MRCS President or Executive Committee. Instead the ESC team met with MRCS programme officers and information managers who participated in ESC meetings. However, the ESC team was not always treated with the same respect they might have received had they had a more formal introduction.

There was no regular communication between the MRCS and ESC facilitated by the IFRC and this lack of mutual understanding may have compromised the ESC teams' performance. None of the ESC coordinators could ever travel to the affected area due to a moratorium on travel for international staff. In the case of the Myanmar ESC staff, all IFRC travel arrangements require approval by MRCS. That approval was not received therefore even the Myanmar staff was unable to travel. The first time the ESC coordinator made her own travel arrangements, after being told repeatedly that ESCs are independent and should not inconvenience the Delegation. Before departure, she was advised not to go as MRCS had not approved the travel. The second time when normal procedures were followed and permission was asked from MRCS, the permission was not forthcoming. MRCS had been asked to limit the number of volunteers sent to Rakhine and perhaps they felt that IFRC ESC staff would be seen as contrary to this request.

- *A minimum protocol or guidelines for ESC/NS relations needs to be developed. In Myanmar this includes a formal face to face introduction, sharing terms of reference, exploring to what extent the NS wants to be involved in the ESC and to what extent the ESC would want to collaborate with the NS, what are travel protocols and how should the ESC present themselves, and encouraging informal communications when appropriate to promote good relations. As good relations between the ESC team and the MRCS (National Societies) will normally be beneficial to both. This is only a first step (R12).*
- *Eventually the NS may want to play a more proactive role in the coordination and management of disasters in their country. Perhaps suggesting the MRCS DMM or President be an honorary chair of an occasional meeting. The ESC and engagement in the cluster system can be considered capacity building in this light. This should be the prerogative of the NS dependent on the emergency and political situation (R12).*
- *Other than the obvious information sharing on needs and distributions the NS and the ESC also can benefit from sharing of experience in culturally-appropriate NFI standards[42], accountability (beneficiary communication) strategies, and streamlining needs assessments forms such as in the Tachilek earthquake (see The Necessity of Clusters in Small and Medium Emergencies). If the MRCS obtains its own offices at township level, this would provide an alternative meeting space to the UN or government offices (R12).*

- *The term "shelter response" has different connotations for NS and is not automatically perceived to be part of their mandated response. [43] Either the broader interpretation of shelter (including distribution of tarpaulins) needs to be explained further or NFI kits might be a better 'entry point' for discussions with MRCS and the ESC. Other opportunities for greater ESC – MRCS – IFRC collaboration include the MRCS Contingency Plan and ESC-OCHA-MRCS collaboration, the Government's Standing Orders for disaster management and response (R12).*
- *If MRCS cannot sponsor travel for IFRC cluster coordinators, perhaps IFRC, the RC/HC's office and OCHA can find an alternative 'cover' for cluster coordinator travel (R13).*

E. Information Management

When the cluster was still 'informal', IFRC in consultation with cluster members decided to focus on technical specifications for emergency shelter interventions and information management (IM).   In general, IM was good with relatively detailed and accurate reporting by the ESC information manager(s). However this took time as the ESC-IM had to go direct to agency offices (indicative of a lack of commitment to the ESC?). Even for their own operations, agencies often did not have dedicated IM focal points.

IM was complicated by several factors: a) the confusion between kits (shelter and NFI), b) agencies own lack of adequate information systems, c) lack of participation by some agencies in the ESC, d) lack of means of communication/clear information flows with field offices and field coordination, e) the delays in CERF funding that resulted in emergency shelter being distributed in months 3, 4 and 5 after the cyclone, and f) the lack of information data and structures necessary to adequately convey the process of 'sheltering', that is the process of crisis shelter to transitional and semi-permanent shelter in early recovery. Finally, there was perhaps an over emphasis of the ESC-IM manager on getting it perfect given the situation above.

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[42] MRCS volunteers noted the inappropriateness of plastic plates which are used in prisons. Hence villagers not wanting to use them in fear that it might 'hex' them.
[43] Particularly as the MRCS MoU is with the Ministry of Health

Without an initial needs assessment, there was not enough information to develop a shelter early recovery strategy and identify in more detail early recovery needs. Therefore initial reporting had a narrow focus on crisis needs which may have created confusion among donors and the concern of those (albeit few) ESC members interested in early recovery that needs were not adequately nor timely advocated for.

The ESC-IM consistently attended the IM working group (IMWG), wherein MIMU noted that ESC had a "better handle" on their information when compared to other clusters. In the IMWG it was agreed the relative roles of the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) and the Cluster IM.[44] In general, IM protocols followed the Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster Coordinators and OCHA in Information Management. However this Guidance wasn't always followed by OCHA who directly asked several agencies for information on their shelter response. Not only did it cause confusion for agencies on who to report to, but the data had not been reconciled, e.g. MSF-H was distributing ACF kits. While joint reporting formats were recommended in previous evaluations and lessons learned, they were not used by both clusters for the Giri response. This was further complicated by the fact that UNICEF/WASH did not have a dedicated IM focal point.[45] In a lessons learned session at the closure of the IMWG in February, IM focal points all indicated data inconsistencies, delays in communication with Sittwe and Myebon, and the fact that for many of them, it was their first time as an IM focal point.[46]

ESC members, many of whom are now Shelter Working Group (SWG) members, also noted a break in information management with UNHabitat asking for the same data that they provided to the IFRC-led ESC (final distribution . Per UNHabitat, SWG members chose not to use 'cluster funds' (e.g. CERF) for information management but opted instead for more direct support to affected families.

- *Information management templates need to reflect the changing information needs from crisis to recovery, e.g. from needs of tarpaulins/shelter kits to needs of either partial or total reconstruction, three columns instead of one, particularly when they overlap in the first month after the disaster (R6, R7).*
- *ESC had appropriate information management expertise and succeeded in tracking distributions of emergency shelter and NFIs even though very complicated and the disaggregation of data did not occur until December.*
- *As good practice, the ESC Information Manager's contract was extended to end of January to facilitate IM in the SWG (R7).*
- *Joint reporting formats, which remain a valid recommendation, were not implemented in part due to lack of coordination with UNICEF/WASH and a UNICEF/WASH dedicated IM focal point (R5).*
- *IFRC should encourage and support OCHA in its present review of the Operational Guidance note, the role of MIMU and OCHA itself in Myanmar, and how OCHA can more constructively support clusters to meet their responsibility for information management in emergencies. This is a recommendation also from other clusters lessons learned exercises (R6).[47]*

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[44] IMWG Meeting notes 12 November.
[45] In fact, no other cluster had international dedicated and experienced IM support.
[46] IMWG Meeting notes 4 February.
[47] Food Cluster, Lessons Learned, 2011. "There was a recommendation that information should be provided to cluster the lead only at central and field level (not to OCHA or MIMU) then it is the responsibility of the cluster lead to keep OCHA and MIMU informed at all times."

F. Strategy Development

As mentioned, it was agreed by the ESC members that the TOR be minimized to focus on standards and IM, meaning that strategy development, needs assessments, advocacy and resource mobilization would be limited. As capacity increased and the needs of the ESC members changed, the TOR of the group was never revisited.

It is important the ESC coordinators and ESC members understand the 'sheltering' process, i.e. the transition from crisis to early recovery through the provision of progressively more permanent and durable materials. Specifically, this process-perspective needs to be reflected in needs assessment, information management, strategy development, advocacy and resource mobilization, particularly in natural disasters when recovery can happen faster. Other strategic issues that were not adequately considered or advocated for by the ESC included a discussion on the composition and distribution of NFI kits, and inter-cluster coordination with WASH and Health, the necessity of an 'emergency shelter and NFI strategy' and its relation to an 'early recovery strategy', any discussion around cash for shelter – a 'best practice' in shelter interventions (and a Global Shelter Cluster priority for 2011) and cross cutting issues such as environment. Deforestation in Rakhine State is a serious issue and was raised as a concern by local NGOs.[48] To counter deforestation, the Ministry of Forestry was reported to be selling timber for reconstruction.[49]

- *Don't change the TOR without periodic review. Prioritise activities based available human resources and needs but revisit the TOR as capacity increases (R4).*
- *In Giri affected areas, more than 80% of households said their biggest constraint to rebuilding is cash. Cash is considered a good practice elsewhere in shelter interventions. Cash grants should always be automatically considered and discussed by the ESC. Other humanitarian actors in Myanmar have reiterated the need for more flexible responses implied in the greater use of cash (R4).[50]*

G. Needs Assessments

Coordinating needs assessments, synthesis of these assessments and determining overall shelter and NFI needs is one of the responsibilities of the ESC. In Myanmar, IFRC due to its relationship with MRCS, is often considered a first source of information on needs. In the absence of the humanitarian community having prepared for an alternative, e.g. trained teams of Myanmar people both in the UN, local and international NGOs, with a initial rapid assessment form in Burmese, MRCS/IFRC as the primary source of information was the case in Nargis and again in Giri.[51] In fact basic information regarding needs, including the destruction of houses, was available from MRCS and GoUM by the end of October, one week after Giri. However as donors would only accept an 'externally verified' determination of need, these results were not used until much later when the UN and INGOs triangulated the data with other assessments, e.g. UNDP, and accepted the figures as their own. This became a problem for resource mobilization when in December it became apparent that there were 'unmet needs' for permanent shelter and livelihoods.

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[48] Note that the comprehensive joint assessment observed 9% self recovery 2 months after the Cyclone with more than 80% of respondents saying cash was the main constraint (not materials or skills).
[49] The ESC did inquire after the Ministry of Forestry but there is no follow up mention in the Minutes.
[50] Donors should reconsider the approach of detailed sector based calls for proposals (especially in the early period after a disaster). It encourages homogenous and centralized planning from Yangon and does not allow for the flexibility and responsiveness that is required (Paung Ku 2011).
[51] The IRA has recently been translated to Burmese but is still 14 pages long. ACF, who published the first needs assessment, did not use it in Giri saying it was too long and at that time it was available only in English.

Ultimately an ESC TWG co-lead by Solidarites and UNHabitat resulted in a "comprehensive joint assessment"[52] focusing on early recovery needs and later (January) informed the development of a Shelter Early Recovery Strategy. However, the opportunity was lost to evaluate the then-current state of emergency shelter and indirectly the objective of the ESC, i.e. effectiveness of actual tarpaulin distribution and standards, and if emergency shelter met Sphere guidelines. However it did demonstrate that for the 20,000 households still living with host families in January, tarpaulin distribution wasn't enough for them to go home.[53]

Unfortunately this 'second round of assessments' was not limited to the shelter cluster but occurred in four clusters (Food and Livelihoods, WASH and Shelter). The ESC was invited by WASH to do a joint assessment in January, but the TWG preferred to complete their assessment which began collecting data in December. The inter-cluster coordination did not work effectively to reduce the number of assessments causing duplication of work. Save the Children for example deployed three times for these three assessments.

- *Assessments should always complement each other, particularly if they are done within the same cluster. Early needs assessments if possible should not only assess needs for immediate shelter but also at a minimum partial and complete destruction of houses (looking forward). Similarly, if a second assessment is done, it should include an assessment of what was distributed in terms of shelter and NFI and the standard of emergency shelter, not only to ascertain the urgency for transitional or semi-permanent shelter but also the effectiveness of the emergency shelter intervention (looking backward). This allows a more holistic view of the shelter intervention (R3, R7).*

H. Resource mobilization for ESC interventions

Respecting the Government's wishes that the humanitarian operation 'keep a low profile', initial more proactive actions on the part of the RC/HC's office that might have motivated donors to act more quickly were not taken, e.g. formal activation of the clusters, Flash Appeal and immediate application to the CERF. The CERF was not applied to until 17 days after Giri, funds were not released to UN agencies until 35 days later and to implementing NGOs in the case of emergency shelter (UNHCR to Save the Children) until mid December almost two months after Giri. There were further complications in that ECHO, a large humanitarian donor, also did not declare Giri an emergency, and later had to integrate funding for Giri into a 'regional operation', effectively competing with other countries in the region for funds.[54] This had the effect of increasing competition for funds. NGOs went direct to donors and negotiated bilaterally for funds and some donors even had 'closed' calls for proposals, e.g. DFID for WASH and health. This contributed to a general feeling of a lack of transparency in fundraising and that donors were funding NGOs and not cluster strategies or activities, undermining one of the purposes of the cluster.

Almost without exception, UN and INGO stakeholders were very disappointed with the CERF application and allocation process in terms of leadership, prioritization, and transparency. The UN Country Team, who benefited from the CERF, was not seen to be cohesive. The IFRC HoD participated as an observer, while UNHCR decided to apply to the CERF for emergency shelter funding (838,000 USD) as did UNDP (350,000USD) and IOM (171,000USD). There was an announcement in the 3 November ESC meeting that

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[52] With the participation of two local NGOs (NCV and SDF), Save the Children and IOM.
[53] They reported their primary constraint was money to reconstruct their homes, not skills or materials.
[54] Eruption of Mont Merapi and Kepualan earthquake (Indonesia), flooding in Cambodia, Chennai India, the Phillipines, and Vietnam with over 5 million person affected (EM-Dat, 2011)

UNHCR would be applying to the CERF (but no mention of IOM or UNDP) and no detailed discussion of what this meant for ESC members.[55] Later UNHCR and Save the Children bilaterally arranged for the bulk of UNHCR/CERF resources to be distributed through Save. ESC stakeholders while acknowledging that Save had operational capacity in Rakhine, lamented the fact that the process was not discussed and that other operational agencies, particularly local NGOs who could have sub-contracted with UNHCR, did not have access to these important funds.[56] The fact that UNDP was not active in the ESC cluster but received CERF funds further clouded the process. When the CERF application for 10 million was approved for 6 million, the RC/HC decided to implement a 40% cut across all sectors without further prioritization based on life-saving needs and available funding. While this did not directly reflect on the IFRC who do not compete with the UN for CERF funds, IFRC is normally viewed a neutral and important player in these negotiations and expected to act on the best interests of the ESC.

The second round of CERF funding (under-funded window) was slightly better organized in that it was agreed that UNHabitat would apply on behalf of then Shelter Working Group (SWG) and that UNHabitat would partner with SWG for implementation (500,000USD). At a SWG meeting attended during the course of the evaluation, UNHabitat repeatedly referenced the agreement made with the SWG on the use of funds indicative of a much more participatory and transparent process.

- *The ESC has a responsibility to advocate that CERF funds are used for the projects they are allocated for, i.e. life-saving interventions. The ESC has a role in discussing the use of these funds and making recommendations. IFRC as representative of the ESC has a responsibility to communicate this to the CERF working group. As good practice, the process should be as transparent and as participatory as possible. As it was the first time the HoD of IFRC was participating in the CERF discussion, UNHCR, the 'co-coordinator' of the ESC could have done more to ensure the above happened. However, according to stakeholders, there was minimal consultation.[57] A one-page brief on the CERF process, pitfalls and good practice would help ESC coordinators navigate the process better.*

I. Resource mobilisation for the costs of coordinating the the ESC

Early costs of implementing the ESC were borne by the Myanmar Delegation and when the ESC team was deployed from Haiti and Canada, they were borne by the IFRC Global Shelter Programme in line with previous policy. However, actual policy is that the cost of cluster coordination should be included in national fundraising efforts. For the UN, this means including costs in the CERF. For IFRC this means that funds to coordinate the shelter cluster are requested at the country-level IFRC Emergency Appeal through a dedicated project. When no Emergency Appeal is issued, as it was the case in Cyclone Giri, or when the Emergency Appeal is underfunded, the Global Shelter Programme becomes the funding (and fundraising) instrument.

In the case of Myanmar, the Canadian Red Cross sponsored the dedicated cluster coordinator that was deployed. The American Red Cross also informed Geneva that they might be interested in covering

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[55] Discussion minuted in WASH cluster Nov 2010.
[56] Both SDF and NCV had operational capacity to implement emergency shelter.
[57] UNHabitat noted that they even wrote a letter to the ERC complaining about the process. However 3 November when UNHCR announced it would be applying for the CERF, UNHabitat did not attend the meeting.

coordination costs. [58] There was a misunderstanding on who should follow up this offer and the funding was lost.

- *While not a catastrophe in the Giri response, clearer roles and responsibilities for local fundraising for ESC costs are needed for Delegations and the Regional office.*
- *In Myanmar standby arrangements for funding the ESC might be discussed with ECHO, the American Red Cross, USAID and AUSAID.*

J. Involvement of Local Actors

Local NGOs were significantly more active and integrated into the Giri response when compared to Nargis. Only a week prior to Giri, local NGOs had presented their contingency plan to the Government and when Giri hit, these same local NGOs were called upon by the Government to act. Their contingency plan included a parallel cluster coordination system led by a designated local NGO. This could have been an asset to the IFRC-led cluster, however the local NGO shelter cluster did not have the capacity and was never fully implemented. Nonetheless, the local NGO coordinator, Swanyee Development Foundation (SDF), did actively participate in the IFRC-led cluster. National Compassionate Volunteers (NCV), another local NGO, made a presentation of its early assessment findings with extensive photos. These photos could have been important early advocacy material for donors to demonstrate through images the extent of the damage but were not.

The involvement of local actors increased when the ESC team became Myanmar. Local actors welcomed the change in approach and felt there were advantages, including easier communication, through simultaneous translation and informal discussion. However, local actors too complained of the 'disconnect' between the field and Yangon and requested greater field support to coordination, a service the Myanmar ESC team was well-placed to address if they had been able to travel.

- *There was a significant improvement in the involvement of local NGOs in ESC activities not only through greater partnership and networking (Solidarites/NCV and CARE/SDF) but also in greater capacity both to engage with the cluster, undertake needs assessments, and to effectively distribute humanitarian assistance. This was the case for all clusters. But having Myanmar ESC staff helped (R8).*
- *While the MNGO CPWG clusters were not particularly active in Giri, there is a potential there to give local actors even more responsibility and opportunities for meaningful engagement. The challenge will be how to define and nurture this given IFRC does not have a permanent cluster presence. Advocacy, coordination with UNHabitat and OCHA in this regard might be useful with IFRC providing technical support (R8).*

III. Management Structure and Staffing of the ESC

Interviewees for this evaluation noted the competence of the IFRC staff in the ESC, particularly the effective management of meetings and being proactive with information management. However there were some concerns regarding the previous experience of all of the IFRC Cluster Coordinators in actually coordinating

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[58] The initial budget for coordinating the shelter cluster for two months was over 100,000 CHF. This budget included the deployment of 2 dedicated staff, their flights, accommodation, running costs, this independent review, and other costs. The budget was reduced in half when Canadian Red Cross deployed the coordinator as an in-kind contribution, accommodation was provided by the delegation and other saving measures.

an ESC. In fact, none of the IFRC staff in the role had ever been trained or acted as ESC coordinators before. In the case of the second coordinator, this was perhaps made up for by the fact that he was a "typical" cluster coordinator - western male Anglophone.[59] While the third coordinator, a Myanmar national, had been trained in IM and had experience with the ESC in Haiti. One IFRC staff interviewed noted that he always thought that the cluster system was a stop-gap measure, until a government was willing and able to manage disaster response in their own countries. Instead, in Myanmar as elsewhere, there has been little attempt by the various cluster lead agencies to integrate more Myanmar people into leadership roles in coordination.[60] But there is shared interest in this approach. UNICEF, similar to IFRC, had a Myanmar national with experience in cluster management in Eastern Europe, who was "assistant cluster coordinator" during Giri and effectively ran the cluster in month 3.

Complaints by OCHA and one other cluster coordinator, and not shared by all cluster coordinators, focused largely on the *perceived* lack of up to date information and the *perceived* inability of the cluster coordinator to ensure all shelter information was included in reporting. This appears to have been particularly around the time of the transition of information needs; from emergency needs and emergency actors that were different from recovery needs and recovery actors. While it is true an accurate picture of transitional shelter needs was not available and advocacy for these needs began before a needs assessment was done (not an unusual strategy), the emergency shelter distribution and later the NFI distribution was very accurate if not always timely as the ESC attempted to reconcile confusing information before it was published. Other criticisms were related to the lack of comparable seniority, but cluster coordinators are chosen based on their competence, not their seniority, as clusters are meant to ensure partnership and shared responsibility and is not a management structure for operations *per se*.

Neither IFRC nor ESC members discussed a management structure with more shared responsibilities which, regardless of the competence of the IFRC staff, is a more robust way of managing and may have resulted in more confidence of all those involved. Previous 'good practice' of determining a co-cluster coordinator with a specific TOR, or a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was not implemented as it was felt that given the few active members (10) all the relevant issues could be discussed in regular ESC meetings. While UNHCR is, at the global level co-cluster coordinator when approached at the country level, UNHCR were hesitant to co-lead at the country level as their operations were concentrated in Northern Rakine State. Whilst UNHCR were very supportive in country for the Giri response, it is unclear what value they added other than actively participating in TWGs and a beneficiary of the first CERF to channel funds to Save the Children. Solidarites was a very active NGO but other than TWG leadership, but did not share responsibility for the performance of the ESC. The ESC-IM staff focused largely on information management and did not provide a management support role.

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[59] A common criticism in cluster leadership being the inability of cluster leads to speak the local language, see Haiti Real Time Evaluation, Grunewald 2010 and an observation in general that leadership positions are largely held by westerners who are most often male, see Buchanan-Smith, Leadership in Action: Leading Effectively in Humanitarian Operations (ALNAP 2011).
[60] Group URD/GPPI 2010, Currion and Hedlund 2011.

- *IFRC needs to further elaborate cluster leadership arrangements with co-coordinators and technical support with NGOs. On a global level, this requires pursuing the relative roles of UNHCR in a complex disasters and UN Habitat in natural disasters, where in the latter the transition to early recovery and semi-permanent/permanent shelter needs to be considered from the beginning. This could also come in the form of a TWG within the first month of a disaster (as was the case in Giri). However it remains a problem where UNHabitat is inadequately funded (R7).*
- *How to reinforce leadership, either through a Strategic Advisory Group or co-coordinator, should not be optional. Cluster coordinators and participating agencies should immediately look at how to ensure the cluster is meeting its obligations through more robust management structures and accountability within those structures. Each country-based and disaster-specific SAG will be different depending on actors (R2).*
- *Participating agencies have mutual responsibilities and these should be reinforced through a discussion of the Principles of Partnership and inclusion of the PoP in cluster evaluations (R2).*

While there were a very few concerns regarding the competence of the staff, largely based on unmet expectations of other cluster coordinators and OCHA what a cluster coordinator should look like (international with experience as cluster coordinator, who can fluently use the lexicon of the international humanitarian system, and preferably a senior staff), there were no significant doubts as to the effectiveness of the ESC over all, not least the members of the ESC. Members of the ESC, local and international, including donors (ECHO was a regular participant) all noted that in general meetings were run efficiently, priority concerns were addressed, if necessary in a separate technical working group (TWG), and emergency needs were largely resourced in a timely manner. And while there were understandable delays in information, and therefore strategy development and resource mobilisation for early recovery, there was an effective and timely handover to UN Habitat who had the capacity for their role in early recovery.

Overall performance aside, the important precedent of recruiting Myanmar nationals to fill the role of cluster coordinator and information manager, demanded more commitment from IFRC as a whole to ensure it succeeded. IFRC could have done more to provide the support needed to the ESC coordinator to at least feel more confident in her position. There is a 'duty of care' that perhaps has been breached in her case (to quote IFRC staff in Myanmar). The person chosen to coordinator the ESC in Myanmar was not a trained or experienced cluster coordinator, albeit they (there were three) did have significant international experience with clusters both in Myanmar and internationally.

Regardless of nationality, not having an in-depth understanding of the Terms of Reference of the ESC and the international system of coordination in general can put a coordinator at a disadvantage, e.g. when participating in negotiations for the CERF and therefore resource mobilization for ESC members and appreciating the sheltering process and therefore strategic management of cluster activities including handover.

However, the dedicated cluster coordinator (third cluster coordinator) came with many advantages that were specific to Myanmar and address common criticisms of clusters that regularly cluster coordinators lack a familiarity with the country, the language and the inability to reach out to and include local partners (government, local NGOs and the local National Society).[61] Unfortunately, she was not provided the support needed to exploit these advantages and cope with any disadvantages. This would have come in various

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[61] Group URD/GPPi 2010.

forms, some of which include more continuous technical support from the region (there was a perceived gap of 2 weeks during a particularly difficult time for the cluster coordinator) such as daily communications for the first one to two weeks and every other day after that. The relationship with the regional shelter alternate should have been simultaneously developed so that when one left, the other one could have more effectively stepped into his shoes.

More personalized support from the IFRC delegation in Myanmar would also have made a difference, given their appreciation for the cultural barriers a Myanmar person might have when engaging with an international system such as clusters. Importantly the ESC Coordinator has a double reporting line. He/she is accountable to the Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator in Geneva for technical coordination and to the IFRC HoD for local administration.

The HoD ESC Concerns&QA drafted by the Regional Office describes how the ESC staff are accountable to Geneva for 'technical coordination' and to the HoD for "security, administration, HR, etc" (Annex 10). However theseee 'managerial' lines of accountability that need to be clarified for HoDs. There is the technical part of shelter, e.g. specifications for materials, and the technical side of coordination, e.g. effective development and implementation of a workplan as defined by the TOR. With regard to the latter, there needs to be a person in country to whom the shelter coordination team is accountable; someone in a position to directly observe and discuss with stakeholders if necessary the performance of the ESC team. For other clusters this is the agencies' country representative and the RC/HC.

In the case of Myanmar, in simple, non time consuming ways, the HoD can maximize potential effectiveness, e.g. by facilitating good relations with the MRCS, and promoting accountability within the cluster system by interacting directly with the RC/HC or attending inter-cluster coordination if necessary.

- *IFRC and other clusters should continue to build the capacity of nationals in disaster prone countries to ensure a roster of competent national coordination teams. The advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The disadvantages can be compensated for through more support to these teams when deployed (R9).*
- *Training or support for those with little experience of systems (and politics) of international coordination must include briefing on topics such as the sheltering process and the role of UN Habitat and/or UNDP, the CERF, Flash Appeals, and practical advice on how to negotiate on behalf of the ESC, ensuring transparency of decision making processes and information sharing with ESC participating agencies (R10).*
- *Along the same lines, ESC materials should be produced for IFRC's online tutorials or internet-based "learning platform" and a short module on what is IFRC's commitment to the ESC and the basics of ESC coordination should be integrated into the regional disaster response team (RDRT) training (this latter recommendation is presumably already done)(R10).*
- *The role of the IFRC HoD is essential for the effective functioning of the cluster. Not only for a first hand capacity assessment of cluster performance, but also to ensure adequate seniority when necessary, and facilitate important relationship building, e.g. with the National Societies. Their role should be further elaborated and referenced in their terms of reference (R11).*
- *Finally, the ESC coordinators for Giri should be properly trained as ESC Coordinators, taking advantage of this important experience.*

IV.   Holding the Cluster System to Account

"Policy and practice have focused only on the accountabilities of the agency leading and coordinating the cluster. There are no agreed expectations or partnership models for cluster participants to contribute to results, engage in a predictable way or share responsibility for outcomes"[62]

There have been several mentions throughout the report on the responsibility of IFRC (the Global and Regional Shelter Cluster and the Delegation), ESC team, the other cluster coordinators, OCHA and the RC/HC and other humanitarian actors including the member/participants of the cluster. Without repeating the justification for the following recommendations, let it suffice to say the recommendations are in line with the IASC deliberations (19 April) on improving performance management of humanitarian coordination including the HC and clusters:

- *There was a need for greater leadership by the RC/HC's office in disaster response including, in the case of Giri: a) indicating the likelihood that the impact of a category 4 cyclone would require significant international assistance, b) insisting on only life saving interventions be financed by the CERF and prioritising, c) insisting that agencies clarify gaps in funding before allocating CERF, d) need for field coordination and designation of hubs, e) ensuring effective management of inter-cluster meetings and identifying appropriate solutions to problems within clusters, f) insisting on participation and information sharing of major humanitarian actors, particularly UN agencies, in clusters (R1).*
- *Lines of accountability within the cluster system and the role and responsibilities of the RC/HC, OCHA and the IFRC HoD and the inter-cluster meeting needs to be clarified and reinforced to ensure not only are clusters performing to standards but that appropriate capacity building is provided in the event it is necessary (R1, R10).*
- *IFRC when conducting evaluations of the Emergency Shelter Cluster should consider an appropriate version of the Principles of Partnership questionnaire developed in Uganda that examines the shared responsibilities for the effective functioning of the cluster [63] as well as integrating into evaluation TORs and/or sharing with evaluation consultants their Performance Management System (R2).*

V.   Handover and the role of UN Habitat

A significant improvement over previous emergencies, both in Myanmar and elsewhere, UN Habitat had the capacity to participate in the ESC from the beginning, by dedicating available international staff. As mentioned, an Early Recovery TWG met for the first time on 24 November. However it was not until December that UN Habitat began taking on a leadership role when it became apparent there was a big need and little funding for early recovery. This resulted in some conflict in the ESC when UNHabitat insisted on presenting donors with early recovery needs without an assessment (see Timeline mid December).   As emergency distribution was nearly 50% complete and was sufficiently organised and funded in December, IFRC suggested that UNHabitat take the lead before the end of the year. However UNHabitat was not yet ready, it was agreed that handover would be in early January. Ultimately the handover went well with UN Habitat taking a very proactive role in doing a comprehensive joint shelter recovery needs assessment, developing a early recovery shelter strategy with the then Shelter Working Group (SWG) in late January and making significant inroads with ECHO for funding. However at the decision of the SWG, UNHabitat did not

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[62] *Knudsen 2011 ODIHPN 50.*
[63] *Ibid.*

allocate funds for a dedicated information manager contributing to incomplete emergency reporting and a lack of continuity in reporting formats/structures and databases.

The determination of needs and initial resource mobilization for *emergency shelter* needs went relatively quickly (by mid November) leaving the IFRC ESC coordinator largely tracking distributions in late November/early December. Early recovery related activities in December might have been better implemented earlier in November and a handover to UN Habitat done before Christmas. Human resource management (round trip Canada-Myanmar of the ESC Coordinator over Christmas) was probably not ideal. However, IFRC did its best to ensure the best possible handover even if it meant this additional expenditure.

- *UN Habitat played a much earlier and proactive leadership role in the ESC in the Giri response; facilitating a 'second shelter assessment' in December/January and an Early Recovery Shelter Strategy in January (R7).*
- *It is also true that the transition from tarpaulins to thatch, from rope to beams, can begin sooner in a natural disaster when people are not displaced for long periods of time. The emergency shelter and early recovery shelter strategies and therefore the ESC's activities need to better reflect this (R7).*
- *In the case of Giri, given that information needs, strategy development, advocacy and resource mobilization for early recovery began one month after the cyclone, an earlier leadership role for UN Habitat might have eased the transition even more, and the perception of a 'gap' in December(R7).*

VI.   Lessons learned from previous ESC deployments

A detailed review of previous ESC evaluations and lessons learned and their application in the Giri response is in Annex 5. While many improvements have been made over the last deployment in Myanmar for the Nargis response, notably the increased collaboration and earlier handover to UN Habitat, some issues remain still relevant for IFRC and the ESC to improve upon (UN Habitat, 2009: Annex 9):

Lesson learned	*Performance in Giri*
Shelter Cluster should be chaired by government and supported by co-chairs made up of a UN Agency and a NGO (continuity ensured between UN and NGO).	*No use of co-chairs or strategic advisory groups in the Giri response.*
More cross-cluster integration essential to avoid gaps and overlaps and to ensure more holistic approach i.e. Shelter, WASH and Livelihoods.	*Intercluster coordination for non-food items still remains problematic, for distribution and for reporting.*
Strong coordination at hub or township level required. The 'centre' must be responsive to the issues raised from the hubs. Danger that the centre just 'takes' and does not 'give'.	*There was practically no hub level coordination in the Giri response and efforts of the ESC to travel to the hubs was complicated by requiring travel permission from MRCS, even though the ESC staff were nationals and should not have been limited by restrictions on international staff travel.*
UN-HABITAT should support and be engaged with IFRC or UNHCR from day 1 of the disaster response in order to be best prepared for taking over at end of emergency phase.	*UN Habitat was involved from day one, however their role and responsibility was not defined. They had little influence on the activities of the ESC until together they initiated an early recovery shelter assessment 2 months after Giri. Handover could have been anticipated however there was insufficient planning and therefore capacity to do so.*
UN-HABITAT should appoint one Shelter Coordinator and where necessary periodically draft in other advisory staff on mission to give specific support to the Coordinator.	*The international staff appointed to the ESC did not have roles and responsibilities defined or recognized by the ESC.*

Unambiguous shelter standards are required. There should be no confusion between emergency standards and ER Shelter standards.	*There was again confusion among emergency and early recovery requirements. IFRC staff, UN Habitat, and the RC/HC worked together on advocacy and clarification of needs, including release of the ER needs assessment findings and specialized advocacy materials that contributed to considerable funding being made available for ER however late.*
Compliance with standards, agreed by the Shelter Cluster Technical Working Group, is essential. Donors have influence over their implementing partners. Shelter Coordinator should brief donors to ensure that donors insist on compliance.	*Standards for individual shelter assistance were respected, according to villagers. However the requirements for village kits were not respected by some agencies, neither was it made clear to villagers their expected use (sharing). As a result village kits were redistributed to individuals and therefore of little use*
Focus on funding must be maintained through the transition from Humanitarian response to Early Recovery. The transition is a 'danger period' for loss of focus and momentum and once lost, it may not be possible to regain.	*See above on confusion between emergency and early recovery needs.*

Note these are only a partial list of the summary of lessons learned. A full list is in Annex 9.

- *Care will be sponsoring a Lessons Learned in the Giri Shelter Response workshop at the beginning of July. They've requested to use the findings of this study. The workshop would be a good verification exercise, but equally importantly, ESC team members still in Myanmar should participate.*

VII. The Necessity of Coordination Team Deployment in Small and Medium Emergencies

A final note on the applicability of the cluster system in a small or medium emergency: There will always be coordination in an emergency. The question is to what extent does it require the deployment of additional or even existing but dedicated human resources? The recent earthquake in Tachilek (Shan State) in Myanmar is an example where the Government, MRCS and WVI with support of OCHA quite adequately 'led' coordination, locally. The question is not if IFRC will support coordination but how, with the deployment of a shelter coordination team (SCT) as one option of many.

Every emergency should start with a needs assessment in this case for coordination. Questions such as is the government playing an effective collaborative and coordinating role? Given extra human resources are often deployed for centralized coordination first, is there a need for centralized coordination or is local coordination enough? Conversely what is the aim of centralised coordination? Who is going to be coordinated? Are the actors local or international, with a familiarity with each other and the country? If the size of the disaster is commensurate with local capacity to manage and respond effectively and decision-makers, and donors are satisfied and will make necessary funds available for a timely and adequate response, then probably no – there is no need for external support to coordination.

Similarly before deploying a full international team, different options can be considered starting with part time local support for IM, possibly from the Delegation as was the case in the Tachilek earthquake, maximising the use of experienced nationals (therefore requiring investment in national capacity), or reinforcing other agencies capacity (UN/INGO/LNGO/National Society).

Did IFRC respond appropriately in Giri? In the evaluator's opinion, IFRC didn't need to do more than what they did. The actors were few and knew each other, at least in emergency shelter, hence the tendency for parallel coordination. However determining overall need, resources required, distributions and gaps was relatively complicated given lack of a reliable needs assessment that would have demonstrated relatively significant and varied degrees of need (260,000 spread over 4 townships) in a politically and logistically challenging terrain. The team dedicated (pre-deployment) and deployed had the capacity to ensure there was adequate information sharing and management, determination of needs and resource mobilization. All clusters could and should have done more to address the fact that information was scarce and perceived to be unreliable and therefore needs were not adequately known and resourced in a timely fashion. This was the shared responsibility of the HCT and was partly the fault of inadequate preparedness. There is more than adequate potential national capacity for expert needs assessment without deploying internationals.

Could IFRC have done less without compromising the response? Only if they had been able to effectively mobilise existing human resources in other agencies, e.g. UNHCR, UNHabitat or an INGO/LNGO. And these agencies were not forthcoming with support comparable to the need.

In Myanmar lessons can be learned from recent disasters that did not require external support to coordination, e.g. the Northern Rakhine State (NRS) floods, where UNHCR took the lead role in coordination and the Tachilek earthquake where the Government, MRCS and World Vision took the lead. These emergencies were limited in geographic area (one township) but had comparable damages, e.g. 20,000 houses lost in the NRS floods. However in the Tachilek earthquake, IFRC did provide some informal IM support through the Shelter Delegate. Other recent disasters in Sri Lanka and the Philippines additional, cluster support was not deployed. But these countries benefit from stronger government leadership. Obviously not all emergencies demand a full time dedicated cluster coordinator, but there is a minimum commitment that needs to be agreed upon for small and medium emergencies, even if it is only an information management and reporting function and establishing technical standards.

- *Small and medium emergencies do not always require a full cluster deployment but they do have minimum requirements. Working backward from the TOR, resources should be dedicated and strategies developed that ensure the TOR will be met (unless revised). At a minimum this includes ensuring sufficient information is available to facilitate an effective response. This may or may not require a cluster coordinator or a decentralized coordination function. At the very minimum it requires good communication. IFRC can review is commitment for small emergencies in this light. The role of the MRCS and the IFRC Shelter Delegate in the recent Tachilek earthquake is informative (R4, R9, R10).*

VIII. Recommendations

1. Two hundred and sixty thousand (260,000) people with complete destruction of public and private infrastructure and means of livelihood in at least one township and partial destruction in 3 others was a significant disaster.[64] IFRC must advocate for stronger emergency response protocols that cannot

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[64] Although there are no UN-endorsed 'disaster ratings' (with the exception of the Integrated Phase Classification or IPC for food security crisis) humanitarian crisis are usually informally categorized moderate, serious, severe or catastrophic based on number of people affected, dead, geographic scope of disaster, extent of damages and ability of the affected country(ies) to respond without external assistance (EM-DAT 2011). The last point is key as "in the absence of comparable indicators of the scale and intensity of a disaster, the decision to respond tends to be influenced by institutional imperatives and the political priorities of donor governments" (Oxley 1999) and I would add "a government's priorities and UN complicity". Perhaps there are ways to build on the important advances in the Common Alert Protocol (CAP) of the World

be compromised and stronger humanitarian leadership when deciding to respond in a disaster, this may include advocacy for a separation of the humanitarian and resident coordinator functions particularly when they are in conflict. Along the same lines, IFRC must advocate for a "do or don't" approach to clusters as informal activation risks compromising the agencies' accountability given confusion over roles and responsibilities (similar to the Sidr response).

2. To address issues of participation and transparency, IFRC Geneva-based shelter delegates should inform participation in the ongoing IASC debate on "mutual accountability", i.e. the shared responsibility of humanitarian agencies and cluster members to participate in cluster activities.[65] There are different means to ensure this mutual accountability, among them more robust and participatory leadership structures (co-leadership/strategic advisory groups). IFRC and ESC members must ensure that relevant agencies, particularly the UN, are actively and transparently engaged in the participatory development of ESC strategies and, importantly, using 'common funds' to implement them. With regard to the latter issue, ESC teams need to understand some of the common criticisms of the CERF and be prepared to take action to address them. Building on experience in Uganda, the use of the Principles of Partnership as a management and evaluation tool for cluster performance may also be useful.

3. IFRC needs to stay engaged in ongoing discussions in Geneva to strengthen leadership, management, participation and protocols for inter-cluster coordination (building on the draft Guidance for Inter-cluster Coordination). And ensure this translates to better performance at field level through regular contact with local ESC teams. Inter-cluster meetings need to focus on strategic issues and not degenerate into repeated requests for information. If information and participation are a problem they can be addressed using the HC (and IFRC HoD see below) in a separate meeting. Inter-cluster meeting participation should respect the structure of clusters decided upon by members in a given emergency, e.g. coordinator and co-coordinator and when relevant technical working groups, and agreed to by the cluster coordinator. As WASH, Health, and Shelter/NFI have common inter-cluster concerns, not least the coordination of standards and information management, the HC, OCHA and the coordinators of these clusters and OCHA are responsible to ensure this coordination happens.

4. It is already recognized that there is no 'one size fits all' cluster coordination model. Coordination needs will be determined by in-country agencies and cluster members under the leadership of the cluster coordinator.[66] Depending on scale, timing, duration, typology and logistical challenges of the humanitarian emergency, changes to standard procedure should be further elaborated and can include (among others):
    a. Changes in the Terms of Reference, e.g. reducing to a minimum of information management and establishing standards. It will be important to ensure discussion and agreement on the revised TOR by cluster members *and periodic review.* Any decision needs to be documented to ensure transparency and avoid misunderstandings.

Meteorological Association Information System (WIS). The CAP reports on 5 values for urgency, severity and certainty of a natural disaster and is currently used in the United Nations Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (CDACS).
[65] IASC Working Group 19 April 2011.

[66] IASC 2011. Draft Framework on Cluster Coordination Costs and Functions in Humanitarian Emergencies at the Country Level.

b. The decision to implement cluster coordination at the national level and/or in sub-national hubs. If members decide sub-national coordination is not necessary, it is also good practice to ensure at least regular contact between national and sub-national coordination bodies. In the case of Myanmar and the IFRC, this means ensuring that cluster coordinators can travel regularly to the field and have regular communication with designated agencies. Again, this is the decision of the cluster and needs to be respected by OCHA and others as such.

c. The decision to use existing capacity that is not 'dedicated' only to cluster management and/or using national staff with cluster experience (further elaborated under R9 and R10).

Note however that the TOR of clusters have been developed over time based on experience and learning. Thus the decision to reduce the functions of the cluster might have implications, e.g. on coherency of response. For example, developing a strategy document might have been one way to rationalize different emergency shelter and recovery approaches being employed in Myanmar. It is also a means of ensuring certain important issues are discussed and if necessary addressed through clusters, e.g. missing in the Giri emergency shelter response were strategies and standards for downward accountability, cash interventions, and the environment.

5. IFRC and shelter partners have developed extensive guidelines and both technical and managerial support material for emergency shelter. The same attention needs to be paid to Non-Food Items (NFI). Later reporting (post November) on detailed NFI distribution allowed for a more accurate view of NFI distribution which was not as comprehensive as previously thought. As suggested in previous ESC evaluations including Nargis, joint reporting templates with a reasonable amount of disaggregation do exist and need to be used by relevant clusters and *their members*. Reporting should not combine shelter and NFI 'kits' as there is a high risk that they do not contain the same materials. NFI standards do exist (Sphere) and need to be rationalized or revisited in Myanmar given findings from evaluations and lessons learned exercises. This issue could be discussed in the upcoming Shelter Lessons Learned exercise organized by CARE and should include MRCS for whom the issue is also pertinent. The issue of distributing shared kits which has not proven effective needs also to be discussed.

6. IFRC continues to demonstrate strong information management capacity providing some of the most detailed reporting (at village level by item) in the Giri Response. Strategic decisions sometimes need to be made by the ESC regarding "good enough" reporting to respect the need for timely information. These decisions need to be documented and respected by OCHA who is a primary consumer of information produced by clusters. If IFRC provides dedicated IM capacity, it behooves the members, OCHA and any information function, i.e. Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), to exploit this capacity and not circumvent it. Interpretation of data and advocacy messages, particularly for needs and fundraising, must be vetted by ESC members. The ESC should consider joint reporting on emergency and early recovery needs where the information is available or at least nuance the message when the information is not, particularly for natural disasters where early recovery can happen sooner. Problems will continue to exist when reporting on planned and actual distributions, but rigorous follow up by the ESC IM will eventually resolve this issue (and it did).

7. The transition from a focus on an acute emergency response to early recovery was timelier than in Nargis and an area of significant improvement in Giri. UN Habitat participated in the ESC from the

beginning and co-chaired the first Technical Working Group on early recovery a month after Giri; an approach that should be considered good practice. Given the relative high capacity of UN Habitat in Myanmar (which is not always the case), an earlier transition (before Christmas) would have been more appropriate and the two agencies could have prepared from this from the start. This includes closer coordination for information needs, therefore needs assessments (which happened in December/January), and resource mobilization. It is also necessary to clearly communicate and distinguish resource needs when discussing emergency shelter (November) and reconstruction (December), optimise the utility of any needs assessment to look forward to recovery needs and/or backward to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of emergency distributions, and ensure coordinated and complementary participation in inter-cluster meetings.

8. Local actors in Myanmar, not least the Government, have become more active in disaster response since Nargis and were better integrated into the ESC in coordination meetings, joint needs assessment and joint implementation. There remains a need for continuous engagement with local NGOs for preparedness and response. Some areas for discussion with IFRC, MRCS and MNGOs include joint contingency planning with the Myanmar NGO Contingency Planning (MNGO CP) Working Group, and joint MRCS and MNGO capacity building for needs assessments, not least as a contingency when international access is denied. Other areas for clarification and collaboration include determining roles, responsibilities and relationships between parallel cluster systems[67] as presently foreseen in the MNGO CP, and a discussion of field coordination arrangements. All of this is of course much better facilitated by someone who speaks the same language and understands the systems, hence the advantage of engaging more Myanmar nationals in the ESC and in coordination with OCHA.

9. The important precedent of recruiting Myanmar nationals to fill the role of cluster coordinator and information manager, demands more commitment from IFRC as a whole to ensure it succeeds. IFRC can do more to provide the support needed to a national ESC team. A Myanmar team comes with many advantages that address common criticisms of clusters.[68] But these advantages need to be exploited and any disadvantages coped with, including more continuous technical support from the region, more personalized support from the IFRC delegation in Myanmar and the HoD, including the facilitating of good relations with the MRCS, and promoting accountability within the cluster system by direct interaction with the RC/HC, and attending inter-cluster coordination when necessary.

10. Regardless of nationality, if for example, in small or medium disasters where the humanitarian response has few and/or no new actors, is limited in geographic scope and scale, and does not require significant resource mobilisation or advocacy, the need for full cluster coordination team deployment needs to be reviewed. In the Giri response, IFRC sent dedicated staff while other agencies used existing, experienced senior staff - by default not by design given visa restrictions. Adaptations on the profile of the cluster coordinator (vs. the TOR already discussed in R4) includes whether or not cluster leadership needs dedicated human resources, if and when cluster coordinators should be 'senior staff' (however this is debatable as the coordinator/convener role it is not a decision-making role but one that facilitates decisions being made by cluster members), and

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[67] …not least a discussion for the necessity of…
[68] Regularly cluster leads lack a familiarity with the country, the language and the inability to reach out to and include local partners, Group URD/GPPi 2010.

the mix of experience and training of the ESC team. Regardless, if the team has less experience then the needs for support from the region and Delegation are greater. Ideally the appropriate profile of the cluster coordinator is a decision by the Humanitarian Country Team or inter-cluster meeting chaired by the HC and the cluster coordinator agencies, including IFRC. Additional recommendations on training and reference materials are also included in the full report.

11. Leadership and the ability to provide oversight and ensure accountability for performance remain key to the success of coordination. IFRC/ESC must demand effective leadership in emergency protocols (R1) but also inter-cluster meetings, CERF negotiations and addressing disaster-specific coordination problems. When there are issues around perceived lack of leadership (RC/HC and OCHA), or perceived lack of competence of cluster coordinators, regardless of how (in)valid these concerns are a protocol must be in place to manage them.
    a. Similarly, the role of the HoD and accountability for (non technical) performance has to be further defined as the Head of Delegation could play an important role in providing essential in-country feedback and guidance on the performance of the coordinator.

12. The operational and administrative relationship between the ESC and National Societies remains vague; particularly the latter given IFRC staff in Myanmar rely on the MRCS to facilitate visas and travel permission. General and context specific guidelines and protocols need to be developed to help explain, negotiate and agree on scenarios for ESC/NS' interactions. This includes relations with government, representation, visa and travel permission, information exchange, and coherence of NS' response with cluster strategies. This discussion can also include the role the NS sees itself playing in coordination and how the IFRC can further strengthen NS capacity in this regard. This will most likely be negotiated on an emergency by emergency basis. Regardless in Myanmar as disaster management is changing, if the Tachilek earthquake example is a precedent. IFRC is in a unique position to do this given its dual role in supporting NS capacity and convening the ESC. With regard to operational collaboration, where shelter is not considered a traditional response for the MRCS, perhaps NFI distribution and standards is a better entry point.

13. The IFRC must be able to fulfill their responsibilities as cluster conveners while respecting the principles of the Red Cross. Independence is one of these principles which can be compromised when the relationship between IFRC and NSs' dictate that NSs' secure permission for IFRC activities, e.g. the travel of ESC personnel to the field. Contact with field offices, indeed field visits, are an essential part of the ESC responsibilities and the lack thereof is the criticism of many evaluations, not least the Cluster Evaluation II in Myanmar for Nargis. If R12 does not effectively result the greater independence of ESC teams, then alternative arrangements need to be discussed, e.g. delegation of field support to other agencies or travel under the umbrella of UN/OCHA.

IX.   Annexes

Annex 1 Persons interviewed
Annex 2. Detailed Timeline
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Annex 5 Matrix of previous evaluation findings for ESC and performance in Giri (incomplete)
Annex 6 Cluster Terms of Reference
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Annex 10 Concerns and QA Raised by the HOD in the Asia Pacific Region, KL, 2011

Annex 1. Persons Interviewed

Anthea Kerr	Donor DFID
Christopher Reltien	Donor ECHO
Paul Davenport	IFRC 2nd ESC Coordinator and OD staff Myanmar
Yin Min	IFRC 3rd ESC Coordinator
Phyo Kyaw	IFRC ESC IM
Phyo Phyo	IFRC Giri programme assistant
Miquel Urquia	IFRC Global Shelter Delegate
Bernd Schell	IFRC Head of delegation Myanmar
Chang Hun Choe	IFRC Programme coordinator Myanmar
Sanjeev Kafley	IFRC Disaster management Myanmar
Patrick Elliott	IFRC Nargis shelter delegate
Gregg Macdonald	IFRC Regional (KL) Shelter Delegate
Felix de Vries	IFRC Regional (KL) Shelter Delegate
Preeti	INGO CARE
Tala J Deaton	INGO CARE
Sabine Linzbinchler	INGO DRC
Birke Herzbruch	INGO Liaison
Paul Sender	INGO Merlin
Mapy	INGO MSF Holland Head of programme
Andrew Kirkwood	INGO Save the Children Head of office
Denis de Poerck	INGO Save the Children Head of operations
Daniel Collison	INGO Save the Children Head of programme quality
Jeronimo Candela	INGO Solidarites
Aye Myat Thu	MNGO Local Resource Centre, NGO liaison
MNGO CP WG	MNGO Nargis Action Group, Social Vision Services, Border Areas Development, Myanmar Health Assistants Association, Swanyee Development Foundation, MEET, Thingaha, Child Friendly Network, Community Development Association, MCWSA, and Thandar
MNGO shelter cluster	MNGO Swanyee Development Foundation, National Compassionate Volunteers
U Maung Maung Kin	MRCS Disaster Management
Dr. Tun Myint	MRCS Executive Committee
Dr. Tha Hla Shwe	MRCS President
Srinivasa Popuri	UNHabitat, Country Programme Manager
Nadine Waheed	UNHabitat, Programme Officer
Claas Morlang	UNHCR
Dara Johnston	UNICEF WASH Chief and WASH Cluster Coordinator
Blaise Kabongo	UNOCHA Darfur (deployed to Sittwe during Giri)
Vincent Hubin	UNOCHA Deputy Head of Office
Barbara Manzi	UNOCHA Head of Office at time of evaluation
Thierry Delbrueve	UNOCHA Head of Office at time of Giri
Antonio Massella	UNOCHA Regional Office (deployed to Myanmar during Giri)
Bishow Parajuli	UNRC/HC Myanmar
Sarah Gordon Gibson	UNWFP Deputy Country Director and Food Cluster Coordinator

Annex 2. Detailed Timeline

Date	Key Events with *ESC Milestones in italics*
14 Oct – 24 Dec	Eruption of Mont Merapi and Kepualan earthquake (Indonesia), flooding in Cambodia, Chennai India, the Phillipines, and Vietnam with over 5 million person affected.
19/10/10	Rakhine State (RS) put on high alert. National elections planned for November 7.
21/10/10 (Day before Giri)	Evacuations by MRCS/GoUM. HCT Forum met and Giri is discussed. Agencies told to prepare field staff in RS and "encouraged to be prepared to respond in a coordinated manner". Insignificant preparedness by MNGO/ INGO and UN including no emergency communications for field information relay in first hours/days. No review of stockpiles and no plan for ENA.
22/10/10 (Friday)	Giri strikes RS as a category 4 cyclone. Communications cut.
23/10/10 (+1 Saturday)	MRCS begin first aid, search and rescue and reuniting family members. In Yangon, I/MNGO meeting to exchange information (UN not invited). Later that day RC/HC's office organizes interagency meeting stating that "Government welcomes assistance from agencies in Myanmar." But the UN told to keep any humanitarian response to Giri low profile and that there is no need for "higher international engagement although damage is recognized to be high". GoUM organise 3 displaced camps in Kyaukphyu (where Giri made landfall) and begin distribution of 2000 tents.
24/10/10	MRCS begins food and water distribution. Some I/MNGO arrive in Myebon with emergency food, water and cash.
25/10/10 (+3 Monday)	HCT Core Group meet for coordination of Giri response. Lead agencies identified for informal sectoral coordination. *IFRC accepts informal convener role for ESC with UNHCR support.*
26/10/10 (+4 Tuesday)	Regular Humanitarian Partners Working Group (HPWG) meeting (International community and local NGOs). Agenda changed to report on Giri. Interviewees (UN, donors and NGOs) perceived UN leadership to be downplaying seriousness of need for international response. Donors and NGOs report no sense of the UN 'gearing up'. *1st 'informal' shelter cluster (ESC) chaired by IFRC Nargis staff. Other clusters chaired by existing senior UN agency staff.*
28/10/10	MRCS assessment figures start becoming available to int'l community. DREF approved for MRCS intervention.
29/10/10 (+6 Friday)	MNGO announce activation of their contingency plan. Government establishes coordination in Sittwe, Kyaukpyu, Minbyu. *2nd 'informal' shelter cluster. Agreement on specs for shelter kits in TWG led by IFRC Nargis shelter tech. First request by OCHA for ESC field coordination. No decision taken by YGN ESC participants.*
30/10/10 (+7 Sat)	GoUM assessment of damages made available with a total 260,000 people affected. With estimate of number of houses totally/partially destroyed (56,000), disaggregated by township.
1/11/10 (+9 Monday)	RC/HC officially activates clusters by sending a letter to Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). *IFRC designated ESC Coordinator with UNHCR as co-coordinator. First ESC sit rep with numbers of houses damaged by township and major ES/NFI actors identified (MRCS, MSF-H, Save the Children).*
2/11/10 (+10)	*Letter from IFRC HoD to Geneva initiating a discussion on external support for cluster activities. Within same day, support team identified.*
3/11/10 (+11)	RC/HC's letter forwarded to global cluster for approval. UNDP assessment available confirming GoUM reports of damage. *3rd 'informal' ESC meeting chaired by IFRC international OD staff. Triangulation of MRCS/ GoUM assessment data. TWG (Solidarities) shares market data for shelter materials. ESC coordinator and co-coordinator develop 'coverage table' indicating 80% HH emergency ES/NFI needs met with confirmed funding based on reports from members in order to estimate funding shortfalls for CERF. CERF working group meets for first time with participation of IFRC Head of Delegation on behalf of ESC.*
5/11/10 (+13)	*Clusters officially activated. First inter-cluster meeting. Letter from IFRC Geneva approving and reiterating support role of UNHCR.*
6/11/10	CERF working group review CERF application.
9/11/10	CERF request sent to ERC.
11/11/10 (+19)	Sit rep includes no update on shelter. *4th (now formal) ESC meeting Chaired by IFRC OD staff and recently arrived ESC IM dedicated staff. Second request to ESC members for township level ESC focal points. UNDP*

	starts shelter intervention however not an active ESC participant creating confusion in ESC reporting.
15/11/10 (+23)	*Distribution of first disaggregated gaps/ duplications table by ESC-IM. Only with MRCS and MSF-H data as other agencies have not provided disaggregated data. Dedicated ESC Coordinator arrives in country 14/11.*
16/11/10	*Data from 3/11 indicating 80% planned coverage and confirmed funding published in Sit Rep.*
18/11/10 (+26)	*OCHA proposes UNDP be focal point for shelter field coordination without prior consultation of ESC. 5th ESC Chaired by dedicated ESC Coordinator and IM staff.*
19/11/10	First official donor briefing on resource needs and shortfalls. *ESC data from 3/11 provided to donors with focus on emergency shortfalls (not recovery which later caused some confusion when recovery needs were announced).*
24/11/10	*First TWG on shelter early recovery co-chaired by UNHabitat/Solidarites.*
23/11/10	No mention of shelter in Sit Rep. First CERF (10 out of 15 projects) approved.
24/11/10	*6th ESC meeting. TWG led by UN Habitat/Solidarites to plan for a 'comprehensive joint shelter assessment'.*
27/11/10 (+35)	Remaining CERF request approved for total of 6 million USD (of 10 million USD requested; all agencies reduce requests by 40%, i.e. no prioritization). *For emergency shelter and NFI: UNHCR receives 838,000 USD disbursed 6/12, IOM receives 171,000USD disbursed 2/12. For repair of emergency shelter and restoration of basic shelters: UNDP (not an active ESC participant) receives 347,000 USD disbursed 10/12.*
29/11/10 (+37)	*30/11 Sit Rep includes detailed description of ESC/NFI actual distribution (26%). No other cluster, with the exception of food, has reported at such level of detail.*
1/12/10	*Correspondence from IFRC HoD to KL/Geneva re concerns of some UN agencies on seniority and experience of ESCT. Concerns not shared by IFRC Delegation. IFRC and UNHabitat start discussion on handover.*
3/12/10 (+41)	*7th ESC meeting. Clearly articulated in minutes by participating members, they would not find any value-added to reinforced field coordination. First ESCT field mission cancelled due to lack of agreement by MRCS. Regional ES Delegate travelling with very limited email contact between 2-17 December resulting in feeling of gap in backup for Myanmar ESC.*
Mid December	NGOs start receiving CERF funds through UN agencies, e.g. *UNHCR/Save the Children begin emergency shelter kit distributions. UNHCR boat with shelter/NFI items delayed in YGN harbor 12-25 December. ESC website operational.*
15/12/10 (+53)	*8th ESC meeting. Updated distributions vs. needs table distributed by ESC-IM. Table demonstrates 45% coverage in distribution of emergency shelter material and additional 41% in pipeline. NCV/Solidarites share joint shelter assessment for Myebon. Assessment demonstrates temporary shelter 'far below minimum standards' (without specifying which standards). Big wind storm in Rakhine affects temporary shelters.*
Mid December	Announcement by RC/HC that priority needs are shelter and livelihoods. *ESC coordinator pushed by UNHabitat to announce an estimate of recovery needs (prior to the assessment being complete). OCHA and donors are confused by the difference in resource shortfalls between emergency and recovery needs (one page explanation provided).*
16/12/10 (+55)	*Handover date agreed upon by IFRC and Habitat. ESC-L leaves country between 15/12 and 5/1. ESC IM to lead cluster and UN Habitat to lead TWG in her absence (no meeting minutes available).*
10/01/11 (+80)	*Official handover to Habitat. Handover note prepared and co-signed by IFRC and Habitat. UN Habitat IM capacity significantly reduced given discussion with SWG members and use of CERF funds.*
20 January	*Comprehensive joint shelter assessment available. Workshop to develop ER shelter strategy convened.*
February	*Early recovery action plan distributed to donors with early recovery shelter strategy.*
March	*Second CERF allocation: UNHabitat receives CERF 500,000USD and SWG/ER partners receive ECHO 5million USD.*

Annex 3. Background of Listening Project and Methodology (excerpt from Listening Project Myanmar, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects)

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA), with a number of colleagues in international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors and other humanitarian and development agencies, has established the Listening Project to undertake a comprehensive and systematic exploration of the ideas and insights of people who live in societies that have been on the recipient side of international assistance efforts.

The Listening Project seeks the reflections of experienced and thoughtful people who occupy a range of positions within recipient societies to assess the impact of aid efforts by various international actors. Those who work across borders in humanitarian aid, development assistance, peace-building efforts, environmental conservation and human rights work can learn a great deal by listening to the analyses and suggestions of local people as they reflect on the immediate effects and long-term impacts of such efforts.

The Listening Teams are made up of staff from international and local organizations, with facilitators from CDA. The teams do not use pre-established questionnaires or a rigid interview protocol. Rather, we tell people that, as individuals engaged in international assistance work, we are interested to hear from them how they perceive these efforts. Teams ask people if they would be willing to spend some time with us, and to share their opinions and ideas. In this way, we converse about their issues of concern, without pre-determining specific topics.

Many conversations are held with one or two individuals, but in some cases, larger groups form and what begins as small-group dialogues becomes, in effect, free-flowing group discussions. In most cases, conversations are not pre-arranged (except for appointments with government officials and other key stakeholders). A Listening Team goes to a community and strikes up a conversation with whomever is available and willing to talk, speaking both to people who have and have not received international assistance.

Annex 4. Field Interview Guidelines

Interview Guide

This is an evaluation of how aid coordination and in particular shelter assistance and non food items, was done after Cyclone Giri. Shelter assistance includes tarpaulins, ropes, nails, hammers and other materials used to build shelter. Non food assistance is things like blankets, buckets, jerry cans, kitchen utensils and other non-agricultural or non-fishing items

What we would like to find out is: How was humanitarian assistance delivered in the village? Was it good quality and quantity? Was it appropriate or suitable? Was it timely? Did the provision of aid cause any problems?

When you listen to people's stories listen for any answers to the following questions:

1. **Pre-existing coordination and self help** – Do outside agencies recognise and build on this? Or did outside agencies set up their own coordination committees and provide the aid that they thought was needed?

2. **Outside agencies coordinating among themselves** – Did outside agencies decide who will do what where? Was this communicated to the villagers?
3. **Outside agencies coordinating with the villagers** – How did they do this? Did they using existing committees or set up new committees? How did these committees cooperate?
4. **The coordination of emergency shelter and non-food assistance** – Where there gaps and duplications?
5. **The appropriateness, quality and quantity of shelter and non-food assistance** – Did people get what they needed, when they needed it, in the right quantity, and good quality? Did it differ in nearby villages?
6. **How was it delivered** – Was it well targeted? Did aid cause any problems in the village? If so, how were these problems resolved?
7. **The transition between emergency assistance (tarpaulins) and recovery assistance (rebuilding)** – Was it timely, coordinated and generally well implemented?
8. **Complaints and feedback** – Did villagers know who to talk to and how to contact them? Did they feel free to give complaints, suggestions and feedback?
9. **Their ideas for how aid can be better coordinated in the future**.

What to do in the village: This interview can be done with an individual or a small group. For a large group, you would have to prioritise what questions can be asked or risk spending all day!

Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. My name is _____. I am working with a consultant with the International Federation of the Red Cross. The IFRC was responsible for coordinating emergency shelter activities from Yangon after Giri. The information that you share with us is confidential. The feedback you give us will be used to improve coordination in the next emergency.

(In your notes, indicate how many people in the focus groups, what are their positions in the community, e.g. village leader, mother, student, and the name of the village)

1. Can you tell me about how aid for Giri was coordinated in this village?

(Let them tell their story. You might find that many of the questions below are answered in the story and then you don't have to ask all these questions. You might find that someone has really good ideas and information and you ask them if you can talk more to them later).

2. Now can tell me specifically how shelter assistance (tarpaulins and then later rebuilding supplies) and other household assistance, e.g. blankets, plastic buckets, kitchen utensils were coordinated?

Thank you for your time in answering our questions. Do you have any questions or any more comments or suggestions that you want to make?

Now write up your individual interviews on a few sheets of paper. Use the Areas of Inquiry above as sections. And we'll discuss when we see each other in Yangon! THANK YOU!

Annex 5 Lessons learned matrix (incomplete)

Lessons from previous cluster evaluations*	Evaluation Findings (Giri) (Good Practice in bold)	Recommendations
Activation and Deployment In Nargis, slow activation of cluster lead (delayed by a week)(1) Good collaboration with UNHCR(1)	Decision by IFRC within 2 days to dedicate IFRC cluster support using existing international Nargis staff. 2 different international staff facilitated cluster (5 meetings) until dedicated SC staff arrived. While UNHCR was designated to "support" shelter cluster as co-lead, however terms were never clarified and no significant strategic, leadership, logistical, financial, or administrative support was provided.	Review criteria for deployment in small and medium emergencies including priority needs for coordination (given TOR was revised), existing IM capacity (IFRC or HCT), existing coordination mechanisms (Gov't, INGO/NGO, UN), influx of new NGOs or familiarity of existing NGOs with each other and the country, the needs and capacity to coordinate locally vs. nationally, and capacity of other UN agencies, e.g. in a natural disaster, the pre-existing capacity of UN Habitat, etc.
Structure and TOR Good co-leadership and involvement of NGOs in Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)(1) Promote co-leadership (2) No clear TOR for SAG(1) Active use of TWGs(1) Ensuring consistency of support provided by a cluster partner as part of a main cluster service or hub cluster role (4)	While UNHCR was co-lead, in practice ESC participants did not view any obvious value-added. There was no SAG appointed for Giri SC. TOR for cluster re-negotiated by initial IFRC staff to consider only shelter technical standards and information management, specifically WWW and distributions. TOR never re-negotiated after dedicated staff appointed to SC. **TWGs implemented for technical standards (Oct) and early recovery (Nov) with active NGO and UN involvement (Solidarites and UN Habitat)(GP).**	Shared leadership arrangements are more robust. SAGs should not be optional. *Regional/Global Cluster:* Review co-leadership with UNHCR and UN Habitat in complex vs. natural disasters.
Central and decentralized Coordination Assess validity of many local clusters. Consider combining them (2) Conduct regular visits to the field (2) Decide communications flowcharts and feedback mechanisms (2) Formalise MoUs with between national and local agencies conducting coordination activities (2) Decentralise as many functions of as possible to field (2/4) The 'centre' must be responsive to the issues raised from the hubs (5)	At Regional level, UNDP managed the 'shelter cluster' however communication flows were not agreed upon. At township level, UNDP did a combined general coordination meeting that included all sectors. Probably sufficient levels of coordination but communication flows not good. International staff unable to travel until mid December (7 wks after Giri). Two visits planned by Myanmar cluster lead (arrived 14 November) was prohibited by MRCS largely due to lack of planning and effective communication. (see MRCS relations for recommendations). Giri very centralized while Tachilek earthquake very decentralized.	*Global/Regional Cluster:* While an MOU was probably in appropriate, at least a one page clear designation of responsibilities between UNDP (applicable if someone else) and ESC in Yangon. One page guidance note could be developed by Global/ Regional cluster and put on website. *National*: To be adapted to each country and disaster. Decide priorities for coordination and if coordination needs can be met at field level, decentralize coordination maintaining an information function and inter-cluster coordination at central level (this is easier in a smaller emergency). Review Tachilek coordination arrangements and lessons learned.
Inter-cluster coordination Too complex, too poorly defined (4) Links between WASH, logistics, and shelter should be further strengthened and formalized (5)	No inter-cluster meetings between WASH, Health (also distributing kits) and the ESC (see Standards on problems with kits). (See IM for problems with reporting).	
Emergency Needs Assessment Design common needs assessment forms (2). ENA and short vs. long term shelter strategy to work closer to together from the beginning (1)	UN did not organize inter-agency assessment. While access was limited local staff and LNGOs had good access however inter-agency assessment seen to be too 'high profile' and against GoUM wishes. **In the absence of more robust ENA, MRCS assessment results triangulated and figures used within 2 weeks for planning and resource mobilisation (GP).** Confusing messages on adequacy of funding for shelter, particularly transitional and recovery. **Comprehensive joint shelter assessment in Dec-Jan to inform ER (GP).**	*Global/Regional:* Promote broader understanding of the sheltering process among ESCs. Review TOR to include close collaboration with ER partners on nuanced messaging and ER work planning within one month of a natural disaster. *National*: Build on experience in Tachilek where a common assessment used the MRCS assessment form. Within the first month, agree with UN Habitat (and ESC) the nuanced advocacy messages for recovery.
Strategy Clarity on - role of cluster re humanitarian shelter, transition shelter and housing reconstruction and timeframe of cluster etc (4) - advocacy role of cluster re appropriate shelter strategies re timeframes and evolving disaster contexts (4) Strategies need to be regularly updated to reflect changing context	No emergency shelter strategy developed. Early recovery strategy later developed in January. Some perceived the ESC to be promoting self-recovery as a preferred option (whether or not this was the case). Some perceived IFRC to be overly focused on the short window for 'tarpaulin distribution'.	Even a one page strategy can clarify needs for information, assessments, and a 'who does what when' action plan on the part of the ESC. It is in this strategy that the early role of the ER actors is clarified and their participation/action is stimulated. Make sure that 'self-recovery' is not confused with 'On-site/owner-driven construction 'as a strategy. Cash grants (and not CFW) needs to be included in 4.1 Developing a Strategy, in line with good practice.

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and to remain relevant to operations (4) Lack of sufficient familiarity with the use of cash programming to support shelter interventions (4)		
Standards	The content of NFI kits were not formally discussed in the ESC nor in inter-cluster meetings with WASH and Health. Became an issue for information management when it should have been agreed upon earlier. Community kits for both shelter and NFI were not distributed regularly by ESC members as they were not convinced of their utility. And kits were not 'shared' as planned by communities but instead auctioned and lotteried.	*Global/Regional:* Review global materials on technical specifications to ensure that NFI receive the same amount of care that emergency shelter has until now with reference to Sphere standards. Make sure NFI is referred to in the title of the ESC when appropriate. Review training and briefing materials to ensure adequate attention to NFIs. *National:* Review and rationalise with the Contingency Planning of the IASC the content of the various NFI kits. The working group should include at a minimum MRCS, Save the Children, MSF-H, ACF,UNICEF, and WHO. Review utility of shared kits, at a minimum, increase community participation in design and distribution.
Resource Mobilisation for the ESC interventions Invite donors to ESC(2) Clarify funding disbursement by disseminating a one-page document on Flash, CAP and CERF (2) Smooth transition from ESC to ER to avoid losing momentum for ER shelter (5)	ESC did not lead or coordinate resource mobilization for agencies (no joint shelter strategy, no discussion of priorities, capacities and allocations of CERF). Instead agencies went unilaterally to sources of funds (e.g. UNHCR for CERFI and UNDP, IOM and UN Habitat to CERF II. **ECHO was an active participant (GP)** and to a lesser extent JICA and OFDA **Eventually ECHO funded ER Shelter based on ER Shelter strategy which was in turn based on sound ER assessment (GP).**	*Global/Regional:* Ensure good understanding of international funding mechanisms (Flash, CERF) and role in resource mobilisation of ESC, particularly if CL is not very experienced with back-up from Regional office during process to ensure transparency with and participation of ESC members.
Resource Mobilisation for ESC management	Funds for CL from Canadian Red Cross. Funds available from American Red Cross except confusion regarding who is responsible for developing and submitting proposals. In the end ARC not approached.	Include responsibilities for resource mobilization in Regional and Delegations TOR (expanded Q&A). Reinforce this through better communication between Geneva, Regional offices and Delegations
Information management IM participated in SAG/TWG facilitated good communications between YGN and hubs (1) Good IM template available early (1) Local market assessment (1) Regular list of suppliers and supplies with prices made available to cluster members (1) Joint reporting formats for WASH, Health and Shelter (kits) (1)	(see Field-Central coordination) Compared to Nargis, MIMU had more detailed WWW in Giri (to village tract level). OCHA used MIMU to collect shelter related data without consultation of ESC. Contrary to agreements between MIMU and clusters on data flows. **Very proactive SC-IM data collection given poor IM by agencies (GP). YGN market assessment TWG in first week by Solidarites (GP)** but no list of suppliers. No joint reporting formats. UNICEF did not have dedicated IM capacity. Big confusion over kit contents and distribution.	Global/Regional: Review
Transition UN Habitat short of funding often not ready to take leadership of recovery phase (1) UNDP/UN Habitat integrated into leadership within first few weeks to ensure better transition (1)	**Early active participation of UN Habitat in Giri response (GP). Early transition to ER/UN Habitat (January)(GP).** Handover of CL but less effective handover of IM functions.	*Global/Regional:* (see Structure above regarding role of UN Habitat). *National*: Ensure UNDP participates in the ESC.
Relations with local actors Hire local staff (1) Ensure native speakers present (1) and translation (1/2) Actively encourage local participation (2)	Information Manager (IM) is local staff from outset. Within 3 weeks, Myanmar cluster lead (CL) and IM staff with international experience (Haiti) is in-country. Local NGO contingency plan had identified local cluster focal points. These agencies participated in SC. Myanmar CL and IM staff attend local NGO shelter cluster meeting. During SC meeting, CL is able to provide simultaneous translation of discussions. Technical standards in Burmese available from Nargis. However just because a person is a national does not mean that they value the contribution of civil society.	*Global/Regional:* When recruiting ESC teams query attitudes toward perceived contribution of civil society. Perhaps include a small module in ESC training course ("why and how"). *National*: Build relationship now with MNGO CP Working group and Swanyee Development Foundation (SDF) and decide working protocol if there are parallel coordination systems.
Preparedness Contingency plans to include local actors when access a problem (1)	MNGO Contingency plan (CP) in existence and activated for Giri however little coordination and exploitation of local actor's access in first weeks (although relatively better than in Nargis). MNGO CP not	*National:* Work with IASC to develop tools and strategies for immediate deployment of national assessment teams including the MNGOs.

	clearly linked to IASC CP nor IFRC/MRCS CP. After first month, SC able to network MNGO and INGO for shelter distribution (upon arrival of Myanmar SC staff).	
Relationship MRCS-IFRC-Shelter Cluster Make more clear the rationale for separating MRCS operations and shelter cluster (1) Clear roles/responsibilities between MRCS/SC taking advantage of MRCS resource that could be useful for the cluster (1)	International community still relies on IFRC to obtain MRCS assessment data. Seen as critical value added of IFRC. However MRCS told not to share assessment data with international community after 1 week. IFRC not responsible for collecting MRCS distribution data with non-RC funds, e.g. UNICEF funds. MRCS did not regularly report to SC on other distributions neither directly nor through IFRC. IFRC SC staff twice discouraged from visiting the field for fear of 'causing problems for MRCS'.	
Improve capacities, training and tools on cluster approach Make materials available (2) Promote online surveys (2) Regular communications (2) Ensure good handover materials (2)	Materials online recognized as exemplary however…CL had a hard time downloading materials from the internet. Need a CD with materials available at country level. While an online survey exists, ESC members were not aware of it. Neither was the CL or IM staff. Communications were good and essential for back-up to less experienced ESC team however there was an important gap and the relationship between the alternate (in KL) had not be established to allow easy transition to the alternate. End of mission report was only verbal with no lessons learned included (should be included). Hand over note was completed.	Developed ESC-lead training through the IFRC "learning platform" with online tutorials. Continue to train those with any experience and potential to be a CL, e.g. the series of CLs in the Giri response.
Strengthen the role of OCHA to support functioning Training of cluster staff (2)	MIMU had regular IM meetings. Inter-cluster meetings were largely for information exchange and not strategic. No capacity building was done, and in fact OCHA circumvented the ESC to find information from agencies.	Reinforce information management and reporting guidelines, i.e. Clusters are responsible for reporting. When IM and reporting are not adequate, implement SOP for increasing accountability of clusters (see Improve accountability within clusters).
Promote accountability to local populations Include standards and methodologies downward accountability in TOR of clusters (2)	Nothing done to promote downward accountability. Some ESC agencies had complaints mechanisms (Save the Children) however this was not shared in the ESC. No Accountability Working Group (like Nargis) in Giri. MRCS also noted need for greater participation of beneficiaries in establishing NFI kit contents (MRCS Giri LL).	**Global/Regional:** To be part of TOR for clusters (IASC 2011) Should be included in standard training for Cluster teams **National**: Participation of MRCS and national IFRC staff in the Accountability and Learning Working Group at the Local Resource Centre (in Burmese and focusing on local agencies' practical issues and experience).
Enhance accountability mechanisms within clusters Increase role of HC/RC (2) Increase role of HoD (2) Measure cluster performance by agreed upon indicators (2) Use Principles of Partnership as an evaluation tool (3) Lack of defined mutual responsibility (4) Need for clarity on role/responsibility of cluster re beneficiaries and their involvement in the cluster (4)	HC/RC delegated inter-cluster coordination to OCHA who in turn delegated to the Deputy head of office. No agreed upon protocols or SOP for measuring performance and what to do when performance is inadequate. No indicators decided upon (no inter-cluster monitoring matrix (IMM) such as in Nargis (tool needs improvement). Some shelter actors did not actively participate in the ESC, e.g. UNDP.	**Global/Regional:** Include role in relation to the ESC in HoD ToR. Expand on regional Q&A for HoD's to include more specific indication of role of HoD, including responsibilities for leadership performance and liaison with HC/RC and when necessary attendance at inter-cluster meetings. Familiarise ESC teams with the PoP by ensuring the PoP on the ESC website, CD and in trainings. Include the PoP as a reference document in evaluation TORs. **National**: The HC/RC needs to be told when important actors are not participating and a solution found, e.g. why aren't they coming?

*Previous evaluations include (1) Nargis ESC, Alexander 2009, (2) Cluster Evaluation II, Group URD/GPPI 2010, (3) Partnership in Practice, Knudsen 2011, (4) Shelter Cluster Mtg, IASC 2010, (5) Lessons learned, Shelter Coordination, Nargis Myanmar, UN Habitat 2009.

Annex 5. Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster sector leads

The Cluster Approach operates at two levels. At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by designating global Cluster Leads and ensuring that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors or areas of activity. At the country level, the aim is to ensure a more coherent and effective response by mobilizing groups of agencies, organizations and NGOs to respond in a strategic manner across all key sectors or areas of activity, each sector having a clearly designated lead, as agreed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team. (To enhance predictability, where possible this should be in line with the lead agency arrangements at the global level.)

The Humanitarian Coordinator – with the support of OCHA – retains responsibility for ensuring the adequacy, coherence and effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Sector/cluster leads at the country level are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator for facilitating a process at the sectoral level aimed at ensuring the following:

Ensure inclusion of key humanitarian partners for the sector, respecting their respective mandates and programme priorities
Establishment and maintenance of appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanisms
- Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including national and international NGOs, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM and other international organizations), through establishment/maintenance of appropriate sectoral coordination mechanisms, including working groups at the national and, if necessary, local level;
- Secure commitments from humanitarian partners in responding to needs and filling gaps, ensuring an appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the sectoral group, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary;
- Ensure the complementarity of different humanitarian actors' actions;
- Promote emergency response actions while at the same time considering the need for early recovery planning as well as prevention and risk reduction concerns;
- Ensure effective links with other sectoral groups;
- Ensure that sectoral coordination mechanisms are adapted over time to reflect the capacities of local actors and the engagement of development partners;
- Represent the interests of the sectoral group in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator and other stakeholders on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy;

Coordination with national/local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors
- Ensure that humanitarian responses build on local capacities;
- Ensure appropriate links with national and local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors (e.g. peacekeeping forces) and ensure appropriate coordination and information exchange with them.

Participatory and community-based approaches
- Ensure utilization of participatory and community based approaches in sectoral needs assessment, analysis, planning, monitoring and response.

Attention to priority cross-cutting issues
- Ensure integration of agreed priority cross-cutting issues in sectoral needs assessment, analysis, planning, monitoring and response (e.g. age, diversity, environment, gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights); contribute to the development of appropriate strategies to address these issues; ensure gender-

sensitive programming and promote gender equality; ensure that the needs, contributions and capacities of women and girls as well as men and boys are addressed;

Needs assessment and analysis

- Ensure effective and coherent sectoral needs assessment and analysis, involving all relevant partners

Emergency preparedness

- Ensure adequate contingency planning and preparedness for new emergencies;

Planning and strategy development

- Ensure predictable action within the sectoral group for the following:
- Identification of gaps;
- Developing/updating agreed response strategies and action plans for the sector and ensuring that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies, such as the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP);
- Drawing lessons learned from past activities and revising strategies accordingly;
- Developing an exit, or transition, strategy for the sectoral group.

Application of standards

- Ensure that sectoral group participants are aware of relevant policy guidelines, technical standards and relevant commitments that the Government has undertaken under international human rights law;
- Ensure that responses are in line with existing policy guidance, technical standards, and relevant Government human rights legal obligations.

Monitoring and reporting

- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review impact of the sectoral working group and progress against implementation plans;
- Ensure adequate reporting and effective information sharing (with OCHA support), with due regard for age and sex disaggregation.

Advocacy and resource mobilization

- Identify core advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the HC and other actors;
- Advocate for donors to fund humanitarian actors to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging sectoral group participants to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

Training and capacity building

- Promote/support training of staff and capacity building of humanitarian partners;
- Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

Provision of assistance or services as a last resort

- As agreed by the IASC Principals, sector leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard.
- This concept is to be applied in an appropriate and realistic manner for cross-cutting issues such as protection, early recovery and camp coordination.

Humanitarian actors who participate in the development of common humanitarian action plans are expected to be proactive partners in assessing needs, developing strategies and plans for the sector, and implementing agreed priority activities. Provisions should also be made in sectoral groups for those humanitarian actors who may wish to participate as observers, mainly for information-sharing purposes.

Annex 6. REFERENCES

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World Bank 2008 and 2009. Social Impacts Monitoring of Humanitarian Aid in the Nargis Response, Washington D.C.

Annex 7. TOR for Evaluation

Terms of Reference (ToR) for:
A Review of the Myanmar Cyclone Giri 2010-2011
IFRC-led Shelter and NFI sector

1. Summary

Purpose: The secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) seeks to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the coordination services given by the IFRC-led Shelter Coordination Team to the Myanmar Cyclone Giri response in 2010 – 2011, as well as identify key lessons learned and recommendations to improve and inform future response.

Audience: The IFRC and in particular the Shelter& Settlements Department will use the evaluation to identify lessons and provide recommendations for future deployments. Shelter coordination team members will use it as reference. Cluster partners will use it as reference and in improving their sectoral response if relevant. Donors, and other humanitarian actors will use if for general information.

Commissioners: This evaluation is being commissioned by IFRC as Global Shelter Cluster Lead for natural disasters.

Reports to: Miguel Urquia, IFRC Shelter and Settlements Department.

Duration: (up to) 21 days

Timeframe: from 20 March 2011 to 30 May 2011

Location: Home based with travel to Myanmar (7-10 days). The visit to the field should be arranged with key informants.

2. Background

Following the landfall of Category 4 Cyclone Giri in western Myanmar's Rakhine State on 22 October 2010, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) led by the UN RC/HC discussed the need to activate the cluster system in a meeting on 25 October 2010. This was seen not appropriate for different circumstances. However, an informal coordination mechanism was put in place, led by the IFRC for shelter, as a voluntary effort of the IFRC delegation. At the time, the coordination mechanism's capacity was limited to the capacity in-country. As the situation evolved on 2 November, it became clearer that there was a need to scale up this coordination mechanism with a dedicated team made up of a shelter coordinator and a shelter information manager. Two Myanmar nationals with international experience in shelter coordination and information management were deployed to Myanmar from Canada and Haiti to coordinate the Shelter and Non food Items (NFIs) sector until 10 January 2011, when the coordination was handed over to UNHABITAT for shelter recovery.

3. Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The objectives of the review are to:

- Appraise the service provided by the IFRC as coordinator of the shelter and NFI sector to shelter sector participants – Government, UN agencies, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, NGOs both national and international, and other actors;
- Review and analyze the experience of the IFRC with respect to the establishment and operation of the shelter and NFI sector, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;
- Provide recommendations with regard to the IFRC's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination activities at both national and global levels;
- Examine if there were aspects of the IFRC's shelter sector leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent;

- Examine the options for the IFRC to continue to have a lead role in the shelter sector during non-emergency periods and the resources required to perform such a role;
- Examine the linkages between the shelter and the NFI sector and any coordination system set up by the national authorities;
- Examine the extent to which national actors (NGOs, affected population, civil society and the private sector) were included in the coordination mechanism; and
- Analyze whether actions have been taken to address recommendations (global and not specific to operational context) made in previous cluster reviews.

Scope of the Review:
The review will encompass, but not be limited to, the following areas:
- Activation of the cluster process and the extent of involvement and influence of the IFRC, as an IASC member, in the decision-making process;
- Understanding and support of IFRC's shelter coordination role within the in-country delegation, the region and the secretariat in Geneva;
- Linkage of IFRC's shelter coordination role with any coordination system set up by the national authorities;
- •Examine the extent to which national actors (NGOs, affected population, civil society and private sector) were included in the coordination mechanism;
    - Impact of the Shelter Coordination Team (SCT) on the Federation Delegation, the Myanmar Red Cross Society, and other operational Red Cross Red Crescent Societies;
    - Design and implementation of the SCT, including factors and determinants which provided the SCT's strengths and weaknesses;
    - Value of linking and/or separating the SCT and the Red Cross relief operation;
    - Design and implementation of the exit/handover strategy;
    - Relations with other sectors, the UN system and the Government;
    - Staffing of the SCT and the support provided from the IFRC secretariat;
    - Equipping and funding of the SCT;
    - Involvement of the SCT in the transition from meeting emergency shelter needs to permanent housing and resettlement; and
    - Issues with regard to visibility for the International Federation and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

4. Evaluation Methodology
The methodology employed by the evaluator(s) in gathering and assessing information should include:
- Review of available documented materials relating to the start-up, planning, implementation, and impact of the shelter and NFI sector.
- Review previous recommendations from other cluster reviews.
- Interviews with key internal stakeholders within the Secretariat in Geneva, the IFRC zone office in Kuala Lumpur, the Regional IFRC Office (e.g. Regional Representatives, DM positions, etc.), the IFRC country delegation, and the National Society.
- Interviews with the former members of the IFRC Shelter Coordination Team.
- A field visit to Myanmar:
- Interviews with other key stakeholders, in particular government officials where possible;
- Interviews with the UN Resident Coordinator's office and any other relevant people in the UN system;
- Interviews with shelter agencies participating in the Shelter and NFI sector, and in particular IOM, UN Habitat, and other key actors/clusters; and

- Follow up with focus group discussions with relevant actors if needed.

Note: A suggested list of interviewees will be provided separately.

5. Deliverables (or Outputs)
- Concise, written report in English (maximum 60 pages without annexes) with key recommendations and supporting information. This document should be of use for discussing the IFRC experiences of the shelter coordination process internally and also with key donors and other stakeholders. In addition, recommendations should be presented in a separate table.
- Additional notes, summaries of interviews etc. as appropriate or supporting documentation.
- Summary of review activities undertaken including interviews, visits, documents reviewed etc.
- A timeline that captures the important events regarding the deployment of the SCT and shelter coordination.

6. Proposed Timeline (or Schedule)

The exercise will be implemented over a period of 21 days from 20 March 2011 to 30 May 2011. Some 7 to 10 days of this period will be spent in the field. A final draft of the report showing complete documentation should be submitted to the Shelter and Settlements department by 1 May 2011. The Shelter and Settlements department will review (in coordination with other departments, the IFRC country delegation and the relevant IFRC Zone Office). Revisions and the final report should be submitted to the department by 30 May 2011. The final report will be made public at www.sheltercluster.org/evaluations

7. Evaluation Quality and Ethical Standards

The evaluators should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the evaluation is designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of people and the communities of which they are members, and to ensure that the evaluation is technically accurate, reliable, and legitimate, conducted in a transparent and impartial manner, and contributes to organizational learning and accountability. Therefore, the evaluation team should adhere to the evaluation standards and specific, applicable practices outlined in the IFRC Evaluation Policy: www.ifrc.org. The IFRC Evaluation Standards are:
- Utility: Evaluations must be useful and used.
- Feasibility: Evaluations must be realistic, diplomatic, and managed in a sensible, cost effective manner.
- Ethics and Legality: Evaluations must be conducted in an ethical and legal manner, with particular regard for the welfare of those involved in and affected by the evaluation.
- Impartiality and Independence; Evaluations should be impartial, providing a comprehensive and unbiased assessment that takes into account the views of all stakeholders.
- Transparency: Evaluation activities should reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.
- Accuracy: Evaluations should be technical accurate, providing sufficient information about the data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods so that its worth or merit can be determined.
- Participation: Stakeholders should be consulted and meaningfully involved in the evaluation process when feasible and appropriate.
- Collaboration: Collaboration between key operating partners in the evaluation process improves the legitimacy and utility of the evaluation.

It is also expected that the evaluation will respect the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: 1) humanity, 2) impartiality, 3) neutrality, 4) independence, 5) voluntary service, 6) unity, and 7) universality. Further information can be obtained about these principles at: www.ifrc.org/what/values/principles/index.asp"

8. Evaluator(s)

The evaluation will be carried out by an external independent consultant. Support will be provided to the consultant by the Shelter and Settlements Department, zone office and country delegation as necessary and appropriate.

Experience:
- Comprehensive knowledge of the IASC humanitarian reform and the cluster approach.
- Knowledge of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement desirable.
- Experience working for a humanitarian aid organization in disaster management in developing countries.
- Experience analyzing, planning, and evaluating relief and shelter programmes and resources.

Skills:
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills.
- Strong skills in gathering data, analysis and report writing.
- Proficient in computers (designing software preferable; Windows (Microsoft, Excel, Powerpoint); and internet-based communication technology (Skype etc).

Languages:
- Excellent written and spoken English.

9. Application Procedures

Interested candidates should submit their application material by 15 March to the following e-mail miguel.urquia@ifrc.org Please put Application for Review of the Myanmar Cyclone Giri 2010-2011 in the subject heading. Application materials are non-returnable and only short listed candidates will be contacted for the next step in the application process.

Application materials should include:
3. Curricula Vitae (CV) including three professional references
4. Cover Letter
5. At least one example of an evaluation report written

0. Appendices

Key referenc documents to be provided:
6. IFRC-UN OCHA Shelter MoU
7. ToRs of the IFRC Shelter Coordination Team members
8. Email to Global Shelter Cluster informing on the deployment of the SCG
9. List of relevant people to be interviewed with contact details
10. Shelter and NFI sector Handover document (if appropriate)

All documents (meeting minutes, strategy documents etc.) available from the Shelter and NFI sector website can be found at www.sheltercluster.org/giri

Reviews of IFRC-led shelter cluster coordination in Nepal (Floods 2008), Myanmar (Cyclone 2008), Bangladesh (Cyclone 2007-2008), Tajikistan (Cold weather 2007), Pakistan (Floods 2007), the Philippines (Typhoon 2006), Bangladesh (Cyclone Aila 2009) and Pakistan (Baluchistan earthquake 2008). These reviews can be found at: http://www.humanitarianreform.org/Default.aspx?tabid=688

Annex 8. Inception Report

APPROACH PAPER: IFRC Independent Evaluation of IFRC shelter cluster leadership during Cyclone Giri, Myanmar

Purpose: The secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) seeks to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the coordination services given by the IFRC-led Shelter Coordination Team to the Myanmar Cyclone Giri response in 2010 – 2011, as well as identify key lessons learned and recommendations to improve and inform future response.

Audience: The IFRC and in particular the Shelter& Settlements Department will use the evaluation to identify lessons and provide recommendations for future deployments. Shelter coordination team members will use it as reference. Cluster partners will use it as reference and in improving their sectoral response if relevant. Donors, and other humanitarian actors will use if for general information.

1. Appraise the service provided by the IFRC as coordinator of the shelter and NFI sector to shelter sector participants – Government, UN agencies, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, NGOs both national and international, and other actors;
2. Review and analyze the experience of the IFRC with respect to the establishment and operation of the shelter and NFI sector, with a particular emphasis on lessons to be learnt for future operations;
3. Provide recommendations with regard to the IFRC's leadership of future emergency shelter coordination activities *in MYANMAR*;
4. Examine if there were aspects of the IFRC's shelter sector leadership which potentially might have or actually did compromise the mandate and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent;
5. Examine the options for the IFRC to continue to have a lead role in the shelter sector during non-emergency periods and the resources required to perform such a role *IN MYANMAR*;
6. Examine the linkages between the shelter and the NFI sector and any coordination system set up by the national authorities;
7. Examine the extent to which national actors (NGOs, affected population, civil society and the private sector) were included in the coordination mechanism; and
8. Analyze whether actions have been taken to address recommendations (global and not specific to operational context) made in previous cluster reviews.

The consultant will during the first set of interviews by phone, also identify key issues specific to Myanmar that IFRC and other stakeholders feel particularly interesting to explore such as:

a. *Deploying Myanmar nationals as shelter cluster leads*
b. *Issues of neutrality and impartiality given the close relationship between the Myanmar RC and the government.*
c. *Actual and potential synchronicities between the shelter cluster and the local NGO contingency plan (approved by the Ministry of Social Welfare prior to Giri)*
d. *Other as learned through initial interviews.*

Proposed approach and methodology:

In addition to the methodology proposed in the TOR (Review of available documented materials relating to the start-up, planning, implementation, and impact of the shelter and NFI sector, Review previous recommendations from other cluster reviews, Interviews with key internal stakeholders within the Secretariat in Geneva, the IFRC zone office in Kuala Lumpur, the Regional IFRC Office (e.g. Regional Representatives, DM positions, etc.), the IFRC country delegation, and the National Society, Interviews with the former members of the IFRC Shelter Coordination Team and A field visit to Myanmar: Interviews with other key stakeholders, in particular government officials where possible; Interviews with the UN Resident Coordinator's office and any other relevant people in the UN system; Interviews with shelter agencies participating in the Shelter and NFI sector, and in particular IOM, UN Habitat, and other key actors/clusters; and Follow up with focus group discussions with relevant actors if needed):

Other key stakeholders to be interviewed using various tools include local communities affected by Giri and requiring shelter support, local NGOs and self help groups that provided shelter services, local government officials and their role/perception of the coordination of shelter services – all stakeholders commonly mentioned in evaluations who are 'left out' of coordination activities.

To acquire the above information, as the consultant will not be able to travel to the affected areas (shortage of time) the consultant will also collaborate if feasible the Local Resource Centre (or other impartial, non-implementing local counterpart). Together we will design and implement a local informal survey to be implemented prior and during the Myanmar country visit in the affected regions, in order to glean as much as possible the perceptions of coordination of shelter activities in affected communities.

The TOR of the shelter cluster will be used as a guiding document to design a questionnaire. The principles of the IFRC and the Considerations below will also be guiding documents in designing information collection from local actors.

Particular effort will be made to look for good practice that can be replicated in Myanmar and potentially globally.

Considerations

Respecting all of the considerations indicated in the TOR , the consultant would also like to highlight that her approach will emphasise the following in the proposed ways:

Accountability and Performance, Utility, **Feasibility**, **Ethics and Legality, Impartiality and Independence**, **Transparency**, **Accuracy**, **Participation**, **Collaboration:**

- *The IFRC accountability and performance framework will be used as a guidelines, e.g. openness in monitoring and reporting; transparent information sharing; meaningful beneficiary participation; effective and efficient resource use; creating systems for lessons learning; and developing feedback mechanisms. While it is recognised this is also for actual implementation of shelter activities, certain cluster activities can be evaluated using the same principles, e.g. feedback mechanisms such as the online shelter cluster survey (Gregg – can I get a copy of the results from this?)*
- *With regard to utility and feasibility, every attempt will be made to study those evaluations that stakeholders, particularly the IFRC, has found useful and draw on good practice in evaluation including clear and succinct recommendations using tools such as tables/matrices;*
- *A common obstacle in cluster evaluations is beneficiary participation (Cluster Evaluation II). Every attempt will be made to get affected communities and local actors' perceptions;*
- *The consultant recognises the limits of a single individual collecting and analysing data for an evaluation, and will seek to engage stakeholders in the interpretation of findings, the formulation of recommendations and if appropriate, practical local action planning such as amending existing contingency plans, without compromising independence and impartiality;*
- *She will involve those in building capacity, leading and implementing shelter cluster management and activities in the future in Myanmar so as to infuse the evaluation with learning and looking forward, consistent with the IFRC framework for accountability and performance.*

Annex 9 Summary of ESC Nargis Lessons Learnt from interagency workshop, June, 2009

1.3 Top 15 Lessons Learnt

- Strong committed engagement from government essential to coordination mechanism, particularly around data collection and enforcement of standards.
- Shelter Cluster should be chaired by government and supported by co-chairs made up of a UN Agency and a NGO (continuity ensured between UN and NGO).
- More cross-cluster integration essential to avoid gaps and overlaps and to ensure more holistic approach i.e. Shelter, WASH and Livelihoods.
- Strong coordination at hub or township level required. The 'centre' must be responsive to the issues raised from the hubs. Danger that the centre just 'takes' and does not 'give'.
- UN-HABITAT should support and be engaged with IFRC or UNHCR from day 1 of the disaster response in order to be best prepared for taking over at end of emergency phase.
- UN-HABITAT should appoint one Shelter Coordinator and where necessary periodically draft in other advisory staff on mission to give specific support to the Coordinator.
- Unambiguous shelter standards are required. There should be no confusion between emergency standards and ER Shelter standards.
- Compliance with standards, agreed by the Shelter Cluster Technical Working Group, is essential. Donors have influence over their implementing partners. Shelter Coordinator should brief donors to ensure that donors insist on compliance.
- Donors should be aware that durable shelter coordination requires funding for approximately two years after a major disaster to ensure best practices are followed and value for money is achieved.
- Capacity building of local communities is vital for successful implementation. This capacity building can be in all forms: training; logistics; project management; working together to moderate construction material prices.
- Home Owner Driven construction process, provides an enabling environment to engage women in the process of construction and leadership roles, in addition to a wide range of other benefits over contractor driven shelter provision.
- Shelter provision is one of the most effective direct and indirect livelihood generators and shelter provision should feature in donor livelihoods strategies.
- There is no 'one-fit' shelter solution. Cash grants, materials provision, full construction are all valid initiatives.
- However, using large contractors has globally and locally resulted in less consultation, less engagement of affected families and more expensive construction.
- Focus on funding must be maintained through the transition from Humanitarian response to Early Recovery.
- The transition is a 'danger period' for loss of focus and momentum and once lost, it may not be possible to regain.
- There is a clear need for Public Information campaigns to explain eligibility. This is essential to avoid frustration, jealousy and negative rumours spreading which can result in equity related social conflict.

1. **Why is the IFRC "convener" and what does it mean?**

   The term "convener" reflects the language in the MoU between IFRC & UNOCHA, in particular the clarification that unlike the other cluster "lead" agencies IFRC is not a provider of last resort and does not have a formal supervisory reporting line to the UN HC/RC.

2. **What are the reporting lines of the coordinator? Does he/she report to OCHA?**

   The reporting line of the IFRC country level shelter coordinator is to the IFRC HoD (or the in-country representative in the absence of a delegation) for issues such as security, administration, HR, etc. and to the IFRC Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator for technical coordination issues. The IFRC country level shelter coordinator does not have a supervisory reporting line to OCHA. On behalf of the country level shelter cluster, he/she provides information and reports to OCHA, but can say "no" if requests from OCHA or the HC/RC provide no added value to the shelter coordination or intercluster coordination efforts.

3. **What do we do in conflict countries?**

   At the global level, UNHCR is the shelter cluster lead agency for conflict situations, and UNHCR or other agencies with a mandate for working in such contexts (such as the Norwegian Reguee Council (NRC)) will lead the shelter cluster at country level.

   There are situations where a natural disaster may occur in a country or region that is conflict affected. In such situations, Movement policies on the role of IFRC apply, in particular the Seville Agreement and Supplementary measures. Hence, where ICRC are the agreed lead for the Movement, IFRC will not convene the shelter cluster. Where IFRC or the National Society are the agreed lead for the Movement, IFRC can convene the shelter cluster e.g. Baluchistan earthquake 2008.

4. **For smaller disasters when the government activates the national clusters, shelter is missing and they look at the IFRC to fill this gap. As a small delegation there is no capacity to address this expectation. How can we fill this gap?**

   Shelter cluster coordination after disasters is an acknowledged additional role for IFRC, and hence requires additional human resources. The coordination surge capacity established and managed at the global level by IFRC's Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator can be mobilised to meet such needs.

   The deployment of these additional human resources also requires additional funding (although fully funded delegates are sought where possible to minimise additional funding needs). Donors have indicated that any such funding should be sought at country or regional level - hence, funding for coordination needs should be included in existing IFRC appeal mechanisms or through solicitations to in country PNS or other donor sources.

5. **Confusion at the country level with the authorities that the IFRC should provide shelters as it is the shelter cluster lead.**

This is a common confusion between the coordination role of the IFRC and the IFRC shelter operations. The HoDs and shelter cluster coordinators should regularly underline the distinction in their discussions with the authorities.

6. **Does our role as convener depend on what the HCT in the country says or decides?**

Yes. The activation of the clusters, which clusters are needed for a specific disaster, and the allocation of agencies to lead the respective clusters is a decision for the HCT. Therefore, it is critical that IFRC participates in these HCT discussions. In many cases, particularly where IFRC does not have a country delegation, IFRC is not party to HCT discussions and hence is not able to contribute to informed decision-making.

7. **Can the HoD say no? It is not always clear that there is an option for the HoD to say no to the involvement of IFRC even if the clusters are activated.**

Regarding the activation of the cluster approach for a given disaster, the HoD can say "no" when in his/her opinion the scale of the disaster and the extent of international involvement does not warrant the use of this mechanism or where existing coordination mechanisms and roles and responsibilities are adequate.

Regarding IFRC's role as convener of the shelter cluster if the cluster approach is activated, IFRC has made a formal commitment to undertake this role unless, through rapid consultation between the HoD (or whoever is representing IFRC in the HCT) and the IFRC Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator, it is agreed otherwise. Circumstances where IFRC may decide to not convene the shelter cluster include:
- The disaster has occurred in a location which is partially conflict-affected and although ICRC is not the overall Movement lead IFRC would not be able to convene the shelter cluster in all required hub locations without potentially compromising Movement operations.
- As agreed at global level, another agency which meets the agreed minimum requirements for country level cluster leadership is better positioned to take on this role.
- The resource demands of coordination commitments in other emergencies, or the forecast lack of required financial support for the given emergency, mean that IFRC will not be able to deploy the required coordination capacity.
- There is no delegation in country, the National Society is weak or unable to provide required support even with financial assiatance, and for security reasons due to the context the deployment of IFRC personnel is considered inadvisable.

To enable an informed decision to be taken, the HoD (or whoever is representing IFRC in the HCT) should request that the HCT allows a short timeframe e.g. 24 hours, for such consultation with the Zone and the Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator.

8. **The cluster role puts extra burden on the delegation and brings with it extra responsibilities that are difficult to meet with existing capacity.**

For rapid onset natural disasters, the required additional, dedicated capacity is deployed from the global surge capacity roster. Although administrative and logistical support for in country shelter coordination teams is sought from the delegation, cost coverage for such activities or the hiring of additional capacity can be included in the separate, shelter coordination budget.

For cluster based contingency planning, this is an additional demand on delegations and National Societies. Support for this component of IFRC's shelter coordination commitment should be included in Zone and country level plans and budgets, with technical support from the Zone or Geneva as required.

9. **What are the expectations from and responsibilities of the IFRC with respect to preparedness efforts?**

As global shelter cluster convener, IFRC is looked at to lead cluster-based contingency planning. There are two options to deliver on this:

- Support, technical advice and guidance is provided to the National Society to take on the role of initiating and overseeing the process, but with an emphasis on tasking other agencies with particular activities related to the planning process (unless the NS has the interest, resources and expertise to undertake individual tasks as well). As in 8 above, this activity should be included in Zone and country level plans.
- Through existing interagency relationships in country, identify another agency to lead this process, but on the basis of a clear understanding that in the event of a rapid onset natural disaster IFRC will deploy the surge capacity to coordinate the emergency response.

10. **Are we observers or participants in the inter-agency mechanism (Pacific)?**

Formally, the IASC only exists at the global level (established by a UN General Assembly resolution), and IFRC participates as a standing invitee (only UN agencies plus IOM are formal members). ICRC is also a standing invitee. At regional level, there are a variety of interagency fora in which IFRC participates. Unless participation in such fora requires adherence to collective decision-making and accountability that conflicts with IFRC policies and guidelines, IFRC should engage to ensure the Movement position informs discussion and decision-making. In brief, participation should reflect IFRC's participation in the IASC at the global level i.e. active participation, subject to time and resources, with priority given to engaging on issues pertinent to IFRC's mandate and strategic areas of interest. When proposed activities or initiatives are potentially in conflict with IFRC principles, policies or guidelines, IFRC can exempt itself.

11. **Too many rotations in cluster coordination teams**

As IFRC further expands and develops its shelter coordination team roster, the focus is on the inclusion of individuals who would be available for longer term deployments. One constraint, particular for individuals from National Societies or IFRC delegations, is securing temporary release from their permanent position. This requires the support and understanding of their supervisors, and the ability to secure short term coverage. Similarly, National Societies who support delegates on the roster need to be made further aware of the profile, visibility and impact of this role to encourage extended deployments. Making regional and country level NS representatives aware of this role of their NS can greatly assist this.

12. **Contractual differences between team members (consultants vs. seconded staff) and associated challenges (e.g. not being able to issue WAs to consultants).**

The focus is on a) expanding the number of Movement personnel on the roster in preference to the use of consultants, to capitalise on the opportunities provided by the "big" Federation and b) establishing framework agreements with partner agencies to deploy personnel as part of IFRC-led shelter coordination teams. This will progressively reduce the number of independent consultants being deployed, and the related adminstrative issues.

13. **Do the team members seconded to the SCT from non-RC partners have to sign the CoC? Whose responsibility is it that they do?**

Yes. It is the responsibility of the cluster coordinator to make sure that they sign.

14. Is the approval of the national society necessary before accepting the convener position? What if the national society says no?

Whilst it is certainly preferable to have the support of the NS prior to taking on the convenor role after the activation of the shelter cluster it is not a requirement.
The NS can be reminded of the formal commitment by IFRC to undertaking this role, as endorsed by Governance on behalf of the membership.

15. Co-chairing of clusters with the government. What does it mean? Should we actively pursue this?

Yes, where there is a clear division of responsibility and accountability. For preparedess and contingency planning, co-chairing with the government is welcomed. For coordinating disaster response, the participation of the government in the cluster is also welcome, but either chairing by the humanitarian sector or co-chairing with the government with separately defined responsibilities for the co-chairs is essential with respect to maintaining "humanitarian space".

16. Would it be a good idea to refresh the minds of the national societies (e.g. through a senior level letter) that the IFRC had made this commitment and what it actually means?

Yes – we will look into who would be the best placed to provide this communiqué.

17. Better utilization of the positive cluster image in our communications internally and externally. We should capitalize more on the fact that the shelter cluster in perceived as one of the better clusters in the system.

Reporting on the cluster activities should be a regular part of the operations updates when the cluster coordination has been financed through the appeal. More attention should be paid at all levels to communicate the experiences of the shelter cluster to partners. A one/two pager on positive messages (internal and external) about the IFRC role in cluster coordination could be created. Quotes from reviews amongst other materials can be used for this purpose.

The shelter cluster page on FedNet (under Disaster Management/Shelter & Settlements), has further information. IFRC have also recently established a dedicated website at www.sheltercluster.org

18. Considering all the resources that went into this commitment since 2005, do we still think that this was the right decision? Should we have done it?

(These replies came from the HoDs themselves) Yes.

It is an honor for the IFRC that it gets to lead a cluster as the only non-UN agency.

The humanitarian environment has been changing and it is not possible not to get affected by that change. Therefore it is better to be in a leading position than watch it from the sidelines.

A lot of resources and energy had to be put into raising the shelter profile as the IFRC was expected to be in a position to deliver immediately after having accepted the responsibility. It is also noteworthy that this was achieved at a time when the organization was going through major reorganization and change.

19. Clarification on the non-food items. Do they belong to the shelter cluster?

In establishing the different clusters, it was agreed that shelter-related and household items should be overseen by the shelter cluster, water containers and personal hygiene items by the WASH (Watsan) cluster, and medical/health items by the health cluster. This broadly reflects how non food items are covered by the Sphere standards i.e. a separate Non food items section under Shelter, settlement and non food items, with water and hygiene items included under Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion. In practice at country level, the shelter cluster is often the "Shelter/NFI" cluster, although close collaboration with the other clusters, including Camp Coordination & Camp Management, is essential. Typically, the shelter cluster will define early on in the operation which NFIs the cluster will keep track of Guidance can be obtained on the shelter NFIs through the NFI booklet ("Selecting NFIs for Shelter").

20. Funding aspect of the cluster deployments. How to communicate to the national society?

At the request of the donor community, in 2009 the IASC Working group agreed to include the financial requirements for cluster coordination in country level appeals – CAP and Flash Appeals for the UN system. Internally the IFRC reviewed this and decided to fund shelter cluster deployments through the Emergency Appeals. Where IFRC is to convene the shelter cluster, a separate shelter coordination component is included in the Emergency Appeal, with the Global Shelter Cluster Coordinator as the budget holder.
Resource mobilisation for the IFRC response therefore also needs to raise awareness of the funding requirements for shelter coordination as well as the operations. HoDs should explain to the NS that additional funds will be requested for this additional interagency coordination role.

21. Is the IFRC commitment only to emergency shelter as per the MoU?

IFRC is committed to coordinating the emergency phase, which may include discussion on transitional or permanent shelter if this is what is requested by cluster agencies. IFRC is not obliged to coordinate transitional shelter, although the MoU with UNOCHA does not prevent IFRC for coordinating this phase. There have been a number of incidences where the cluster agencies and the UN HC/RC has requested IFRC to coordinate the transitional phase in addition to the emergency phase (e.g. West Sumatra, Haiti). IFRC can consider such requests where this is supported by the cluster agencies (including Movement partners), the UN HC/RC and the Government; resources are available to undertake an extended coordination role; and this does not compromise Movement operations.

22. Exit strategy. Who decides when and to whom to hand over?

Although the guidance on the cluster approach does not provide a mechanism to determine handover or exit of a cluster or agency, IFRC with shelter cluster partners has established an understanding to limit the expectations on IFRC. IFRC will usually coordinate the shelter cluster for the emergency phase. Handover will be made to the agency best placed to take on the responsibility for coordinating transitional shelter or reconstruction in that specific country (e.g. UNHABITAT, UNDP, etc.). Handover is "triggered" when the focus of the cluster agencies switches to the following phase i.e. emergency to transitional shelter, transitional shelter to reconstruction.

23. There has been a review of the cluster commitment in 2010. Have the recommendations of this review been acted upon?

As IFRC commissions independent reviews of each deployment of a shelter coordination team, a rolling process has been established of acting upon key recommendations. The meta review finalised in 2010 identified a wider range of issues, institutional and otherwise, for IFRC and cluster partners. A number of the recommendations have been followed up, for example HR issues on delegate status, and funding. As the Haiti response requiring the deployment of the largest IFRC-led shelter coordination team to date occurred as the review was finalised, on the completion of the complementary review of the Haiti deployment a response plan to the findings of both reviews will be agreed.

Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the IFRC to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

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