

Global Meeting of Food Security Cluster Partners: DRAFT Meeting Report

7-8 May 2014, FAO, Rome, Italy



GLOBAL
FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

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1. Executive Summary

The global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) Partners' Meeting was held 7-8 May 2014 in Rome, Italy. The meeting brought together more than 70 participants and observers representing 39 partner agencies.

The overall purpose of the meeting was to review the work of the gFSC throughout 2013 and early 2014, and to confirm priority areas for 2014. These objectives were addressed through presentations, panel discussions and plenary sessions leading to the capturing of best practice and recommendations on future work to advance them further.

The meeting was chaired by Allister Clewlow from Samaritan's Purse, one of the several partner organizations that took an active role in the meeting. Panel discussions were provided by a range of partners working in specific technical areas relating to food security, as well as external technical specialists, and representatives of the Cluster Lead Agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and United Nations World Food Programme).

Discussions and outputs were enriched by the participation of active country-level cluster coordinators, whose ground-level experience in cluster responsibilities was especially valuable in highlighting the challenges and successes of the Food Security Clusters in action.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the formal introduction of the new management team of the global Food Security Cluster. Three new senior-level staff had recently joined the team: the new Global Coordinator Cyril Ferrand, the Senior Programme Advisors Anne Callanan and Ariella Glinni. With the engagement of the new team, strategic planning for the Cluster for 2015-16 will take place. It will be based on feedback from this meeting, recommendations of the formal evaluation of the cluster and partner inputs. This will be an inclusive process and the new Strategic Plan will be presented at the next Partners Meeting for approval.

Partners' expertise was captured in particular when the Working Groups reported back to the Plenary at the beginning of the meeting. Three working groups presented the outcomes of their deliberations held the day before the meeting. These working groups are focused on: Cash and Vouchers, Programme Quality and Food Security in Urban Environments. The theme of programme quality was carried through the meeting, with additional sessions on the topic.

2. Opening remarks and welcome

Jeff Tschirley, Officer-in-Charge for the Director of Emergencies, Emergency and Rehabilitation Division, (FAO) officially opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

Mr. Tschirley elaborated the changes in gFSC Support Team, fare welling Graham Farmer and welcoming Cyril Ferrand in his place. The valuable contributions from Senior Programme Advisors, George Aelion and Marjolaine Greentree were also recognized. Anne Callanan from WFP and Ariella Glinni from FAO were welcomed as the new Senior Programme Advisors and completed the secretariat in Rome to support partners and country clusters.

Mr. Tschirley went on to note that this was the 6th Global Partners' Meeting, and that the strength of the cluster is building progressively and making good progress, especially in light of the four recent system-

wide Level 3 emergencies. In fact, the cluster went 18 months without any Level 3 emergencies and in the past few months three had been declared, challenging the cluster and its partners.

Elaborating further, Mr. Tschirley noted that on top of the current emergencies, all clusters faced new challenges: First, donors are increasingly linking assistance in food security to the quality of the assessments and programming done by the clusters, increasingly focusing on how the clusters support collaboration in the field; and second, the new Strategic Response Planning (SRP) process. The SRP now means that the clusters have been brought into the centre of the process. This will result in a very different model of cluster arrangements than in the past. Mr. Tschirley felt the cluster is well positioned and the outputs of the Working Groups, especially the focus on Programme Quality, will feed into the process. The major role of the gFSC is to advocate for the value added of cluster responsibilities in countries, with “advocate globally, act locally” summing up the approach.

David Kaatrud, *Director of Emergencies, WFP*

David Kaatrud welcomed the participants, noting that the participation in the meetings is getting bigger and better. The cluster is now moving into a mature phase, with the FSC embarking more strongly on strategic planning.

According to Mr. Kaatrud, these meetings are one of the points in time to reflect collectively, as part of a continual process of engagement especially as it is the partners who had generate the agenda. This meeting will focus on Level 3 emergencies, which are “an opportunity to learn in real time”. On average, the cluster is coping with more than one Level 3 per year. Mr. Kaatrud also noted that there increasing scrutiny from donors, and that sometimes it can be difficult to find the right balance between coordination and implementation.

Mr. Kaatrud discussed the Transformative Agenda and explained that the Emergency Directors and donors have committed to leaving the term “Transformative Agenda” as a term behind, as by the end of the year the “system has transformed”. The focus will consecutively on be on the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), including needs assessments which will feed into the SRP Process. Mr. Kaatrud mentioned that UN Office of for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) are currently perfecting the HPC and encouraged the FSC partners to feed into this process. He continued by mentioning some of the challenges related to the Transformative Agenda and emphasized that it is important to ensure the process be balanced, not forgetting programme quality and accountability.

Mr. Kaatrud went on to elaborate that part of the Transformative Agenda is preparedness, which is a cross-cutting issue. As the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has connected to the preparedness community, the humanitarian community has now defined a preparedness strategy. He noted there is a high level of interest on food security in the preparedness area. There should also be a link between preparedness and resilience, keeping in mind that there is a need to define resilience as there is close connection.

Mr. Kaatrud closed by announcing that he was taking up the position of WFP’s Regional Director in Bangkok. He thanked the partners for the past years noting that he will continue his involvement in emergencies in this new role. Stefano Porretti, current WFP Country Director for Somalia, was introduced as the new WFP Emergency Director as of August 2014.

Cyril Ferrand, Global Coordinator gFSC

Cyril Ferrand started by outlining the current global humanitarian situation of 52 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Over the past ten years the number of people in need has multiplied by four, whereas the donor contributions have only doubled. In 2013, the funding gap was 44 per cent of the global appeal. He inferred that consequently, also the gFSC have to deliver more with fewer resources. This means there is a need to be more strategic, with clear processes, commitment, and partnership – especially in the strategic support of countries.

When introducing the meeting, Cyril explained the agenda, the priorities, funding availability and the next 2-year strategic planning process, encouraging partners to actively engage in the process.

3. Report back from technical working groups

The day prior to the meeting, 6 May, was reserved for face-to-face meetings of the working groups: Cash and Vouchers Working Group, Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group, and Programme Quality Working Group.

3.1. Cash and Vouchers Working Group

Chair: Quentin Le Gallo NRC

The Cash and Vouchers Working Group was created as a recommendation of the Partners Meeting in November 2013. Since then, the Working Group has drafted the TORs, set up a webpage and brought forward discussions on the proposed activities. The Working Group has three main objectives:

1. Developing a Cash Capacity Building Roster (CashCap) for cash experts to be deployed on a need basis (similar to ProCap/GenCap);
2. Advocating for a multi-sectoral coordination platform at global level for Cash and Vouchers programmes;
3. Linking with the other gFSC working groups especially with the Urban Working Group on the mapping exercise.

The challenges for the Working Group are to clarify their purpose in reference to other groups working in the same area in order to avoid duplication of work and to develop clear outputs. The Working Group will be maintained, however the structure and TORs will be revised following discussions at the face-to-face WG meeting.

Plenary Discussion

The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) was developed after the tsunami response, with a clear linkage to the Transformative Agenda and quality programming. Last year, there has been a review of the role of CaLP with an opportunity to review membership, reinforce the multi-sectoral use of cash transfer programming and how it links to the IASC Transformative Agenda and the Strategic Response Plan. CaLP is willing to collaborate with the gFSC to advocate and facilitate the setup of a multi-sectoral coordination platform.

- It was proposed that an inter-cluster mechanism could benefit all clusters involved in cash programming and this will be further explored. The gFSC could take the lead to encourage the other global clusters in engaging in the coordination platform and contributing to the Roster.
- How will the Cash and Vouchers Working Group engage with the Programme Quality WG? The mechanism for working together is yet to be determined. However, issues related to response analysis could link efforts between the working groups.

3.2. Quality Programming Working Group

Co-chair: *Phillippa Young - Oxfam*

Co-chair: *Davina Jeffrey - Save the Children*

Co-chair: *Vincent Annoni - Impact Initiatives*

The Programme Quality Working Group began as the Assessment WG but expanded to Programme Quality Working Group with a broader Terms of Reference (ToRs) to support rapid response on the ground. The last meeting recognized indicators, people-centric issues and response framework in slow onset emergencies as major programme quality issues. The challenge now is to redefine the ToRs and define programme quality. There are several issues bundled up in the Working Group, however, the time of participants to contribute is recognized, and identifying people who can lead the work plan items is the next step.

Over the past 6 months, the Working Group has been identifying the situation and output indicators for the cluster and providing guidance on their use. A guidance leaflet has been developed and the indicators have been shared with the OCHA indicator registry, which contains indicators from all clusters. The WG is now looking at how indicators have been used on the ground. In practice, there is not much monitoring of situation indicators, but the endorsed indicators have been used at least in eight SRPs.

As next steps, the WG will review the leaflet guidance and OCHA registry for consistency between the gFSC list and the OCHA list and identify core situation indicators. The WG will also look at cross tagging and how to take it forward, and is considering a systematic review of MIRA at global and country levels, as well as the indicators used in MIRA processes. Additional tasks will consist of a review of assessment tools and indicators by phases of an event, and linking the two together.

In terms of people centered programming, despite years of trying to ensure IASC cross-cutting issues are included in plans, there is still a gap. It is felt there are too many resources, guidelines and handbooks available, so the Working Group wants to develop and provide simple single framework with essential/minimal steps for mainstreaming key people centric issues (age, gender, disability and protection, contributing to Accountability to Affected Populations) to use at country level, and to house this in the Cluster Coordinators' training and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The safe access to fuel and energy has become a major cross-cutting issue, with aspects of protection, food security and gender issues. A reference group and guidelines have been developed, and will be shared with the broader group.

Another piece of work is on improving responses of slow onset emergencies through the development of slow onset situation analyses. The Programme Quality Working Group is considering having a special sub-working group to develop response analysis for slow onset situations further, linking to the Horn of Africa clusters, and deciding different contingency plans and options for response.

It is planned that the Working Group website will be rearranged, making it more intuitive and easier to read. The assessment tool inventory is available on the website as a Google document.

Plenary discussion

Following the presentation by the Programme Quality Working Group, a number of issues were raised. These included:

- When looking at the situation indicators, only 2 out of 8 came through in the SRPs. For appropriate accountability to affected populations, there is a need increase the use of the situation indicators. The Working Group aims to create a list of simple situation indicators.
- For slow onset emergencies, more in-depth information gathering can complement inputs from other agencies.
- There was a concern expressed by one of the participants that overall, a lot of time is spent reviewing indicators and measures, when the focus should be on the response: how we target, monitor and how we measure we have made a difference.
- There was also the suggestion put forward that the Programme Quality Working Group should be engaging with other clusters as cross cutting issues affect more than the gFSC. However, the Working Group has to be strategic in terms of what they take on.

In summing up, the Working group chair recognized a lot still needs to be done, and thanked the participants and the global Support Team for their time and input.

3.3. Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group

Chair: *Allister Clewlow, Samaritan's Purse*

The Chair thanked the core team for their active commitment in Working Group activities. The Working Group has focused on three objectives: 1) development of urban tools and guidance, 2) information sharing and 3) country-level outreach, i.e. how to ensure that the WG outputs benefit country-level urban groups and efforts.

The WG has continued with the interactive mapping exercise and is looking into developing a version III, which will include more information on geographical location and implemented activities. The link of the mapping is now available on the WG webpage. Linkages with other urban groups conducting mapping exercises, such as Food for Cities and CaLP Cash Atlas, are being discussed.

Collection of urban food security case studies of gFSC partners is also ongoing, and a "Lessons Learned in the Urban Response Initiative" has been launched. The aim is to capture experiences and suggestions on food security responses to emergencies that affect urban populations to inform and facilitate the development of related tools, guidance and coordination mechanisms. The first exercise has been conducted on the Philippines Typhoon Yolanda L3 Emergency and the idea is to do the same for other urban crises. The two-year joint gFSC/WFP Proposal "Adapting to an Urban World" has now received approximately 25% of funding from WFP to cover the Phase I of the project, thanks to a contribution from DFID. The overall aim of the proposal is to strengthen the humanitarian response to food security crises in urban settings through the development of related tools, training and guidance. The Phase I includes a desk review to highlight achievements and gaps, a pilot food security assessment in an urban area and a workshop to share findings and plan next phases.

The visibility and advocacy of the WG has strongly increased over the last six months. Working Group members have been invited to participate and input in various urban initiatives, consortium groups, conferences and events such as World Urban Forum 7, ALNAP, IASC Urban Reference Group Harvard University. The Working Group also increased the number and variety of its members including academia and other UN agencies.

Several country clusters have established Urban WGs and hubs including Somalia, South Sudan and oPT. As support to country-level is the overall aim of the Working Group, country-cluster representatives have been involved in the face-to-face WG meeting to discuss how the global level could assist country-level urban groups and initiatives and how to increase communication. For this purpose, a concept note will be drafted and shared.

4. Update from the evaluation team

Presenters: *Julia Steets and James Darcy, Global Public Policy Institute*

The Food Security Cluster Evaluation team presented the evaluation process and the main findings, as well as the next steps in presenting the results of the evaluation.

The aims of the evaluation were to examine the effects of the Food Security Cluster coordination and what factors influence the effectiveness of food security coordination, focusing on effects at country level and on all types of food security coordination mechanisms: from Food Security Clusters to government-led Food Security Working Groups, and other mechanisms.

The evaluation team noted that they covered 4 regional hubs and 8 countries and had a total of 424 interviews. The team received over 400 responses from 43 countries to their survey-monkey from a well-balanced variety of stakeholders, but noted that there may be some selection bias, as those more engaged in the cluster were more likely to provide responses. There were some gaps in reaching stakeholders, as the team struggled to engage with non-traditional humanitarian actors.

Findings of the evaluation:

- Food security coordination can influence all stages of the **humanitarian programme cycle**, by strengthening relationships, making information available and facilitating joint positions.
- The **actions and structures of clusters** in countries vary, but coordination; information sharing and design, coordination and/or implementation of **needs assessments** are the crucial areas of food security cluster activities. However, the contributions to needs assessment and analysis are inconsistent. The team found that **gap analyses** are not used well enough. It improves where the clusters share the results and findings of gap analysis.
- **Strategy and planning.** Several food security mechanisms invest time and energy in contributing to broad strategy plans, such as SRPs. While this result in better plans, some question the investment of time and find the processes time-consuming with limited operational relevance. Overall, systemic processes should be lighter and planning should be operationally more relevant.
- **Reducing duplication and addressing gaps.** Several respondents agreed that coordination reduces duplications. However, the evaluation team still came across situations where duplications exist, often depending on who does and doesn't participate in coordination mechanisms. They found that the 4Ws matrix (who is doing what, where and when) is good at looking backwards; but not as good in looking forward as the planning of services isn't reflected well. The evaluation team found that when

a gap analysis was done on the basis of advance planning, the clusters were good at directing agencies to fill gaps. However, clusters have often difficulties in identifying gaps and addressing problems, or pooling resources to address the gaps. The evaluation report includes a recommendation that the cluster be more proactive in this area.

- **Standards.** The team found that even though technical guidance and standards exist and there is a range of good examples with positive effects available, there is no systematic provision of guidance and standards. According to the evaluation, clusters are often focused on technical issues, with much less attention to quality issues such as gender and accountability to affected populations (AAP).
- **Reporting, monitoring and learning.** The team noted that while there were enough coordination meetings and information shared in general, there was not a sufficient exchange of best practices and lessons learned. There also needs to be more emphasis on analysis for decision-making – not only on collecting information.
- **Preparedness.** In terms of preparedness the team found that in most cases the cluster doesn't see a role for itself. Bangladesh is an exception as preparedness is the major focus of the cluster, and it will be important to evaluate the benefit of the preparedness work there.
- **Participation in the cluster** was good from the traditional actors, but with gaps in the participation of local NGOs, government agencies and “non-traditional” actors. There can be issues with security (i.e. in conflict situations) and capacity of local actors, which will be harder to address. The co-lead agencies have an unused potential to facilitate engagement with government partners in the cluster. The clusters need to be clearer as to why government should be at the table and on what benefits would they get from participating.
- **Coordination mechanisms.** In general, L3 protocols form a rather heavy process and lots of pressure on clusters. It is difficult to balance the need for gathering information and the need for operational work. In general, coordinators familiar with the system can play an important role in figuring out the right balance removing unnecessary burdens.
- **gFSC demand-driven mentoring** is extremely appreciated, for example the deployment of experienced Cluster Coordinators. The downside is that this has been uneven; there needs to be a greater awareness in all countries of what the gFSC can offer. As a result, there needs to be greater readiness to deploy coordination capacity.
- **Temporal, thematic and geographic boundaries** are sometimes unclear, especially in relation to transition and exit strategies, and the links to development. In general, there is a need to have an agreements among clusters on where the cross-cutting issues are housed. The clusters should consider the idea of area-based coordination which can be more flexible and efficient than a standard national/sub-national approach.

In summary, the evaluation team concluded that most people see the benefits of coordination and consider coordination as a worthwhile investment. The Food Security Cluster comes out well compared with other clusters. While capacities for coordination have been increasing, the evaluation team asked what the optimal investment in coordination is. With more resources, better results are obtained, but do not automatically lead to proportionally better results. Flexible coordination solutions to increase cost-effectiveness are to be further explored.

Plenary discussion

The following topics were raised during the plenary discussion:

- Most **successful clusters** have 1. Joint ownership by co-lead agencies and by members and have action-oriented processes on the agenda; 2. They meet actual needs of the membership, and are responsive to what the partners need, including donors and operational agencies; 3. Governments found the cluster useful for managing the humanitarian systems and reporting requirements. 3. Well-led clusters are where the Cluster Lead Agencies are proactive.
- **Characteristics of less successful clusters** were: 1. Where Cluster Lead Agencies dominated; and 2. where the needs of the members were not addressed but the needs of bigger processes were considered a priority. Areas requiring further work were sub-national coordination approaches and government involvement.
- **Participation in the meetings** at country and sub-national levels: the evaluation team found that where the cluster is an information sharing meeting only, senior officials will not come to the meetings and the coordination meetings are unable to make decisions. There may be procedural ways to change this, as staff at the appropriate level should be engaged in a more strategic and systematic way.
- As resources for coordination are so crucial, more advocacy is necessary for **donors** to understand that the costs of coordination are worthwhile. It is important to get a common understanding of the role of the cluster with the donors and agreement on what are the costs of coordination.
- The big difference between slow and rapid onset crises needs to be considered especially in early warning and preparedness. There is little progress on preparedness and contingency planning to define how the cluster acts in a timely and preventive manner.
- The gFSC provides people in the field with the feeling that they belong to a larger family. Independent evaluations are useful and the gFSC should hold on to this process.

Next steps: The evaluators are open for inputs and ideas from participants. The draft report will be circulated and it is planned they be followed by webinars with gFSC and country teams to discuss the recommendations for various actors. The gFSC should discuss some issues with other clusters and compare the findings of this evaluation with the gFSC lessons learned exercises. The final evaluation report will be presented to the governing bodies of WFP and FAO in October-November 2014.

Summary by Cyril Ferrand:

The evaluation provides a set of useful recommendations to the gFSC, to Cluster Lead Agencies and the donors. Some are related to the issue of resources for coordination, versus resources for response. The processes are getting heavier (i.e. L-3 protocols, HNO/SRP), and the clusters spend significant time processing information and the need for information managers and tools is increasing. The gFSC will follow up with discussions with other clusters and donors on the issues raised by the evaluation team.

This evaluation is considered very timely for the definition of the next two year strategy. Not all countries know what to expect from the gFSC, so the cluster needs to increase communication and outreach on the services that the gFSC can offer. Finally, a lot needs to be done on cross-cutting issues.

5. Lessons learned on the Strategic Response Plan and addressing activity costing

Presenter: *Cyril Ferrand - Cluster Coordinator gFSC*

Facilitator: *Melanie Mason - US Mission to Rome*

Cyril started by introducing the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC), which is a cycle of assessment, planning, resource mobilization, monitoring and review, and which is at the heart of the work of the entire cluster. There is an ongoing Lessons Learned exercise on the 2014 HPC with the objective to improve the current guidance and tools, define quality standards for the process and products, provide examples of innovative approaches and define the technical support requirements. The review will focus on the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), Strategic Response Plan (SRP) guidance, activity costing and project profiles.

Cyril introduced the phases of the SRP process: 1. HNO captures sector needs based on all available data; 2. SRP is the country strategy, including cluster plans (objectives, activities, and projects with costing); and 3. Monitoring, which varies country to country. It was also noted that the midterm review process rarely occurs, for example, it did not happen in the Palestine response in 2013.

Currently, there are various methods for costing the SRPs:

a. Budgets based on projects (= keep the existing system)

These projects go through a system of validation. **The budget of a cluster is calculated as the total of the budgets** of all the projects that are validated. Projects declared allow the cluster coordinator to know “who wants to do what where”, i.e. have a vision of what needs may receive a response and where gaps might be.

b. No project planning

Cluster members establish a **budget based on planned activities**, using generic, lump-sum amounts per beneficiary and/or activity, as taken from past experience. The cluster plan and budget may then be completed and distributed, while projects are not yet declared. After this is done, cluster coordinators do not ask all actors to declare their projects. Along the year, only those projects that are actually funded and implemented will be registered in the OPS (Online planning/projects system). This allows some monitoring, knowing “who was funded to do what where”.

c. The mixed approach

Cluster members establish a **budget based on planned activities**, using generic, lump-sum amounts per beneficiary and/or activity, as taken from past experience. The cluster plan and budget may then be completed and distributed, while projects are not yet declared. After this is done, cluster coordinators ask all organization to declare their projects for 2014 in the OPS. These projects go through a system of validation. The organizations have the possibility to declare new projects along the year. Projects declared allow the cluster coordinator to know “who wants to do what where”, i.e. have a vision of what needs may receive a response and where gaps might be.

d. No budget

Of 23 countries reviewed, 14 countries are still project based, 3 have used a mixed approach, only 4 countries have done activity costing and 2 do plans only. Approaches for next year will depend on the country capacity for activity costing. The aim is to reach agreement on cost per beneficiary. Cyril ended his presentation by posing the question of whether country activity costing improves humanitarian operations and promotes evidence based decision making. He asked the meeting group whether they thought activity costing is more successful for leveraging donor funding.

Plenary discussion

The floor was opened for meeting participants to add their experiences of activity costing. During the plenary session, different experiences on costing were discussed. As a result of an informative discussion,

it was decided that the FSC will take the topic forward, including OCHA, partners and country-level Food Security Clusters as well as other clusters.

- **Experience of activity costing in Afghanistan.** Activity costing has been done for the past two years. However, the costing has not been accurate, and only a few partners got involved, including the Cluster Lead Agencies and around 6-7 NGOs. Afghanistan FSC found the costing for different agencies was very different and therefore cluster budget should not be compared with each other.
- **Objectives of activity costing.** Participants felt there doesn't seem to be any clear objective as to why this approach has been taken on. Agencies conduct different activities with different costs. Similar activities in different countries will have different supply-related and implementation costs. Having one unit cost is too restricting, as these approaches don't address quality of programming. However, project costing helps allocate CHF funds, but with activity costing it is not clear how much funding should go to each agency.
- **Guidance.** Currently, there is no proper guidance on the costing activities for SRP. Global Clusters need to support their cluster coordinators and therefore will need to identify the type of support needed to take this forward.

6. Lessons learned from the Level 3 emergency responses with a focus on the Philippines, C.A.R and South Sudan

Facilitator: *Megan McGlinchy, CRS*

Panel members:

Samantha Chattaraj gFSC;

Ruco Van der Merwe, Samaritan's Purse;

Raymond Lund, WFP;

Eric Michel-Sellier, FSC Coordination CAR;

Frederick Linardon, FSC Co-chair, CAR

In the midst of several Level 3 emergencies, it is a timely opportunity to take stock of lessons learned and challenges.

The Philippines

In the Philippines L-3 response, the government had good capacity and there was a strong private sector. In terms of FSC staffing, the sub-national clusters in Roxas and Tacloban had a Cluster Coordinator and an Information Management Officer, and there was a team of three in Manila including a database specialist. Therefore, there was good capacity for Information Management, especially in mapping and data analysis. This meant there was good data visualization for the 3/4Ws and gap analysis. As a result, it was possible to identify gaps in different areas, e.g. in a few municipalities where there were affected individuals yet no plans for aid forecasted. At the same time, there were duplications since five different food pipelines existed. Although coordination was challenging, data visualization enabled the cluster to identify who does what where and when (4Ws). The 4Ws were linked to Google maps, which meant information could be drilled down to different areas, with very high detail for reviewing ongoing activities. The challenge was making this available and for people to use it.

Furthermore, advocacy was very important, as the planting season was rapidly approaching. Through support of the cluster, the immediate need for seeds was raised, and this allowed planting to get underway.

South Sudan

South Sudan was a stark contrast to the Philippines. In terms of deployments, the gFSC mobilized the global Cluster Coordinator for the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) reprioritization, an Information Management Officer from Samaritan's Purse, and Programme Advisor from the gFSC Support Team went as co-coordinator. The deployments from gFSC supported the implementation of L3 protocols.

The L3 response focused mostly on the three crises states (Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei) however due to severe access security constraints the cluster staff could not be based there and many agencies had suspended their work in these areas. Therefore, sub-national coordination was weakened which had a negative impact on the national level coordination. To address this problem, the cluster sent sub-national coordinators along with the interagency rapid needs assessment team. The reports from the weekly missions were feedbacked to national cluster meetings for advocacy and planning response.

Among the challenges was that agency programmes were suspended in the crises areas, therefore there was an imbalance between the level of coordination and the level of response. There were multiple coordination meetings at different levels trying to gauge the situation. However, there was a limited response and given that data on the number of beneficiaries reached was not easily available, the quality of response and gap analysis did not provide a comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground. This made it hard to update the situation reports thrice a week, which highlighted the need for the cluster to think about meaningful levels of reporting in Level 3 emergencies.

Central African Republic

The cluster team (Cluster Coordinator and Information Management Officer) was deployed in November 2013 and was joined by a co-facilitator from ACTED. The acute crisis at the beginning of December and the L3 declaration came just few weeks after and, in a very short time, the cluster had guided the response to the IDP crisis, the Multi-Sector/Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), and three strategic planning processes (the SRP, the 100-day plan and the revised SRP in January 2014). In March, ECHO decided to fund the co-facilitator position for one year.

In this period (from December 2013 to May 2014) the main trends that have been observed are the following:

- There has been an increasing number of actors, from about 20 in October 2013, to more than 60 now. The number of local NGOs has increased from around 40 to some 200.
- The security situation remains very volatile and fluid and access outside the capital Bangui is only now improving, although still difficult.
- Few partners were in the field at the beginning of the crisis and are now going back. It has been therefore very complicated to produce data both for security and capacity issues.
- The cluster has been facing a major challenge with information being considered strategic for fund-raising. As a result, few actors are willing to share information, especially in advance of receiving funding (i.e for planning purposes).
- There has been a scarcity of financial resources and competition for funds among cluster partners.
- This has resulted in a vicious cycle of low availability of data, little sharing of information, limited background for strategic documents and limited impact of strategic documents on advocacy.

To facilitate discussion and make coordination meetings more effective, the partners were divided between national and international NGOs. Beside the initial response to the IDP crisis in Bangui and the efforts to address minorities' needs in the programmes and distributions, a major focus of the cluster in this period has been saving the planting season. A specific working group was created for this purpose.

The cluster developed simple accessible tools for all the partners, and produced a more detailed cluster plan of action in addition to the SRP. Because everybody is lacking information, the expectation on the cluster to provide relevant information are very high. As a result, an emphasis has been given to the development of common tools for data collection. The cluster team is working with the local university to increase cluster capacity, and the capacity of the university students in coordination of food security.

In general, Central African Republic is an example of everything that has been raised at the meeting: there is the need to increase information gathering and analysis to increase resources and to decrease gaps in implementation in the field. It was noted that the 3Ws are often not compatible with partners' tools and data, which means that it is difficult for the Information Manager to combine information received. Thus, the cluster needs to better advocate the added value of sharing information, and adopt common tools to break the negative cycle. In addition, it was noted the cluster needs to work on preparedness and further reinforce collaboration with the Government.

Plenary discussion

Following the three presentations on lessons learned from Level 3 emergencies, the floor was opened for questions and comments. The following topics were covered:

- **Role of market analysis.** In the Philippines an assessment registry was maintained, and the cluster circulated all assessments it received. Based on the findings, a market assessments map was created. However, markets were rapidly changing and, in general, were very strong. The cluster could have done better if there was an ongoing way of tracking the market functionality. Many clusters were asking for market analysis, and there were multiple agencies assessing markets. Emergency food assistance was initiated immediately, but this put pressure on the commercial goods going to market. OCHA did cash coordination for the first time, but there was a need for cross-cluster market analysis, including linkages with shelter, logistics etc., to assess market vendors' capacity. In general, there were some missed opportunities, such as cross-sectoral market analysis, and the cluster could not take some proposals forward, for example engaging with the other clusters on the topic and using the same cash transfer modality for various clusters. Multi-sector market surveys would be preferable, although this would mean the market analyses would not be as granular and might not fulfill the programming needs of each sector.
- **Quality programming in C.A.R.** In C.A.R, there were several agencies stepping in to support affected people in Bangui. However, some minorities were missed out, in this case the Islamic community. As a result, the cluster facilitated support to the minority groups and to the host families, while the initial focus was mainly on IDPs in camps.
- **Role of the cluster in advocacy.** In the Philippines, land ownership was an issue, with 5 per cent owning land and 70 per cent renting. This meant that every seed makes the landlords richer as most of the harvest goes to the owners. The cluster worked with government and other actors to advocate for the coconut tenant farmers rights and present the difficulties.
- **Food assistance versus livelihoods development in South Sudan.** In the assessment strategy in South Sudan, there is an Agricultural Working Group and a Livestock Working Group, so the FSC took the lead in ensuring these areas were integrated.

- **Government role in response.** There is a need to ensure strong coordination between government structures and the cluster system. In the Philippines where the government structures are strong, food assistance and agriculture are separated in the government cluster architecture, however, not in the UN system where they are combined.

7. A framework for implementing programme quality across the Humanitarian Programme Cycle

Panel Members:

Marcus Skinner, HelpAge International

Vincent Annoni, Impact Initiatives

Cyril Lekiefs, Action Contre la Faim

Delphine Brune, GenCap

Facilitator: *Patricia Colbert, WFP*

People-centric issues such as age, gender, disability and protection need to be brought together, and mainstreamed into programming. This will enhance our accountability to affected populations.

Integrating people-centric issues: the Philippines

Marcus Skinner talked about integrating people-centric issues in the context of Philippines. From an age perspective, there have been some examples of modified programmes, especially in physical access to food distribution, implying there is recognition of age and disability in programme implementation. Some projects collect sex/age disaggregated data at beneficiary level; although it does not include older people or disability, and is not often used for programming, nor does have an impact on project design. The Philippines was a very good example of people-centric programming, but not necessary across the entire cluster.

In general, it can be said that we are not seeing the inclusion of vulnerable groups in programming, or contextual analysis of the roles of these people in communities reflected in needs assessment. We do not see adapted programming (types of food for older people). The underlying issue is that we do not see enough ownership for people centric issues in the cluster. In general, the cluster tends to look at technical issues, not people-focused assistance. The issue is how we deliver impartial assistance to vulnerable people. There is a need for greater sharing of best practice.

Use of tools

In his presentation, Vincent Annoni outlined four key points:

1. **Normative approach versus uses of tools.** Several tools and best practice have been developed, however, more emphasis should be put on using these tools to help integrate people-centric issues in programmes.
2. **Output vs outcome.** The extent to which we use knowledge and capacity in looking at the outcomes, especially how beneficiaries use our outputs, which can add conflict to the communities.
3. **Programme vs. strategy.** While vulnerabilities are examined when responses are implemented, systematically thinking about vulnerabilities when planning responses is not usually done. The cluster could better position itself by fulfilling its mandate to implement an overall strategy, keeping in mind that the sum of individual actions is not the sum of the cluster.

4. The cluster needs to focus on **accountability**. The challenge is how to adequately deal with the beneficiaries using a human rights based approach.

Role of cluster coordination

Cyril Lekiefs outlined that in Afghanistan, the cluster invested in promoting people-centric issues such as gender, protection, age and disability, for example, by developing a tool kit on these issues. The role of the cluster coordination team has been to provide an enabling environment to address these issues, although it cannot compel partners to adopt the recommendations and tools. Therefore it would be useful to go back and review how these issues are addressed in Afghanistan after all these resources have been invested.

In Afghanistan, there are continuing food security crises, with seasonal flooding, dry spells, and dry winters. Currently, OCHA is doing yearly planning. In this type of environment, there is a need for multi-year strategic plans and programming targeting the vulnerable people over a period of time. WFP has developed a calendar with agriculture, health and education, which ACF uses as well. This exercise has increased programme quality, providing a better understanding of the vulnerabilities which are multi-sectoral. It is essential to have cross-sectoral programming to address vulnerability.

Overall, linkages between FSC and Nutrition can contribute to accountability to affected populations, and can ensure the interventions have a positive impact on vulnerable populations.

Sharing experience from the WASH Cluster

Delphine Brune explained that also other clusters face challenges in addressing programme quality. In WASH Cluster, partners expressed fatigue in discussing vulnerabilities and WASH, so the cluster focused on which critical issues needed to be considered irrespective of type of emergencies. They found that gender, age and gender based violence were most critical. Based on this, the cluster now has four minimum commitments to be promoted by cluster partners.

In general, there is a need to go beyond the household level unit to see how men and women are specifically affected. In the Sahel response, it was interesting to see how women and men were affected by food insecurity across the planning cycle. We need to challenge the household unit as a central measurement tool for FSC, moving beyond this, and recognize assistance is never neutral; there will always be an impact at disaggregated level.

The FSC has an important role to play not just in targeting gender based violence and safe access to assistance, but looking at broader picture of vulnerabilities. When sex and age disaggregated data is not available, it is important to tap into local knowledge and information on task division, and discussions with for example female and male farmers to inform our programmes. The gender marker has been a 'checking the box' type of tool. However, it was designed for the cluster to design projects. It our responsibility to use it as an opportunity and not as a constraint.

People-centric programming in the Philippines

Samantha Chattaraj noted that there was concrete evidence from the cluster partners of integrating people-centric issues in the Humanitarian Planning Cycle in the Philippines. When developing the Strategic Response Plan, the Cluster ensured that people-centric issues were integrated appropriately. The cluster engaged specialists from the GenCap, Age and Disability Task Force, protection specialists and an Accountability to Affected Populations advisor. However, it is important to understand that specialists provide only injects and the ownership of the inputs should be taken by the Cluster as a whole. Six months later, the cluster coordination team went back to all partners and asked what the key steps were taken in

people centric programming, as they wanted to see how the cluster partners implemented it. Seven partners have responded to the survey. Based on the responses, a report was developed to demonstrate concrete evidence and good practices from the typhoon Haiyan Response.

Plenary discussion

Following the brief overviews, the floor was opened for discussion:

- **Age/sex disaggregated data.** One of the underlying causes why we have inadequate age/sex data in food security is that the household unit is the baseline unit, and we do not ask for disaggregated information. We need to review the approach and change methodology to focus on vulnerable. We also face challenges in targeting community support networks.
- **Options for collecting age/sex data.** A practical step on gathering age/sex data is to encourage electronic registration, which has ability to disaggregate data. Some agencies are using this now. It could be useful to push an inter-cluster approach to using technology to collect data.
- In the Philippines, the **census data** to barangay (local administrative unit) level and vulnerability data was available. This shows that data is available from alternative sources.
- It is important not to forget **children in the vulnerable**. Field teams can often be daunted by information gathering when there is a time pressure. However, it is possible to link with the development teams as longer term actors, who often have this information in the event of a rapid onset crisis.
- Evaluations show that age/sex data and targeted assistance usually comes in the second month after onset. In rapid onset, average household and average needs are estimated and blanket assistance is provided. In rapid onset situations it is more difficult to integrate people centric issues.
- One issue with people-centric issues is connecting to support from the donors, as there is a tendency not to support analysis or research to collect it.
- Often cross-cutting issues can be handled through preparedness. If it is known that a typhoon is coming; we could have the data beforehand.

8. Strengthening partnership within the cluster at national and global levels

Panel :

Holly Radice, Save the Children, Cluster Coordinator of the Somalia Food Security Cluster

Francesco Baldo, Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group coordinator, Gaziantep, Turkey

Facilitator: *Davina Jeffrey, Save the Children*

The purpose of this session was to understand the strengths, weaknesses and challenges faced in different partnership models and clarify relations and mutual expectations between national and international NGOs, the government and donors within the cluster framework. In order to achieve this, panel members presented partnership models that remain strong and engaged even when no formal cluster is active. The panel members also challenged traditional partnership models and then promoted the notion of equal partnership.

Somalia

Holly Radice explained that the Food Security Cluster in Somalia has over 400 organizations as partners – both international and local NGOs, UN organizations and donors. In order to describe the different phases that were needed to bring together this many organizations to form a well-coordinated cluster, Holly used Tuckman’s stages of groups as an analogy.

In the *forming phase* the cluster was brought together, with major buy-in from the Cluster Lead Agencies and governing bodies. It defined the Terms of Reference, built a strong membership and sense of partnership, and regularized its processes.

In the *storming phase* the cluster provided technical guidance, focusing on capacity building and cluster performance evaluation. It created an additional post for an International NGO (INGO) coordinator and liaised with the Federal Government of Somalia. In addition, it worked to identify the reasons why some NGOs weren’t involved in the Cluster.

In the *norming phase* the cluster performed an evaluation, developed the work plan openly and had it commented on by the Cluster’s Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). It also provided advocacy, encouraged pro-active contributions, and focused on ensuring that the cluster relationship was mutual – moving away from “extractive relationship” where the partners felt they gave inputs to the cluster but did not receive as much in return to true, balanced partnership.

According to Holly, the overall challenge in Somalia was that people often have different understandings of the role of the cluster. Therefore, it was essential to balance expectations.

Gaziantep, Southern Turkey

Francesco Baldo, the coordinator of Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group (FSLWG) from Gaziantep, South Turkey explained that the coordination solution provided there is largely based on the spirit of partnership. Despite constraints such as limited access for assessments, absence of specific funding for the response and three different languages for operations partners still actively participate in FSLWG. Whenever there are more than one actors providing a response to the same shock in a defined geographical area, there is need for coordination and this is why it is important to identify and address the minimum requirements of coordination in every context.

When the gFSC deployed staff in Gaziantep, they ran a big risk of operating in a new environment, without being able to hold people accountable. However, that challenge was addressed by delivering on what the local actors needed for coordination in a contextualized way. Furthermore, at a more general level, to provide minimum information to partners a strong Information Management set up is needed. Without information, the cluster does not exist. Normally the cluster is good at reporting what has happened. However, the key to good coordination lies in forecasting, planning and discussing future operations which still remains a challenge due to many factors relating to both providing and managing information by partners and the cluster coordination team respectively.

Discussion

The floor was opened for comments and questions. The following major topics were discussed:

- **Somalia coordination.** In Somalia, successes were built on strong partnerships, understanding leverage and how partners can support the work at different times in different ways. Forecasting ahead is most helpful, especially for advocacy. When there is a common goal, the added value for the

cluster is demonstrated. In Somalia there were incentives for partners to participate. It is very important for the global partners to ensure their staff engages with the cluster at country level.

- **Partnerships.** It can be said that the model of traditional partnership is driven by financial transactions. A true partnership is having shared objectives, which prevents people from talking about 'them and us'. Working collectively is not based on financial relationships. Often when considering partnerships, it is for risk transfer to others. During the discussion, it was mentioned that there are some good examples of partnerships in Afghanistan, where INGOs conduct seasonal food security assessments in two thirds of the counties, and support national NGOs to complete the rest.
- **The cluster.** The partners need to know what to expect from the cluster; its roles and responsibilities should be clear to everyone. Good cluster coordination examples are where topics are tackled in a meaningful way, and the input is meaningful. Unfortunately, it is often felt that the input is not meaningful enough in the cluster meetings. It is also increasingly important to involve government bodies in the cluster work. Sometimes, there is also the problem of mixed expectations: partners expect the Cluster Coordinator to move things forward, whereas the Cluster Coordinator thinks it is the partners who should move things forward.

9. Defining resilience in relation to Food Security Clusters at global, national and sub-national levels in emergency contexts: developing an integrated approach to resilience programming

Panel:

Quentin Le Gallo, NRC

Marco Valentini, Cluster Coordinator, Yemen

Sylvie Wabbes-Candotti, FAO

Scott Ronchini, WFP

Facilitator: *Agnes Dhur, ICRC*

The objective of the panel discussion on resilience was to identify the food security cluster's role in building and strengthening the capacity of people, communities and national institutions, where appropriate, through resilience programming and to define the boundaries of what the cluster can realistically achieve in terms of resilience. Throughout the discussion, partners highlighted the risks and implications for not planning long term and the importance of working together in partnership to contribute to a more sustainable response, as opposed to simply gap filling.

Quentin LeGallo's presentation on *Building Resilient Communities in Somalia as part of the BRCis M&E Framework* stressed the importance of understanding resilience both conceptually and programmatically, through the involvement of communities in the overall response. NRC's resilience programme involved community consultations for a six month period, during which the core areas of work included the identification of a monitoring system, with key indicators for each community. The focus of NRC's presentation was whether and how the food security cluster should adopt a community, multi-sector approach to resilience-building.

Similarly, Marco Valentini, presented the inter-cluster work on resilience undertaken in Yemen from his experience as Food Security and Agriculture Cluster Coordinator. He stressed the role that all key actors,

including Coordinators, Information Managers, partners and donors play in strengthening resilience within the cluster system through advocacy, capacity building and inter-cluster/agency initiatives. In particular, he mentioned that the FSAC is transitioning from a humanitarian crisis into a more recovery phase, which is also reflected as part of the 2014 SRP, stressing the need to work more closely with government counterparts, where appropriate, to develop consortia to incentivize partners in working toward more coordinated resilience programming.

Additional lessons learned on resilience programming were provided by Sylvie Wabbes-Candotti, FAO, who recounted her experience in the Sahel where, as part of the FAO strategic objective on resilience, she sought to design a viable programme to manage shocks to natural resources, using a livelihood approach. The strategy was built on the four pillars of the Hyogo Framework (governance, risk monitoring and early warning, risk reduction, preparedness and response), but was limited by the lack of long term commitment and action from partners. The question was therefore raised, whether the Global Food Security Cluster has a greater role to play in advocating for more long term planning on resilience.

On the other hand, Scott Ronchini, WFP, capitalized on the in-country experiences presented, to introduce a very practical resilience tool that could support better coordinated planning. He explained the three-step process: Integrated Context Analysis (ICA), Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) and the Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP), as an approach that can also serve to harmonize humanitarian and development activities. One of the benefits of this tool is that it is both multi-partner and multi-sectoral effort, allowing for greater links and causal analysis and also contributing to gap filling and reduced duplication of efforts. Furthermore, the tool discourages partners from implementing their programmes in isolation and strives to engage national institutions and government counterparts to take on the tool as part of their in-country preparedness. Indeed, this was the case in the Philippines, Yemen and Sudan.

Throughout the plenary discussion, the following key issues were raised in relation to defining resilience and the parameters through which the Food Security Cluster should operate:

- **A long term approach that also bridges the humanitarian and development divide.** To enhance resilience programming, cluster partners should strive to build stronger long-term multi-agency coordination that addresses both the emergency and early recovery phases of the response. The role of the Coordinator could be to advocate for multi-year funding for this and to enhance the knowledge management base, through lessons learned and operational guidance that further contribute to better resilience programming.
- **A mechanism to promote government linkages and capacity development through enhanced preparedness.** One of the outcomes of resilience should be to promote in-country capacity development and to strengthen national institutions and government counterparts, where appropriate. The WFP SLP tool was effective in enhancing national coordination bodies and helping them avoid duplication of efforts when the international workforce left.
- **Seasonal Programming that incorporates a livelihood approach.** Resilience must duly take into account different seasonal risks associated to different country contexts. The Seasonal Livelihood Programming Tool allows for these natural elements to be addressed, but issues related to conflict, access and social protection must also be factored into the equation by working in an anticipative and preventive fashion through reliance on good preparedness mechanisms.
- **A multi-sector approach that embraces different related themes.** Multi-sectoral analyses are key for ensuring good resilience programming in food security responses. Because food security embraces a variety of different themes, ranging from livelihoods to nutrition, market systems and food assistance,

it is very important to factor these issues into the overall response with a view to ensuring greater sustainability. Furthermore, the institutionalization of resilience should not hinder the development of a people-centred approach to resilience that strives to enhance the livelihoods of individuals and communities. Consequently, a multi-sector approach to resilience will further acknowledge the different needs of vulnerable groups and the need to combine different response options to ensure better quality lives and sustainable livelihoods.

The Chair concluded the discussion on resilience by stressing that if done properly, resilience could significantly help enhance the food security response by adopting multi-year funding and programming that uses a people-centred, grassroots approach, facilitating better information sharing and government involvement and contributing to bridging the humanitarian and development divide.

10. Review of gFSC achievements November 2013-May 2104

Presenter: Cyril Ferrand, Global Coordinator, gFSC

Cyril Ferrand started by giving an overview of the Food Security Clusters around the world: currently, there exist some 19 formal IASC country-level clusters, and another 19 informal coordination solutions. In three countries, there is an on-going L3-emergency.

Cyril continued by introducing the new management team of the gFSC and mentioned that after having officially started in his new position on 1 April, he will move to Rome full-time at the beginning of June. Anne Callanan from WFP and Ariella Glinni from FAO have joined the team as Senior Programme Advisers since the last meeting in November.

At the start of his presentation, Cyril briefly went back to the recommendations from the previous Partners Meeting: The Cash and Voucher Working Group had been formed; the Assessment Working Group had adapted its TORs to become the Programme Quality Working Group; the cluster had started to facilitate cross fertilization and information sharing between country-clusters by establishing a virtual platform. However, the regional conference on Syria discussed at the previous meeting had not taken place, and it was still to be decided if the partners felt there was a need for one regional meeting per year.

The global Support Team's funding requirement is approximately USD 3 million for 2014, covering staff and activities. To date, the cluster has secured around USD 2.2 million, highlighting a gap of some USD 800,000. This is important to note in terms of what the gFSC can achieve. Three new Level 3 emergencies have been declared in the last six months, and the gFSC has supported all three through deployments, trainings, backstopping and Information Management support. The gFSC needs as well support through staff secondments are a valuable component of partnership and allow the cluster to tap on the partners' technical expertise.

The cluster continues to work to enhance setting up the roster system and to increase the engagement of stand-by partnerships. Within the next six months, the global clusters will explore the possibilities of collaborating on their currently separate stand-by partner rosters.

Cyril went on to elaborate that in February, the first Pilot Cluster Coordinator training was held in Rome. The next simulation training is planned for Bangkok in June 2014. The e-learning is being developed and will be finalized before the next meeting. The Information Management tool is being developed and will be piloted in July. Programme quality trainings at country level will continue.

Lessons Learned exercises have been conducted in the Philippines and C.A.R. since the last meeting, and similar exercise is planned for South Sudan. Planning for website revamp has started, and the gFSC has started to use social media, with Twitter, Facebook and Yammer. Country level Cluster Performance Monitoring will first take place in Pakistan, Yemen and Afghanistan. The working groups have been extremely active over the past six months with global level discussions feeding into country programming.

In terms of advocacy, communication and partnership, the decision has not yet been made whether there should be a regional Global Partners' meeting. Monthly teleconferences have been conducted, newsletters are being sent out, and the cluster continues to have an active voice in the Transformative Agenda and the SRP processes.

Cyril noted that for the rest of 2014 is for the cluster to continue working on the current work plan, keeping in mind the issue of funding. Already this year, the cluster will start planning for the next 2-year strategy and related work plan. This will be done in the spirit of partnership, keeping in mind the recommendations from the evaluation.

Partners noted that it would be useful to continue to enhance process to ensure the IASC-level decisions properly reach the field level. The cluster should further increase its communications at country level as it is important for the Cluster Coordinators to know what is being decided at global level. During the discussions, it was noted that turnaround time for several processes is so fast that it can be challenging to engage with partners early enough, one example being the activity costing. It was noted that in the monthly teleconferences with partners, the larger IASC initiatives such as developments on Transformative Agenda and SRP processes can be shared.

Cyril concluded by reminding the partners of the results of the evaluation and ensuring that the recommendations will guide the on the way forward.

11. Food Security Cluster Information Management Tool

Panel:

Marisa Muraskiewicz, gFSC

Astrid Sacristan, Information Management Officer, South Sudan Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster

Marisa opened the presentation by noting that the topic of Information Management has been raised several times in the meeting discussions. It was often mentioned that information management can become a challenge for the country clusters. The Information Management Tool, which the global Support Team has been developing, is planning to facilitate this process. The tool was originally developed by the Somalia country cluster, and the global Support Team is now taking this good practice forward, aiming to offer it for all country clusters. The web-based tool has been developed in a participatory way to ensure it is globally accessible and adaptable to different country/emergency contexts.

Marisa explained that the tool covers both operations and specific activities. The tool will facilitate managing of data, covering for example assessments, targets, plans and actuals. The tool will be able to produce standard reports and maps automatically, facilitating gap analysis. Both partners and donors can use the tool to produce reports. The benefits of the tool include standardized units of analysis. Data will be confidential and can be aggregated.

Astrid complemented Marisa's presentation by highlighting her experience as Information Management Officer in the Somalia, Gaziantep and Philippines Food Security Clusters.

During the discussion, it was noted that it would be useful to involve the working groups in the process of finalizing the Tool. Marisa confirmed that the tool will be aligned with the OCHA reporting systems, and that gFSC has engaged with OCHA during the development process. In situations where there is a bad internet connection, data can be exported to Excel.

12. gFSC strategic planning for 2015-16

Presenter: *Cyril Ferrand, Global Coordinator, gFSC*

Cyril Ferrand explained the upcoming gFSC strategic planning process for 2015-16. Currently, the Strategic Plan of the gFSC (2013-14) includes four pillars: surge support in support of national clusters, capacity development in support of national clusters, information management and learning, and communication, advocacy and partnerships. While the current pillars will inform the gFSC when developing the new Strategic Plan, we will also take into account the pillars of the Transformative Agenda; leadership, coordination, and accountability, as well as the recommendations from the FAO/WFP formal evaluation.

During the plenary discussion, it was suggested that to help the gFSC support team to draft the Strategic Plan, there could be a "Drafting Committee" consisting of partner organizations and country-cluster coordinators. It was suggested that the Committee should remain relatively small in size and have representation from different types of partner organizations. The new plan could then be approved at the next global Partners' Meeting in November 2014.

Other suggestions included organizing a teleconference on the proposed process in 3 months, having groups of Cluster Coordinators work together at regional levels and then reporting back to gFSC, informing partners by email and structured teleconferences, and organizing a survey monkey to map out country-cluster needs. It was also noted that since no drastic change in TORs are expected, the gFSC could draft a skeleton plan and partners could then comment on it. Some partners, including Welthungerhilfe and Samaritan's Purse already volunteered to support in the development of the strategic plan.

It was decided that the gFSC will keep partners informed on the process and call for expressions of interest to form the Drafting Committee.

13. Summing up

Presenter: *Cyril Ferrand, Global Coordinator, gFSC*

Cyril Ferrand noted that the momentum of the meeting had been amazing, with the partners bringing topics forward. He reminded the partners of the challenge the humanitarian community is facing this year: there are 52 million people affected, while 2013 saw the biggest gap in funding. He reiterated that the cluster will all be pushing forward the programme quality agenda, including age gender disability and how it is framed along the lines of 'equal rights, different needs'. Resilience will be around for a while on the agenda.

14. Meeting closure

Presenter: *Dominique Burgeon, Director, FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Division*

Dominique Burgeon noted that each time there is a Global Meeting of the Food Security Cluster Partners, a bigger room is needed. This implies the gFSC is very active, with several participants from a multitude of organizations exchanging information and ideas on how to make the gFSC even more active. When he reviewed the agenda, he was impressed by the number of issues covered and depth of discussion. This shows there are many issues to be worked through. With the recent Level 3 emergencies, it can be a challenge. According to Mr. Burgeon, results of the FSC evaluation are interesting, and cluster needs to collectively implement the recommendations to transform it for the better.

Mr. Burgeon closed the meeting by heartily thanking everyone for their participation, and expressed special thanks to Allister for chairing, to all the panel members for their inputs and for the team behind the meeting for organizing.

Annex: Presentation on “Building capacities for integrating nutrition and food security programming”

During the Global Meeting of the Food Security Cluster Partners held on 7-8 May, the project team of the ECHO-funded project “Building capacities for better nutrition and food security programming, seed security assessment and accountability to affected populations” made a presentation focused specifically on the nutrition component’s objectives and activities.

This component seeks to improve capacity of humanitarian agencies to integrate nutrition and food security interventions throughout the program cycle appropriately and accountably. The project is a global project but with a strong regional focus in the HoA and in the Sahel, 4 countries being targeted more specifically in both regions.

Various activities have been, or are programmed to be, held to achieve the objective. To implement the project’s activities the most effective way, the project team closely collaborates with the FS and Nutrition clusters, and supports inter-cluster works. The clusters are an important platform to disseminate information on project activities (inception missions were conducted in all 8 target countries to formally introduce the project to clusters coordinators and members, to agree upon project implementation and ways of collaboration between cluster coordinators and regional project team) and to collect good practices and case studies that will then be shared with everybody.

Beyond this platform role, the clusters also play an active role in selecting national participants for regional workshops and Training of Trainers, two major outputs of the project. For the Sahel RTW, selection committees have been set up jointly between FS and Nut clusters. Workshops participants are committed to represent their national clusters during the regional workshop and to report back to them key workshop results. In addition participants develop concrete country action plans during the workshop to contribute to national efforts to better integrate Nutrition and Food Security programming.

For instance, as a follow up activities to the Regional workshop for the Horn of Africa:

- Two sub-regional training workshops were organized in Somalia (Hargeisa and Garowe) in May 2014 with the support of the Nutrition and Food Security Clusters and the FAO project team. These interactive trainings were facilitated by the Somalia trainers’ team, who participated in the regional Training of Trainers (February 2014). 21 participants in Hargeisa and 13 participants in Garowe, representing both the Nutrition Cluster and Food Security Cluster members, participated in the two-day workshops. These participants were drawn from both international and local humanitarian agencies as well as from the government ministries.

- In South Sudan, a working group composed by the participants who attended the Regional Training of Trainers session has been formed, after debriefing and discussions with the Ministry of Health and Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster. This working group is seen as an inter-cluster Working Group that will facilitate Food Security and Nutrition clusters’ efforts to strengthen the linkages between nutrition and food security. The draft Terms of Reference of the Working Group have been prepared and sent for discussions and agreements.

Because the project does not aim to develop new tools or methodologies but, on the contrary, wants to share and better inform about the existing tools and experiences that are already available, two of the outputs are a mapping of the existing tools and a documentation of case studies from the HoA and the Sahel.

Also, as mentioned above, 2 regional training workshops in the Horn of Africa and in the Sahel have been held. They gathered professional from both FS and Nutrition sectors and were conjointly programmed with a Training of Trainers which resulted in a pool of trainers able to facilitate national training workshops and to support agencies with integrating FS and nutrition. Concretely, the project aims to replicate inter-cluster national workshop on integrating Nutrition & FS and this is done with great support of cluster heads.

Another output of that project is the development of on-line modules on integrating FS and nutrition that will be available in French, English and Spanish.

To know more about the project, please visit the project website <http://www.fao.org/in-action/food-security-capacity-building/project-components/nutrition/en/>