



NOTES: NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN WASH SECTOR COORDINATION MEETING/ FORUM

The unprecedented refugee influx in Uganda in mid-2016 resulted in exceptional circumstances that have put a spotlight on the need for collective action to address needs in essential social services in refugee settlements to minimize public health risks. This will require a coordinated approach with partners working in refugee contexts both at settlement and national levels. To build upon this, UNHCR initiated discussions with the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE), UNICEF and other WASH actors to explore ways of strengthening national WASH coordination. It is as a result of these consultations that the WASH sector held its first national humanitarian WASH coordination meeting/ forum on **Wednesday, 1st February 2017** at UNHCR offices in Kampala. The meeting was chaired/ co-chaired by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) and UNHCR. A total of 34 participants attended the meeting from the following 16 WASH agencies/ govt:

UNHCR	UNICEF	NRC	DRC	ARC	CARE	AAH	Nsamizi
MoWE	Oxfam	LWF	ACF	HIJRA	IOM	PWJ	Water Missions

Opening Remarks: Ajit Fernando (UNHCR)

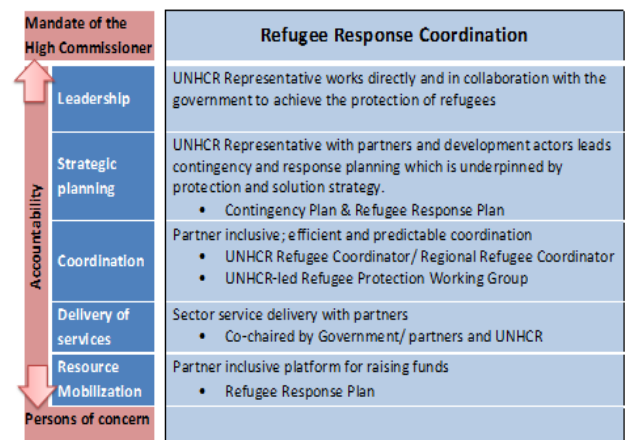
Emphasized that WASH is the backbone of many humanitarian responses, and encouraged collaboration and partnership - building on resources of each agency, including staffing and funding resources. Also encouraged WASH actors to use evidence to make sector plans developed which will ensure higher rate of success of interventions; and consider minimum cost maintenance - harnessing new technologies such as solar systems etc.

Recognized the role of government in the refugee response. UNHCR is working in Uganda at the invitation of the government. Our interventions should therefore be complimentary to national programmes and meet the national standards.

Refugee Coordination - Jens Hesseman, UNHCR

The session aimed to clarify where WASH sector coordination fits within the overall Refugee Coordination Model in the country. Refugee populations are unique in that they are usually not part of the planning population of the government programmes.

Refugee Response Coordination



There is need to strengthen WASH sector coordination, and improve linkage between settlement and country level coordination.

An Inter-sector Coordination forum will soon be set up for the various sector leads to tackle cross-sectoral issues. Information Management Technical Working Group will also be set up soon to manage information relating to the refugee response.

Action Point: To circulate the Refugee Response Plans for 2017 to all WASH partners (Jens/ Jane).

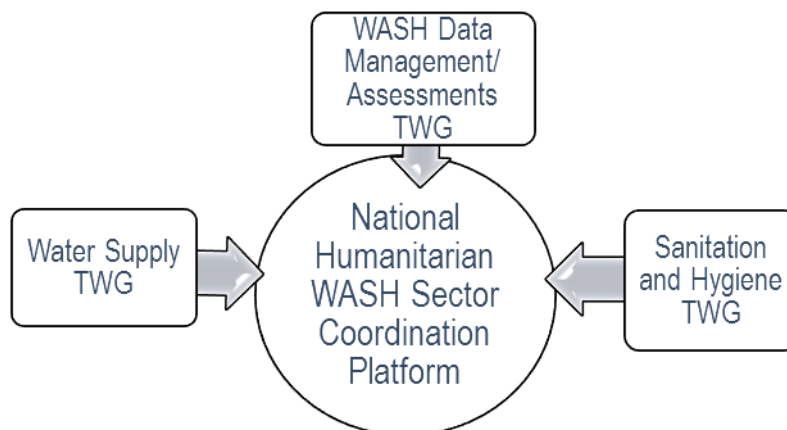
National Humanitarian WASH Sector Coordination - Jane Maonga (UNHCR)

There are four line Ministries coordinating different aspects of Water Sanitation and Hygiene promotion in Uganda, including: Ministry of Water and Environment; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education. This in itself presented challenges previously in coordinating WASH in emergency contexts, as there was lack of clarity on the line ministry with the overall say in sector coordination in WASH.

Following consultations with different WASH stakeholders and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) - which oversees humanitarian coordination in Uganda - it was decided that the national humanitarian WASH Sector Coordination platform be anchored under the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE)'s department of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation. The platform will be led by the **MoWE**, who will provide overall lead in humanitarian WASH coordination, with co-lead arrangements with **UNHCR** (responsible for coordinating WASH interventions in refugee settlements); and **UNICEF** (to coordinate WASH in non-refugee emergencies (natural disasters/ other emergencies in non-refugee contexts).

Membership will be open to WASH agencies operating in humanitarian contexts in Uganda and at national level, as well as: the Office of the Prime Minister (Liaison officer), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, National Water and Sewerage Corporation and Donors (to be invited).

Technical Working Groups: Under the WASH coordination mechanism, the following technical working group will be established: i) Water Supply; ii) Sanitation and Hygiene; iii) WASH Data Management/ Assessments.



The technical working groups (TWGs) will support the national WASH coordination platform to develop technical guidelines on specific technical issues (water trucking guidelines; Technical solutions e.g. to challenge of boreholes with high iron content; latrine construction in collapsing soils; drilling activities in collapsible formations; WASH NFI distribution guidelines; review strategy for provision of support for HH latrine construction etc).

The modalities for operations (ToR) for the TWGs, specific priority issues to address will be agreed when each of the TWG meets. The TWG will then report to the national humanitarian coordination platforms, and the outputs of the TWGs shared during the national WASH sector coordination meetings for endorsement. The TWG lead agencies will hold the roles on a rotational level for a period of 6 months, and may be nominated to a second term by members of the group and endorsed by the broader coordination platform membership.

Following a self-nomination and voting process, these agencies were appointed to lead the 3 WASH TWGs:

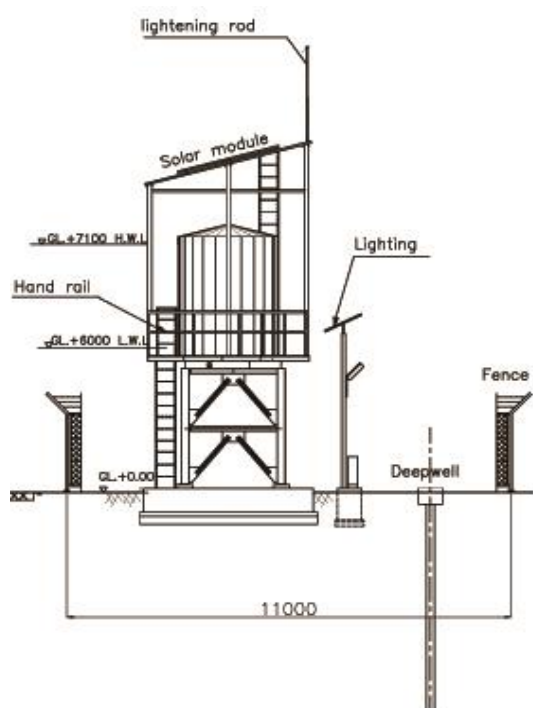
1. **Oxfam GB** - Water Supply TWG lead; Members: LWF, NRC, DRC, AAHI, ARC, Peace Wind, Water Missions - with MSF and Uganda Red Cross (the two were proposed in absentia)
2. **NRC** - Sanitation and Hygiene TWG lead; Members: DRC, AAHI, IOM, ACF, CARE, Oxfam, LWF, ARC
3. **Ministry of Water** - WASH Data Management/ Assessment TWG lead; Members: UNICEF, UNHCR

Water and Sanitation Sector Working Groups: The Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platform will feed into long-term Water and Sanitation Sector Working Groups under the Ministry of Water (Water and Environment Working Group; Water and Sanitation sub-group; Water and Sanitation Development Partners Working Group) to avoid having parallel structures. Other operational issues agreed by the forum are that:

- a) The national WASH sector coordination meetings will be held on a **monthly basis** (first week of the month)
- b) WASH sector leads will carry out **joint monitoring** visits to the field (prioritizing emergency operational areas) on a monthly basis - two weeks before the sector coordination meeting.
- c) The WASH sector coordination platform will establish a **web-based platform** which will act as a repository/ online resource centre for the sector and will be used to disseminate information to WASH partners on relevant sector policies and National guidelines

Findings of the Hydrogeological studies - Robert Mutiibwa (MoWE) and Richard Ochaya (UNHCR)

This session discussed the findings of the hydrogeological studies that had been undertaken in Palorinya/ Moyo, Rhino, and Bidibidi and recommended that the reports be shared widely to guide WASH partners who intend to engage in borehole drilling in the settlements.



Future Plans: Point Source Water Supply Systems

The following **recommendations** were agreed at the meeting as a follow-up on the studies' findings:

- ✓ Hydrogeological surveys to be undertaken at onset of identification of refugee sites to guide water supply interventions.
- ✓ WASH actors will develop a Water Supply master plan for each settlement under the overall leadership of the site-specific sector lead (based on settlement water facilities maps) to guide agencies coming on board.
- ✓ The Technical Support Units (TSUs) under the MoWE are available and could provide support to agencies operating in refugee settlements design comprehensive water supply systems that can serve more populations
- ✓ To monitor ground water capacity/ aquifer monitoring, the government will set up monitoring wells in various settlements
- ✓ As part of the preparedness plan for the sector, hydrogeological study should also be undertaken in the other settlements beyond West Nile - to the South West and Mid-West
- ✓ WASH actors advised to take note that MoWE is transitioning from point groundwater sources to motorization, supply and distribution for multi-village water supply systems

Refugee Response: Progress of WASH interventions, Gaps and Challenges - Various WASH Partners

The session had presentations from partners working in the seven refugee settlements categorized as follows: 1. Emergency Response: West Nile region: Bidibidi, Rhino, and Palorinya; 2. Maintenance phase: Mid-West region: Adjumani, Kiryandongo, Kyangwali; 3. Protracted settlements: South West Region: Nakivale, Oruchinga, Rwamwanja, Kyaka. The key issues highlighted are:

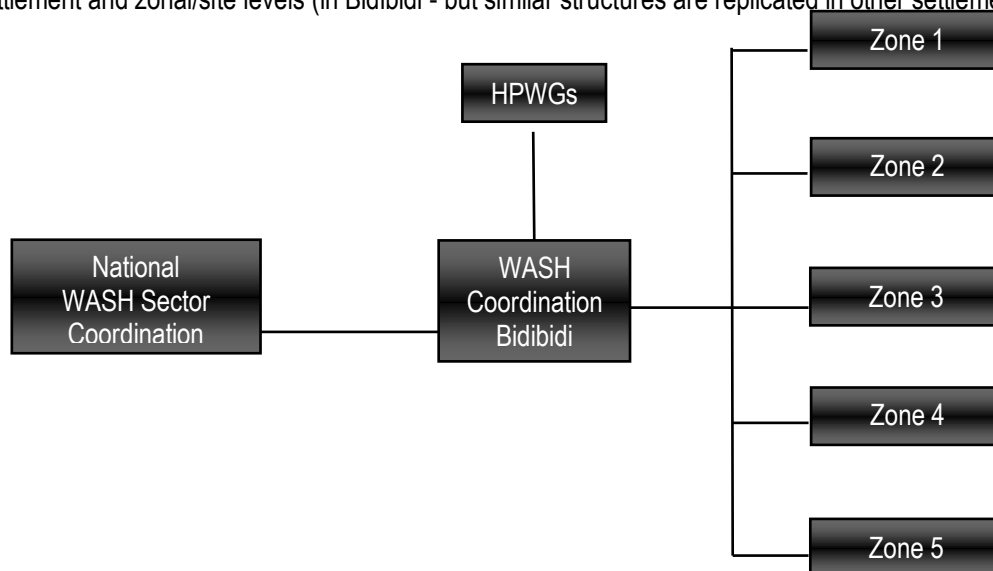
Gaps/ Challenges	Recommended Actions
Hydrogeological factors: Difficult ground formation of aquifer - not favorable for borehole drilling in some clusters and Over-reliance on water trucking.	Maximize the production of high yielding well to supply water stressed areas through piped water systems and development of small scale water supply networks covering clusters/ zones. Upgrade boreholes for solar motization
Too much focus on visible output (water/ sanitation facilities) at the expense of behavior change-related interventions	Intensify hygiene promotion activities throughout the settlements to capitalize on gains made from hardware water supply and sanitation interventions
Under-funding/ limited resource allocation leading to quality issues in the WASH interventions e.g. the purchase of low grade water tanks (in Rhino); Communal latrine designs (emergency); and the design of water supply systems based on budget provided rather than needs on ground	Improved evidence-based planning to highlight gaps in the WASH sector and inform decisions on resource allocation for the response.
Settlement patterns - not clear where population would be settled and self-relocation by refugees affecting the responsiveness of the interventions and distorts progress indicators for the latter (planned vs actual)	Improve preparedness for the response - including provision of information to WASH agencies operating in the settlements prior to relocation of PoC to their zones to facilitate responsive actions
Lack of data on WASH facilities previously constructed in most of the settlements	Work with the MoWE (GIS unit) to collect and update WASH data for refugee settlements through the national WASH humanitarian coordination platform; Also develop SOPs for WASH partner engagement to ensure proper handover of key documentation and facilities upon entry/exit.
Lack of harmonized approaches to construction of water systems; and Limited opportunities for capacity building of WASH partners on different WASH technologies and designs.	Use joint monitoring visits to come up with collective solutions for addressing technical challenges faced by WASH actors at settlement level
Low household latrine coverage in some settlements partly due to the topography/ soil formation (e.g. Rhino -15%), and lack of latrine construction materials – especially in protracted refugee contexts (South West and Mid-West regions).	Address supply chain issues for latrine construction material - and other WASH-related NFIs (e.g. 51% of households in Nakivale are reported not to have access to drinking water storage containers which affects safe water sourcing)
Minimal participation of target communities in implementation of WASH interventions and lack of clarity on operation and maintenance issues.	Engagement with refugees through community structures such as Block leaders, Water Users Committees to increase awareness on their involvement in the management of WASH facilities; Develop SoPs to streamline roll-out of O&M issues.

Working Together: WASH Coordination in Bidibidi Settlement - Alex Ayella (Oxfam GB)

Oxfam GB (on behalf of other WASH agencies working in Bidibidi), shared a case study on effectiveness of collaborative and a coordinated response and how this was achieved during a cholera outbreak in the settlement (Zone 1) in August 2016. Some of the areas highlighted as contributing to a successful response include:

- a) **Strong coordination:** District health department, UNHCR, UNICEF and Health Partners
- b) **Joint campaigns:** Mobilized hygiene promoters from different agencies; Sensitization: market, house to house, community meetings; Partners contributed items in one pool for distribution; Latrine use; jerry-can cleaning; disinfection; Hygiene Promotion Working Group set up under the WASH coordination mechanism
- c) **Cooperation between different partners:** E.g. Latrine blocks; pits, poles and labor funded by a different organization; tarpaulin, treated logs, plastic slabs supplied by UNHCR/UNICEF warehouses; Need for WASH facilities; didn't matter who was funding the facilities. *Life Saving First!*
- d) **Area of work:** Zones divided into sub-zones for different agencies; Handover area of work: one agency hands over to another including their own WASH facilities; Allocation of areas for borehole drilling
- e) **WASH standards:** Initially, different agencies different WASH standards. Coordination ensured that all standards discussed and agreed in the coordination meetings; based on available resources and the daily influx. E.g. from 5" to 6" casings for all borehole drilling. Also, it was agreed that gap analysis is best discussed at Zonal meetings and shared at WASH coordination meetings
- f) **Engaging with District departments involved in WASH:** At beginning of emergency, District Water Officers (DWOs) attended the settlement-level WASH coordination meeting; District Water and Health Officers also supported during training of Water Users Committees and Hygiene Promoters; DWOs and Sub County support - in water trucking from Medigo, Kuru and Omugo Sub County
- g) **Information sharing and support from OPM:** To resolved issues of peaceful coexistence of refugees with host communities. They also participated in WASH Coordination meetings.

The following structure shows the linkages between the WASH coordination mechanism at national, settlement and zonal/site levels (in Bidibidi - but similar structures are replicated in other settlements):



Action Point: National WASH Sector Coordination forum should encourage sharing of experiences, solutions that have been found for challenges that have been experienced in other locations should be shared with other locations for replication. Government experts should also be invited to share experience on some technical challenges that they have managed to address (Robert/ Jane/ Prakash)

WASH Sector Strategy: Refugee Contexts - Juliet Mwebesa / Jane Maonga (UNHCR)

An outline of the draft WASH strategy was shared during this session, key highlights of the strategy includes the approach that the sector will adopt in implementing WASH in refugee contexts, which includes:

1. **Coordination:** Strengthen field and national sector coordination to ensure quality WASH service delivery through collaborative partnerships
2. **Technical guidelines:** Develop SoPs to harmonize approaches - ensuring that they are aligned to national standards, as well as best practices from WASH actions in refugee settlements
3. **Evidence-based planning:** Coordinated needs assessments (rapid and continuous)
4. **Capacity development:** Assess capacity gaps and support capacity development efforts for national/ local WASH actors in relevant technical areas through trainings; online courses; and technical learning resources
5. **Emergency preparedness:** Develop sectoral contingency plans for refugee settlements to ensure a predictive rather than a reactive response
6. **Monitoring:** Develop monitoring systems to assess quality of WASH interventions
7. **Innovation, Research and Learning:** Encourage innovative thinking in the design of facilities and approaches used in the delivery of WASH services - and collaborate in research in the sector
8. **Inter-sectoral integration:** Identify areas of synergies with other sectors for integration and joint planning

Action Points:

- a) Develop settlement level consolidated WASH operational plans (1 year). Field level plans should include:
 - WASH Baseline data; Targets and Indicators
 - Coordination arrangements/ partners
 - Operational Plans (activities, timeframe, approach)
 - Monitoring and evaluation framework
 - Linkages with districts (development plans)
- b) Planning process/ documentation will be coordinated by UNHCR WASH focal points for each settlement. Planned WASH activities need to clearly show projected /intended impact of interventions as well as targeted population to be covered
- c) Share the first draft of the national WASH sector strategy comments/ inputs by mid Feb - expected to have the final draft in early March. The Field level plans will feed into the national WASH strategy
- d) The national WASH sector Coordination forum will also to set up performance indicators for each phase of operation and use these to hold partners to account collectively (Jane/ Robert/ Prakash)
- e) Ministry requested to share District Annual Activity plans for those operating within the refugee Operations in the respective locations to avoid overlaps/duplication of interventions (Robert)
- f) Wider circulation of VHT guidelines developed during the public health coordination forum circulation (Jane)

ReHOPE Strategy: WASH Perspective - Prakash Lamsal (UNICEF), Sofie Johansen (UNHCR)

- 1) ReHope is a government-led approach: Technical WASH ministries (MoWE/MoH/ MoES) are leading the sector interventions and carry out monitoring and supervision. Need to build on and strengthen existing coordination structure - District Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee
- 2) Need to think of solutions from the start of the emergency operation. In that regard, should lobby to ensure that refugee issues are included in District Development plans; and Align humanitarian response and common programming with the SDG e.g. Sector-wide approach
- 3) Strengthening ownership and capacity of local government by ensuring that humanitarian response is embedded in district development plan and part of budget plans

- 4) Need to assess impact of humanitarian interventions on long term development needs: Build on existing programmatic blocks - Uganda Sanitation Fund, National handwashing Initiatives
- 5) Some of the solutions we are seeking for refugee settlements are available in the national programmes. Strengthen capacity of community institutions through formation and training of users group and rollout of Community-based management systems for water supply

Next Meeting: Dates for the next meeting will be communicated to WASH partners

Presentations: The detailed presentations are available on this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c3duuzzxhgj2iif/AAD9DzeP3NmHWT1V6ZVhTy3Na?dl=0>