

Minutes of *Extraordinary* Shelter / NFI / CCCM National Cluster Meeting

10:00 – 11:15, Friday, 5 June 2015

UNHCR Office, Yangon

Attendees: ECHO, Embassy of Philippines, German Embassy, ICRC IOM, LWF, NRC, Protection Sector Lead, Senior Gender Advisor (IASC), UNHCR Programme & External Relations, UNOCHA & USAID

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action / Actor / Date
<p>1. Introductions</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meeting, 13 May, accepted and posted online: http://www.sheltercluster.org/node/4632. Cluster Coordinator (CC) stressed that this “extraordinary” meeting was called at very short notice but it needed to be done due to recent/swift developments. This was a <i>vital</i> opportunity to update and explain a possible course of action but before doing so, discuss with Cluster partners. CC stressed his “appreciation” for the healthy attendance. There was only one main agenda item.</p>	
<p>2. Actions from Previous Meeting</p>	<p><u>Kachin/Shan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second round of camp profiling shared in soft/hard copy but still not uploaded, yet. • Still clarity from World Vision (WV) needed on whether they could address quality issues in Shan, name of location being “KBC Cultural Compound”. Cluster Lead in YGN had been chasing them for feedback but still no response. Said they would reply to CC 23 March. <p><u>Contingency Planning/Preparedness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, the Cluster Lead has fed back to OCHA (who leads in this area) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contingency planning (CP) for a scenario of a cyclone in Rakhine; ✓ Sector Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPA); ✓ Cluster Members Available for Post Event Assessments in Rakhine State. <p>In accordance with the OCHA requests, as Cluster Lead still the CC is required to: X Compile list of contingency stocks; X Produce an <i>Operational Response Plan</i>. On the issue of the Cluster Members Available, agreed with OCHA that details such as “function”, “email”, “telephone</p>	<p>CC ASAP¹</p> <p>CC obtain WV answer ASAP</p> <p>CC to provide: List of contingency stocks; <i>Operational Response Plan</i>;</p>

¹ Since the meeting the action has been done. The links are:
<http://www.sheltercluster.org/library/individual-camp-profiles-northern-shan-2014> (Northern Shan)
<http://www.sheltercluster.org/library/individual-camp-profiles-kachin-2014> (Kachin)

	<p>number” and “languages spoken” were only required for one person per agency not for all 229 persons (as had collectively been pledged by Cluster partners). Stressed that these three actions were long overdue by this Cluster and needed to be addressed, forthwith.</p>	<p>“Details” of Cluster Members Available, one person per agency.</p>
<p>3. Continuing Shelter Support for IDP Returns</p>	<p>First the CC gave a chronological update of events since the forum last met, 13 May:²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May saw the emerging boat crisis, and though not directly related to the responsibilities of this Cluster the two were <i>not</i> mutually exclusive; • 18 May UNHCR gave a brief to embassies on this emerging crisis. While the majority of the brief was focused on this issue, due to expressed interest from international community to know more about IDP returns, CC and Protection Sector Lead gave a brief update on returns. Images shared were already known to this Cluster. Amongst others UNICEF Country Representative attended. • Weekend 24 May saw a Heads of UN Agencies, RC/HC and <i>Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Myanmar</i> Vijay Nambiar (VN) visit Rakhine State. Clear output of mission was to explore possibility of funds from the international community to support more returns. Meeting(s) with the Chief Minister (CM) drew sharp attention to the fact that CM had made a request to the international community for support to continue the process the RSG had started yet funds needed to materialise.³ • 26 May a meeting with three key donors of the Emergency Response Fund (ERF), UNHCR and UNOCHA to explore feasibility of US\$1 million that was in the ERF to be made available to support more returns. General feedback from the three donors (DFAT, Sweden and DFID) was not forthcoming in terms of ERF being the right conduit to channel such funds. Donors implied preference was that while funds were available, they be channelled through UNHCR. Their sense was ERF was <i>not</i> the appropriate mechanism. Responding UNHCR and Cluster Lead expressed reluctance for UNHCR play such a role, the agency was not set-up for such a cash-based assistance programme. • 26 May CC briefed VN on the IDP returns. Images/slides used Cluster was familiar with and would be shared (again) today. • 27 May UNHCR appreciating the risks with such a programme, but noting the donor support being offered to support more returns, accepted that it had as a matter of urgency it start exploring <i>how</i> it could support the process, if the donor commitment was secure. • 1 June sign of wider interest from other donors to support additional returns but that was being discussed bilaterally between donor and Government of Myanmar. Were all those funds being suggested to materialise, plus the US\$1 million through UNHCR, plus the US\$2 million spent by the RSG and using a crude calculation, should cover individual housing for the entire 5,000HH the RSG wishes to address at this stage. <p>Noting the likelihood of UNHCR supporting the Government with more returns, if the right mechanism could be found, but appreciating the risks, CC was keen to stress two rhetorical questions to the Cluster to discuss today:</p>	

² Minutes of 13 May 2015 meeting can be located at: <http://www.sheltercluster.org/library/national-cluster-meeting-minutes-2015>.

³ For more details of this “Expanded” HCT meeting with the Rakhine Chief Minister see national Cluster meeting minutes dated 13 May 2015: <http://www.sheltercluster.org/node/4632>

Is this Cluster in favour of continuing to support these returns and this process; if not, why not? If yes, why?

Requesting all to mull over this question, CC then referred to his PowerPoint presentation. All had hard copies of the ten slides used plus to be circulated in soft copy. CC worked through a series of images that visually explained the story thus far, 2012-2013/emergency shelter, 2013-2014/temporary shelter then developments since the launch of the *Shelter (& WaSH) Options* (paper) for Rakhine State in early March 2015.

Some points stressed were:

- ✓ Approximately 1,800 households (HH) had been assisted, mostly in the townships of Kyauk Taw, Mrauk U and Minbya, covering 22 villages.
- ✓ Modality of assistance gives beneficiaries ownership of process/product and utilises the capacity of the displaced;
- ✓ Swift and easy to deliver and also, discreet;
- ✓ Land issues were being resolved at the local level;
- ✓ Till now there were no major protection incidents observed;
- ✓ In most cases the assistance had been cash based assistance, US\$1,000/household;
- ✓ Assistance seemed to be working well due to combined bottom-up and top down approach, where the role of the State was clear and decisive.⁴
- ✓ Benefits were not just felt by the IDP returnees but also traders selling materials, engendering relationships of reciprocity between Muslim IDPs and Rakhine non-IDPs.

X However, despite the assistance no major change in access to basic services/freedom of movement and lack of livelihood opportunities.

X Lack of RSG funds had resulted in some back in the place of origin, out of the temporary shelter but just under makeshift shelter (see photo below). Makeshift shelters provide poor protection from rain/floods. IDPs complaining of sickness from living in hot shelters while lying on cold earth. **IDPs may find themselves in emergency situation again if adequate shelter assistance (materials/tents) is not provided before season is in full force.**

- ✓ CC was keen to stress that non-Muslim IDPs were receiving the more proscriptive design of house, contractor built and at a cost of US\$2,400 (see photo below). While this could be analyzed through a prism of discrimination, the analysis from the protection officer was that it was a way for the RSG to manage the issue of backlash to large numbers of Muslims receiving assistance. Also, based on these first-hand accounts/photographic evidence, both were meeting minimum standards. Critically, the self-build approach was bringing additional benefits although the quality of the housing suggested that many Muslim IDPs were using some of their own/additional funds.

Summary: Citing the original *Shelter Options for Rakhine State* paper, available in Myanmar and English, which at its release in early March coincided with the 10 March *Embassies-States Shelter-NFI-CCCM Partners Briefing*, two differences as to what

CC circulate PowerPoint

⁴ Though not mentioned in the meeting, it is worth noting that this RSG led program has been reported in the Global New Light of Myanmar. See attached zip file with scanned copy of article, 22nd May 2015 as part of a visit of the Vice President to Rakhine State.

	<p>Shelter Cluster road map suggested were as follows. The RSG had mostly opted for cash-based rather than material-based assistance. Also, the Cluster set a standard of US\$1,500/HH for material assistance. However, these were RSG funds and US\$1,000 was what displaced persons in southern Rakhine State, citizens, had received in 2013. More importantly, the critical issue was the output/impact and there the results looked, at this stage, “encouraging”. Again repeating the question before the discussion was opened to the floor:</p> <p><i>Is the Cluster in favour of continuing to support these returns and this process; if not, why not? If yes, why?</i></p>	
LWF	<p>Stated their support for this direct assistance approach, namely cash to support construction at the place of origin. “We needed to take this opportunity”.⁵ Also updated on LWF activities in Rakhine State. Significantly LWF have set aside some, US\$300,000 (part of the significant funding they have for shelter) for individual shelter, not maintenance and repair of temporary shelter. CC strongly welcomed this commitment, albeit as with all of Rakhine, the political space and support has to be generated, led and maintained by the RSG. They also noted that the clear line from the RSG was that new temporary shelters were <i>not</i> to be constructed. The CC welcomed this position. Construction of more or new temporary shelters was regression.</p>	
Cluster Coordinator	<p>Following a question from USAID, namely what will happen to those who will remain in temporary shelter for the foreseeable future, the CC noted discussions at the previous Cluster meeting. The likely reality was the vast majority of the total IDP caseload, notably in Sittwe and Puaktaw Townships would remain in temporary shelter for the rest of this year and into 2016. On this issue there remain considerable discussions and frequent meetings with the RSG.⁶ The main actors in addressing these needs being LWF, DRC, UNHCR, ICRC and critically the RSG.⁷ Current status was partners individually undertaking their assessments of the needs camp by camp, using the RSG needs data as an initial steer.</p>	
Senior Gender Advisor (IASC)	<p>Asked to what extent were we aware that women were consulted/involved in this process? CC said he could not verify this more specific issue albeit but as he noted during the PowerPoint, all the information/images were coming first hand from UNHCR Protection Officer(s) and their view of the “process” was very positive.</p>	
USAID	<p>Underlined their support for UNHCR as the (Sector Lead in Protection Sector and Cluster Lead in Shelter Cluster) to be engaged in this process in an effort to see more HHs benefit. Stressed that at least till the General Elections this was a window of opportunity that should be seized, “now”.</p>	
ECHO	<p>Echoed the words of USAID, supportive of supporting this process. More widely also the need for more development although it was stressed that it is also a matter of “rights”. <i>Even</i> if development takes an active approach to support all</p>	

⁵ See **UNHCR Programme** section for possible collaboration between UNHCR and LWF on supporting returns.

⁶ For a detailed understanding of these discussions, minutes of all Rakhine Shelter Cluster meetings can be located at: <http://www.sheltercluster.org/library/meeting-minutes-2014-2015-shelter>.

⁷ It was important to stress that while such work needed to happen for people’s basic dignity, the shelters were designed for two years and they were two years old. The work being proposed can make them viable for another year but this means, one year from now, similar discussions/decisions and funding would have to happen, depending on the circumstances. **All recognised that this was a less than perfect scenario but in terms of strategic planning the consensual view was that it was hard to plan for more than a year. The situation remained fluid.** This could be negative fluidity or positive fluidity. As an example, a year ago IDP returnees were “not in a position to receive a plastic bucket and now they were rebuilding their original homes”. The view was the **work required for these temporary shelters should be done with a view to make them viable for another year**. As one partner commented at 13th May meeting, it was a “no brainer”.

	communities if “not all communities have the same rights” then underlying problems remain.	
Embassy of the Philippines	<p>Welcomed the positive developments. Stressed there were various ways and approaches as to how displaced people could be assisted. Positive lessons had been learned from the Philippines, both in responding to conflict but also natural disaster displacement. Stressed the need for beneficiaries to feel a sense of ownership of the projects but also to mobilise the community, adopt a holistic approach. CC welcomed this contribution and any opportunity to learn lessons from elsewhere, something (humanitarian) responses were not (always) good at doing.⁸</p> <p>More generally CC underscored the desire to ensure regional States were fully informed of this process and latest developments. Other Asian states had attended various briefings/meetings in the last two months while the contribution of the Singapore Ambassador at the aforementioned “Expanded HCT” was mentioned. His supportive comments to the Chief Minister on ending displacement were pointed and poignant, coming from the second largest investor in Myanmar after China.</p>	
Protection Sector	<p>Joining for the second half of the meeting, the Protection Sector Coordinator stressed a few points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Latest information suggested approximately 1,800HH had returned and benefitted from the assistance; ❖ Clearly there were significant numbers of IDPs who had left their temporary shelter (long houses), they had been taken down and were living on their plot of origin but awaiting assistance (see slide 8 from a/m PowerPoint presentation). Latest data suggested there could be as many as 900HH in such a situation, under makeshift shelter. ❖ With regards to UNHCR as both Protection Sector and Shelter Cluster Lead, keen to stress that these funds likely to be channelled through UNHCR should be categorically focused on returns. ❖ While for the sake of expediency just focusing the funds through UNHCR on more of the so called “low hanging fruit”, where returns are easy or people have already returned (and are living in makeshift shelters awaiting assistance to re-build their house) was one option, UNHCR may also explore the possibility of raising the situation of some of the harder caseloads. Perhaps with funds it receives the Sector/Cluster Lead would opt for a blended approach, some to the harder caseloads(s) and some to the lower-hanging fruit. <p>Noting the particular concerns of 10 Maramagi/Buddhist households in Raw Ma Ni in Mrauk-U and information that some were being required to sell their plot of origin in order to receive assistance, the Protection Sector noted that this was a particular situation with which they were familiar and are monitoring. It exemplified the need to avoid</p>	

⁸ Gawad Kalinga (GK) started in 1995 as a youth program to address slum problems in Manila. During a GK expo in 2003, they launched a program to build 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities for seven years. It was premised on building communities, rather than providing shelter per se. It built on a tradition of *bayanihan* or community-building where local people join hands to help one another. The beneficiaries provide the labour. More importantly, the planning took account of other community needs beyond shelter including schools, hospitals and livelihood. The program was so successful that it was used as a model in resettlement of displaced families due to insurgency (in southern Philippines) and natural disasters. Its leaders received the equivalent of Nobel Peace Prize in Asia. The GK is now a development model with a view to strengthen governance; developing community-based programs for health, education, environment, and productivity. As an approach it has gained traction across various universities internationally. In summary, making people realize their abilities and empowering them to help themselves and sustaining community-building projects. More details can be located at: www.gk1worl.com.

	generalisations in Rakhine State but each situation of displacement had its own issues and specificities.	
DRC	Citing the CC's original questions, DRC stressed their support for the Cluster Lead to directly support more HH benefitting from this RSG-led process. More widely there was mention of DRC funding and implementing development programmes across communities in townships north of Sittwe. CC was keen to congratulate DRC on this new source of funding. On the wider issue of development, DRC was keen to stress that effective programming and delivery could only occur if there was "long-term funding continuity and predictability".	
UNOCHA	Stressed that as positive as this narrative on returns was, it logically begged the question "what next" and the need to see a proactive role played in the area of early recovery and more generally, development. CC fully endorsed this position. ⁹	
UNHCR Programme	Digesting the expressed support for UNHCR to support the continuation of what the RSG has started, it was asked if there were any present that would be interested in being a partner on such a programme. LWF were forthcoming. It was agreed they would meet/discuss UNHCR after the meeting.	UNHCR Programme and LWF to explore possible partnership
Cluster Lead	Wrapping-up this main agenda item, CC expressed his support for the views that were forthcoming. Listening to operational partners and different donors, the consensus was one of support for UNHCR as Cluster Lead to explore swiftly ways to support the Rakhine State Government to continue this process. The Cluster Lead would seek act, "swiftly".	
4. AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICRC noted that in addition to the shelter repair and maintenance they are doing in Pauktaw, their plan is to provide cash grants. ICRC already provided 470 conditional cash grants for income generating activities in 2015, mainly in Mrauk U. An additional 800 grants are planned to be disbursed during the second half of 2015 in Minbya, Pauktaw and Kyawktaw. Last year 590 conditional cash grants were disbursed in Sittwe and Mrauk U, and 400 in-kind grants (fishing gear) for fishermen in Sittwe and Pauktaw. In summary, the target of 2014 and 2015 combined is 2,250 families (grants), having already disbursed 1,460 grants. Beneficiaries are 50% Muslim and 50% Rakhine families in isolated/remote villages. Noting this and DRC's a/m commitment to engage in more cross-community development activities in townships north of Sittwe, where returns are happening, exemplified <i>why</i> it was increasingly important that a suitable early recovery/development mechanism/forum at the Rakhine State level was pro/active. The CC stressed the point to OCHA. It was duly noted. • Though not mentioned in the meeting, Protection Incident Monitoring Reports for Sittwe, Kachin and Northern Shan circulated with these minutes, filed in the relevant zip file.¹⁰ All three are available in English and Myanmar and cover the first quarter of 2015, January to March. As the documents state, they are for internal use only and NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED FURTHER. 	

The next meeting will be scheduled in June; minimum of a week before the CC would send an email confirmation and agenda nearer the time of meeting.

⁹ The week following this meeting OCHA (Yangon) was on mission to see the status of returns for those who were displaced in their villages of origin. As Rakhine-based colleagues have reported, the returns process is nearly - if not fully - complete in Zone 1 (Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya Townships). Six villages well off the beaten track were visited and in all cases people had dismantled long houses and either built new homes or had constructed more makeshift shelters. There was no one without shelter.

¹⁰ The "Sittwe" report covers urban and rural zones, the Townships of Pauktaw, Myebon, Kyaukphyu, Ramree and the operational area known as 'Zone 1' (Minbya, Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw).

Documents shared in hard copy with the participants at the meeting or in soft copy to all Cluster partners:

- *Shelter-NFI-CCCM YGN Cluster Meeting Minutes, 13.5.'15.*

HCT-OCHA

- *Vacancy-Nat'l Humanitarian Response Coordinator (UNFPA), 2015-16.*

Kachin-Shan

- *Protection Incident Monitoring Report, Kachin – January to March 2015 (English & Myanmar);*
- *Protection Incident Monitoring Report, Northern Shan – January to March 2015 (English & Myanmar);*
- *Kachin AHCT Minutes, 9 April 2015 (with appendix);*
- *Kachin AHCT Minutes, 14 May 2015;*
- *JST Key Messages, 9 June 2015.*

Rakhine

- *Protection Incident Monitoring Report, Sittwe – January to March 2015 (English & Myanmar);*
- *Hard copy of PowerPoint Presentation for Meeting, 5.6.'15;*
- *Shelter (& WaSH) Options (paper) for Rakhine State;*
- *Article from the Global New Light of Myanmar, 22nd May '15;*
- *Rakhine State Inter-Cluster Sector Coordination Meeting, 21st April '15;*
- *Rakhine State Inter-Cluster Sector Coordination Meeting, 2nd June '15.*