

**The Refugee Task Force** is held on a monthly basis and serves as the primary national forum for inter-sector coordination in Ethiopia, jointly chaired by ARRA and UNHCR. The below minutes reflect interventions by the Chairs, all sector chairs/co-chairs, and invited participants, together with agreed action points.

**Location:** UNHCR Branch Office, Main Conference Room

**Time and Date:** 3.30pm, 22 November 2017

**Chairs:** ARRA and UNHCR

**Action Points:**

Reference	Action Point	Who	By When	Status
11.10.17 #1	CRRF Governance Structure and Coordination Unit Organogram to be shared with RTF members.	ARRA/UNHCR	13/12/17	
11.10.17 #2	CRRF Roadmap to be shared with RTF members following CRRF Launch on 28 November.	ARRA/UNHCR	13/12/17	

**Opening presentation: ‘Updates on Utility Model for Refugee Settings Ethiopia’.**

On behalf of the WASH Sector Working Group, UNICEF conducted a presentation on the rollout of the utility model that aims to reduce the unit cost of water provision for refugees through a reduction in the operation and maintenance cost of permanent water schemes. The approach seek to deepen refugee involvement in WASH service to increase community ownership and improve cost effectiveness, which exploring collaborations that builds of synergies local government service provision.

Following the presentation, and a Q&A with members, it was noted that beyond the intervention in Itang, the scheme would be expanded to five other woredas following an assessment of all camp in the country. It was noted that the IRC would provide interim support to operational maintenance of the system ensure a stable transition in Itang. Rollout in Adi Harush and May-Ayni in the Tigray Region would follow, which additional options in Afar, Somali and Gambella Regions to be explored.

**General Announcements**

- The *CRRF Roadmap* for the implementation of the Pledges, including the governance structure, has been finalized, ahead of the CRRF launch on 28 November. The Roadmap will form the basis for the detailed work-plans that will be prepared by each of the technical committees. A copy of the Roadmap will be shared with RTF members. The first Steering Committee meeting will be held shortly after the launch. ARRA, MOFEC, and UNHCR will co-chair the steering committee. An overview of the CRRF Governance structure will be shared with RTF members following the meeting. A series of workshops, one for each technical committee, is planned for January 2017. The workshops will bring together RTF members together with a wide range of stakeholders.

RTF member highlighted the importance of providing a platform for the voice of refugees to be incorporated within the CRRF process, together with a clear role for NGOs. It was further noted the fundamental protection principals should remain. UNHCR noted that the implementation of the CRRF would vary by location and population group, while underscoring that the emergency response would remain the priority. It was further noted that the national track record was one

of a principled response in line with the Refugee Convention. UNHCR went on to underscore that the CRRF was for everyone, including refugees and the host community, where the engagement of all stakeholders was vital.

UNHCR highlighted that a recent regional stock taking meeting on the CRRF serve as an important opportunity to consider the process for the rollout of the CRRF across all implementing countries. It was noted that it was an inevitable change process for all, and vital to support the governments who had committed to the CRRF process. It was highlighted that in Ethiopia the launch of the Vital Events Registry signalled the achievement of the first of the nine pledges adopted by the Government.

- *South Sudanese refugees:* While the overall security situation in Gambella is calm, with low rate of new arrivals. To accommodate future arrivals, Nguenyiel Camp that was recently expanded to accommodate 90,000 refugee, and with a current population of 82,782, would be divided into two separate camps, each with a capacity of 60,000 (120,000 collectively). In Pugnido –Goge Woreda there is a noticeable concern over the resumption of Murle tribesmen attacks, once the dry season commences. The situation security in Pagak South Sudan is reportedly tense and fragile as the two warring parties could resume fighting at any time soon.
- RTF member highlighted the challenges posed to accommodate and ensure the health status of the large volume of livestock that has accompanied the most recent new arrivals. UNHCR noted FAO and MoA consultations that will informing a response to health status of animals, together with broad efforts that will be advanced to ensure the physical security of such valuable households assets that play an important role in safeguarding the nutritional status of families.
- RTF member queried the projected new arrival population figures for 2018. While noting a preference to be conservative in future estimates, UNHCR highlighted that the figure of 35,000 for next year was to be considered in the context of an end of 2017 planning figure of 450,000 (with a registered population of 418,892 to date). On this basis, the South Sudanese refugee population is expected to reach 485,000 by the end of 2018.
- *Somali refugees:* In October, an occupied airfield in Melkadida was cleared for rehabilitation in a joint project between UNHCR, UNHAS and WFP. Rehabilitation included cleaning of the land, the removal of the original surface, watering, mixing of the soil, placing the soil, grading and compaction and ditch preparation. Additionally, marking of the airstrip with painted tires on the landing site has been completed. A humanitarian flight landed for the first time in on Saturday, 18 November, 2017. The UNHAS flight with only the pilot and co-pilot on-board tested the newly constructed airfield. The project, which became a safety and security priority, will have a significant impact on other aspects of the operation, admin, logistics, supplies, fleet conditions and staff/partners wellbeing.
- *Security situation between the Somali and Oromo regions:* The current security environment between the Somali and Oromo regions has had a negative impact on humanitarian operations in Melkadida, leading to the evacuation of all UNHCR's Oromo staff to Addis Ababa. These tensions are manifested by the constant disruption of activities implemented by NGOs perceived as highlanders, and the seizure of goods and materials coming from the highland areas. To address these negative developments, ARRA and UNHCR organized a meeting with local authorities to reemphasize the humanitarian and development character of interventions and the imperative to maintain neutrality amidst a polarized environment.

- *Donors Mission:* A high-level donor mission organized by DRRM and involving 14 donors visited the Gambella operation from 7-10 November 2017, with the aim of understanding key challenges in regards to emergency response and protracted situations in light of the CRRF. The team visited key facilities in Pugnido and Nguenyiel camps and had the opportunity to interact with refugees and representatives of the host communities. Meeting with humanitarian and development actors were organized in Addis Ababa, during which possible funding collaborations were discussed.

#### **A. Registration**

- As of 31 October, there were 889,071 registered refugees, comprising of 245,075 households. Through the course of 2017, there have been a total of 103,263 new arrivals.
- *Start of vital events registration for refugees:* The Government of Ethiopia has started country-wide civil registration of refugees as of 27 October 2017. Refugee children born in Ethiopia are now able to obtain birth certificates issued by the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) on behalf of the Federal Vital Events Registration Agency (FVERA) in all refugee camps and urban centres. The approximately 70,000 refugee children born in Ethiopia over the last 10 years who have not received birth certificates can obtain these retroactively. The inclusion of refugees in the national civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system constitutes a milestone for refugee protection in Ethiopia considering that especially in situations of displacement, birth registration is an important protection tool and facilitates refugee's access to essential basic services, such as education and health care. By ensuring refugee children have equitable access to CRVS system, the Government of Ethiopia is implementing the pledge made on Birth Registration (pledge # 9) during the Leaders' Summit in New York held in September 2016.

#### **B. Protection**

- With the Refugee Protection Working Groups operational in almost all of the field locations, the structure has been reinforced to streamline operational analysis and response, as well as better feed into the Refugee Task Force forum. . The development in protection coordination follows the Refugee Protection Working Group retreat held in Addis Ababa in September 2017, and is a part of the 2017 Protection Strategy. The minutes from the meetings in Addis Ababa and Shire are available.
- Also resulting from the September Retreat, UNHCR, ARRA and partners of the Addis Urban Refugee Programme came together on 24 September to consolidate Operational Guidelines for Out of Camp Policy (OCP) Refugees to ensure a more harmonized and efficient approach. The document is being finalized and will be presented for review and eventual endorsement at the next Refugee Protection Working Group
- Trends in onward movement were among the issued discussed during the Shire Refugee Protection working group. Overall, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of new arrivals of Eritreans to Italy, as also confirmed via UNHCR global statistical tracking. In 2016, more than 26,000 Eritreans arrived in Italy by sea; only 4,000 Eritreans have arrived in Italy by sea through July 2017. Part of the explanation for this trend may include detention at Libya. Of critical note, 434 unaccompanied minors/separated children may have attempted onward movement from the Shire camps in October 2017. This statistic is per the Norwegian Refugee Committee, a UNHCR partner operating in the area.

- Also related to onward movement, there are 120 refugees currently detained in the Shire area of operation under the charge of either smuggling or trafficking. This statistic is confirmed via detention centre monitoring undertaken in late October. Concern is also raised regarding due process. Refugees lack legal representation, and there have been trial delays. As an immediate stop-gap measure, a memorandum of understanding with the law schools of Mekele and Axum Universities have been created, for the provision of legal assistance.
- From Addis Ababa, it is noted that Level 3 Registration is underway for all refugees authorized to live in the city. Registration is on-going by UNHCR and ARRA staff daily from 7am to 5pm. Level 3 registration includes the collection of an expanded data set profile, including related to professional and educational skills. Biometrics are also recorded. Each refugee household is also issued with a proof of registration form, and each refugee over the age of 14 is provided with a refugee ID card. Advocacy is underway to encourage the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation to accept the Refugee ID card for the purpose of obtaining a SIM card.
- The Participatory Assessment for refugees throughout the country is complete. Focus group discussions have been held with women, men, girls and boys of different age groups and backgrounds, with structured discussions held among thematic areas. The results vary by region, though concerns were raised in particular regarding the need for greater access to secondary and tertiary education, to the need for documentation, to concerns regarding livelihoods and to a request for solutions. (Will we produce something for circulation?)
- The “Humanitarian Corridor” programme is underway, with the first 25 of 500 refugees expected to depart to Italy on 29 November 2017. The Corridor is an initiative between UNHCR and two faith-based organizations, Caritas and Sant’Egidio; under this initiative refugees from Eritrea, South Sudan and Somalia are identified and selected for movement. Integration efforts will be undertaken by the diaspora in Italy, along with the Italian church. Persons will receive permanent residence, which limits movement to Italy only during the first 12 months after arrival.
- On Resettlement, there is a request from the United States has asked UNHCR to identify and refer persons who may not require “extreme vetting”, and have asked for additional referrals of Congolese, South Sudan and Eritrean refugees. While the Protection team will undertake this request, we do raise concern that this approach is discriminatory against refugees of other nationalities, including those from Somalia and Yemen. We will attempt to fill need with the Canada quota for 2018. UNHCR in particular remains concerned regarding the some 14,000 persons who may already be in the resettlement pipeline, particularly for the United States, but for whom departure is not likely in 2018, and beyond.
- Regarding Somali refugees, a Return Help Desk (RHD) closed during the 2016 regional drought crisis has been reopened in each of the five camps in Melkadida since mid-June. 13,550 individuals have approached the return help desks to express an initial interest in return. 75% of households that expressed an interest in return attributed insufficient food in Ethiopia as a primary reason.
- Child Protection: More than 70,000 refugees have arrived from South Sudan in 2017. Efforts are underway to reunify families intra-camp, as in numerous cases children became separated from their parents during flight. UNHCR and ARRA are adopting streamlined procedures to expedite this process. UNHCR has also developed a Child Protection strategy in line with Global Guidance, following a consultative process with ARRA and partners.

- Opening of urban Child Protection Centre in Addis Ababa by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS): In a colourful inauguration and with over three hundred refugees in attendance, the first Refugee Child Protection Centre in Addis Ababa has been officially opened on 2 November 2017. Vulnerable refugee children of all backgrounds and age will be able to access comprehensive child protection services provided by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) at the Centre. Services include child protection case management including placement of unaccompanied children in family-based foster care, provision of psychosocial support/counselling, activities at Child Friendly Space including indoor and outdoor games, Amharic and English language classes, life skills training, catch-up classes and access to vocational training.
- Revision of the regional framework for the protection of South Sudanese refugee children: A 3 day regional workshop was hosted by UNHCR Child Protection to revise the regional framework for the protection of South Sudanese refugee children in Nairobi from 15-17 November. From Ethiopia, staff from ARRA, UNHCR, Save the Children and Plan International attended. Child protection actors from the refugee operations in Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Central African Republic were also participating.
- UNHCR Child Protection partner Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is supporting the identification and rapid assessment of children at risk. Identified unaccompanied and separated children as well as other children at risk are referred to the Child Protection Desk where a JRS case worker conducts a rapid Best Interests Assessment (BIA). The BIA serves the assessment of immediate risks and initiation of follow up action. The rapid BIAs will be later on uploaded onto proGres.

### **C. Health**

- To date in 2017, a total of 668,690 persons benefited from consultations in health centres across all refugee camps. 9% of the consultations were from the host communities. The health facility utilization rate stands at 1.2 consultations per refugee per year and is within the standard of more than 1 consultations per year. The mortality rate in children under five is 0.2/1000/month and is within the expected range in all camps. 98% of all deliveries in the camps were conducted with the help of skilled birth attendants.
- UNHCR, ARRA and partners participated in the annual public health workshop. The workshop was conducted over three days for more than 60 participants, more than half of the participants were from field locations. During the workshop the team focused on reviewing the implementation of public health programmes in the various regions and getting familiarised with new approaches including CRRF. A large part of the workshop focused on introduction to new initiatives which will be rolled out in the various locations in 2018, including among others the use of the Last Mile Mobile Solution for improved nutrition beneficiary data management, roll-out of UNHCRs Infant and Young Child Feeding framework and enhanced treatment for non-communicable diseases. Half a day was used to advance the discussion with health, nutrition and WASH partners on revising the SOP for the outreach workforce to enhance the efficiency of the community based work and avoid overlaps.

### **D. Food and Nutrition**

- The UNHCR standardized expanded nutrition survey was conducted in the refugee camps of Sherkole, Tsore, Bambasi, Tongo and Gure Shombola in Assosa and results revealed a weighted

average of prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) of 8.0% and 1.1% severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in children aged 6 – 59 months, which is within the acceptable UNHCR standards of below 10% and below 2% for GAM and SAM respectively. Nutritional screening continued among new arrivals at entry points in Gambella and Dollo Ado particularly for the under-fives children and pregnant and lactating women. Proxy prevalence of GAM was above the emergency threshold of 15% in both vulnerable groups and identified individuals were referred to nutritional centres for treatment.

- With available resources, WFP will continue implementing the current level of ration until February 2018. WFP anticipates critical pipeline break from March 2018 unless additional funds are secured from donors. In the meantime, WFP Ethiopia has submitted an advance financing request (loan) to its HQ in Rome to avoid sudden pipeline break using the funding forecast per the previous trend as a collateral.
- Following increased market price for cereals, the transfer rate was adjusted by 18% in the Jijiga camps from November 2017;
- Contrary to the findings of JAM and WFP's own surveys, refugees in Dollo camps resisted to receive white sorghum. The main reason behind looks low market value of the white sorghum (3 Birr/Kg) compared to red sorghum (9 Birr/KG)
- WFP, in collaboration with UNHCR and ARRA, will be conducting the annual representative household survey (Food security and vulnerability) across the camps during the third and fourth weeks of December 2017 so as to get updated information on food security and vulnerability among refugees. The findings of this survey, combined with nutritional survey findings will be used as a basis for any decision regarding ration cuts if needed be.

## **E. WASH**

- Utility Model for water management in Itang (covering Kule, Tierkidi and Nguenyiel): the transition of the management of the permanent water scheme in Itang from NGO partner management to utility management is planned for January 2018. ARRA, UNICEF and UNHCR developed a SOP indicating working modality between the three agencies and One WASH. The SOP outlines the processes to be undertaken during the preparation, infrastructure investment and utility setup with clear roles and responsibilities of the various agencies. In another utility development, the Itang water utility board has agreed to incorporate three (3) ARRA and 3 Refugees representatives into the board. This is because Refugees form more than 70% of the consumers of the Itang water supply.
- HH Latrine coverage: Coverage of family latrines varies widely between camps. Among those with the lowest coverage are Okugo, Kobe, Melkadida, Bokolmanyoo Refugee camps which all have HH latrine coverage of less than 15% despite their long term existence. Nguenyiel has a similarly low coverage but additional funds from partners will ensure a coverage of 45% in the next few months. UNHCR remains engaged with partners and donors to seek for additional funding to improve access to sanitation.

## **F. Education**



- Ministry of Education in collaboration with ARRA have placed a total of 517 refugee students in public universities across the country for the academic year 2017/18. Out of this 253 students are those who have completed secondary school this year in Ethiopia and who have passed Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination (EHEEE) and achieved a threshold score required for admission to higher education. The other 264 are refugees who passed special placement examination, meant for refugees who are believed to have completed secondary education outside of Ethiopia but who did not have education documents/certificates. The 517 students would qualify for DAFI and Government scholarship programmes.
- Annual DAFI Scholarship workshop was held in Assosa town on 4th November 2017. The workshop was aimed at bringing together key education stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges of higher education and also to share information about the DAFI scholarship with stakeholders. The workshop provides an opportunity for the active scholarship holders and former DAFI students to meet the donor and other key stakeholders face-to-face, express their opinions and future aspiration, to document best practices, celebrate success stories and narrowing down any communication gaps in the processes of the implementation of programme. The workshop was attended by over 80 participants including the donor representative (from German Embassy in Addis Ababa), DAAD (German Academic Exchange), Regional Education Bureau, Assosa University Officials (Academic Vice President and Head of Registrar), Education Focal Points, representatives of refugee community from Refugee Central Committee RCC, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Women Association, and representatives of secondary school girls and boys from five camps.
- Discussion is progressing with MOE's department of ICT and Education Management Information System (EMIS) on the publication of refugee education EMIS data along with the national abstract for 2016/2017 Ethiopian academic year.

#### **G. Shelter**

- No input provided.

#### **H. Energy and the Environment**

- No input provided.

#### **I. AOB**

- UNHCR underscored the importance of implementing partners to conclude 2017 project closures by the end of the financial year. It was note that the results of the 2018 partner selection would be released next week. UNHCR encouraged organization to actively engage the Agency on the results for more substantive feedback as may be required.

**The next Refugee Task Force Meeting will take place on 13 December 2017 at 3.30pm.**