



Refugee Coordination Group (RCG)

Quarterly meeting – 13 June 2018 – Minutes

Opening Remarks

Following the launch of the CRRF, and the constitution of its governing bodies, it became necessary to streamline the coordination of refugee response activities in line with the Refugee Coordination Model. In this regard, the Refugee Coordination Group (RCG) has been established, to convene on a quarterly basis; March, June, September and December. It will allow for discussions with partners around priorities and inter-sectoral issues, joint planning, analysis of data and identification of data gaps, common standards and implementation.

Refugee Demographic Trends and BIMS

An update on the Multi-Year Registration Plan of Action was given that will be rolled out by the end of 2018. Implementation is key to improving registration and ensure accurate figures. Partner support will be essential in this ongoing effort and will lead to more precise data and improved profiling of refugees. Current figures for BIMS enrollment are lower than for L3 registration as refugees 5 years or younger are not enrolled in BIMS.

Data sharing agreements with the government guide what data is shared with other stakeholders. Currently, the data sharing agreement extends to ARRA and the Immigration Office. General information in relation to education and skill profiles of refugees can currently be shared, but sensitive information, including in relation to specific needs is only accessible to UNHCR. Once the new database Progres V4 is fully established, more partners will have access to additional forms of data to facilitate an increasingly targeted response to service delivery.

Session 1: CRRF – operational rollout

Following the regional launches, there is an opportunity to reflect on how to move forward regarding the CRRF and operationalizing the response to the Pledges. Certain challenges and opportunities have emerged, that should guide the way partners coordinate on the ground and move toward a whole of society approach, benefiting both refugees and host communities. Meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly refugees and host communities in the implementation of the Pledges should be ensured.

Much of the work in relation to the CRRF roll-out has been focused to-date on establishing CRRF administrative architecture at the Federal level. Now that structures are in place, the coming period should be more focused on a phased approach towards realizing the Pledges. The anticipated release of the National Refugee Strategy and the adoption of the revised Refugee Proclamation will further guide implementation.

At the regional level, concerns were raised about CRRF being seen as another “aid package” modality. It should be understood that it is a new approach that will allow new actors (incl. IFIs, private sector and development actors) to engage in addressing joint needs of refugees and host communities, many of whom reside in the most marginalized parts of the country. The roll-out of the CRRF will constitute a joint learning exercise that will be adapted and adjusted over time to ensure it is as beneficial and useful of an approach for our beneficiaries.



It is essential to establish working links with line ministries, not only at the regional, but also at the federal level. Relations with MOFEC and BOFED are fundamental. Existing relationships between UN-agencies with line ministries can be a catalyst to the process.

A protection note is being finalized by UNHCR that will guide CRRF implementation, particularly around pledges for work and livelihoods. The note will set out norms, standards and the rights of refugees that should be respected. In particular, as new partnerships are being formed outside of the humanitarian community, it is important to ensure that new actors are aware of the basic protection rights that should be safeguarded for refugees.

One consistent point raised by members was the lack of awareness among key stakeholders at the regional level around the concept of the CRR approach. Additional communication and awareness raising is required to orientate all actors. The lack of awareness and understanding of CRR approach is also present among local communities, which could lead to potential tensions with refugees. A communication strategy will be developed to ensure that communities understand the CRRF and how that stand to benefit. The Strategy will also bring on board community actors to support outreach. Focus should also be on highlighting what works already (proof of concept).

Members mentioned how they are already using CRRF approaches and it is important to learn from these experiences. Moreover, it was emphasized that partners should be involved in the design of programmes/projects from inception, including during the assessment and mapping phases, up to prioritization and implementation. Members have strong linkages with both refugees and host communities due to their proximity to the populations, and hence can contribute to all phases of project design, incl. community consultations.

Other points raised included:

- The potential for joint programs should be explored to ensure efforts are aligned in an effective manner.
- More clarity was needed around institutional arrangements in terms of the central role of BOFED/MOFEC in area-based planning. Currently discussions are ongoing at the national level, including on how to bring district and woreda level actors onboard.
- Consideration should be given to what is defined as the immediate hosting area? There are ongoing discussions with partners around the concept, including the World Bank to define areas of coverage.
- There is a need to prioritize between the Pledges in the immediate terms to provide momentum to the process.

Session 2: Access to energy – Safeguarding refugee women and girls

Four working groups discussed the need to have a multi-sectoral approach to SGBV prevention, specifically in relation to the context of Gambella. One key gap is safe access to domestic fuel and natural resources. Challenges and opportunities around access to energy are inherently multi-sectoral. If access to fuel and natural resources for energy can be improved this would lead to:

- Strengthened peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities
- Decreased SGBV risks
- Increased environmental protection



- Improvements to quality of life as less time would need to be spent on ensuring access to energy (e.g. children don't have to skip school to fetch firewood and women can spend more time on family care).

Recommendations in relation to the approach to energy solutions by the various groups included the following:

- Work on joint assessments, and review with all stakeholders
- Design strategy on the ground, including lessons learned and best practices
- Ensure full community engagement, including both hosts and refugees. Considerations should include acceptability of different modalities, safety aspects, and scalability.
- Ensure access to energy is included in other sectoral strategies
- Mainstream SGBV prevention and response
- Consider variety of contexts (even within a regional setting like Gambella the situation can vary per camp).
- Involve women in peaceful coexistence interventions
- Ensure flexibility to adjust solutions in line with new innovations, and engage in continuous monitoring.
- Improve knowledge exchange, including through sharing of assessments, best practices and lessons learned in a joint database (both within the Ethiopia context, and from other countries).

In terms of proposed solutions there was consensus that the long term preferred option is connection to the national grid. However, due to contextual differences in the short term a multitude of solutions might need to be employed, which include:

- In consultation with local authorities allocate firewood collection areas
- Woodlot development
- Scale up biogas and briquette production, incl. through programmes involving both host and refugees and /or private sector. Increasing access to bio-ethanol was also proposed. There should be sufficient raw materials, but investments in production are required.
- Increase access to solar lighting to increase security. Refugee community and woreda and kebele local authorities should be involved in messaging and management.

To ensure safe access to energy in-kind contributions may be required for the immediate terms. Voucher or cash modalities could be considered.

UNHCR commissioned a study into options for household energy, and the inception report has been finalized. The final report is expected in October. Discussions around safe energy access to be continued in the Energy Taskforce to which all partners are invited. It is important to prioritize the most efficient and effective solutions with the limited resources available.

Session 3: Quarterly Situational Analysis – Integrated data gathering tool

To facilitate information management several tools have been established and are under development. The country operational data portal serves as central source of information for all stakeholders. Content is dependent on inputs from all partners and this resource should facilitate country based planning. The Ethiopia refugee response plan has been developed for the first time in 2018, with the support of all partners, to provide a comprehensive overview of overall needs of refugees. For the 2019 version, further consultation will be required on the inclusion of off-camp CRRF interventions.



The interagency data gathering tool has been developed as a joint tool to facilitate data gathering and reporting. At the sectoral level a monitoring plan will need to be developed by sector working groups, including decisions regarding indicators to be measured, baselines, frequency of data collection etc., based on those defined within the Ethiopia Refugee Response Plan.

The tool is a consolidation platform and as such can be aligned to other data tools that for example exist within other coordination fora/clusters. The data gathering tool will be focused on comprehensive refugee needs, and as such is not just restricted to implementing partners. While supporting sector coordination, the tool will contribute to the preparation of a multi-sector quarterly situational analysis, to be reviewed during subsequent RCG meetings.

A workshop will be organized in Gambella and Assosa with all partners to further explain functionalities of the tool and request feedback. The aim to pilot its application aligned to current reporting requirements of the South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan. The outcome of the piloting exercise will be presented at the next RGC meeting. Partners that require more explanation on the tool may also get in touch with UNHCR directly.

Session 4: Nutrition Causal Analysis – Key findings and operational responses

Presentation of the outcomes of the Nutrition Causal Analysis that demonstrates multi-sectoral causes for undernutrition in Gambella. Solutions are also multi-sectoral, but considering limited resources further discussions (incl. in Health and Nutrition WG) will be necessary around prioritization. Community work should be strengthened to ensure improved practices that can positively impact on nutritional status.



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