Lessons

for complex conflict emergencies

December 2013

LESSONS
from South Sudan[1]

Introduction

Learning from the past to inform the future is the core of WFP's approach to Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Knowledge Management. With each new crisis, the Emergency Preparedness Division makes available learning from earlier emergencies so that we can continually improve the way we respond. This is a standard operating procedure for all Level 3 and Level 2 emergencies, and has already been applied to the Sahel 2012, Syria, Philippines, and Central African Republic crises.

Below is a summary compilation of the South Sudan Corporate Response (February 2012-December 2012) Lessons Learned Exercise, which are similar in nature and scope to the 2013 Republic of South Sudan (RSS) crisis. This summary aims to inform Managers and staff involved in the RSS emergency response on previous experiences and possible challenges in order to improve the way we respond this time around.

Key Recommendations

i. **Time-bound Increase in Delegated Authority of Country Directors**
At the time of a CR, the delegated authority of Country Directors should be immediately increased from US$200,000 to US$1 million for the duration of the CR.

ii. **Introducing a Programme Capacity Assessment in WFP Regular Operations**
WFP should explore the possibility of developing a Programme Capacity Assessment (PCA), similar to that produced by Logistics, which would be updated on an annual basis. The PCA would bring together into one formal document much of the information already available but dispersed throughout both the Programme Unit and the CO. The Programme Unit through VAM should provide rough estimates of needs that could be used for planning purposes during a CR with an allowance of refinement of the figure once better information or assessments are done. This information could

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[1], South Sudan 2012
For more information on Lessons Learned of past emergencies, kindly refer to http://epweb.wfp.org/ep2/llearned/

include, but not be limited to, information on NGOs operating in the country and their expertise, government counterparts, known population movement patterns (if appropriate), and availability of merchants and/or shops for cash and voucher programmes

iii. **Alternate Arrangements for Vehicle Call Forward during CRs**

A thorough review of the GVLP business model and an exploration of other actions are required. The Resource Management and Accountability Department has advised that it will be looking into this issue as part of the business process review. It is recommended that the following options be considered as part of such review:

(I) Establishing a stock of MOSS-compliant vehicles that can be located at United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots and available for dispatch by air in support of a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency within

24-48 hours; or

(II) Automatically grant Country Directors and/or Regional Directors the authority to purchase vehicles from other sources other than GVLP and arrange them to be MOSS compliant.

iv. **Implementation of an Emergency Roster**

Human Resources and the Emergency Preparedness Division should jointly expedite implementation of the corporate emergency response roster. WFP (executive management) should ensure sustainable funding for maintenance and updating of the roster on a regular basis.

The WFP Response

Programme

- In order to contribute to the overall corporate response strategy, WFP should instigate a "PCA" to ensure a thorough understanding of critical programming elements and information in a country and identify shortcomings (based on the model of the LCA) and bottlenecks, which will benefit a rapid response. The PCA could also better guide the feasibility and appropriateness of programme modalities at a certain period of time during the response.
- In the context of emergency operations, high priority should be given to nutrition interventions at the outset of the response because children have different needs that cannot be covered by GFD.

  As part of WFP's Strategic Objective 1, the rapid deployment of resources and overcoming pipeline breaks of specialized nutritious products by improving upfront operational planning and communication are needed.

  Given the limited shelf life and availability of nutrition commodities different options need to be discussed. This could range from programming of nutrition commodities and taking into account unexpected and seasonal fluctuation needs; augmenting storage and pre-positioning capacity at CO and regional level; and ensuring that FPF for nutritious products is capable of managing multiple emergencies.

- Given the complexity of implementation and the need for prioritization of nutrition activities in large scale emergencies, ensure the early deployment of a nutritionist to support CO and field based nutrition personnel. Further, ensure that WFP Programme staff are aware of nutrition and HIV imperatives in emergencies.
- Investment in prevention and preparedness to respond to a potential crisis in a timely manner and advanced planning for emergencies should be strengthened.
- Address the lack of easily accessible basic programme templates (beyond the Programme Guidance Manual), and providing a programme staff emergency guidance folder for operations with ready-to-use formats ("how-to" liaise with Rome Headquarters).
- Include staff with innovative programme area knowledge into the emergency roster and continue to build capacity on C&V internally by providing training on C&V to COs.
- In CRs, WFP should adopt a culture whereby the Programme Unit, through VAM, provides provisional estimates that can be used for planning purposes. These can then be refined once better information or assessments are done. Seasonality should also be factored in during the planning phase and thus influence the timing and choice of transfer modality.

Logistics
- In a difficult environment such as the Republic of South Sudan, and in the event of a CR, WFP should consider prioritizing the deployment of Logistics staff with previous experience in the country and/or region.
- Logistics surge staff should, as much as possible, be incorporated into the existing structure of the CO. By creating a temporary parallel group of people for the CR, there is a risk of weakening the core structure of the CO, which will have to take over sooner or later.

Procurement
- In order to reduce the bureaucratic burden on COs during a CR, the delegated authority of the Country Director should be increased to US$1 million for the duration of the CR.
- The deployment of a Senior Procurement Officer to the CO would facilitate the timely procurement of items required for the scale up of a CR.

Resource Management
- A protocol should be developed to ensure direct access to advance funding mechanisms for CRs.
- Consideration should be given to strengthening staffing for pipeline functions. Responsibility for pipeline is often buried in the generic tasks of Programme Officers. WFP should consider making Pipeline Officer a specific job category to enlarge WFP's pool of skilled pipeline analysts.
- WFP should consider formalizing the creation of a Supply Chain Management Working Group as a sub-group of the task force.
- The use of pipeline tools is instrumental in highlighting the needs for early funding mechanisms and should be used in a more systematic way to access advance mechanisms.

Emergency Preparedness Division (OME)

ICT

- Incoming TDY staff, especially those in sudden onset emergencies, should be encouraged to deploy with equipment (laptop, mobile phone, etc.) from their originating CO. Protocols should be developed that would allow for reimbursement should TDY staff not return to the original duty station or if equipment is lost or damaged.
- Pre-deployment guidelines for staff should encourage TDY staff to bring equipment with them.
- A stock of VHF radios, GPS and satellite phones (Thurayas) should be held at the logistics hubs for call forward as these items are generally unable to be imported by staff.

Finance and Administration

- During the initial phase of a CR, when the situation may be fluid, the Regional Director/Director of Finance may consider extending financial reporting periods beyond the 30 days to 90 days.
- In addition to supplementing finance/administration staff, WFP should consider deploying a WINGS expert who can support the significant increase in payments and WINGS processes that characterize the initial stages of a CR.
- In the event of a scale up that involves recruitment of new national staff, national staff on TDY should be paired with newly recruited local staff to mentor and pass on their knowledge.
- Human Resources Officers in regional bureaux should be encouraged to keep rosters of national staff by staff profile for call forward in a Level 2 response or a CR.
- In areas where conditions are very difficult, WFP needs to make sure that conditions for national staff are considered so that staff are retained and that WFP does not lose them to other agencies.
- Staff should be encouraged to get their DSA payments prior to deploying as supplies of cash may be limited.
- WFP HR should consider developing a CR pre-deployment checklist.
- WFP should implement a roster system that will enable the deployment of the right staff at the right time and at the right place.

Security

- Surge capacity for Security Officers must be a priority in a CR environment, particularly those with a higher security level.
- The importance of consulting with security should be borne in mind when expanding operations and establishing offices and warehouses.
- A fleet of MOSS-compliant vehicles should be ready for call forward for CRs.

Reporting

- A dedicated Reports Officer should be deployed at the declaration of a CR and remain in place throughout the CR.
- Unit heads should clear the information before it is sent to the reporting team.

Emergency Preparedness Division (OME)

- Reporting staff need to visit all the sub-offices in order to have first-hand knowledge and build rapport with staff.
- The staff assigned to monitoring and evaluation beneficiary counting need to be knowledgeable of the system and the issues behind the data to ensure that the data remains reliable.

External and Inter-Agency Affairs

Donors
- Continue the use of tools such as WCFF and SRAC loans for CRs, which can either be paid back during the course of the project or through donor contributions.
- Ensure donors and partners are informed in a timely manner when a WFP-specific CR is declared.

Public Information
- The roster of trained PI consultants with knowledge of WFP needs to be strengthened and enhanced at Headquarters and expanded to include the RB levels.
- WFP needs to determine who is responsible for visibility within the organization and give them a budget.
- A stock of WFP visibility items should be kept at the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRDs) and immediately dispatched to a CR or if required by a CO.

In-Country Coordination

Cluster Responsibilities

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
- In each CR, the ETC should decide whether to have a standalone special operation (SO) or to include its requirements in the Logistics SO. A dedicated SO for ETC is cumbersome to administer and, in this instance, was not very successful in attracting donor support.
- Management of radio rooms for the security of humanitarian workers should remain under the management of the ETC and not be handed over to United Nations missions, as discrepancies in radio protocols and the language barrier between humanitarian workers and military personnel could impair communication.

Food Security Cluster
- WFP should deploy a dedicated Food Security Cluster Coordinator during a CR so that other technical staff are not used to fill in as the coordinator.
- The use of a dedicated SO should be considered to fund the Food Security Cluster.
- WFP needs to determine the exact role it wants to play vis-à-vis the FSLC and how it wants to interact with the cluster.

Logistics Cluster

- For cargo air transport, the Logistics Cluster funded and used the service of a dedicated aviation officer from the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS). This arrangement proved to be effective in managing and prioritizing the air transport requests coming for services users.
- Funding remains a challenge for the Logistics Cluster. The Logistics Cluster should explore the possibility to operate as soon as possible on a cost-recovery basis. Because services are provided free of charge, requests are not necessarily prioritized by users. Moreover, some organizations are budgeting and are funded for their logistics needs while benefiting from free services from the cluster; this issue is being acted on, with a market assessment under way.

United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

- Linkage between the Logistics Cluster and UNHAS was good. The Logistics Cluster had one dedicated aviation officer working with UNHAS, which assisted in prioritizing cargo. It is recommended to use the same arrangements in other emergencies.

Corporate Response Management
Headquarters Support

- WFP should adopt the concept of two task forces in a CR.
- Setting up an Operations Centre and identifying focal points early is still good practice in case Headquarters emergency preparedness and response technical support is needed.

Regional Bureau Support

- The RB should continue to be the first port of call for technical and administrative support in a CR.