STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Eighteenth Session

ROLE OF IOM IN THE CLUSTER SYSTEM

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1.   This paper provides a brief update on IOM's growing involvement in cluster coordination and operations, specifically the Organization's role in the cluster system and the current status and priorities of its activities in support of various clusters.

The cluster rationale

2.   In 2005, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted the "cluster approach" in order to make humanitarian assistance more effective, predictable and accountable. The approach emphasizes partnerships between humanitarian organizations, identifying lead agencies and dividing the work within various sectors of assistance according to each organization's mandate. The core functions are to: support service delivery; inform humanitarian country team strategic decision-making; plan and implement cluster strategies; monitor and evaluate performance; build national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning; and support robust advocacy.

3.   National authorities bear primary responsibility for managing disasters, emergencies and crises. The clusters support existing coordination mechanisms and national capacities when these face constraints in doing so. Government-led sectoral emergency or crisis coordination mechanisms are established by and report to designated government bodies. The humanitarian country team selects country-level cluster lead agencies according to each agency's coordination and response capacity, operational presence and ability to scale up, in a way that often mirrors global cluster lead arrangements, but can also differ when other organizations are better positioned to lead. Thanks to its strong operational presence, IOM is frequently selected to lead country clusters or to be a key player in a humanitarian response.

IOM and the cluster system

4.   IOM actively engages in the cluster system at various levels. Together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it co-leads the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster – IOM leading in natural disasters and UNHCR in conflict contexts. IOM also participates in the Global Shelter, Protection, Health, Early Recovery and Logistics Clusters. It has implemented cluster-related shelter and non-food item activities in over 40 countries. It currently leads or co-leads about one third of country-level emergency shelter coordination mechanisms. It also contributes to strategic discussions at global level.

5.   Under IOM's leadership, the Global CCCM Cluster has evolved and expanded to support humanitarian operations around the globe in the coordinated management of displaced populations, providing tools, guidance and capacity-building. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, a set of tools and methodologies used to identify and regularly update information about the numbers, location and needs of internally displaced persons, is also used to support cluster operations. In order to reaffirm and operationalize its commitment to gender and protection mainstreaming, IOM has been advocating stronger linkages between the CCCM and protection sectors, to better identify, mitigate and address issues such as gender-based violence and human trafficking.

6.   With the support of donors such as the European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the United States Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migrants, and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), IOM has acted to strengthen cluster global responsibilities, creating and maintaining a global CCCM capacity roster (a Norwegian Capacity subroster), deploying rapid response teams, and strengthening capacities to identify and refer gender-based violence risks.

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

Core functions

7.   The overall mission of CCCM is to ensure equitable access to services and protection for displaced persons living in communal settings; to improve their quality of life and dignity during displacement; to advocate solutions; and to prepare people for life after displacement. CCCM strategic objectives vary according to the country context and ensure that responses take account of local conditions, the level and type of displacement, and the most pressing needs of uprooted populations. CCCM responses typically involve:

(a)   Ensuring camp/site coordination and camp/site management structures are in place to facilitate the effective and targeted delivery and monitoring of services;

(b)   Ensuring decent, safe living conditions and protective environments in displacement sites;

(c)   Mapping the location, movements, intentions and cross-sectoral needs and priorities of displaced populations;

(d)   Establishing representative communication schemes with displaced populations, in and outside displacement sites, and with host communities;

(e)   Strengthening the capacities of national authorities, which bear primary responsibility for managing displacement.

8.   Unlike other clusters, where the primary deliverables are commodities, CCCM services are not easily measurable and quantifiable for setting standard costing and approaches. Instead, success is measured by improvements in living conditions, the establishment of governance structures and coordination networks, and the identification of durable solutions that will ultimately facilitate return or transition to recovery.

CCCM in practice

9.   Over the years, IOM-led CCCM operations have been among the largest CCCM responses. For instance, IOM led the CCCM cluster in Haiti, where 1.5 million people were displaced across a thousand sites. In South Sudan, IOM has been improving, expanding and managing protection-of-civilians sites such as Bentiu, which has such a large population that it ranks with the country's third largest city. In addition to camp-based responses, IOM operations focus on those displaced outside camps, given that around 70 per cent of displaced persons worldwide are living with host families and in non-camp settings. In such cases, different mechanisms are used to identify needs and deliver assistance. They range from establishing displacement focal points to setting up information centres and systems covering

both the displaced and their host communities. IOM has been at the forefront of these approaches, while also investing heavily in capacity-building.

10.   In 2015, IOM implemented CCCM activities in 41 countries overall. It led or co-led formally activated CCCM clusters in the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen, targeting 5.7 million internally displaced persons. Although appeals for these eight country contexts totaled USD 283.8 million, only USD 95.2 million (34%) have been received. IOM is also supporting CCCM sectoral coordination in 24 other countries.[1]

11.   The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tracks and monitors populations displaced in sites/camps and internally displaced persons in host communities. It is designed to capture, process and disseminate information, regularly and systematically, on location, demographics, vulnerabilities and multi-sectoral gaps. As such, it plays a crucial support role for CCCM, enabling IOM, national authorities and other humanitarian players to identify needs for targeted assistance. DTM operations, which tracked 7.2 million internally displaced persons in 17 countries in 2014, increased in scale and scope to track over 14 million in 22 countries in 2015.

12.   Examples of IOM-led CCCM activities are to be found in:

- The Central African Republic, where mobile site facilitation teams offer flexible, on-site and remote management support in a resource-scarce operating environment;

- South Sudan, where IOM engages in site planning, camp management, and camp coordination functions, and registers and tracks internally displaced persons;

- Nepal, where IOM played a key role in the pre-identification of potential evacuation sites in the earthquake-prone Kathmandu Valley, and rolled out the DTM when disaster struck;

- Nigeria, where IOM has been tracking the more than 2 million people displaced by Boko Haram activities and community clashes, 90 per cent of whom are not in camps;

- Chad, where the DTM is being used to track both returnees from the crisis in the Central African Republic and those displaced by Boko Haram; and

- Colombia, where the DTM (known locally as the SIGAT) has been transferred to the national authorities.

13.   IOM CCCM activities are predicated on successful partnerships with national authorities, humanitarian partners and the private sector. Private sector partners such as SAS, ESRI and Deloitte have helped boost the technical and analytical capabilities of the DTM. Standby partnerships – with the Norwegian Refugee Council, the DFID, the International Civilian Response Corps (Canadem), the international non-governmental organizations iMMAP and RedR International, and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) – have enhanced IOM's rapid response capacity and the range of expertise its response teams can offer. Partnerships with national authorities and civil protection counterparts have helped streamline emergency preparedness and response by promoting shared expertise between civil protection and humanitarian agencies.

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[1]   Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Mali, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu.

14.   IOM has also been at the forefront when it comes to mitigating and preventing the risk of gender-based violence in both CCCM and Shelter cluster operations. It has bolstered the capacity of field practitioners to identify, prevent and mitigate the risk of gender-based violence, in order to reduce vulnerabilities from the outset. Likewise, IOM CCCM activities have focused on ensuring gender-based violence and other protection risk indicators are incorporated into the DTM in Ethiopia, Iraq, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Sudan and Vanuatu. These indicators relate to site layout and infrastructure, security, women's participation, and knowledge about and availability of related services. IOM has also designed training resources to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of national authorities, DTM specialists and camp management staff, enabling them to better anticipate, recognize and address the protection concerns of women and girls in camps and camp-like settings.

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

15.   At the global level, IOM is a key member of the Shelter Cluster Strategic Advisory Group and actively contributes to the Shelter and Gender-based Violence Risk Reduction Working Group and the Shelter Technical Community of Practice. It is one of four agencies staffing the seven-person team of global focal points, who provide surge capacity and remote support to country-level clusters in emergencies. They also engage in global cluster preparedness, capturing good practices and developing or updating guidelines and tools.

16.   At field level, IOM leads or co-leads one third of all formally activated shelter clusters or other national coordination groups. For example, it currently leads the Shelter/Non-food Items Cluster in South Sudan, and has other significant shelter cluster operations in Iraq, Nepal, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey. Activities within the cluster mechanism range from coordination between partner agencies and NGOs and managing shelter and non-food item core pipelines, to distributing kits of non-food items, shelter construction/repair, cash-based assistance and training, and pre-positioning of shelter materials and non-food items for a more timely response.

17.   IOM has a unique coordinating function and large operational footprint; it also implements most activities directly, making it a key player and partner for national authorities both in the wake of natural disasters and in conflict/complex contexts. In 2015, it received funding to implement shelter and non-food item activities in 42 countries, involving, for instance, the distribution of non-food items, emergency shelter kits and tents, shelter construction, repair and upgrade, cash-based assistance, and shelter training. Over the course of 2015, IOM programmes in this sector reached over 5.2 million individuals affected by various types of disaster and conflict.

18.   IOM focuses on reducing risks and building resilient communities, i.e. "building back better". Its shelter activities are context-driven and, thanks to the Organization's operational presence and cross-sectoral activities, provide a comprehensive, full-spectrum response. Assistance in conflict-affected countries and protracted crises, such as South Sudan or Iraq, focuses on the distribution of relief items, whereas activities in the aftermath of a natural disaster may be more diverse. In the response to Typhoon Haiyan (Philippines), IOM implemented activities ranging from cash-based assistance to capacity-building for safer construction, shelter repairs, emergency shelters and new shelter construction.

IOM ENGAGEMENT IN OTHER CLUSTERS

19.   IOM uses a multi-sectoral operational approach to ensure that the humanitarian needs of mobile populations affected by an emergency are addressed. The Migration Crisis Operational Framework and its 15 sectors of assistance facilitate this approach, aligning IOM's humanitarian interventions with cluster strategies. IOM is present in over 470 field locations, and 95 per cent of its operational staff is based in the Field. The Organization's direct mode of implementation gives it a specific comparative advantage and has enabled it to take responsibility for cluster operations in various sectors in the Field, even when other agencies lead the cluster at the global level. IOM implemented critical humanitarian activities in these sectors in more than 40 countries over the course of 2015.[2] Its positioning and activities enable it to go beyond emergency responses to transition and recovery, with a view to building the resilience of communities.

20.   Examples of engagement include:

- In the Protection Cluster, monitoring human trafficking during evacuations in the Typhoon Haiyan response, consular services during the Libya and other crises, and psychosocial support in the regional crisis sparked by Boko Haram activities in Nigeria;

- In the Early Recovery Cluster, community stabilization and social cohesion in Bangui, Central Africa Republic, the removal of tens of thousands of cubic metres of debris after the passage of Typhoon Haiyan and the earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, and livelihood and income-generating activities;

- In the Logistics Cluster, warehousing and pipeline handling of relief items for entire sectoral responses (e.g. the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Pacific islands affected by drought and tropical storms), and air and surface transportation of persons during the crises in the Central African Republic, Libya and Yemen;

- In the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster, interventions usually linked to shelter activities in contexts such as Ukraine and Myanmar; and

- In the Health Cluster, cholera prevention and response in Haiti and Zimbabwe, and medical evacuations and treatment centres during the outbreak of Ebola virus disease.

Changes in humanitarian aid and coordination

21.   IOM has actively engaged in, and been a strong supporter of, the IASC-led reform process aimed at strengthening humanitarian responses. The cluster approach has helped fill gaps in sectoral programming and resulted in stronger leadership and increased preparedness across the system. However, IOM shares the perception of country clusters and its field partners that the system currently tends to be excessively process- and coordination-driven at the expense of operational effectiveness. Efforts to heighten accountability to the populations concerned have also failed to gain traction and affect change at the field level.

22.   The humanitarian landscape has changed drastically in the last 10 years. Slow-onset crises and protracted displacement scenarios are now the norm, with displacement being measured in generations rather than months or years. Reform measures framed in reaction to

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[2]   See http://humanitariancompendium.iom.int/countries.

large-scale natural disasters such as the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti and floods in Pakistan do not fully address the challenges of a world where the lines between natural disaster and conflict settings are blurred. When responding to complex emergencies, the humanitarian community has to look beyond agency mandates and silos, and explore area- and sector-based approaches as well as new delivery modalities, such as sector-wide cash-based assistance.

23.   Furthermore, national disaster management agencies are increasingly well capacitated to lead the coordination of national and international responses within their territories. Building on these capabilities and learning how the clusters can best support and complement national capacities in localized responses are essential for better targeted humanitarian action. New players, such as the private sector, the diaspora and the media, also have an increasingly important role, and coordination platforms need to be open to accommodate them and ensure compatibility of efforts.

24.   IOM remains committed to working within the IASC to promote an integrated system that is well prepared to deal with the scale and scope of current and future humanitarian crises. This includes working to strengthen the cluster system. Concurrently, IOM will continue to drive progress, translating policy reform into field-level and day-to-day practice, and making tools and processes fit-for-purpose, such that crisis-affected and mobile populations remain at the centre of IOM programming and have access to the services they need.