



Resident Coordinator's Office – Blue Nile State, Damazine

## Lessons Learned Workshop Kurmuk Emergency 2008



Kurmuk  
UNHCR Conference Room  
13 January 2009

## 1. Introduction

During the rainy season 2008 particularly the inaccessible rural returnee communities in Kurmuk were affected by a food and health emergency. This emergency was addressed by a common response of UN agencies, NGOs, the local Government as well as UNMIS. In the aftermath the actors felt it would be useful to conduct a lessons learned workshop in order to discuss what went well and what could be improved in the future and how. The workshop was facilitated by the RCSO and hosted by UNHCR on 13 January 2009 in Kurmuk.

This report comprises the opening message, the background, the objectives, the methodology, the outcome and the recommendations of the workshop as well as further information in the annexes.

## 2. Opening Messages

In the absence of the Kurmuk Commissioner as well as the SRRC Commissioner, the HAC/ SRRC Deputy Commissioner opened the workshop with a short speech. He thanked the organizers of the workshop and he appreciated the role of the humanitarian actors during the response of the emergency in Kurmuk. Moreover, he stated that the locality is looking forward to hear the recommendations of the workshop.

The facilitator of the workshop, the Head of the RC Field Office in Damazine, also welcomed the participants and started the workshop with a presentation of the background by presenting the timeline of crucial events, the objectives and the methodology.

## 3. Background

### Timeline of crucial events

- **7 July 2008:** AHA, UNHCR mission to Balila
- **14 September:** WHO, TCC, UNMIS RRRRCSO, HAC/SRRC medical camp in Balila
- **22, 23 September:** Situation report 1 and 2 by RCSO, mentioning 28 dead children in Gindi and 21 in Borfa based on UNHCR figures.
- **25 September:** Reuters report published:

At least 69 children dead in Sudan food crisis: UN

Thu 25 Sep 2008, 13:40 GMT

At least 69 children have died from malnutrition and sickness after floods washed away crops in isolated villages in southeast Sudan in recent weeks, U.N. agencies said on Thursday.

Blocked roads and a lack of air transport are preventing the supply of emergency rations to parts of the region, the agencies added.

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- **25 September:** The DSRSG RC/HC requested UNMIS air assets to support delivery of food to Kurmuk. UNMIS agreed to provide air assets in order to conduct assessment as well as delivery of items in the affected areas. Until 31 October two flight daily are available in Damazine or Kurmuk
- **2 October:** The Wali of Blue Nile State declared a state of emergency for the areas affected by the food and health crisis in Kurmuk. It did not become clear which consequences this will have for the Government's response to the crisis.
- **2 October:** Associate Protection Officer arrived to support tentatively the UNHCR team in Kurmuk.
- **6 October:** OCHA Disaster Management Officer arrived to support tentatively the RCSO
- **6 October:** Two WHO representatives arrived to be based in Damazine until the arrival of the new Head of Sub Office.
- **6 October:** UNMIS TCC Medical Camp in Challi. HAC/SRRC, WFP and UNICEF assessment in Challi.
- **7 October:** UNICEF, SMOH mission to Balila.
- **7 October:** Misunderstanding about funding of UNMIS flights.
- **7-11 October:** WFP, UNHCR, GOAL, AHA conduct land convoy with food to Balila.
- **8 October:** BNS Government requests UNMIS trucks to transport Government food from Damazine to Dindero.
- **13 October:** UNMIS agreed to conduct the transport.
- **22 October:** UNMIS revised its decision due to the condition of the road from Damazine to Dindero.
- **22 October:** Air assessment mission to Gindi, sponsored and led by UNMIS. Medical camp was established by UNMIS TCC. Participants were: UNMIS RRR, UNICEF, SMOH (two nutritionists) HAC/SRRC and WFP.
- **November:** BNS Government transports and delivers food by land to Kurmuk.
- **10 November:** Last air mission, to Belatuma, sponsored by UNMIS RRR, led by RCO, assessment and medical camp by HAC/SRRC, RCSO, UNICEF, SMOH, WFP, WHO and GOAL, i.e. no more UNMIS TCC.

#### 4. Objectives

- Identify what worked well and what needs improvement regarding early warning and monitoring, assessments and response.
- Discuss the basic services and livelihood situation in Kurmuk as a root cause of the crisis.

## 5. Methodology

The so-called **SWOT** analysis was used, which is a method to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project.

**Strengths**: positive tangible and intangible attributes, internal to a project.

**Weaknesses**: internal factors within a project's control that detract from the organization's ability to attain the desired goal.

**Opportunities**: external beyond the project's control attractive factors that support the project's goal.

**Threats**: external factors beyond the project's control which could place the project at risk.

Working groups prepared SWOT analyses as well as recommendations for the following topics and shared and discussed it with all participants:

- Early Warning and Monitoring
- Assessments
- Response
- Basic Services and Livelihoods

The former three topics were directly related to the emergency in Kurmuk, while the latter one is seen as the root cause of the crisis. Furthermore, the facilitator recommended including the following topics to the discussion:

- Cooperation between Blue Nile Government, UN agencies and NGOs, e.g. transparency of plans and operations.
- Cooperation with UNMIS, e.g. regarding air assets, but also civil-military coordination guidelines.
- Role of media, e.g. Reuter's article, who leaked it? What effect?
- Availability of accurate data, joint assessment.
- Did the people in Balila sell their initial WFP food ration and if so, why?

## 6. Outcome

### 6.1. Early Warning and Monitoring (Working groups)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of INGOs, UN agencies and local government</li> <li>- Good communication system in place</li> <li>- Data profiles in place</li> <li>- Willingness of all actors to respond to crises</li> <li>- Good environment for information sharing</li> <li>- Existence of radio and mobile network</li> <li>- Collaboration for transportation services</li> <li>- Availability of organized communities and leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor coordination and information sharing (e.g. July monitoring visit)</li> <li>- Subjective data (e.g. “70% malnutrition” is unrealistic)</li> <li>- Access (roads) problem for monitoring visits</li> <li>- No early warning system in place (meteorological data)</li> <li>- Lack of information from Ethiopia (Situation is unpredictable in Ethiopia)</li> <li>- Lack of infrastructure, storage and staff</li> <li>- UNMIS policies and mandate prohibit to use their assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of agencies</li> <li>- Availability of storage facilitates</li> <li>- Good coordination and division of task</li> <li>- Task force-identification of needs (GOV, UN, NGOs)</li> <li>- Availability of accessible roads</li> <li>- Provision of seeds and tools</li> <li>- Provision of health infrastructure, medical staff and regular medical supplies</li> <li>- Availability of income generation activities, vocational training and programmes</li> <li>- Staff support (e.g. from OCHA)</li> <li>- Return data available</li> <li>- Central coordination meeting prior to the rainy season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaccessibility, poor roads, and weather conditions</li> <li>- Financial constraints</li> <li>- High costs of transportation (land and air)</li> <li>- Time limitation for field monitoring and planning</li> <li>- Lack of reliable data (Exaggeration of population figures and malnutrition rates)</li> <li>- Lack of clear structures, roles and responsibilities during the emergency</li> <li>- Influences of policies and politics</li> <li>- Security and unsafe over night stay in rural Kurmuk</li> <li>- Lack of enough tractors</li> </ul>

### 6.2. Assessments (working groups)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment after crises alert provides overview of the situation</li> <li>- Rapid assessment and response (business assessment)</li> <li>- Method of information sharing among the actors</li> <li>- Good mobilization for crises</li> <li>- Use of checklists during the crises</li> <li>- Collaboration between the actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gap in information sharing</li> <li>- Selective and subjective criteria of assessments sites</li> <li>- Lack of information and coordination with assessment data centre (RCSO Information Kiosk)</li> <li>- Lack of identification of type and areas of assessment for emergency response</li> <li>- Lack of involvement of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commitment of actors (working together)</li> <li>- Availability of technical staff (objective data)</li> <li>- Joint assessments with government involvement</li> <li>- Collaboration with communities</li> <li>- Building capacity of local communities</li> <li>- Landmine removal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaccessible roads</li> <li>- Financial constraints (funding)</li> <li>- Time limitation</li> <li>- Delay in information sharing</li> <li>- Landmine problems</li> <li>- UNMIS mandate on flight (regulation for NGOs to travel on UNMIS flights)</li> </ul>

	<p>national staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of awareness (government plan what gaps to fill not available)</li> <li>- Funding gap, and who has to do what and when</li> <li>- Time constraint, with lack of assessment facilities</li> <li>- No follow up on the assessment recommendations</li> <li>- Air missions from Damazine, i.e. Kurmuk not involved</li> </ul>		
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### 6.3. Response (working groups)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information sharing (radio, e-mail, phone, word of mouth)</li> <li>- Collaboration among partners regarding information and resources sharing</li> <li>- Support from UN agencies outside BNS</li> <li>- Government support (provision of food, coordination)</li> <li>- Availability of food (WFP) pre-positioned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delay of response</li> <li>- Delay of sharing information</li> <li>- Lack of means of transport to deliver the available food</li> <li>- Funding to transport food</li> <li>- Lack of co-operation to receive the food by local communities, from the distance of 3km</li> <li>- Lack of co-operation by the community to provide information during the assessment</li> <li>- UNMIS land transport, first approved and then cancelled.</li> <li>- Government has no contingency plan for transport</li> <li>- Government has led, but with no capacities</li> <li>- Lack of mitigation</li> <li>- Dependency created</li> <li>- Focus on one sector (food)</li> <li>- No evaluation</li> <li>- Waste of time, e.g. Balila medical camp</li> <li>- Small NGOs provided more assets /fund than big organizations (UNMIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilize existing health network, train health personnel</li> <li>- Utilize local capacity (HR, EQT, local authorities, communities)</li> <li>- Optimal utilization of RCSSO Information Kiosk.</li> <li>- Share lessons learned from past experience</li> <li>- Utilize government capacity</li> <li>- Strengthen current communication network</li> <li>- Government to facilitate road repair Damazine - Kurmuk</li> <li>- More coordination among actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low capacities of local population (skills, awareness, mobilization)</li> <li>- Inaccessibility</li> <li>- Timely availability of funds and other resources</li> <li>- Administrative loopholes</li> <li>- Bad weather</li> <li>- Pressure by local Government on NGOs and UN agencies</li> </ul>

#### 6.4. Basic Services and Livelihoods (working groups)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of technical assistance and tools for basic services</li> <li>-Infrastructure (hospitals, clinic, schools, radio station)</li> <li>- Availability of manpower</li> <li>- Training is going on</li> <li>- Initiatives in livelihood activities</li> <li>- Availability of CHF (Common Humanitarian Fund)</li> <li>- Initial livelihood programme</li> <li>- SMOH trains midwives, medicine and drugs are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delayed and inadequate seeds and tools</li> <li>- Inadequate extension services (farming veterinary services)</li> <li>- Unclear criteria for distributing seeds and tools</li> <li>- Market and storage accessibility – poor or not available</li> <li>- Poor water harvesting skills</li> <li>- Random cutting of trees (deforestation)</li> <li><b>Health:</b></li> <li>- No decision making in Kurmuk</li> <li>-Inadequate health personnel, and facilities in general</li> <li>- Inadequate supplies in medicine (lost trust in government services)</li> <li>- Poor hygiene and sanitation (No latrines)</li> <li><b>Education:</b></li> <li>- Lack of trained teachers</li> <li>- Curriculum problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commitment by the government to improve basic services</li> <li>- Access in Kurmuk to villages (roads)</li> <li>- Build schools (particularly secondary schools)</li> <li>- Communication: radio, telephone</li> <li>- Integrated approach towards food security, and sustainable livelihoods</li> <li>- Capacity building for government to take over from agencies</li> <li>-Relative security, peace and stability</li> <li>- Presence of government representatives in all the localities</li> <li>- Donor’s interest in Blue Nile State</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dependency syndromes</li> <li>- Majority of the returnees are women and children</li> <li>- Government policy towards NGOs</li> <li>- Lack of appropriate agricultural techniques</li> <li>- Harmful traditions</li> <li>- Donor fatigue</li> <li>- High expectations of the government from NGOs and UN agencies</li> <li>- Lack of income generation activities</li> <li>- No livestock to complement crop production</li> <li>- Insecurity and crimes increase</li> </ul>

## 7. Recommendations

- 1- BNS Government to reveal government plan to be able to identify gaps
- 2- BNS Government to support and facilitate entry of more INGOs/NGOs to Blue Nile State
- 3- BNS Government to create strong security environment to enable UN/NGOs to establish bigger presence in the underdeveloped localities of Blue Nile State
- 4- BNS Government, UN agencies and NGOs to support (vulnerable) women, e.g. on income generation
- 5- BNS Government, UN agencies and NGOs to empower communities (cooperation)
- 6- BNS Government and UNOPS to improve road conditions
- 7- SMOH to preposition medical supplies
- 8- UNMIS to develop a policy for emergencies
- 9- UN agencies (UNIDO, UNDP, FAO, WFP) and NGOs to support livelihood and income generating projects
- 10- UN agencies to come up with exit strategy
- 11- FAO and NGOs to improve seeds and tools distribution criteria
- 12- RCSO to be temporarily based in Kurmuk
- 13- UNICEF to support MOE workshop on curriculum issues
- 14- To build capacity of Kurmuk locality (in a way that Kurmuk related issues are dealt with by relevant bodies on the ground, rather than from Damazine level)
- 15- To support SRRC technically and institutionally
- 16- To expand accessibility to basic services (transportation)
- 17- To establish task force for emergency response and preparedness (on local level) and develop TOR
- 18- To conduct comprehensive, standardized joint assessment and base line study
- 19- To use metrological data as early warning indicators
- 20- To maintain contact with the community leaders and share information
- 21- To improve information sharing among humanitarian actors
- 22- To conduct a central coordination meeting prior to the rainy season
- 23- To utilize more the RCSO Information Kiosk and RCSO Google Group

## Annex 1

### Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>9:00 – 9:20</b>	Opening Messages (Commissioner of Kurmuk, HAC/SRRC)	
<b>9:20 – 9:45</b>	Introduction, Methodology and Objectives (RCO)	
<b>9:45 – 10:45</b>	Kurmuk emergency 2008: Early Warning and Monitoring (working groups)	SWOT
<b>10:45 – 11:45</b>	Kurmuk emergency 2008: Assessments (working groups)	SWOT
<b>11:45 – 12:30</b>	Lunch	
<b>12:30 – 14:00</b>	Kurmuk emergency 2008: Response (working groups)	SWOT
<b>14:00 – 15:00</b>	Kurmuk situation in general: Basic Services and Livelihoods (working groups)	SWOT
<b>15:00 – 16:00</b>	Discussion, Summary (all participants)	Report including recommendations

## Annex 2

### List of Participants

No	Name	Organization
1-	Soenke Ziesche	RCSO/HERR
2-	Dr. Golam Rasul	WHO
3-	Dr. Hashim Dalil	WHO
4-	Rasul Kaliba	AHA
5-	Tajeldin Mohammed	AHA
6-	Ibrahim Abubakar	G.O
7-	Dr.Nabeel Abdalnabi	SMOH
8-	Ahmed Aba Alla Alnour	Kurmuk Locality
9-	Abdel Azim Mohamed Ahmed	IRC
10-	Dr. Zuhair Sir Elkhatim	UNICEF
11-	Farhat Jabeen	UNHCR
12-	Gasim Mohamed	SRRC/HAC
13-	Yuram Inna	Mercy Corps
14-	Ruger Kahwa	OCHA / Juba
15-	Shair Hamid	WES / Kurmuk
16-	Khadiga Agab	UNMIS/PoC
17-	Capt. Robert Ngabirano	UNMOS
18-	Capt. Aliek De Jong	UNPOL
19-	Comas Probous	UNPOL
20-	Omar Bojang	UNPOL
21-	Maduok Akot	WFP
22-	Yohannes Tesfai	WFP
23-	John Otto	WFP

24-	Abdul Aziz Salih	FPDO
25-	Aaron Wolcott	Samaritan's Purse
26-	Gideon Khamis	UNHCR
27-	Rabab Yousif	UNHCR
28-	Marion McGowan	GOAL
29-	Mella More Taban	GOAL
30-	Mohamed Elnour	PADCO
31-	Francis Shadrach	UNHCR
32-	Khalifa Abdel Rahim	SRRC/HAC
33-	Abdelati Mohamed	PADCO
34-	Sheeza Zafar	UNMIS / Civil Affairs
35-	Albadi Mohamed	MOE / Kurmuk
36-	Alawiyya Jamal	UNMIS/ HERR
37-	Nedal Musa	UNMIS / HERR
38-	Mohamed Ali Babiker	RCSO

## **Annex 3**

### **Sample from South Sudan - TOR Inter-agency Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force**

#### **Introduction**

In the backdrop of over two decades of civil war leading to destruction of infrastructure, systems and lack of basic services as well as complete absence of development, the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 9, 2005 was a landmark event. Notwithstanding the CPA, sizeable sections of the society continue to remain vulnerable to emergencies arising from drought, flooding, disease outbreaks, inter-clan/tribal fighting over resources, and the need to resettle and re-integrate large number of returnees. Lessons learnt from past chronic complex emergencies indicate that for the foreseeable future, the ability to carry out effective and timely emergency response will remain a priority area for the GoSS and its partner humanitarian agencies. However, the response capacity of the Government of South Sudan and humanitarian agencies is at varying degrees at central (Juba), state and County levels. This can be enhanced by scaling-up on emergency preparedness measures that are “real time” which could mitigate on the effects disasters on the vulnerable population.

During the period 2007/8 OCHA facilitated the development of Contingency Plans in Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Lakes, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Jonglei states with funding sourced from ECHO through Oxfam GB. One of the products from the consultative process was a general hazard profile for South Sudan in relation to humanitarian emergencies. The profile was shared with the UNCT on 1st August 2008 who endorsed the formation of the Inter-agency Emergency Preparedness & Response Task Force as proposed by OCHA. The Inter-agency EP&R Task Force will complement already existing coordination sectoral mechanisms/forums and liaise closely with key Government partners.

#### **Primary Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Inter-agency Emergency Preparedness & Response Task Force in South Sudan is to proactively put in place emergency preparedness measures, ensure a prompt, effective and concerted (South Sudan wide) emergency response by the UN system as well as IASC members in the event of a human-induced or natural disaster. The team is set up to ensure effective and efficient humanitarian coordination that is complementary to government efforts, as well as take steps to avoid wasteful duplication or competition for resources by humanitarian agencies.

## **Main objective of the group**

The key focus of this group lies on emergency preparedness and response in South Sudan by:

1. Conducting hazard mapping and profiling for all the 10 states in South Sudan.
2. Jointly carrying-out real-time risk and humanitarian consequence analysis that facilitate decision making by UNCT & IASC members,
3. Coming up with preparedness and response matrices based on likely scenarios (including inter-agency contingency planning), as well as advocate for pre-positioning of emergency stocks in high risk areas,
4. Developing/adapting, field testing and reviewing of inter-agency assessment tools, and
5. Organising post emergency evaluation to facilitate documentation of lessons learnt and share with UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, Government, Donors and the public.
6. Reporting of its information analysis and recommendations to the UNCT in a timely manner to facilitate a timely UN & IASC response.

## **Membership Composition**

The EP&R Task Force will be composed of nominated members drawn from UN agencies, NGOs, IASC members, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and representatives from public authorities.

## **Chairperson and Co-chairperson**

OCHA will chair this forum as well as provide secretarial support, while co-chairing will be on a rotational basis by all humanitarian agencies that will be part of EP&R Task Force.

## **Reporting line**

The EP&R task Force reports to the UNCT. This is a body that comprise of UN and IASC members that meets on a weekly basis. The EP&R Task Force acknowledges the mandates of different agencies and will not replace or supersede specific functions of organisations/agencies, but will seek to draw on the expertise from various institutions to enhance the emergency preparedness and response in South Sudan.

## **Frequency of meetings**

At the formation of the EP&R taskforce the group will meet on a weekly basis for one month, and there after reduce to monthly. However, at the height of emergencies the frequency of meetings may be increased to daily/weekly to facilitate rapid humanitarian coordination and response, as well as coming up with key information that can be shared with senior management.

### **Pre-Emergency function**

Engage in situation monitoring, humanitarian consequence analysis, development of contingency plans, “real time” preparedness plans, inter-agency preparedness matrices, response and operational plans.

### **During the Emergency**

Facilitate the conduct of inter-agency assessments; operationalise response plans; humanitarian coordination; advocacy; mobilisation of resources, provide updates to the UNCT for decision making.

### **Post Emergency Function**

Following a major emergency operation the EP&R Task Force will coordinate a participatory evaluation focusing on preparedness (including contingency plans), coordination, quality of response against international standards (SPHERE, humanitarian principles, OCHA IDP guidelines, IASC guidelines for response, etc) and document some lessons learnt.