OCHA INPUTS
INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S AID EFFECTIVENESS
2 February 2011

OCHA's Strategic fit: "Coordination Saves Lives"

OCHA plays a critical role in orchestrating the actions of hundreds of humanitarian organizations, donors and governments to ensure more timely, effective, equitable and low-cost delivery of humanitarian aid, most recently evident in the coordination of enormous operations in Haiti and Pakistan. The organization also ensures maximal impact of humanitarian aid across all sectors through more effective strategic planning, monitoring and assessment. OCHA coordinates humanitarian appeals at the country and global level. In 2010 alone, across the globe, OCHA provided the programmatic support required to allocate over $450 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and more than $360 million from the country-based pooled funds (Australia has contributed a total of US$58 million to the Fund since 2006, including a pledge of AUD 14 million (US$13.4 million) for 2011 and has a multi-year commitment with the CERF through 2013, with increases every year. This ensures predictability and sustainability). OCHA has also coordinated common humanitarian action plans and consolidated and flash appeals whose combined value in 2010 was more than $11 billion.

Geographic coverage:

OCHA Country Offices (COs) are established when the severity of humanitarian needs demands a level of international humanitarian assistance that is beyond the capacity of a government or of any one agency to coordinate. OCHA currently has COs in 22 countries. In new or ongoing operations where humanitarian needs spike, OCHA works to scale up quickly, as in Pakistan where OCHA doubled the number of international staff in two weeks to respond to the flooding affecting some 17 million people. OCHA also has five Regional Offices (ROs), which are chiefly used to support preparedness and surge response in new emergencies, where there is no CO. In each of its COs, OCHA works with partners to develop strategic humanitarian action plans. The OCHA-managed Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) selects a set of project proposals to present to donors on the basis of peer review within 'clusters' (groups of humanitarian organizations focusing on a certain sector, such as health) and further vetting by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). This enables donors to allocate resources among crises based on objective criteria and comparable information. Considering the extensive array of humanitarian partners, OCHA's role in managing and enhancing this unique system is irreplaceable.

Focus on delivery of results:

OCHA presses the international humanitarian system to deliver better results in part through its advocacy mandate. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and other senior humanitarian officials engage constantly in private and public advocacy on key issues of concern. Private advocacy is particularly important with governments of affected populations in conflict situations, for example on access. Public advocacy is delivered through intelligence briefings to the United Nations and other key humanitarian forums and through the distribution of information products such as ERC Key Messages. OCHA's strategic approach to advocacy is based on its comparative advantage of serving as a neutral coordinating body and as a nexus for information gathering, research and analysis.

Part of OCHA's role is to facilitate, on behalf of the humanitarian system, the monitoring of humanitarian goals and objectives against the results achieved in a specific crisis. The CAP mid-year review process for example reports on progress to date. Similarly, each new CAP contains a progress report vis-à-vis the previous year's goals. CAPs increasingly measure the effects of humanitarian action on fundamental humanitarian indicators, such as acute malnutrition rates and disease incidence. In this way, the OCHA-led system provides a strategic barometer on the direction and trend of a crisis.

At a global level, OCHA is leading discussions with inter-agency bodies on defining and evaluating humanitarian impact, a step seen as critical to understanding the ultimate results of collective humanitarian action. OCHA has managed and facilitated, with Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners, the development of a framework to allow coordination and financing mechanisms, such as clusters and pooled funds, to be evaluated against commonly agreed performance criteria. OCHA also helps lead Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluations. These evaluations are an IASC-mandated tool intended primarily for learning in emergency operations, with field-level inter-agency coordination and management at the core.

Low cost:

An external review of OCHA administrative functions, carried out in 2010, found that OCHA's administrative costs are appropriate and in line with other UN departments and agencies. OCHA's procurement is

limited to the purchase of items to support staff in HQ and the field and is conducted in accordance with the principle of "Best Value for Money", which aims to optimize whole-life costs and quality needed to meet requirements. OCHA's Rapid Deployment Stock allows for immediate mobilization of equipment at the onset of an emergency, serving as insurance against excessively high prices that often accompany an emergency. OCHA's budgeting process has been bolstered with the development of comprehensive guidelines resulting in more realistic and disciplined budgeting.

Partnership behaviour:

OCHA facilitates donor harmonization through a variety of means. It participates in HQ level donor fora such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative and the annual Montreux Retreat on policy issues, and at the field level through various ad hoc meetings. As mentioned earlier, the CAP is an ideal mechanism to coordinate donor contributions, all of which are tracked in real time through OCHA's online database of humanitarian funding figures, the Financial Tracking System. OCHA also strives to manage the pooled funds under its administration with exemplary donor behaviour. It allocates these funds quickly, strategically, and according to commonly agreed priorities.

The establishment of country-specific pooled funds has played an important role in decentralizing authority to the field, thereby providing maximum flexibility for a country-led approach. As the funds are unearmarked, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) manages the decision of allocations, supported by OCHA. This makes for neutral funds, free of varying donor policies and political interests. As a "one-stop" mechanism, pooled funds help harmonize donor interactions with various organizations and promote legal agreements with one entity – in this case OCHA. OCHA has continuously advocated for its humanitarian response partners to strengthen national response capacity, support national priorities, and complement rather than duplicate national coordination mechanisms for disaster preparedness and response.

To date, country-based pooled funds (Common Humanitarian Funds-CHFs, Emergency Response Funds-ERFs) have generated close to $1.8 billion in response to humanitarian needs in 20 countries (16 ERFs, 4 CHFs). These mechanisms are considered flexible and rapid source of funding that strengthen the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the coordination architecture. The un-earmarked nature of the funds allow the decisions to be made at the country level where needs are best known. This element of pooled funds has also attracted donors that are small in size and those that have limited capacity in a given country. Country-based pooled funds also complement the CERF as they provide direct access to NGOs. In 2010, Australia became a new donor to country-based pooled funds. Australia contributed US$422,000 to the ERF in Afghanistan and $1.8 million to the ERF in Pakistan. For the ERF in Pakistan, of the $32 million, over $17 million (over 50%) has been allocated to 59 projects in 2010. Majority of the projects (except 3) belong to NGOs. International and National NGOs have been almost equally funded: 30 projects for INGOs and 26 for NNGOs. An additional $6 million of projects is under review. Therefore the remaining some $11 million will be used when the inter-cluster strategic humanitarian planning is ready and for other "new/unforeseen" emergencies in 2011. For the ERF in Afghanistan, of the $6.3 million, over $4.1 million has been allocated to 15 projects in emergency shelter/NFI, protection and nutrition in the regions in 2010. International and National NGOs provided food and non-food items to populations affected by natural disasters and the ongoing conflict. ERF-supported emergency projects have reached over 38,000 individuals. The balance at the end of 2010 was $1.2 million. The amount that needs to be mobilized for operations in 2011 is $5 million.

OCHA plays a crucial role in coordinating emergency response. At the global level, OCHA chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and its Working Group, which is the decision-making forum for emergency directors of humanitarian operational agencies. At the country level, OCHA supports Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) in setting the strategic direction for emergency operations through their chairmanship of Humanitarian Country Teams. OCHA also provides inter-cluster coordination at the field level, ensuring coherence across sectors through aligning sector-strategic operational frameworks. OCHA also provides coordinated linkages with national actors and response plans so that the most pressing humanitarian needs are met without duplication of effort. OCHA manages databases concerning which agencies cover what and where (the '3W' data), and produces maps, contact information and Situation Reports that are an invaluable resource for agencies, donors and national authorities.

OCHA is also central to improving overall leadership in international humanitarian response. It works to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to manage and support mutually accountable humanitarian coordination leaders. OCHA brought the need for humanitarian leadership reform to the fore of the global agendas of IASC agencies, donors and the broader UN system. The result was that Humanitarian Coordination Competencies were developed; the Terms of Reference for HCs and Resident Coordinators (RCs) were revised; and a professional,

transparent and participatory system was developed for selecting candidates for RC/HC positions (and their deputies). At OCHA's initiative, an IASC HC Pool was established. It now includes 31 individuals who can lead humanitarian response. OCHA manages and facilitates RC and HC training on emergency preparedness, response and recovery, and has compiled an emergency handbook (to be published this year) that provides a concise checklist of key actions in an emergency. A professional performance appraisal system has been established - ERC/HC Compact and the humanitarian section of the RC/HC/DO Performance Appraisal System have been developed and rolled out. OCHA has actively engaged with UNDG on issues related to the RC system that have an impact on the humanitarian coordination function. As a result, expectations of IASC partners and donors of the humanitarian coordination leadership function are clear and aligned with each other; the pool of potential candidates is wider, allowing greater choice in selecting candidates; and these leaders are better equipped to perform humanitarian coordination functions and are more accountable.

Strategic/performance management:

OCHA's mandate is rooted in GA resolution 46/182 of 1991, in its support to the ERC. OCHA's leadership on issues such as IDP response, protection of civilians, CERF and the cluster approach are often cited as ways that OCHA has used its unique convening and coordinating role to enable the type of change required to keep the international humanitarian system fit for purpose.

OCHA has developed a results-based planning and reporting system centred on clearly defined corporate goals and objectives. The Strategic Framework 2010-13 focuses on promoting a more enabling environment for humanitarian affairs, while ensuring a more effective humanitarian coordination system. OCHA's performance reporting, as communicated through the Annual Report, presents achievements against each of these corporate objectives, both through analytical descriptions of programme highlights and through quantitative reporting of the performance framework. OCHA's results-based planning and monitoring facilitates a culture of continued learning, in which lessons from mid-year performance review help shape the following year's planning strategy and cycle. Clearly defined Policy Instructions provide corporate guidance to all staff on roles and responsibilities, including on Country Offices and issues such as preparedness, ensuring a basis for accountability in planning and reporting. Since 2002, OCHA has had a well-established evaluation function, recently expanded to include independent evaluations of OCHA activities. These evaluations build on regular results monitoring to provide a more in-depth review of critical areas. A new OCHA evaluation policy and strategy seeks to promote transparency and to make independent evaluation a routine practice within the organization.

Financial resources management:

OCHA receives between 40-46 per cent of its total extra-budgetary requirements as fully unearmarked. Allocations of unearmarked funds take place on a quarterly basis, and strictly on the basis of needs and funding shortfalls. OCHA's Annual Report is a primary source of reporting to donors on the organization's activities. OCHA has strived over the years to provide greater details on financial resource management. The Annual Report includes information on how OCHA is funded, and how and where it spends its funding in a given year. The report also shows the resources available to fund its mandated activities (including breakdown of OCHA's closing balance), provides visibility by ranking OCHA's donors on the basis of earmarked and unearmarked funding.

The OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) is an informal group of top donors supporting OCHA's work. OCHA has systematically utilized the ODSG as a key mechanism to discuss its budgetary requirements and overall issues pertaining to financial resource management. This has become a key priority for ODSG members and features on the ODSG agenda as a standing item. The ODSG High Level Annual Meeting is another opportunity to discuss OCHA's resources management at the highest level within OCHA. (See ODSG Chair's Summary 2010).

The mechanisms used for assessing compliance with financial regulations, rules and standards include monitoring the delegation of authority, and the implementation of oversight body recommendations and audits. The bodies responsible for assessing compliance include the Management Committee (composed of senior UN officials), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (internal investigation and audit), the Board of Auditors (external audit), the Joint Inspection Unit, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and the Department of Management. The Ethics Office is also mandated to provide protection to whistleblowers. OCHA has recently improved its management response to audits and evaluations by creating a database to systematically track the implementation of audit and evaluation recommendations. Better management of audits and evaluations enabled OCHA to improve its recommendation implementation rate, and strengthen engagement with auditors and evaluators throughout the entire audit/evaluation process.

OCHA's Financial Accounting System facilitates regular reporting and forecasting of OCHA's financial situation, informing senior management decision-making. Monthly budget performance reviews are prepared for

programme managers, contributing to sound financial management through systematic monitoring and expenditure review. Monthly reporting also allows for timely redeployment of funds from unused and under-used budget lines to under-budgeted lines. Financial and fund-raising analysis for COs and ROs enable targeted fund-raising for underfunded offices.

The UN Secretariat is implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning system that will facilitate compliance and predictability of business performance for the UN, in order to gain deeper financial insight across the organization and tighten the control of finances. The project will automate financial and management accounting and financial supply chain management. The system will provide rigorous support for accounting standards. The organization is targeting its first full set of financial statements to be compliant with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for 2014.

Partner country views:

OCHA's role in promoting principled humanitarian action and advancing the normative framework for humanitarian assistance is widely appreciated by Member States. This is demonstrated by the increased rapprochement between OCHA and the Group of 77 & China, who now consistently reach out to OCHA seeking policy advice. OCHA has also been repeatedly invited to G77 & China internal group deliberations to debrief on issues such as humanitarian leadership and needs assessments. The OCHA Donor Support Group brings together member states providing financial contributions to OCHA but also provides essential backing for international humanitarian assistance. It acknowledged at its most recent high level meeting the pivotal role of OCHA in today's international response system. It noted, in particular, the key coordination role played by OCHA in support of the international humanitarian response in Haiti. The response demonstrated the significant progress made as a result of the humanitarian reforms, for example the way the cluster system worked. The response also exposed weaknesses, such as fragmentation of efforts and inadequate integration of local capacity. It also recognised OCHA's efforts, particularly through OCHA Regional Offices, to work in partnership with key players including the affected state, regional bodies, and humanitarian and development partners to enhance humanitarian response preparedness.

Cross-cutting issues:

OCHA is responsible for promoting the integration of cross-cutting issues, including HIV/AIDS, gender, environment and age, throughout every sector of humanitarian response. The Gender Marker programme is a key component to OCHA's current strategy of promoting gender issues. The programme codes whether or not a humanitarian project has the capacity to ensure women, girls, men and boys will benefit equally, or whether it will advance gender equality in another way. This coding is used in the prioritization process and was successfully piloted over the last year in five countries. It is expected to be rolled out in all OCHA Country Offices in 2011.

Humanitarian access is another cross cutting issue that is a fundamental pre-requisite for effective humanitarian operations. In 2009, OCHA's analysis found that bureaucratic restrictions, violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets, and active hostilities were the most prevalent and severe patterns affecting access in contexts of armed conflict. Facilitating access is an explicit component of the ERC's mandate. OCHA's role to facilitate and coordinate efforts to address access constraints has long been prominent in oPt and Sudan, and is increasingly so in contexts such as Somalia, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Yemen. OCHA has developed an Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework, which is designed to facilitate monitoring of access trends and to maintain a repository of information on relevant policies.

OCHA's policy studies include investigation into possible impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations and fragile states, particularly those beset by unpredictable or volatile weather patterns in recent years. For this, OCHA has increased monitoring mechanisms to help support analysis at regional offices, and included climate change as a fundamental area of measurement in country appeals processes, contingency plans, early warning/early action reports, the Global Focus Model, and other coordination mechanisms. In addition, OCHA has actively participated in the UNFCCC discussions, with a particular emphasis on mitigation and adaptation, channelling inputs and information to the IASC. OCHA is working with partners to encourage post-Copenhagen procedures for climate change adaptation which will incorporate humanitarian concerns, including effective early-warning systems and community-based preparedness measures, alongside national contingency plans and pre-positioned supplies, which have repeatedly been shown to reduce the impacts of disasters on populations in affected countries.

AusAid-OCHA bilateral relationship:

OCHA views Australia as a vital partner. The relationship is governed by a Partnership Framework (PF), entered into force in January 2009 for a period of four years as well as regular consultations at the programme manager and senior level. AusAid recognizes OCHA as a mandated and effective coordinator for humanitarian

action, both within and beyond the United Nations. OCHA in turn greatly values its partnership with AusAid in helping to further its overarching goal of alleviating human suffering in disasters and emergencies. The shared objectives outlined in the PF are achieved by a commitment by AusAid to provide OCHA with an annual core financial contribution; strengthened engagement with OCHA in the Asia Pacific region; a commitment by AusAid to support the CERF; staff exchanges; and ongoing strategic engagement with OCHA through the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG). The able leadership of AusAid during its chairmanship of the ODSG in 2009-2010, resulted in significant progress against the ODSG workplan. AusAid has also been repeatedly praised for its Good Humanitarian Donor Principles in providing early, flexible and predictable funding to OCHA. Australia has been steadily increasing its overall contributions to OCHA. It was ranked as the 6th donor to OCHA in 2010 vs. 9th in 2009.

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