



16 June 17

COUNTRY DIRECTORS' WEEKLY UPDATE

1. Key Meeting Takeaways.

- Humanitarian Country Team meeting next week will consider Steering Committee (SC) input into how to incorporate NGOs' engagement before HCT takes a position in the Consequences Position Paper next week.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will be visiting South Sudan this weekend. The NGO SCs members are invited to attend a meeting with him tomorrow afternoon from 16:20-17:05. Other planned meetings include: meeting with national and international non-HCT organisations at 15:50--16:15; and with donors, 17:05-1750. If you have any issue that you would like an SC to bring up and you are not attending any of the meetings being organised by UNHCR, please let a member know.
- The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Report is expected to be released by the National Bureau of Statistics some time next week.
- NGO Forum Facilitated Dialogue will take place either on June 28, 2017 or July 5, 2017. A suitable date will be agreed next week. The purpose of the Facilitated Dialogue is to clarify roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat, Steering Committees, the Host Agency, and Donors as well as to establish a code of conduct between NGO Forum key stakeholders.

2. Bureaucratic Impediments.

- Latest developments:

Issues raised with RRC this week about which the Secretariat will seek some feedback next week:

- On cash thresholds for which NGOs need RRC letter, there is no agreed thresholds for the amount of cash for which RRC letter is required. RRC will have internal discussions about this.
- On CID not honoring RRC letter when it comes to carrying cash to the fields, it is still an ongoing issue. RRC is aware. They intend to station a staff who is a security personnel at the Airport to address this issue. The person is not yet there operationally.
- On the issue of Press Pass that NGOs are being asked to obtain in order to take pictures or videos of their own work in the field, we request members to share a copy of any formal communications that they have received for further follow up by the Secretariat. Currently the Secretariat or any Steering Committee member has not received a formal request for a Press Pass.
- On PIT for experts the Secretariat made the following observations to RRC to bear in mind and on which RRC would make follow up with the Ministry of Finance: a) NGOs are not against the directive circular that the Ministry sent out; b) any back payments would be impossible for a number of NGOs to meet and this would disrupt operations and services to vulnerable populations; c) PIT payments should be made for staff staying 6 or more months; d) PIT cannot be paid by experts who are paid by USAID

funds as this is a global USAID policy; e) PIT payment compliance could be implemented from the month of June 2017 going forward as the letter from the Ministry of Finance was written at the end of May 2017 though this will still pose a problem for NGOs; and e) there are some countries that have taxation agreement with South Sudan which means that their nationals may opt to pay tax in their own home country. They need to be clear on the list of countries with taxation agreement with South Sudan.

- On PIT at state level, RRC said that it is illegal. We have the cases of: Bentiu, Kapoeta and NBeG. The NGO Forum has requested for a formal letter or circular that the Secretariat can share with members.

- **Trending Bureaucratic Impediments:**

- Registration Fee and Work Permit.

- HLOC of last week postponed and no certainty when it will be rescheduled. NGOs are concerned about the \$US 3500 will be repaid. There is no formal circular rescinding or reversing the registration fee to date. In the absence of High Level Oversight Committee (HLOC) meeting and written directive or circular thus far, NGO Forum is not able to advise members whether the fee should be paid or not paid. The HLOC, on which the Forum is represented, is the decision making body that is to provide guidance on this matter. However, HLOC which should have met last week, did not meet this week. It is not clear if HLOC will meet next week as key personalities may not be present. We are aware that NGOs face the dilemma of balancing this fee vs. closing down their entire operation as they take organizational decisions in regard to the fee. We understand that in the present circumstance, NGO decisions to pay the fees are being made at headquarters' level. In the meantime, the matter of new registration fee has been raised at very senior levels within government.
- NGOs that receive US Government bilateral funds from US Embassy will have or should be receiving a formal letter asking them not to pay the fee using US Government funds as a matter of policy. This is not to say that US Embassy in South Sudan does not recognize the situation in which NGOs find themselves.

- Changing of number plates for NGO vehicles in Juba and in the states.

- The NGO Forum Secretariat met with the Chief Registrar and Head of Database Licensing at the Police Traffic Headquarters requesting that NGOs be given 2 months grace period till end of August for changing number plates, if NGOs could have a dedicated person to help NGOs with changing number plates, what the fee is to change number plates, and where NGOs will go. The outcome of the meeting include the following: time extension for NGOs till end of July instead of end of August as the Secretariat requested and the Secretariat can discuss the option of additional extension after if required; USD 200 for the whole process of changing number plates; NGOs will be given forms for assessing their vehicles in the states; Tumbra (Traffic Headquarters) is where NGOs will need to go and a police officer who is a Licensing Assistant has been assigned to help NGOs (His details are: Kuot John Ring reachable on 0954265626 and 0911613319). Instructions have been given to traffic officers not to disturb NGO vehicles in the meantime. Any additional steer or guidance following SC meeting Tuesday next week will be communicated to members.

3. Security.

- Currently there are 35 INGOs which have provided Baseline Data Matrix details to the SFP.
- Discussions continue with the UN about the permission of national staff members to enter

UN bases in times of crisis. Options to be presented to the SRSG by the end of June.

- 'Localised' fighting is expected to continue across the country as witnessed last week in Upper Nile and Torit, Eastern Equatoria.
- Expect a gradual rise in warehouse / compound break-ins country-wide as people become more desperate for food.
- The threat of ambushes and robberies on road movement remains high.

4. Information / communications.

- The SFP will issue details regarding a reorganisation of Security Skype Groups - at present they are not well controlled and there are unknown persons as members, which restricts information sharing. Country Director support for this initiative is appreciated.
- A new interactive website will be launched in mid-July. It will have a clean uncluttered design, improved functionality and enhanced rich content focused on improving the user experience.

5. Training.

- Forum training opportunities:
 - NGO Forum and Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF) training on Conflict Sensitivity will take place at the Secretariat on June 28. NGO Forum members and some donors will attend this training. NGO Forum Secretariat is in consultation with CSRF on how to make this training available to members on a regular basis.
- Security training:
 - Juba relocation / evacuation exercises to be held on 21 and 28 June and 5 and 12 July.
 - Four female NGO staff attended UNDSS Women's Safety Awareness Training 15-16 June in UNMISS Tamping.
 - Security Focal Point is collecting a database of training providers. If you have any experience with an external agency please forward for inclusion.

6. Secretariat Staff Issues / Movements.

- A new Deputy Security Focal Point will join the Secretariat on Wed 28 June.

7. Forward Look.

- Key events / meetings next week
 - Next SC meeting is on Tuesday next. In case of any issues of concern please let the SC members know.
- CD meetings:
 - Next week the Secretariat will discuss with the UN Technical lead on the 3-year Gender Based Violence UN Joint Programming especially on how they can work with NGOs. The Secretariat hopes to invite them to make a short presentation at the next CDG meeting.
 - We ask more members to consider nominating themselves to the SC through self-nomination forms shared so that they are voted on at the next CDG meeting.

Pius Ojara
NGO Forum Secretariat Director