

10 September 2017

COUNTRY DIRECTORS' WEEKLY UPDATE

1. Key Meeting Takeaways.

★ **HCT** - The key takeaways from the HCT meeting on 7th September were;

- So far 30 aid workers have been reported to have been impeded from travelling at JIA due to a lack of work permits.
- HCT agreed to convene a forum along with RRC and CDs where a resolution on the work permit issue can be reached since there wasn't an opportunity to do so during the Humanitarian Coordination Forum meeting with government.
- NGO secretariat will generate a position paper highlighting the work permit related cases, the impact it has had on programming and some key recommendations which will be shared with OCHA for comments and then used to inform the work permit discussion with RRC led by the Canadian ambassador and Mahimbo Mdoe.
- **UNGA - High level side event on South Sudan update** - co-hosted by OCHA New York and the government of Norway this high level event will take place on 20th september in New York during the UN General Assembly week and aim to mobilise member states to assume greater responsibility for addressing the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan where more than 7.5 million people - over half of the population are in need of humanitarian assistance driven by continued violence. The event will convene UN member states, international actors and humanitarian organisations to (1) draw international attention to the scope and scale of the humanitarian crisis and the horrific attacks on civilians including sexual and gender based violence against women and girls, (2) bring attention to the growing regional impact of the crisis, (3) call upon member states to take action to end impunity for violence against civilians and aid workers, and (4) mobilize support for an inclusive political solution to end the fighting and to commit sufficient financial support for life saving humanitarian actions. introductory remarks will be made by the first vice president of GoSS HE. Taban Deng Gai and the panel will include foreign minister of Norway, H.E. Mr Borge Brende, Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. Mr Mousa Faki, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Mr. Christos Stylianides, President of ICRC, Mr. Peter Maurer and Oxfam America Executive Director Abby Maxman.
- **UNGA Advocacy** - OCHA will be working with the SRSG's office to prepare a brief that will contribute to the statement on south Sudan on the UNGA focusing the the targeting of aid workers, creating a conducive environment for delivery of humanitarian assistance. meanwhile in Juba, OCHA will draft a demarche for the diplomatic community to convey the same message as well as a note verbale to the permanent mission of South Sudan to the UN in New York.
- In Order to generate a consolidated list of humanitarian workers in POCs, RRP humanitarian workers and UNPOL have began scanning all ID cards of humanitarian

workers working in the POCs, the exercise will last 3 weeks after which persons whose IDs have not been scanned will not be allowed to access the POC.

- ★ **Humanitarian Coordination Forum meeting** - The meeting took place on 6th september, at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management. This meeting brings together Government agencies, UN and NGOs to discuss humanitarian issues. The NGO Forum has 3 seats at this forum. Some key highlights include;
- **PIT** - A representative from the Ministry of Finance provided guidance on the PIT circular concerning paying at state level vs paying centrally. He stated that wherever the employee is physically working is where the PIT should be paid. So if staff are in Juba then the PIT is paid centrally but if the staff are located in Imatong then the PIT should be paid in Imatong and so on and so forth.
- The NGO representatives raised the issue of needing additional clarity on administrative issues such as the need for state level Tax Identification Numbers for each state that NGOs are now expected to pay PIT to, as well as what will be the tax clearance process at the state level and how will it tie into the tax clearance process at the national level. No sufficient answers were provided on either of these issues.
- **Travel delays at JIA related to work permits** - The Ministry of Labour acknowledged delays in timely processing of work permits due to lack of resources such as fuel. RRC advised that NGOs should channel their work permit processing through the RRC in which case RRC would follow up with the Ministry of Labour on behalf of NGOs.
- **RRC circular regarding work permit related delays at JIA** - The NGOs raised a point on the administrative burden that would be created for both RRC and the NGOs in processing letters for each NGO staff with delayed work permits traveling through JIA, this was not received very well by the RRC
- **Old state names Vs new state names** - NGOs and UN were cautioned by the government about continued use of the former 10 states as opposed to the new state names in their operations. This was further debated and it was agreed that since the boundaries of the new states have not been finalised and also it is not clear at the moment if more states will be created, NGOs and UN should refer to the states under the greater upper Nile, greater equatoria and greater Bahr el Ghazal classifications.

(Attached: Remarks from undersecretary of the ministry of humanitarian affairs and disaster management at the Humanitarian coordination Forum)

- ★ **RRC meeting with NGOs 7th September** -
 - **Travel delays related to work permits** - The RRC emphasised that the National security (NS) officials at the airport are mandated to make sure that all persons (particularly aid workers) traveling through JIA have the right complete documents and delays at the airport were a result of the NS verification exercise. This was triggered by the recently deceased American journalist who was killed in Kaya and the mystery related to his mission in South Sudan
 - The RRC advised that all NGOs with staff whose work permits are delayed at the Ministry of Labour should get a letter from RRC which will be a temporary solution to enable them travel through JIA. The RRC promised to get a final solution by the end of the week
 - **Number Plates** - RRC announced that they will circulate a directive from the ministry of interior that will help address the problem of traffic officers stopping NGO vehicles **(See attached)**
 - NGOs who experience challenges at the JIA are advised to present their challenges directly to the managing director of JIA (Mr Kilokilo) or any of the contacts below;
1. RRC focal point person at Airport - Tedeo Luka telephone 0955750059

2. Director of NSS at airport Mayor Abdun tel: 0925002778
 - The NS director clarified that they don't request for work permits for persons in south Sudan for short visits e.g. auditors however they do require proof from the NGO that the traveller is in South Sudan on a specific short term mission.
 - RRC noted that they will continue to work with NGO Forum and circulate any information through the NGO forum
 - RRC made a note of USA funded NGOs who continue to undermine the RRC and hide behind their funder. The registrar general made a specific note of AECOM and declared that the RRC will not be renewing AECOM's registration.

★ SSHF Advisory Board meeting 6th September

- One of the outstanding action points from the last SSHF meeting was the organization of a field visit for the advisory board – Aweil was suggested but it has proved very difficult to agree/confirm dates – so it is likely that this might not happen. That said, if anyone wants to visit the projects SSHF will facilitate.
- FAO, IOM and WFP reported some looting/loss of items over the last qtr. No reports of this nature were received from NGOs. DFID asked if this was due to lack of reporting or lack of occurrence of such issues.
- As part of the prioritization process SSHF has encouraged the clusters to improve the level of integration in planning. The full SSHF allocation process takes on average 6 weeks and the extra couple of days to encourage integrated planning is felt to be a valid use of time.
- NNGOs share of the SSHF is now 31% (INGOs: 30%; UN 39%). A lot of training and support has been provided to the NNGOs to help facilitate access to the funding and this support will continue.
- Audits for 2016 are complete; when asked about the approach to audit for smaller /newer NNGOs – at the moment they are subject to the same process as all actors; training is provided to help NNGOs prepare for audit and this will continue.
- Currently there is a balance of USD 5.4 million; this might increase to around USD \$10 million of expected funds come through and possibly the balance could get to USD \$25million. The board agreed to wait until mid October (the IPC results are expected first week) and by then there might be a bigger balance available. If that is the case a new call will be issued.
- In the monitoring and reporting process – it was observed that CMAM nutrition interventions are often not of good quality – the cluster has been informed about this and is reviewing the issue.
- DFID asked that a sample of the monitoring reports be made available – this is possible and will be done.
- WFP asked if the monitoring strategy is available and OFDA suggested that there might be an opportunity for align the SSHF monitoring and more general donor monitoring.

2. Bureaucratic Impediments.

- ★ **Number Plates** - The circulars from the ministry of interior were circulated this week and have been attached here below once again for anyone who may have missed it.
- ★ **PIT** - Updates on this issue have been covered under the meeting takeaways above.

3. Security. A generally quieter week.

The key risks to NGOs operating across South Sudan include (not in any priority):

- ★ Fighting can be expected to continue between SPLA and SPLA-IO at any time.
- ★ Cattle raiding and inter-communal fighting is prevalent - NGOs are not a direct target, but should take extra precautions.
- ★ Crime is prevalent in Juba - national staff in particular can be targeted.
- ★ Continued warehouse / compound break-ins country-wide as people become more desperate for food and possibly fuel.
- ★ The general threat of ambushes and robberies on road movement remains high - in all areas.

Highlights

Koch, Unity: due to insecurity and fighting in the Koch area, approx 40 NGO staff relocated 6-8 Sep. 33 personnel moved by vehicle towards Bentiu, but suffered from poor road conditions and had to stay out overnight 6/7 Sep. Eight staff walked away from Koch towards Rier, but had to stop in a village about 10km northeast of Koch in the evening. UNHAS successfully executed a helicopter relocation from Rumbek on the morning 8 Sep.

The Weekly Security Brief will be held at 1330 on Fridays - **commencing 6 October**.

4. Information / communications.

- The document portal is being re-organized for better accessibility of circulars, government acts and other documents. Please review the repository here <http://docs.southsudannngoforum.org/> and give your comments/feedback.
- Updated list of all CD contacts can be found here <http://southsudannngoforum.org/contacts/>

5. Training.

- **Security training:** none advertised at present.

6. Secretariat Staff Issues / Movements.

- The Deputy SFP will return from leave on 17 Sep.
- Secretariat Director will return from leave on 11 Sep.

7. Forward Look.

- CD survey findings will not be included in the agenda of the AGM because there isn't sufficient time to conduct a CD survey ahead of the AGM, however once the CD survey is done, the report shall be shared with the entire membership before offices close in December. The findings of the CD survey will also be included in the NGO Forum Annual report.
- CD Survey – A third party will carry out the CD survey as proposed by the former information manager citing better methodology and analysis. One of our donors had also questioned the objectivity of the survey findings considering it's always been led by the secretariat.
- NGO Forum security cell is working on a guidebook for NGOs that will act as a guidance document for humanitarian safety in the context. First draft that will be shared with NGO security staff in the next couple of weeks to allow for feedback and input into the process

before a final draft is released.

- Every Thursday at 13:15 hours, HCT representatives for the NGOs hold a pre-meeting to which all NGOs are welcome. Come and make your voices and concerns heard.
- Elections for Steering Committee members for the period October 2017 to September 2018 will be held on 6th October. All positions except for Host Agency will be up for elections. We continue to receive self-nominations from members, including from current Steering Committee members.
- Next Annual General meeting will be on 6th October 2017
- Next South Sudan National NGO expo will be from 26th to 28th october 2017

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