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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAO/WFP JOINT EVALUATION OF FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER COORDINATION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (2009–2014)



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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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BACKGROUND

1. This document presents management's response to the recommendations of the FAO/WFP joint evaluation of food security cluster coordination in humanitarian action (2009–2014). The response was prepared jointly by – WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – and the Global Support Team (GST) of the food security cluster.
2. Management is pleased to note that – overall – coordination at the country and local levels was found to have a positive effect on participating organizations, creating benefits for the organizations and increasing the coverage of humanitarian services. Assessed coordination mechanisms were found to have made consistent, positive contributions by facilitating networking, building trust, reducing duplication, strengthening reporting and, in some cases, setting and disseminating standards.
3. The evaluation also identified constraints that prevent coordination mechanisms from reaching their full potential. These are linked mainly to lack of clarity regarding operational priorities; limited inclusion and participation of governments and national and local organizations; diverse levels of commitment and capacity of the lead agencies; inconsistent donor commitment and support for food security coordination; and unclear roles and responsibilities.
4. Management generally agrees with the findings and recommendations of the summary evaluation report, noting that further dialogue between the lead agencies and across the cluster system will be needed to define responsibilities and implementation modalities. Several of the recommendations are addressed in the global food security cluster (FSC) work plan for 2015–2016.
5. The following matrix sets out the planned actions and implementation timelines.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAO/WFP JOINT EVALUATION OF FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER COORDINATION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 1: Advocate with and support the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in revising standard system requirements to make them less time-consuming and more operationally focused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide the IASC principals and IASC working groups with feedback on experience of the coordination protocols for Level 3 emergencies, and help to make these protocols lighter, more realistic and more focused on operational benefits. ➤ Advocate with the IASC for revising the standard requirements for non-Level 3 emergencies. 	<p>FAO and WFP senior management and emergency directors</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>Analysis will be needed to identify the protocols that need to be lighter.</p> <p>The global FSC and lead agencies coordinate with relevant IASC fora, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other global clusters. Following a review of the humanitarian programming cycle and implementation of the Transformative Agenda in 2013/14, IASC protocols were updated to include guidance on strategic response planning and the cluster coordination reference module for improving effectiveness and operational relevance. The protocols may be revised again following a system-wide review of lessons learned in Level 3 emergencies.</p> <p>The FSC's experiences in responding, including to Level 3 emergencies, informed the humanitarian review process; lessons learned will continue to improve effectiveness. The lead agencies are advocating for improved coordination and protocols at the policy level through their representatives on the senior team for implementation of the Transformative Agenda and related fora.</p>	<p>End 2014</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Enhance mentoring for and capacities of coordination teams in focusing on operationally relevant activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that coordination activities are based on demand, adopt a participatory approach, use adequate formats and have a clear agenda and purpose. ➤ Strengthen activities related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ analysis and use of data, including needs assessment and analysis, response analysis, gap analysis and filling gaps; ◇ the normative role of food security coordination mechanisms, such as in setting standards, preparing guidelines, training and defining common approaches; ◇ mutual/joint learning; and ◇ facilitation of networking/trust-building. ➤ Enhance mentoring and guidance for coordination teams at the country and local levels to help them cope with system-wide demands and focus on operationally relevant issues. 	<p>Coordination teams GST</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>However, while activities should be demand-based, coordination must also produce deliverables in line with the IASC cluster coordination reference module. To enhance coordination capacities, the lead agencies and the GST will increase awareness of the cluster across agencies' units/departments, regional and country offices and the donor community.</p> <p>The lead agencies will strengthen data analysis and needs assessment using tools such as the Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification. Roll-out of the new FSC information management tool aims to improve needs-based strategic response planning, implementation and resource mobilization. The global FSC has established a working group to facilitate access to and understanding of assessment and response analysis tools and to share best practices for food security and livelihoods responses that are more relevant, of better quality and more timely:</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>





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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learning tools developed by the cluster, such as the e-learning module and the training of cluster coordinators, will help to clarify the cluster's role to stakeholders. ➤ Joint learning is supported by regular consultations across the global FSC and lead agencies. Experiences and approaches will be shared via frequent inter-actions with coordinators and information managers. Biannual meetings and regular contacts with the cluster's global partners increase outreach, facilitate learning and boost networking. ➤ Support for cluster coordination teams will include briefing kits and backstopping from the GST, subject to the availability of capacity and resources. The lead agencies provide analytical and programme support to the FSC as necessary. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Enhance the GST's capacity and improve the preparation of deployed teams to strengthen coordination capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance the GST's capacity and ability to mentor country coordination teams and deploy its team members to emergencies, by advocating for donor funding, dedicating lead agency core resources and mobilizing secondments from partner organizations. ➤ Systematically provide newly deployed teams with briefings and a starter kit for food security coordination. ➤ Reduce general training and strengthen mentoring, coaching and targeted training. ➤ Develop a stronger human resource strategy for food security coordinators and information managers. ➤ Deploy coordination team members for longer periods and increase the involvement of national staff members in coordination. ➤ Strengthen learning among coordination teams. 	<p>Lead agencies GST WFP and FAO human resources departments</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The lead agencies are already implementing most of the actions listed. A major challenge in strengthening coordination capacities is the unpredictability of funding at both the global and country office levels, which has significant impacts on capacity development and staff deployments.</p> <p>While agencies have mainstreamed cluster activities to cover 50 percent of GST annual costs, and in spite of advocacy, donor support to the GST remains limited. To enhance human resources for the cluster, in 2014, the lead agencies increased their staff's participation in cluster coordinator training and engaged the global FSC, as appropriate, in emergencies in the regions where they were operational. This will widen the pool of human resources for deployment in the FSC, reducing the reliance on consultants.</p> <p>FSC briefing kits are available online. The GST has introduced more systematic briefing of deployed staff.</p> <p>In 2014, the GST launched new training for cluster coordinators in Level 3 emergencies; new training for information managers is starting. The GST will enhance mentoring and coaching, subject to the availability of capacity and resources.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Two training courses in 2014; one in 2015 End of 2014</p>



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		<p>This more strategic approach to FSC human resources and coordination aims to develop a roster of qualified cluster coordinators and information managers supplemented by global and standby partners for surge deployments and staff secondments. The lead agencies provide support through existing standby partnership arrangements and engagement of new partners.</p> <p>The GST supports learning among FSC teams through working groups, training, lessons learned reviews and other mechanisms.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Enhance nationally led coordination mechanisms and/or increase the involvement of government actors in food security coordination mechanisms to enhance national ownership and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthen the role of FSCs and lead agencies in preparedness, including informal assessments of government capacity and scenarios for scaling up coordination support. ➤ Use existing contacts between the lead agencies and government offices more effectively to facilitate links with the food security coordination mechanism. ➤ Engage in transition and exit planning early, regularly review coordination arrangements, and include capacity development activities for national institutions where necessary. ➤ In cooperation with humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams, strengthen links with development actors and their activities, especially for capacity development. 	<p>FAO and WFP country and regional offices</p> <p>Coordination teams</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The lead agencies are engaged in preparedness activities in line with the IASC's emergency response preparedness approach, and will seek to strengthen the FSC's role.</p> <p>The country offices of lead agencies collaborate with the FSC, involving it in preparedness activities at the country, regional and global levels. They will facilitate relationships between cluster members and government counterparts to ensure that governments understand the role of the cluster and are able to assume that role where conditions allow.</p> <p>IASC guidance on transition and early recovery approaches will be incorporated into capacity development. Longer-term capacity development requirements will be addressed in agencies' country programmes. Capacity development activities face funding constraints. The lead agencies will provide support during the transition from humanitarian clusters to nationally led coordination mechanisms.</p> <p>The lead agencies participate in humanitarian and United Nations country teams, advocating for stronger linkages between humanitarian and development actors.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5: Engage national and local civil society organizations and non-traditional humanitarian actors more closely in food security coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthen outreach to non-traditional humanitarian actors at the headquarters and regional levels. ➤ Use the existing contacts of lead agencies and coordination mechanism members with civil society and non-traditional humanitarian actors more effectively. ➤ Adopt a more field-based, bottom-up approach to coordination, to identify relevant actors. ➤ Offer concrete, demand-based benefits to local civil society organizations and non-traditional humanitarian actors, and ask them for specific inputs or contributions. ➤ Adapt coordination formats and communication channels to the needs and preferences of local civil society and non-traditional actors. 	<p>WFP and FAO partnership/ donor relations branches</p> <p>WFP and FAO regional offices</p> <p>Coordination teams</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Efforts to increase collaboration with non-traditional humanitarian actors should be focused and in line with international humanitarian law and principles.</p> <p>The lead agencies will involve their partnership/resource mobilization units and liaison offices in expanding outreach to non-traditional actors.</p> <p>Country FSCs are exploring country-level coordination mechanisms that take into account the needs of subnational and inter-cluster coordination.</p> <p>The global FSC and lead agencies provide country clusters with tools and guidance for people-centred approaches and programming that address vulnerabilities and needs related to gender, protection, age, disability and accountability to affected populations across all stages of the emergency response.</p>	<p>End of 2015</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>





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<p>Recommendation 6: Take action to ensure more consistent commitment and capacity of lead agencies in supporting food security coordination, and advocate for enhanced donor commitment to food security coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase efforts to ensure that the regional and country offices of the lead agencies take responsibility for ensuring that adequate human resources are available for coordination and for adopting a coordinated approach in their own operations, for example by including these aspects more clearly in performance appraisals and including coordination in the agendas of regional and global retreats. ➤ Enhance FAO's country and field presence in emergencies, including by developing or improving advance financing facilities where necessary. ➤ Advocate with donors to give more consideration in their decision-making to the analyses, priorities and standards developed by food security coordination mechanisms. ➤ Advocate with donors to provide financial support to food security coordination teams, flexible coordination solutions and coordination activities where required. ➤ Develop standard scenarios of coordination costs in different contexts. 	<p>Senior management of the lead agencies Regional and country office directors GST</p>	<p>Agreed. The following actions are subject to funding availability. The lead agencies will increase the awareness of country and regional offices regarding responsibilities for cluster coordination and the related needs – resources, personnel, advocacy, communication, etc. Cluster performance is now included in performance appraisal mechanisms. FAO has strengthened its emergency capacity by decentralizing operations to field offices and issuing a Director-General's bulletin on Level 3 emergencies, which clarifies responsibilities, surge capacity and financing. The Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities is frequently used to support priority cluster activities. The lead agencies are advocating for donor support, and developing strategic approaches to resource mobilization with the GST. The lead agencies are working to ensure the availability of sufficient coordination staff – in cluster coordination, subnational cluster coordination, information management, reporting and Geographic Information Systems – based on identified needs and the scale of the response. FSC standard operating procedures will include coordination cost scenarios.</p>	<p>Ongoing Completed Ongoing Ongoing March 2015</p>

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<p>Recommendation 7: Work with the IASC, OCHA and other clusters to clarify roles and responsibilities in the coordination architecture, and promote more efficient coordination arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop models for linking sector- and area-based coordination mechanisms, such as activation of clusters at the national level, a small number of merged clusters at the hub level, and integrated, area-based coordination at the local level. ➤ Continue to strengthen links between food security and nutrition coordination mechanisms, and with other clusters such as those for health and for water, sanitation and hygiene, and ensure that the information management tools of different clusters are compatible, such as the 4Ws matrix. ➤ Allocate responsibilities for coordinating livelihood activities and cash and voucher programming under different scenarios. ➤ Strengthen compliance with guidance on early recovery as a cross-cutting issue. 	<p>WFP and FAO IASC Principals Emergency directors GST</p>	<p>Agreed. IASC emergency directors are exploring more structured approaches to inter-cluster coordination, including regular global meetings, if feasible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The global FSC is exploring context-specific cluster coordination models and arrangements. ➤ Inter-cluster coordination is being enhanced, particularly with the nutrition, health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) clusters, and country practices are being reviewed, such as in South Sudan. The new FSC information management tool developed with OCHA and other clusters takes into account the need for data compatibility and other reporting issues. ➤ Responsibilities for livelihood activities and cash and voucher programming are context-specific and should be considered not only within the FSC but also among clusters. ➤ The global FSC and lead agencies are coordinating with the global early recovery cluster to implement the IASC Principals' recommendations for strengthening early recovery and coordination mechanisms. Both lead agencies are members of the strategic advisory board of the global early recovery cluster and support the mainstreaming of compliance with IASC guidance into cluster activities. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSC	food security cluster
GST	Global Support Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs