

# CONSOLIDATED COMMENTS ON THE “ZERO DRAFT” OF THE SYNTHESIS REPORT OF THE CLUSTER APPROACH EVALUATION PHASE II

**Date:** 30 March 2010

## **Process:**

- From 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March, Global Cluster Leads, the IASC organizations, as well as the Cluster 2 Evaluation Steering Group (CE2StG) were invited to provide OCHA with consolidated comments. All comments received were forwarded by the Evaluation and Guidance Section (EGS) to the consultants of the evaluation – the GPPI&U.R.D. All stakeholders were informed well in advance of the process. In addition, all stakeholders were also invited to a workshop on the recommendations on 11<sup>th</sup> March, during which the consultants company presented the main findings and recommendations and discussed the feasibility of the recommendations .
- Based on the 11<sup>th</sup> March workshop and the comments received during the period from 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March, the consultants presented the CE2StG and OCHA EGS with a revised version and turned the “zero draft” into a draft, which has been shared with all stakeholders. The consolidated comments in the current matrix are therefore only comments for the “zero draft”.
- OCHA EGS has consolidated all incoming comments into a matrix and included the ‘reaction and comments’ from the consultants. The comments from the consultants are all stated in the current matrix. In addition, all comments provided are also “unconsolidated” accessible via the following link and include also the reactions from the consultants: <http://ocha.unog.ch/ochafupload/upload.aspx?publicID=u300310084817kGhfCrBv0U>

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CONSOLIDATED COMMENTS	REACTION FROM GPPI & URD
<b>BELGIUM (19.03.2010)</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In general: Good report, sound recommendations.</li> <li>2. p63: A better inclusiveness of NGO's and local NGO's is very important. It is the added value of the cluster! It doesn't mean that per definition this slows down the process, since it is essential to find the right appropriate timing to include more and more actors. E.g. after trying to include most NGO-actors from the start of a crises, we can imagine that other actors have to wait a little while to be included until the timing and workload permits. It is important to be "as inclusive as possible" "as soon as possible", and not to reject inclusiveness per sé because of rapidness. This said, inclusiveness of NGO's has also a downside since the track record of NGOs, local and international, in transferring ownership to local institutions (official or civil society) is overall not at all better than the record of the UN on its own. So inclusiveness of NGOs seems to me not a valid <i>goal</i>, if the objective is humanitarian aid. (cfr Paul Collier in Foreign Policy on Haiti). It is however a <i>tool</i> to reach the goal of a better coverage of humanitarian assistance. The system should strive to accountability based on results and indicators, and this can be based on standards discussed in an inclusive discussion. In the end, on the long term, it is the civil society and not the NGO's that should be included / take over.</li> <li>3. p.63: Donors can be involved in some/most cluster meetings, to be decided case by case. It is overstated that donors never can participate, since it seems to work quite well in DRC.</li> <li>4. Leadership of clusters should be reinforced with the necessary power and accountability. Strengthening leadership means giving the power to select partners and to exclude some. It also means the power to allocate funds. Otherwise it is just empty talk. This means we should chose for one of both options: clusters become a centre for accountable delivery, or clusters are an all inclusive coordination centre.</li> <li>5. p9, left column, finding in bullet 9 (conflict of interest) is missing a recommendation in the right column. Furthermore, we believe this to be a very important finding.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no comment</li> <li>2. Agreed – amended. Agreed, though we understand national and local NGOs as civil society.</li> <li>3. Agree – adapted text to make clearer that clusters should have flexibility to include donors when they want.</li> <li>4. In our opinion, option 1 (control/accountability) is neither very realistic (since cluster leads do not hold any real power), nor desirable, as most other humanitarian actors would refuse participation and many benefits can be achieved through voluntary coordination.</li> <li>5. Rec. 5 now includes “Improve the governance and enhance the transparency of financial transactions linked to clusters.”</li> </ol>

<p>6. Recommendation 5 (link with clusters and financing): the Belgian representative worked in the 10 March Geneva workshop on this recommendation, in order to rephrase the text. Main ideas to enhance funding of cluster coordination AND unfinanced activities (provider of last resort) included the use of pooled funding and CERF (especially for unfinanced operations); a % of the operations for minimal coordination (to be determined case by case); and appointing a number of donors-of-last-resort per cluster (cfr. Bilateral cooperation &amp; Decl. of Paris) as main players (which could also enhance the debate between donors &amp; cluster leads to determine priorities). As regard to the conflicts of interest, the group came up with the idea to take the decision power out of the hands of the cluster leaders, into a steering committee with all stakeholders (cfr. Ethiopia).</p> <p>7. Recommendation (5 and) 6: Even in the food security cluster (to be created), there could be very important problems and conflicts of interests (between FAO &amp; WFP, WFP &amp; UNRWA, FAO &amp; NGO's, status &amp; needs based issues). Therefore these institutional issues must be resolved, inside or outside the clusters.</p>	<p>6. Revised version: Provide sufficient funding and define adequate ways for linking clusters and financing mechanisms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide adequate funding for coordination activities.</li> <li>2. Ensure adequate funding for cluster strategies and activities "sponsored" by clusters, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the link between clusters and pooled funds.</li> <li>• Creating strategic links between clusters and bilateral donors.</li> <li>• Strengthening links to and the inclusion of non-traditional donors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Improve the governance and enhance the transparency of financial transactions linked to clusters.</li> <li>4. Further define and clarify what "provider of last resort" entails and strengthen this role.</li> <li>5. (for more details, see extended version in chapter 9)</li> </ol> <p>7. Hope this is captured by rec 6: Resolve outstanding policy issues at the global level: i) links to peacekeeping and political missions and humanitarian space, ii) institutional issues</p>
<p><b>DFID (17.03.2010)</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Firstly let me say a very warm thank you to the evaluation team for producing this first draft report and sharing it widely for initial comments. The team has put in a lot of work to produce this well laid out and clearly written report.</li> <li>2. I will provide some very general comments from the UK's perspective but look forward to an opportunity to develop and discuss them more in depth when the comments matrix is shared with the steering group.</li> <li>3. Broadly the report is comprehensive and seeks to respond to the questions it set out to answer. It was widely acknowledged at the outset that some of the real qualitative</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thank you.</li> <li>2. no comment</li> <li>3. no comment</li> </ol>

assessment would be impossible to gauge without a control.

4. The Executive Summary (which in some cases is all that may be read) states that, 'the benefits generated by the cluster approach *slightly outweigh its costs and downsides*'. Our view is that this is a slightly harsh statement and one which the report that follows fails to justify. The report demonstrates very substantial benefits of the cluster approach and that the direction of travel for further improvements is upwards, provided commitment to it is maintained. We agree that a cost benefit analysis here is not scientific but the report findings do appear to indicate to us that benefits and *potential benefits with further sustained momentum* do clearly outweigh the costs and downsides. For those who read only the Executive Summary the current wording would appear to be a somewhat misleading interpretation of the report that follows. We would welcome others' views on this.
5. In the summary table of Challenges and Recommendations on page 8, the recommendation to shift the focus of the cluster approach from the global level to the local level does not mention funding at country level. A recommendation here would be valuable.
6. Para 65 states that, 'accountability to the HC is minimal and its relative importance for improving humanitarian response has been over estimated. Instead, clusters have started to make valuable contributions to strengthening peer accountability.' Whilst the latter part of the sentence may be true, it does not follow that accountability to the HC is relatively less important. We would value further discussion around the importance of accountability to the HC because we continue to believe it is of central importance to the whole in-country humanitarian system. Although oftentimes it may be overlooked, we are not convinced it has been overestimated.
7. In general, the findings of the evaluation do not come as a surprise because many of the faults within the system were already known and to a greater or lesser extent are already being worked on to improve. However what would be extremely valuable in the recommendations would be to have direct messages to specific agencies or to the IASC principals or donors as action points. These can then be more easily followed up.
8. Lastly, in Annex 2 the table shows in which countries donors were interviewed for the evaluation. However it does not show which donors were interviewed in each country. Nor does it show which donors were interviewed at headquarters level. The list of names of individuals interviewed at global level is partially incomplete but so far does not contain any donors, although clearly they must have been included in the interview process (even if DFID wasn't one of them!)
9. We look forward to further discussion on the draft report on these and other comments. Many thanks for a comprehensive and thorough report.

4. Text here and in conclusion was adapted as we realized that the text was understood more negatively than we had intended
5. The recommendation now states more explicitly that it is about resources.
6. Our main arguments are a) that accountability to the HC to date has been minimal in most cases and b) that peer accountability and accountability to the affected population have not been given sufficient attention in the cluster approach to date. The text has been adapted to reflect this.
7. We are working on this, but will do so in part together with the IASC working group.
8. The evaluation team consciously reduced global level interviews to a minimum – mostly with cluster lead and co-lead agencies to gather factual information on elements of support provided by global clusters. donors were therefore only interviewed at country level. The country studies contain details of institutions and individuals interviewed – they included ECHO, DFID, France, Sweden, USAID
9. No comment

## FEEDBACK FROM AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE ECB-PROJECT (18.03.2010) (JOCK BAKER)

I really think we need to recognize the limitations of this kind of “traditional” feedback system where you can choose between reading through a 100-plus page report or flying to Geneva to attend a debriefing session. Based on what I heard from field colleagues, the in-country debriefs seem to have been useful, but I really wonder if in future we can’t find a more inclusive and user-friendly way of communicating results and collecting feedback from operational staff who really don’t have the time to plow through these long draft reports - very much in line with some of the recommendations in this cluster evaluation about making cluster mechanisms more user-friendly (particularly for national actors, since many of the recommendations are actually relevant to them). In other words, I would suggest that the OCHA Evaluation Unit review their communication strategy for non-UN/non-evaluator stakeholders unless you want to continue to receive feedback skewed heavily in favor of UN agencies (including cluster lead agencies that may have an interest in not significantly changing the status quo).

Here is a summary of the feedback that I did receive from CARE colleagues and peer INGOs involved in the ECB project:

1. **Overall** - the evaluation has successfully captured most of the key successes and gaps in the clusters so, overall, this seems to be a job well done. We were pleased to see that specific issues around inaccessibility of these systems to national actors and weak inter-cluster coordination (so that clusters end up operating as “silos”) were highlighted.
2. **Local actors, integration with existing coordination mechanisms and who is responsible for follow up on recommendations** - the issue around access for local actors is something which is reportedly currently happening in Haiti, despite the recommendations in the country evaluation report. This seems to highlight gaps in accountability (i.e. who is responsible for following up recommendations?). My CARE colleagues in Haiti recently recommended to OCHA and all UN cluster leads during a HCT meeting that they to go back to the country report’s recommendations in the Haiti country report as many of the recommendations are very pertinent for the current response, notably:
3. Facilitate the participation of national and local NGOs. INGOs have been advocating for local NGOs to be integrated in the coordination mechanisms but so far they have been largely excluded...not least because of "logistics" issues which prevent their participation (all meetings are in English, all meetings are held at the UN logbase, which are inaccessible for national staff). This was also one of the key findings from the IA-RTE for cyclone

The evaluation team strongly supports this suggestion and would be happy to contribute to the discussion.

Comments on point 1 – 5: We are trying, but it’s not that easy... Added your point on outreach. Otherwise, more creative ideas would be welcome! Improving cluster management and implementation is already one of the main recommendations and poor facilitation highlighted as one of the major shortcomings, together with the problem of multiplication of coordination fora...

Nargis.

4. Analysis of existing coordination and response mechanisms and capacities to better link rapid response mechanisms with longer-term development. This would include a transition to the coordination mechanisms that were existing before the earthquake and that were led by the different sectorial ministries.
  5. One thing the evaluators may consider is to make recommendations more practical by adding some "how to" guidance. An example would be to improve the engagement of local actors by adopting more outreach-type activities to communicate more effectively instead of sticking to traditional forms of UN-style coordination (i.e. meetings and e-mail). In fact, given the widespread impression that there are just too many meetings, the whole issue around alternative forms of information management and basic good meeting management practice could perhaps benefit from a bit more attention in the report.
  6. **Regional level analysis missing** – since OCHA often operates at a regional level (and other UN agencies have regional offices), it would have been very useful to include an analysis of the regional layer. Does a regional layer have an added value, for example to support the cluster approach on national level? There is currently no clarity on the regional level, and as the regional level officially does not play a role, for example REDLAC depends more on the goodwill and vision of its members and struggles to define its role.
  7. **What are the incentives for cluster lead agencies, cluster coordinators and cluster members to prioritize interagency activities over interests of their own agency?** Although key gaps are identified, there seems to be an over-emphasis on “what” they are and not enough on the “why” – i.e. there are some gaps in the analysis that point towards potential solutions. One of these areas is incentives, or lack thereof, for cluster coordinators to prioritize their allegiance to the cluster over their own agency.
  8. Another example is that rapid turnover of cluster coordinators is a problem, but there is little space given to analyze the reasons for this rapid turnover...which is of course also (at least partially) linked to incentives.
  9. **Weak interagency systems** – another significant gap in the analysis is a discussion around the fact that, for humanitarian reform to work, there needs to be a significant organizational change in terms of transforming intra-agency systems into inter-agency friendly systems. All our systems are currently set up as intra-agency, including things like recruitment, performance management, knowledge management (e.g. large humanitarian agencies all have invested heavily in customized intranets, but clusters tend to use freeware Google-Groups).
6. That level is indeed largely missing. Only Myanmar did the regional level play a significant role. As a result, we did not feel we had enough evidence to include a strong finding and / or recommendation.
  7. This point is relatively difficult to get at. To us, it is most closely related to the issue of mainstreaming (on which there is a clear finding) because better mainstreaming would solve the dilemma.
  8. We had the impression it was most closely linked to the way global surge capacities work, which is why we included it in the relevant recommendation
  9. This did not really come up as a strong problem in the country cases. Where it did appear is when some of the meta-clusters did overall data collection and management for some time and then could not hand over properly to OCHA because systems were incompatible. This aspect is included in both findings and recommendations.

<p>10. I didn't see a reference to the 2009 Independent Review of the Madagascar Humanitarian Country Team in the report, but an example from that study which caused a lot of problems between cluster members was the perceived lack of transparency about CERF fund allocations. It's possible within a matter of seconds using FTS to find out how much funding was provided to cluster lead agencies from donors, but it took cluster lead agencies 2-3 weeks to find out what proportion of these funds were channeled via NGOs. The impression we got was that the cluster leads weren't really trying to hide anything, but there's just no existing systems in place that allows these calculations to be made and communicated in an easy transparent way.</p> <p>11. <b>Food security cluster</b> – we agree that this needs to be operationalized as soon as possible (this was something that was recommended two years ago during a CARE &amp; Oxfam-led food security forum in Rome). However, the analysis and resulting recommendation are somewhat sparse – what are the evaluators' views on, for example, the continued value-added of a separate nutrition cluster? How will a food security cluster compliment/duplicate the activities of an early recovery cluster?</p> <p>12. One question (based on experience from the first cluster evaluation report) is who is actually responsible for following up these recommendations? Many of these recommendations are echoes of the first evaluation which usually indicates the lack of a system for monitoring implementation of recommendations. Otherwise, congratulations to the consultants and I look forward to seeing the final report.</p>	<p>10. We generally tried to base the report only on our own findings and use the literature only as support. The issue of transparency and the CERF, however, also came up in the countries and is mentioned in § 54.</p> <p>11. Admittedly, we did not find a huge amount on evidence on this and answers to some of the questions you mention could only be based on our speculations, rather than evidence. The evidence we had (and we have tried to present this in a stronger way in the revised report / conclusions) only points to the facts that the cluster worked clearly better where it was merged between food and agriculture.</p> <p>12. Thanks!</p>
<p><b>FAO (18.03.2010)</b></p>	
<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>1. In line with the request from OCHA, and given that the country teams have had the opportunity to provide feedback on the six country reports, FAO's feedback is directed at the "Synthesis report – Zero Draft (8 March 2010)". It is divided into three sections: (i) general comments; (ii) specific comments; and (iii) comments on the six recommendations.</p> <p>2. FAO broadly supports the evaluation's findings, analysis and recommendations with qualifications that are described below. FAO comments are focused primarily on corrections and/or clarifications of substance.</p> <p>3. FAO also associates itself with much of the feedback and comment provided at last week's meeting hosted by the IFRC in Geneva, at which Sandra Aviles and Dick Trenchard represented FAO.</p>	<p>1. no comment</p> <p>2. no comment</p> <p>3. no comment</p>

## General comments

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| <p>1. <u>Accept the approach</u>: FAO understands and accepts the approach that the evaluation team has followed in preparing the Synthesis report, namely (i) identifying a series of operational and institutional constraints that hold back the full potential of the cluster approach from being realized at the country level, that in turn, implies that improved cluster performance at the cluster level would lead to even greater humanitarian impact for affected populations; and (ii) presenting a number of broad directions and steps – expressed through six recommendations and actions steps - that should be taken to overcome these constraints and limitations; (iii) leaving it to the IASC and Global Cluster Leads to identify the precise changes, actions and decisions that have to be made to translate the recommendations into impact.</p> <p>2. <u>Style and content</u>: FAO recognizes that the report tackles a highly complex and already much-discussed subject and attempts to provide new analysis and insights. The Report is largely successful in these regards. However, there is scope for further editing to sharpen key messages and conclusions, in particular, with regard to the Recommendations, which at times fall short of capturing fully the points made in the analysis. This detracts from the Report’s overall value and quality.</p> <p>3. <u>Recognising what has been done</u>: Significant investment, effort and commitment has been made to put the cluster approach into practice over the last few years. Whilst there is still much to be done – and this report provides useful guidance in this regard – there is much that has already been achieved. The report would benefit by giving recognition to what has been achieved and the progress that has been made, in terms of i) global cluster support (some clusters, for example, WASH, Health and the service clusters that have made enormous advances in their global support capacity); ii) the investment in building cluster coordination capacity at the country level; and iii) the improvements in terms of coordinated response. Agencies who have invested funding in quality and number of staff, in field presence and NGO networks are also the best cluster leads.</p> <p>4. <u>Strengthened cost-benefit analysis</u>: The report notes investments that were made in the two global cluster appeals implies there is “<i>downsides</i>” to it. This analysis is too limited and would benefit from looking at the investment in terms of the total amount of resources invested in humanitarian response. It should also assess the extent to which clusters have led to a more efficient and effective delivery of humanitarian resources. A “<i>without clusters</i>” scenario could be considered. Further specific points related to this issue are made below. The report needs to present the relationship between cluster initiatives and operational efficiency and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Three areas of analysis could be considered:</p> | <p>1. no comment</p> <p>2. Have revised the recommendations using inputs from the workshop – thanks, though there is still much work to be done.</p> <p>3. See expanded sections in executive summary on improvements and benefits</p> <p>4. Term “downsides” changed; Reference to total resources included; See findings, especially in chapter 6.; Focus of the evaluation was on the country level, so global initiatives were only analyzed if they had observable effects at country level,.</p> |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster initiatives that agencies have invested in since the Phase 1 Evaluation.</li> <li>• Goals for each initiative.</li> <li>• Impact of the initiatives on operational efficiency and cluster effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p>5. To be effective in its argument about cost effectiveness, the report should detail returns on investment that link funding to measurable outcomes and results as tools for future cluster strategic planning.</p> <p><u>Specific points</u></p> <p>6. Executive Summary [para 2 &amp; para 127]: <u>Executive Summary</u> – FAO believes that the Executive Summary needs to be revised. At present, it does not <u>capture</u> the tone, content or feel of the main report. In particular, whilst noting that it is drawn from paragraph 127, the phrase “<i>the benefits generated by the cluster approach <u>slightly outweigh</u> its costs and downsides</i>” [emphasis added] is unhelpful. Firstly, what it describes as “<i>downsides</i>” are categorically <u>not</u> downsides of the cluster approach, but constraints that hold back the full and effective implementation of the approach. The choice of word is incorrect.</p> <p>7. Secondly, the analysis and recommendations – and the 6 case studies – present a different picture, indicating that the cluster approach is good but need further evolution in investment and targeting to raise the operational effectiveness. This would help ensure the approach realises its full potential in terms of strengthened humanitarian impact at the household level. This message is missing in the Executive Summary.</p> <p>8. <b>Funding for global clusters [Para 28-30]:</b> <u>Funding for global clusters</u> – The discussion on the value resulting from the USD57.4 million investments in global clusters is incomplete and requires further analysis and detail. There are three problems with the analysis as currently presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No attempt is made to measure the return on this investment, nor to situate this investment in relation to total humanitarian investments (which is considerably less than 1% of total humanitarian spending in 2009 alone).</li> <li>• Global support is measured in the report primarily in terms of the provision of tools and guidelines [para 28]. This significantly under-estimates the depth, range and breadth of support that is provided by global clusters.</li> <li>• There is an assumption within the report that the global appeal was the only investment made in the global clusters. All cluster lead agencies, including FAO, have sought to mainstream some global cluster costs.</li> </ul>	<p>5. We are not strictly speaking making an argument about cost effectiveness and have toned down related language to avoid confusion.</p> <p>6. amended</p> <p>7. amended</p> <p>8. see below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is impossible to do within the scope of this evaluation</li> <li>• Reference to preparedness activities has been included, though there is no detailed analysis because this was not part of the TORs for the evaluation.</li> <li>• Ok – reference included. If you could provide any detailed sources on this, that would be much appreciated.</li> </ul>
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The report should reflect the range of investments that agencies including FAO have already made in broad-based organisational change, better communication with host authorities and field teams, more training for field-level cluster coordinators, increased learning, increased resources at the field level and the wider application of the cluster approach as the standard business model in emergencies.

9. **Livelihoods [Para 41] :** Livelihoods The Synthesis report cites “overlaps between clusters persists, such as for...livelihoods as part of Early Recovery and livelihoods as part of Food/Food Security/Agriculture” as an example of “ineffective inter-cluster coordination” [para 41]. This analysis is incomplete. On the one hand, it is common sense that that agricultural livelihoods are best coordinated as part of an agriculture/food security cluster’s work (and it is important to remember that in almost all crises, affected households are most typically dependent on agricultural-based livelihoods. On the other hand, it is only appropriate that non-agricultural livelihood activities are included under the Early Recovery cluster’s work. Therefore, FAO does not see this as a symptom of ineffective inter-cluster coordination. However, weak inter-cluster coordination can often lead to poor coordination between the support to agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods.
10. While beneficiaries appreciate the humanitarian aid they receive their priority is to return to self-sufficiency. Many useful efforts are underway to promote livelihoods but these have suffered from fragmentation between clusters and working groups resulting in the lack of a coherent strategy. This needs to be addressed as a wider challenge rather than an overlap or ineffective inter-cluster coordination question. FAO believes it a question of benchmarking and planning among the many agencies and staff who remain involved in implementing relief activities and appear unsure of next steps.
11. **Excessive cluster focus on appeals [Para 52]:** Excessive cluster focus on appeals The Report notes [para 52] that there is a “risk of an excessive focus of cluster activities on appeal processes, to the detriment of other, more direct and operational common activities”. FAO does not believe that this is a risk, as ability of a cluster to provide a coherent, inclusive, evidence-based, needs-driven sectoral strategy and response plan is one of the core benefits of the cluster approach. In the run-up to Appeal launches etc., this can be a time-consuming task that absorbs an enormous amount of cluster efforts, energies and resources. FAO would not describe this as a risk, merely a necessary reality. The challenge is for clusters to ensure that even during these periods that they are able to continue direct and operational common

9. Ok – specified.

10. reference included

11. Reworded: This strong mutual relationship, however, also contains the risk of distracting attention away from other, more direct and operational common activities.

activities. This is different from what is written in paragraph 52.

12. **Preferential funding allocations to large international organizations [Para 52] :**

Preferential funding allocations to large international organizations The view that “funding trends in CAP and Flash Appeals typically favor large international organizations over smaller and more local ones” [para 52] is largely a function of donor preference and behavior rather than an intrinsic feature of the cluster approach which could just as easily accommodate funding trends that favour smaller and more local organizations. The inference contained in this statement is therefore misleading.

13. Clearly larger organizations can devote substantial resources to the fund raising process. Smaller organizations have proportionately less money to invest. Smaller and more local organizations face a variety of challenges. There is the wider question of supporting the smaller organizations administrators and board member to learn and keep up with non-profit management and fund raising as distinct disciplines to be learned and maintained.

14. **Donor perceptions of what constitutes humanitarian assistance [Para 57] :** Donor perceptions of what constitutes humanitarian assistance The paper asserts [para 57] that “several clusters [including Agriculture] face systematic problems in gaining access to funds because few donors tend to recognize them as eligible for humanitarian funding” [emphasis added] is out-of-date and inaccurate. FAO’s agriculture cluster-linked activities are financed by a wide-range of donors and the number is growing. Since 2005 for example, FAO activities in Flash Appeals and CAPs have been financed by over 35 different donor governments and several foundations and private organizations (excluding pooled funds and other UN/IFIs). A challenge for FAO and IASC members is to maintain a coherent and consistent message on the fact that humanitarian support to agriculture livelihood activities have direct and immediate impact on protecting and restoring food availability among families affected by an emergency.

15. **Provider of Last Resort [Para 95, bullet 3]:** In commenting on the provider of last resort function of cluster leads, the report observes: “*The exceptions are lead agencies such as UNICEF and FAO that can draw on emergency budget lines, borrow from their regular programs or offer access to emergency stocks to act as genuine providers of last resort at least for some priority gaps*”. In the case of FAO the notion of “*borrowing from other budget lines*” would be contrary to the financial rules and regulations of the Organization without explicit prior approval. FAO does not have standby

12. Agreed, specified.

13. S. recommendations

14. Evidence from the case study countries suggested that access to funding had improved, but was still a systematic problem. We have now cross-checked this with overall data for the sector and agree that the differences are not that drastic. § deleted

15. Reference to FAO deleted.

mechanisms that could be allocated in the way described in this paragraph.”

16. **Cluster approach strengthens international coordination capacities in country [Para 107]** : The report makes asserts that (i) the “*cluster approach strengthens international coordination capacities in country, thereby undermining national ownership*” and (ii) the participation of *national and local NGOs therefore remain “problem children” of the cluster approach*”. FAO questions both of these statements in light of the evidence provided in the six country reports. There is no causal link between strengthening international coordination and reducing national ownership. While there may be instances in which there is strong international coordination *and* weak national ownership, it is false reasoning to argue that the former creates the latter. Moreover, strong international coordination should underscore and privilege the importance of strong national ownership.
17. “*Problem children*” is an unnecessarily imprecise phrase. FAO feels the point is that many clusters still struggle to find effective mechanisms and safeguards to ensure full inclusion of national and local NGOs. If this is the point being made, then it should be stated in these terms.
18. **trade-off between inclusiveness and effectiveness of meetings [Para 114]** : The report states “there is a trade-off between inclusiveness and effectiveness of meetings, as well as between the level of collective decision-making and the speed of response. Evidence points to the fact that the strength of the cluster approach lies in its inclusiveness rather than speed. FAO disagrees with this assertion and believes that it is not supported in case studies.
19. The strength of the cluster approach lies in its ability to provide a mechanism that allows for both speed and inclusiveness. The relationship between speed and inclusiveness differs from cluster to cluster and from situation to situation (most clearly perhaps, between service clusters (e.g. Logs/ETC) – where the need for speed is more important than the need for inclusiveness – and the sectoral clusters (e.g. Agriculture / Health) – where the need for speed and inclusiveness is paramount.
20. **Food Security Cluster [Para 131, bullet 4]** : Food Security cluster Under a discussion headed “Systemic obstacles to the functioning of the Early Recovery, Protection and other clusters” it is noted that “Institutional issues are relevant in the area of food aid, food security and agriculture. The mandates of the two most important agencies in this area, WFP and FAO, are “*overlap increasingly, [sic] creating incoherences and duplications and making the creation of a Global Food Security cluster more urgent. The creation of this cluster has now been decided.*”

16. Section on ownership has been revised, stating now that while a factual connection has been observed, there is no necessary, “logical” link

17. Rephrased: remain one of the biggest challenges for the implementation of the cluster approach

18. Section has been revised following discussions during the workshop

19. no comment

20. no comment

21. Thank you for the clarification, that was a misunderstanding from one of our interviews

21. In consultation with WFP, FAO would highlight the following problems and inaccuracies with this statement: Whilst there are ongoing discussion between the two agencies to strengthen coordination on food security in humanitarian situations, nothing has been “decided” by the Organizations or the IASC. The organizations have expressed their strong interest and commitment with regard to the issue.
22. It is also inaccurate to assert that the “*mandates of the two...agencies.. Overlap increasingly*” and it is inappropriate to refer to “*incoherence and duplications*”. FAO does not engage in food distribution or food assistance. WFP has occasionally engaged in agriculture-related activities, but this is mostly atypical and to fill gaps – usually with the agreement of the two organizations. It would be more accurate to state that the programmes of the two organizations are gradually converging in order to exploit synergies in countries. Recognition of the value of strengthened coordination around food security as a means of raising humanitarian impact is important. It would be appropriate to include it as a separate point in the text, rather than linking it to other institutional issues relating to the Early Recovery and Protection clusters. The paragraph could be re-stated as follows: “*Evidence from countries suggests there is considerable benefit to be derived from strengthened coordination on food security in humanitarian situations. This would provide opportunity for greater coherence between food assistance and agricultural livelihood-related support to short and medium-term food security needs. The ongoing discussions between FAO and WFP to explore options for strengthening coordination, including the possible creation of a global Food Security cluster.*”

## COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

### 23. Recommendation 1

**Shift the focus of the cluster approach from the global to the local level:** Global cluster functions, including global cluster support, will remain important, and in many instances, the most efficient means of providing systematic support to country (and local) clusters. It is more appropriate to refer to “*extending*” the cluster approach to include a stronger country focus by reaffirming the IASC position that this should be a field-driven process.

24. Whilst it is important to increase support sub-national/local clusters, this implies increased costs, especially if one accepts other findings in the report regarding the need to invest in dedicated cluster coordination and information management functions etc. This trade-off/cost should be recognized.

### 25. Recommendation 2

**In cluster operations and activities, focus on strengthening the quality of humanitarian**

22. *Revised §: The need for a Food Security Cluster.* With an increasing overlap or convergence between the mandates of the leading organizations in food aid and agriculture, WFP and FAO, the option of creating a Food Security Cluster has been hotly debated at the global level for some time. Evidence from the country case studies conducted for this evaluation suggests that such a cluster integrating the Agriculture Cluster should be created. In several countries (Uganda and DRC, as well as potentially soon in Chad), combined clusters were created for food security and agricultural livelihoods that achieved very positive results. In countries where clusters for food aid and agriculture existed side-by-side, by contrast, serious implementation problems emerged (e.g. in Haiti and Myanmar). A merger of food and agriculture issues can help strengthen the early recovery perspective of local food aid clusters and enhance the chances of agricultural projects to receive humanitarian funding

23. The evaluation team believes that, while global clusters are important, the initial focus of resources for creating capacity at the global level should now be changed to focus on the national and local levels. Recommendation reworded to make this clearer.

24. Reworded: Provide dedicated part-time or full-time coordination capacities for local clusters or those levels where operational coordination takes place. Seek to include the costs for local facilitation and coordination into national cluster coordination budgets.

25. This implication is not intended. Reworded to say “enhance the focus”. The accompanying text “Clusters should capitalize on their strengths and maximize their contribution to improving humanitarian

<p><b>response:</b> The word “<i>quality</i>” should be replaced with “<i>the impact of humanitarian response</i>”. The term “<i>quality</i>” is embedded with value judgement and, in this case, implies the country reports have found significant levels of poor quality humanitarian response linked directly to the cluster approach.</p> <p>26. FAO holds the view there is considerable scope to further extend the scope of humanitarian impact through strengthened and improved cluster performance at the country level; this could be achieved by overcoming the operational constraints and seizing the opportunities identified by the evaluation missions.</p> <p>27. <b>Recommendation 3</b>  <b>Reinforce linkages with other coordination and response mechanisms based on the added value of the cluster approach:</b> FAO is troubled by the statement that the “<i>strength of the cluster approach lies in inclusiveness rather than speed</i>”. It is more correct to state that the strength of the approach lies in “<i>inclusiveness <u>and</u> speed</i>” [emphasis added]. FAO’s position on this issue is covered in Point #9 above.</p> <p>28. <b>Recommendation 4</b>  <b>Strengthen cluster management and implementation modalities:</b> Bullet three refers to “<i>clarify the criteria and processes for activating and closing clusters</i>”. There is a need to also include reference to the need to ensure “<i>smooth and effective transition with, and linkage to, development processes and structures</i>”. For clusters such as Agriculture, the challenge is less about when and how to close, but about how to link effectively with development processes and structures without excessively extending cluster costs and mechanisms. This point emerged in the case studies in oPt, Uganda etc. and should be included here.</p> <p>29. Bullet seven refers to the need to “<i>distinguish between strategic and operational meetings</i>”. The point is well made in both the Synthesis report and a number of the country reports that there is need to strengthen the capacity of HCTs to undertake the strategic cluster-related roles and responsibilities required [para 40]. The use of the word “<i>distinguish</i>” in bullet 7 conveys a different message and should be revisited.</p> <p>30. <b>Recommendation 5</b>  <b>Define adequate ways for linking clusters and financing mechanisms:</b> FAO associates itself with the suggestions made on this issue at the Geneva workshop. This recommendation</p>	<p>response by strengthening their focus on enhancing quality”. Hopefully makes clear that we see this as one of the strengths of the cluster approach, but also feel it can easily get distracted with many other things. Since all recommendations are ultimately about increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance “impact” would be too broad.</p> <p>26. no comment.</p> <p>27. Now version: To strengthen timeliness, preparedness, linking with development and supporting the sustainability of humanitarian relief operations, clusters, depending on context, should be more closely linked to national actors, other coordination mechanisms and longer-term development projects.</p> <p>28. More strongly included in rec. 3.3: <b>Strengthen cooperation and coordination between clusters, national actors and development actors at every stage from preparedness to response and the transition to development.</b></p> <p>29. Ok</p> <p>30. Reference included in recommendations (not in findings since this is not a direct finding of the evaluation itself)</p>
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(and the discussion) do not take on board to a sufficient extent the intense discussions that have taken place over the last 2 years on these issues. In particular, the evaluation team should take stock of the work undertaken by the Task Team on Mainstreaming Cluster Costs and Functions, which deals with this issue i.e. financing and clusters. Some of the Task Team analysis could usefully be reflected in the report.

31. The term “adequate” should be removed from the recommendation as it implies that current ways of linking are inadequate, which is neither the case nor evidenced by the report’s findings.
32. Whilst the report [para 95] recognizes that the concept of “provider of last resort” may involve in some cases an obligation to commit resources to fill priority gaps, for many other clusters it involves an obligation on the part of the global cluster lead to continue advocating on behalf of the cluster until every avenue has been exhausted. This understanding reflects current IASC guidance on the issue and is the accepted view. FAO believes this recommendation is an out-of-date or incomplete understanding of the concept – focusing merely on the resource obligations. This undermines the value of the recommendation.
33. In clarifying the role of provider of last resort, this is essentially about recognising that cluster coordination is not cost neutral. Whilst an agency can assume the leadership role for a sector/cluster (and by definition become the provider of last resort), it cannot be assumed that funding is always available to fulfill the role of the provider of last resort.
34. Bullet one: There is no need to “further define and clarify what ‘provider of last resort’ means”. Instead, there is a need to “ensure that country teams/clusters at the country level are fully aware of what ‘provider of last resort’ means and requires on the part of the cluster lead”.
35. Bullet two: Whilst FAO supports pooled funding as a mechanism for managing and allocating humanitarian resources at the country level, it believes the recommendation is imprecise in the unique benefits it ascribes to pooled funding approaches. The benefits are the results of effective cluster coordination and leadership on the one hand, and good donor practice on the other: all the benefits described in bullet two would result from a combination of strong cluster coordination, agreement by cluster partners to seek funding only through the cluster strategy and commitment by donors to fund humanitarian response through the cluster. The advantages of pooled funding, whilst considerable, are different and are associated with issues of prioritization and inter-cluster coordination. As a result, the need is to establish governance mechanisms which ensure equitable access to all resources allocated to cluster strategies, including pooled funding, at the country level.
36. Regarding the creation of strategic links between clusters and bilateral donors, this recommendation should either be deleted or clarified as it is not clear what is meant. A big chunk of whatever funding clusters have has come from strategic links with bilateral donors.

31. Not all ways of linking clusters and financing mechanisms analyzed in the country studies have been adequate (e.g. early DRC model).

32. With this recommendation, the evaluation team wants to draw attention to the fact that there was much value in the original definition of the concept and that efforts should be made to implement it (while recognizing constraints)

33. s. above

34. The evaluation team does not believe that current guidance is sufficient and recommends distinguishing different kinds of clusters and revisiting the current focus on “advocates of last resort”.

35. Rec. 5 has been generally reworded. There may be a misunderstanding: The points listed under “strengthen the links between clusters and pooled funds” are not unique advantages of pooled funds, but criteria / conditions that should be fulfilled when designing governance mechanisms for pooled funds.

36. Clarified.

<p>Finally, the recommendation and concrete steps, as currently stated, are not supported by adequate analysis of the cluster funding situation.</p> <p><b>37. Recommendation 6</b>  <b>Address political issues and define the limits of integration:</b> FAO associates itself with the comments and feedback provided on Recommendation 6 at the Geneva workshop. It might be useful to divide this recommendation into two separate ones. The first could focus on “Resolving global cluster institutional issues” the other focusing on “Clarifying the relationship between clusters and DPKO/DPA missions”.</p> <p>38. Bullet one should be eliminated as it would be covered in other bullets.</p> <p>39. Bullet two should make reference to Early Recovery/CCM clusters and, noting clarification provided by the Phase II Evaluation Team at the Geneva workshop.</p> <p>40. Reference to the Logistics cluster should be removed.</p> <p>41. Bullet three should be modified to read “Encourage FAO and WFP to continue discussions on options for strengthening coordination of food security in humanitarian situations and should move towards the establishment of a global Food Security cluster to support country coordination”</p> <p>42. Bullet four should become two bullets, the first referring to the need to implement IASC guidance on humanitarian space and partnerships, in particular with regard to the relationship between humanitarian clusters and DPKO/DPA missions.</p> <p>43. The second part should refer to the need for clear guidance on these issues for the Protection cluster (recognizing that these issues are often most pressing/relevant for the Protection Cluster). Bullet five can be deleted as this principle is widely known (and respected) whilst the concrete step, as stated, suggests that this is not the case.</p> <p>44. Bullet six can be deleted as it would be reflected in bullet point/s 4.</p>	<p>37. We decided to keep them together since both are issues that need to be resolved at the political level.</p> <p>38. Disagree: is maintained since it is not covered in other bullets.</p> <p>39. Our findings only support reference to the ETC cluster.</p> <p>40. ok</p> <p>41. Now reads: <b>Finalize discussions and create a global Food Security Cluster</b>, integrating food aid and agricultural issues and address related institutional and policy issues at the political level.</p> <p>42. Do to the extremely short time for revising the draft, we have not managed to check and incorporate this guidance at this stage.</p> <p>43. Merged into the point on protection.</p> <p>44. Merged / adjusted: <b>Strengthen decisions of Humanitarian Country Teams relating to humanitarian space</b> through an increased involvement of NGOs, based on the 2006 Principles of Partnership and the 2009 guidance note on Humanitarian Country Teams.</p>
<p><b>FOCAL POINT FOR OLDER PEOPLE – SPHERE REVISION 2010 (17.03.2010) (JO WELLS)</b></p>	
<p>1. Firstly as a general comment it is refreshing and important to see frank recognition of the limited attention paid to cross cutting issues. However, it is a little disappointing to note that</p>	<p>1. We are sorry about that. At country level, nobody referred to HAI and that way it escaped us. Again – please accept our apologies.</p>

HAI was not contacted for interview.

2. The majority of global interviews were with UN agencies, with the exception of ICRC and SCF, and yet HelpAge International as the only non UN agency that has a formal lead role at the global level might have had some useful insights. I am not aware either (though stand ready to be corrected) that any of our field staff in Myanmar, DRC, Haiti or N Uganda were interviewed, even though these are areas where we have programmes. It weakens the recommendations on this issue for me if one of the 4 cross cutting issues has not been formally consulted. Some specific comments on content re cross cutting issues - I have not had time to make comments on rest of text unfortunately:
3. Box 3: Please note that HAI and WHO have produced the following guidance materials as well as numerous other reports and materials some of which are available on the UN One response site. The IASC-WG also endorsed 9 recommendation on age in Nov 2007, some of which were directed at the global clusters. IASC Humanitarian Action and Older Persons - an Essential Brief - French and English 6.2 – 100
4. One key issue relating to confusion over the issue of age, is that age as a cross cutting issue should infact relate to ALL ages of the population and how the particular context affects particular age groups and their vulnerability - for example young men in conflict. Yet, age in the context of the clusters and most people's perception relates to ageing only, hence HAI is the lead. Therefore there is an inconsistency - one age-group of the population is supposedly cross cutting and to be mainstreamed yet others are not.
5. Whilst it is true that there is a lack of clarity about what constitutes a cross cutting issue, this does not explain why there is inadequate attention paid to those that are clear e.g. gender. A point that is not made by the evaluation team here, but which is central (and fellow cross cutting focal points in the Sphere revision have strongly adhered to this) is the importance of needs analysis and diagnostics - if a cross cutting issue is not picked up within initial assessments then that is likely to inform all subsequent response - it links in with the data disaggregation point. Not all cross cutting issues will be (as) relevant to every situation e.g. contexts with low HIV prevalence or countries where the demographic profile of older people is very low, but these are crucial contextual factors that should be built into analysis. Assessments don't just need to be coordinated, though clearly that's true (5.4) but they also need to be comprehensive in relation to target groups and some mention of cross cutting issues within the assessment section would be valuable.
6. Regarding the recommendation 2, which includes cross cutting issues; firstly, I would have liked to have seen a stand alone recommendation on this issue. There are so many points and sub-points within the recommendation 2 generally, that these tend to read like a long (and unrealistic) set of expectations. On the cross cutting recommendation specifically:

2. Apologies: Invitations / requests for interviews and group discussions with the evaluation team were widely disseminated through OCHA and the clusters to all stakeholders in country.
3. Included. Are there any other crucial materials you would like to see included? (The list here is not and does not claim to be complete, it is intended to provide humanitarian actors at the country and local levels with pointers towards the most important global resources and documents
4. Good point. Thank you.
5. Agree / this also reflects the evidence from the case studies. Included.
6. We agree that it is a very important recommendation, but believe it is an integral part of enhancing the quality of humanitarian response – this is why we have included it under this heading.

<p>b. not sure what this is telling us</p> <p>c. dont believe that expanding the list of cross cutting issues will assist at this moment - within Sphere revision 2010 we have struggled with how to deal with an expanded list of cross cutting issues in a meaningful way and some of us have come to the conclusion that actually they should be reduced - age, gender and diversity, environment.</p> <p>d. Yes, identifying and enabling local focal points to provide input is crucial, but many of the organizations who e.g. work with older people would not attend cluster meetings, so this is a more systemic problem about participation of local NGOs.</p> <p>e. HAI has undertaken considerable advocacy in N Uganda, rather than programmes yet thousands of older people still remain stranded in camps as the most vulnerable, so whilst I applaud more advocacy I am also cautious about this recommendation from experience.</p> <p>f. all v well, but there is no way that an org like HAI can attend all cluster retreats and exercises - we are not convinced either of the value of doing so, and so are very strategic and targeted in the initiatives we engage with. Where e.g. UNHCR has committed to addressing age within their workplan we commit to supporting them wholeheartedly with technical expertise.</p> <p>7. I hope these comments are constructive - please do get back to me if you would like to discuss further any of the points raised.</p>	<p>b. There is a reference to cross cutting issues in the TORs of cluster lead agencies – yet, they don’t take that seriously, don’t train their coordinators on that etc... Have included the example of lead organizations exercising leadership be requesting surge capacity on cross-cutting issues and training. If you have more ideas, they would be very welcome.</p> <p>c. We believe that including for example early recovery as a clear cross-cutting issue would help strengthen the early recovery advisory function. We – but mainly also the humanitarian actors we interviewed in the case study countries - also consider the other issues as very import, depending on context. Have shifted this to the back of the point, though.</p> <p>d. This is addressed elsewhere. Specified here that clusters should facilitate their participation in clusters.</p> <p>e. Our recommendation is about the advisory, not advocacy function. There also is now quite a good focus on “EVI” in camps in Northern Uganda.</p> <p>f. Point well taken – tried to emphasize the strategic involvement by rephrasing: and ensuring that focal points for all relevant cross-cutting issues are strategically engaged in developing strategies and work plans and reviewing the work of clusters and their members.</p> <p>7. Thanks so much.</p>
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**GEN CAP & OCHA GAT (18.03.2010)**



3.2 IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

- **What is the treatment of cross-cutting issues (XCIs)?**
- **Interestingly, while the broad description of the architecture of the cluster system refers to the leads/co-leads on the clusters and does refer to the four XCIs as well as their ‘leadership’, there is no mention of the relationship – or even lack of one – either by design or default - between the Clusters, the inter-cluster coordination performed by OCHA and the coordination on the integration of XCIs.**

5. Pgs. 20 and 21: **Is there any information about the establishment of XCI thematic groups within the cluster system and the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of their integration of the relevant issues across the Clusters?**
6. Pt. 4.1 Leadership: **Is there anything that can be said about leadership and their engagement with XCIs and/or on leadership around XCIs themselves?**
7. Pg. 25, pt. 28 – “Gender is the only cross-cutting issue included in the global appeals”: **How has this conclusion been made? We have not any knowledge of gender being included in the appeals on a regular basis. This statement is either wrong or badly explained.**
8. Pg. 27, box 4: **Gender is not a cluster. Where does the \$0.8 million dollars allocated to gender appear, and how does it appear? Please explain, because as far as OCHA GAT understands, this information is either wrong or wrongly explained, and no funding is allocated specifically to gender through FTS.**
9. Pg.27: **Add ‘Pocket-Guide to Gender Equality in and through Education in Emergencies’ (in development March 2010)**
10. Pt. 31, pg. 28 – “Several case study countries also had deployments of GenCap and ProCap experts. Where these experts were used as advisors, attention to the cross-cutting issues of gender and protection was increased. This effect diminished greatly when they were used as (sub-)cluster coordinators”: **Please revise the word experts to Advisors, as in GenCap and ProCap Advisors.**
11. **“Greatly diminished” is a big statement and we wonder about the evidence to support this or the frequency of both situations – is it more prevalent for GenCap or ProCap, given that we have very different mandates in terms of our ‘placement’ within the greater humanitarian structure – more often than not, GenCap Advisors as interagency advisors; ProCap Advisors as Protection Cluster Coordinators. In**

5. Only that we did not observe any and/or their effects – we inquired in all case study countries about mechanisms to include cross-cutting issues, and this never came up.

6. The positive examples here are included in section 6.2

7. Sorry – we mean the two global coordination / cluster appeals.  
Amended

8. According to the FTS sheet on the second global cluster appeal, 758.000\$ was allocated to gender. See <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/pageloader.aspx?page=emergencyDetails&appealID=763>

9. ok

10. ok

11. Admittedly, there were not that many cases where we could observe GenCap and ProCap deployments. Yet, even with this limited number of cases, the finding emerged very strongly and was backed up by external documents. In that regard, we did not observe a major

<p><b>addition, concrete suggestions are missing in the recommendation section (pages 68-69).</b></p> <p>12. Pt. 4.4. Cluster focus and management – pgs. 29 – 30: <b>No mention of the connect or disconnect between clusters’ focus and management and the integration of XCIs. Also, perhaps this is not the place for this point, but no mention here either of the role that OCHA plays/should play on inter-cluster coordination and perhaps setting common visions and strategies, including the systematic integration of XCIs.</b></p> <p>13. 4.5, pgs. 30 – 31 - A crucial role for OCHA, but weak inter-cluster coordination: <b>There is no mention here of the role OCHA plays/should play/does not play in relation to the coordination of XCIs, which commonly don’t have a ‘host’ but, by the very nature need to be everywhere and, therefore, ‘held’ by one single entity. I would contend that this issue needs to be explored or, at the very least, highlighted as an issue requiring further attention and the development of some form of systematic response by OCHA.</b></p> <p>14. Pt. 5.1 from pg. 37 on Partnership; Pt. 5.2 from pg. 39 on Weak Accountability to the HC; Pt. 5.3 on information-sharing from pg. 41; and Pt. 5.4 on Needs Assessment from pg. 43: <b>All key areas to promote the effective and comprehensive integration of XCIs but all four sections are silent on the issue – even if only to report little or no attention to, coordination of or coherence to same.</b></p> <p>15. Section 6 Findings: Effects [of the introduction of the cluster system] on the quality of humanitarian response and the humanitarian system – pt. 98 – please refer to disaggregation by sex and not by gender: <b>It is more accurate and consistent to the concept and acronym of sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD).</b></p> <p>16. P. 50: <b>Please change gender advisor to GenCap Advisor in para 99, line 6-7.</b></p> <p>17. Pg. 58, illustration 2 – reference to incidence of GBV: <b>Given that GBV is an umbrella term for a very broad range of violences and deprivations based of gender inequality and discrimination, we would recommend to use the term “incidences of sexual violence”, since this may be more accurate and helpful.</b></p> <p>18. Pg. 58, para. 123: <b>While this is the original logic framework, is it worth mentioning the seeming absence of reference to XCIs, which perhaps had the result that we got off to a bad start and have been struggling to get ourselves into the mix ever since?</b></p> <p>19. P. 67: <b>Add XCIs to facilitation and coordination skills training.</b></p>	<p>difference between GenCap and ProCap, though there may well be one if the question is considered more globally. Reworded “clearly” &amp; This is already included in rec 2.</p> <p>12. See section on OCHA and inter-cluster management. Strengthened reference to the role of integrating XCI.</p> <p>13. S. above. Reference included in Rec. 2</p> <p>14. This is because we decided that it would be clearer if we discussed issues relating to cross-cutting issues all in one go in section 6.2</p> <p>15. o.k</p> <p>16. o.k</p> <p>17. This is not our illustration, but the one that was developed for the evaluation framework – we are just replicating it here.</p> <p>18. Included now in § 125</p> <p>19. Good point.</p>
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<p>20. Recommend 2, Concrete step 1: <b>Add effective analysis and comprehensive integration of relevant XCIs to the ‘clear and operational focus’ that clusters should have.</b></p> <p>21. <b>Under all of the recommendations, where Cluster Leads are mentioned, please also include XCIs’ Focal Points; when appropriate when Clusters are mentioned also refer to XCIs’ thematic groups. If we do not do this, then it is possible that we will perpetuate the idea that XCIs operate in silos rather than being an integral part of cluster activities and coordination, including inter-cluster and multi-cluster activities and coordination.</b></p> <p>22. <b>Given the rather negative indictment of the integration of XCIs in and across the clusters, we wonder if it would be appropriate to give the same issue a separate recommendation, which would address issues such as its coordination (OCHA’s role and responsibilities, as well as accountability in terms of inter-cluster coordination as well as host to XCI advisors and thematic groups), accountability, etc.</b></p> <p>23. <b>P. 68-69: Please number sub-recommendations</b></p> <p>24. <b>P. 69 – sub-recommendation ”Increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues” seems to be painting of picture of the status quo and does not contain new and concrete recommendations for strengthening the cross-cutting issues. Include accountability for cross-cutting issues under this section, if possible to include issues of accountability in this report</b></p> <p>25. <b>Where should responsibility for coordination of cross-cutting issues sit? Is OCHA the natural home for this?</b></p> <p>26. <b>How can we ensure that sufficient capacity exists? Who is responsible for nominating, training and ensuring that cross-cutting focal points have sufficient seniority? How can we ensure that senior management takes cross-cutting issues seriously and how can they be held accountable?</b></p> <p>27. <b>What kind of additional surge capacity should be developed? Should GenCap and ProCap continue in their current form, or possibly be strengthened? How can we ensure that such advisors do not end up doing coordination if they should solely have an advisory role?</b></p> <p>28. <b>Who is responsible for ensuring that relevant cross-cutting issues are involved in inter-cluster retreats and exercises, as well as strategic cluster meetings?</b></p>	<p>20. Good point</p> <p>21. o.k</p> <p>22. There are 2 specific recommendations as part of recommendation 2.</p> <p>23. o.k.</p> <p>24. Have included reference that OCHA should ensure cross-cutting issues are dealt with by somebody and that roles and responsibilities need to be clarified</p> <p>25. Included recommendation to at least clarify this.</p> <p>26. Any suggestions welcome.</p> <p>27. S. Recommendations – need to be strengthened and not send advisors as coordinators.</p> <p>28. S. above</p>
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<p>29. P. 69 – sub-recommendation ”Engage clusters in coordinating and improving needs assessment”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Ensure that collection and analysis of Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) is made mandatory at both needs assessment, implementation and monitoring phases</b></li> </ul> <p>30. Annex 2: List of Interviewees: <b>Despite an initial approach to the GenCap Advisor to the Global Clusters in Geneva to support the development of the Evaluation, this did not materialise. This is regrettable, , especially in light of the number of references to gender and to GenCap, as well as the omission of some that would perhaps have strengthened the report.</b></p>	<p>29. o.k.</p> <p>30. One GenCap representative was interviewed (still aiting for confirmation of name), another invited to the second meeting with cross-cutting issues focal points</p>
<p><b>ICVA (19.03.2010)</b></p>	
<p>1. This set of comments focuses mainly on the recommendations, although begins with a few initial overall comments and a short section on missing issues. It does not represent all ICVA members’ views nor all the views of the subset of ICVA members involved in the Humanitarian Reform Project. It is hoped to receive a greater number of responses once the next draft is circulated.</p> <p><b>Overall comments:</b></p> <p>2. We welcome the report and much of it is positive with some good suggestions and recommendations for how to improve the system. In particular, ICVA appreciates the observation of the weaknesses in the present approach including the need to refocus the cluster approach vis-à-vis accountability to affected populations, greater appreciation and involvement of local actors, management responsibilities for NGOs, and inter-cluster coordination. We believe NGOs are positioned appropriately to contribute to improving the cluster approach in these areas.</p> <p>3. The observations do not sufficiently hold the UN system, including the ERC, OCHA and global cluster leads, to account for the ongoing weaknesses in the system. CEI noted that major weaknesses in the cluster system three years ago were: “the cluster approach has not lead to observable increases in ultimate (beneficiary) accountability, serious questions persist about the POLR, results of global capacity building have not fed through to field operations, while marginal gains in international partnership (INGO), there have been no significant gains for local NGOs and partners, engagement with host government has suffered from insufficient emphasis and strategic focus, great variation in individual cluster performance.” These are the major findings of CEII as well. What has changed? Why has there been little change? Why is</p>	<p>1. no comment</p> <p>2. no comment</p> <p>3. Phase 1 of the evaluation had a significantly different approach than phase 2 and was therefore not used as a baseline. Rather, the guiding question was to assess the operational effectiveness and main outcomes of the cluster approach to date. The final version will include a table showing how our recommendations relate to the recommendations of phase 1, providing some flavour of how much has changed.</p>

<p>there no mention of the remarkable similarity in the findings!</p> <p>4. The recommendations are insufficiently operational, e.g. 'Strengthen links between global, national, and local clusters' or 'Increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues'. There are often good recommendations but will benefit from the management matrix to identify how to operationalise them. We would like to see more specific and practical suggestions for the different actors including distinguishing which cluster members have a responsibility for action (see below).</p> <p>5. Many recommendations are for a large audience “clusters”. Clusters are comprised of many actors. If these recommendations could be made more specific where appropriate to target action, e.g. UN agencies, INGOs, etc. For example, recommendations related to accountability/participation could be targeted to (not only to) INGOs who have experience in this area.</p> <p>6. While the evaluators mention that annex 1 will include specific reference to the case studies or other materials that justify these recommendations, we would like to see more analysis in the actual text.</p> <p>7. The executive summary should be longer and include more reference to actual findings in case studies and other sources of information: this may be the most important part of the document as many stakeholders, particularly in the field, will be unable to find time to read 105 pages.</p> <p>8. There are inconsistencies in the executive summary, e.g. “clusters have improved coverage of humanitarian needs in some thematic areas, e.g. GBV and disability” but then in the next paragraph says multi-dimensional and cross-cutting issues are neglected. This needs more precise articulation.</p> <p>9. Did the evaluators observe the following: NGOs note that viewing humanitarian response through the lens of the cluster system can result in an over-simplification of the humanitarian situation, which is in fact endlessly complex. If the evaluators’ findings are consistent with this statement we would appreciate an explicit statement early in the report to this effect.</p> <p>10. Weak participation of local actors: this is well treated in the report, and is an important challenge for INGOs which work in clusters when their local partners do not. It means the</p>	<p>4. It is our understanding that a management response matrix will be developed with the IASC working group.</p> <p>5. Where possible, we have tried to differentiate and to specify more.</p> <p>6. This is not possible without significantly expanding the length of the text – which is already too long in its current form. We have included specific examples for almost all findings and will develop the table for annex 1 for the final version to provide an overview of how common findings are.</p> <p>7. Have expanded the executive summary to 5 pages, which we see as the limit for a summary.</p> <p>8. No inconsistency since we use the definition of cross-cutting issues as currently contained on the humanitarian reform page – which does not count GBV and disability as cross-cutting issues, but as thematic (sub-)clusters.</p> <p>9. No. We did not observe this. What we did observe is that the cluster approach strengthens humanitarian identity. The related finding in § 118 discusses the sometimes negative consequences of this. This was, however mainly backed by the oPt study, not by others, and is therefore not a main finding of the evaluation.</p> <p>10. Have tried to do so with the help of workshop participant, but would appreciate the chance to further refine this, potentially with your</p>
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clusters lose expertise, perspective and input of local actors. It would be more helpful if the analysis within the body of the report were more in-depth and was translated into more workable recommendations, identification of best practice, and perhaps incentives or repercussions when local actors are neglected.

11. The report brings up an interesting discussion about what we want with the cluster approach and what can realistically be expected and achieved with the cluster approach/system. The statement on page 68 regarding participation of national & local NGOs: '...the strength of the clusters lies in creating inclusive fora and in facilitating learning, not in coordinating the immediate response to sudden on-set disasters' would benefit from further clarification. Is it in the view of the evaluators that a rapid response does not depend on the clusters? The cluster approach is only one pillar/element of the humanitarian reform and established as a system for improving coordination, predictability and efficient response etc *but not necessarily timely?*
12. Elsewhere in the report it is stated that coordinating through the cluster system does not necessarily mean or result in joint actions/response. Does this mean that that cluster is not achieving its stated objective? Is it a realistic objective? The clusters do provide potential for greater inclusiveness and learning by bringing all these actors together, but we also know that it is most often a very diverse group of actors and hence there are limits to what can be expected in terms of e.g. common positions and agreement on approaches and methods. This is further complicated where NGOs are concerned about humanitarian space.

**Omissions in the report:**

13. A lot is written and talked about partnership in humanitarian action and specifically through the clusters. However the report does not address (or did not evaluate?) the performance of the clusters vis-à-vis Principles of Partnership, and *why* partnership in particular with local actors rarely takes place within the context of the clusters or what can be done about it.
14. Is it sufficient explanation that the cluster system (in fact all pillars of humanitarian reform) is almost exclusively international?
15. What are the/should there be incentives for UN agencies and INGOs to bringing in national partners?
16. The synthesis report should not just draw on the experiences of and include examples from the 6 case study countries. Much documentation and information has been submitted to the evaluators, and the learning from these reviews should be referred to in the report. We've attached two such reports here (Clusters and Disability/Handicap International and Review of experience of NGO cluster co-leads/ICVA-HRP).

input, as well as that of the NGOs and humanitarian reform project.

11. We revised this section following comments that made it clear to us that we had not paid sufficient attention to global preparedness activities (the evaluation had a country focus and excluded preparedness from its TORs since this was covered in phase 1)
12. The evaluators found that clusters currently only rarely result in joint actions. We believe that the cluster approach should not necessarily aim at "joint response" and have tried to capture the current working and our vision in the "practice model", p. 60.
13. s. analysis § 111 and rec. 2
14. The Principles of Partnership were "mainstreamed" by analysing whether or not clusters promote partnerships. Could you explain what you mean by "the performance of the clusters vis-à-vis Principles of Partnership"?
15. Lack of incentives is included as an explanatory factor.
16. Thanks a lot, they are very instructive. We have done a literature research as well, but believe that the evaluation should present findings from the research conducted for it, not secondary sources.

<p>17. In general, there is not enough identification of good practice which might be integrated into the ‘challenges/best practice and recommendations’ box in the Executive Summary. This document does not contribute enough to learning for change.</p> <p>18. On the ground, the role of humanitarian coordinators is to ensure that the clusters function adequately and that there are functional lines of accountability. This should be addressed in a more elaborate way in the report. It is practically non-existent.</p> <p>19. Accountability to affected populations, while a very welcome suggestion to re-focus accountability lines of clusters, is not adequately translated into practical recommendations. Clusters do not have a good understanding of what accountability means, strategies and methods/practice that will help achieve it, and how to measure whether or not they are achieving it. Global clusters, cluster coordinators, cluster members all need more awareness raising and practical capacity building in this regard. Accountability is not limited to participation and participatory approaches or risks being oversimplified and options to achieve more accountable humanitarian operations limited. Perhaps review Humanitarian Accountability Partnership or the Emergency Capacity Building project in this regard.</p> <p><b>Feedback on Recommendations:</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 1: Shift focus of the cluster approach from the global to the local level.</b></p> <p>20. We agree with intent of this recommendation: CE2 findings are that often local actors within clusters find global cluster materials and support of little help. It is important to note here that humanitarian response should be adapted to the national/local context. A shift of resources and attention to the local level would therefore most welcome. Many NGOs have been struggling with this for a long time, and feedback is that the suggestions and recommendations given in the evaluation report is what has already been done for quite some time so this recommendation needs to be more bold.</p> <p>21. At the same time, global clusters have not yet achieved what it was that they were supposed to do, i.e. provide relevant and timely support to national/local clusters. Global clusters should not be undermined by this recommendation. More needs to be included in the report on why</p>	<p>17. Working on highlighting good practice better, yet this is difficult to do well in the few hours we have to produce the first draft. We will definitely keep it in mind for the final draft, however, when we will need to discuss how much more we can include in the text given size constraints.</p> <p>18. We found that most humanitarian coordinators play a marginal role vis-à-vis clusters (s. chapter 4.7 and 5.2). It is not taken up in the recommendations because the evaluation team believes that other elements are more important for improving cluster performance and their effect on humanitarian response.</p> <p>19. Two major ingredients for accountability to affected populations are included now: Participation (incl. information / communication) and standards (especially local standards).</p> <p>20. o.k.</p> <p>21. This is part of the findings and included in chapter 4.3</p>
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<p>global clusters are not supporting local clusters in the way originally intended and practical suggestions on how to change this. Is it that national/local clusters don't know what support is available? Do they find this support not suited to their needs?</p> <p>22. As a major handicap in the first weeks of a rapid onset disaster is lack of experience human resources, it is important that global clusters maintain sufficient capacity to provide surge</p> <p>23. Is it in the findings of the evaluators that the differing mandates between global and national/local level clusters is not sufficiently clear? For example, the recommendation that decision-making should be decentralised. What are or should be the mandates of global vs. national/local levels of decision making?</p> <p>24. The focus on training should also shift to target national/local cluster members and agency staff who could take on cluster coordination and co-ordination roles if necessary. Training should not be confined to, or specifically target, UN staff, but conscious efforts (and targets put in place) should be made to include people across the range of cluster membership. Staff at the national and local level often need are short concise guidance materials; 5 pages rather than 50. This is the kind of thing that global clusters should produce. While this recommendation would appear to address capacity gaps at the national/local level, how do the evaluators rationalise this with the large numbers of actors and countries that this recommendation targets? Perhaps re-orienting the global cluster rapid response support to focus not on acting as coordinators but to building immediate capacity through mentoring of locally identified coordinators in the first month post-disaster would be more helpful.</p> <p>25. This recommendation <i>to provide clearly designated coordination capacities for local clusters</i> could go further and propose that in crises where main cluster activities are far from the capital, the regional/local hubs should be the base for the cluster coordinator, who should not automatically be sited in the capital city, or that a minimum number of days should be spent in field locations (not just "field days" which can be few and far between). Data on relative costs allocated to/used by global versus national level clusters is important to refer to in this regard. The recent example of the response in Haiti illustrates this in that the over-emphasis on Port Au Prince meant delays in starting clusters in Jacmel as there were insufficient capacities or resources dedicated. In fact, could you be more specific what is meant by national cluster coordinator 'field days'; what are the objectives, activities, etc.</p> <p>26. 6 month minimum deployment target should be kept, although we recognise that it may be hard to achieve, it should be something to aim for. The negative impact of many short-term and rotating surge capacity staff is particularly felt by local actors who may be more marginalised by international staff coming into post with little relevant background or knowledge of the context or contacts: partnership working suffers in this regard. The ERC should hold global cluster lead agencies to account for their commitment.</p>	<p>22. Is already covered by the paragraph on preparedness</p> <p>23. OK- already taken into account- see bullet point about global cluster supporting national and local one.</p> <p>24. Ok, we add a mention about providing training for non- UN...</p> <p>25. Included-</p> <p>26. Done</p>
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<p>27. We fully agree with the proposal that global clusters adopt a ‘service mentality’ for national/local clusters. ICVA members experience is that tools being developed at global level are not shared at national/local level. And that best practice and innovation at national level is not sufficiently being capture by global level and re-disseminated. This is also relevant for the recommendation on learning.</p> <p>28. Information flow between the global and national/local level needs to improve and specific learning from the country level needs to be included in information strategies and tools at the global level. There is therefore a need to ensure that national level cluster coordinators have sufficient financial and human resources to do this.</p> <p>29. There is a need to further clarify OCHA’s role in this regard in providing training for clusters, e.g. in facilitation skills, information management etc. The case of OCHA’s role in Myanmar in providing field level cluster coordination training was useful in the response to cyclone Nargis. The evaluation should give more detail recommendations to OCHA in terms of its responsibilities (see more in recommendation 4).</p> <p><b>Recommendation 2: Focus on strengthening the quality of humanitarian response:</b></p> <p>30. 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point: Add here specifically that the meetings on mutual accountability with the HC should include cluster coordinators. In general the report needs to focus much more on the role and potential role of the HC in improving cluster performance.</p> <p>31. The recommendation to <i>facilitate the participation of national and local NGOs</i> is good. Research undertaken by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project show that where NGOs act as cluster co-leads more NGOs are likely to be participating in a cluster. Furthermore, to enable this, donors should be encouraged to expect that the funding proposals from NGOs will include allocations to support NGO involvement in clusters and part of this cost will be to work with national and local NGO partners in enhancing their participation. We propose re-wording the first half of this recommendation to read: “the strength of clusters lies in creating inclusive fora and in facilitating learning. Clusters should therefore encourage the participation...”. Providing transport costs oversimplifies problems of access for local NGOs. Reword this phrase to “ensure cluster meetings are accessible for local actors, including consideration of location, transport time and cost, security protocols for local NGOs, etc.</p> <p>32. ”<i>Strengthen role of clusters in using participatory approaches</i>. This recommendation was discussed at the workshop and the suggestion was to re-word this to “in setting minimum standards for accountability, including using participatory approaches”. In addition to cluster leads/coordinators, this recommendation should be directly addressed to NGOs who have much experience in this area and can contribute accordingly, not least as these standards affect how they operate during an emergency.</p>	<p>27. o.k.</p> <p>28. already included</p> <p>29. Included in the definition and the strengthening of OCHA’s role (potential role in such training)</p> <p>30. We added cluster coordinators in the recommendation. For comments about HC involvement, see previous comments above.</p> <p>31. The suggestions were mostly integrated in the recommendation.</p> <p>32. We believe that we should remain realistic to what the clusters could achieve in terms of accountability to affected populations, as there are many other factors to take into account. The recommendation has been revised in order to better highlight the importance of enhancing downward accountability in general.</p>
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<p>33. The recommendation to <i>increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues</i> should put a caveat that appropriate cross cutting issues vary from situation to situation (to avoid oversimplification) and also include issues such as DRR and psychosocial in the cluster approach. The report mentions this without naming the above mentioned sub clusters/cross cutting issues.</p> <p>34. Increased consideration of mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues is essential. But this recommendation does not address the other problems that result from poor inter-cluster coordination. A specific recommendation on how to improve inter-cluster coordination is needed.</p> <p>35. Bullet point 7: It is clear that different understanding of needs in different phases of the emergency. Clusters need to play a role in conducting the right ENA at the right time. Clusters have an important role to play in ensuring rationalisation of findings of different sources of information (sometimes duplication is okay), facilitating discussion with all cluster stakeholders. Including national/local NGOs in this is important, as often their data is considered less reliable. The contribution of clusters to ENA should be considered in light of the recently established IASC Task Force on Needs Assessment and the different phases/types of needs assessment. Inter-cluster coordination is essential in this regard as well, particularly in initial inter-sectoral ENA.</p> <p>36. Given the above and other issues such as the lack of cross-sectoral prioritisation of needs, led by the HCT and HC, there is a need to have a specific recommendation for inter-cluster coordination.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 3: Reinforce linkages with other coordination and response mechanisms:</b></p> <p>37. Clarify that timely response to emergencies should not be compromised by the implementation of the cluster approach. As discussed at the workshop, there appears to be some confusion regarding this sentence.</p> <p>38. Add after <i>'..sustainability of intervention, coherence with present and future development.'</i></p> <p>39. This recommendation misses any discussion/reference to disaster risk reduction/preparedness, existence of national platforms for action, etc. This needs to be explored in the report/text and analysis and the recommendation needs to link more explicitly to this aspect.</p> <p>40. 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point: Clarify that this analysis should be done as part of preparedness exercises and regularly updated as, according to issued guidance, clusters should be activated by the HC in conjunction with humanitarian actors, within 24 hours of a sudden onset emergency.</p>	<p>33. Suggestions taken into account.</p> <p>34. There is one recommendation about inter-cluster gaps/coordination.</p> <p>35. Suggestions taken into account. Better emphasis on the need to include local./national NGOs in discussion and on the role of clusters in ENA.</p> <p>36. There is one recommendation about inter-cluster gaps/coordination.</p> <p>37. Done in the findings</p> <p>38. no comment</p> <p>39. see bullet point about assessment of existing mechanisms</p> <p>40. o.k. done</p>
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**Recommendation 4: Strengthen cluster management:**

Most of the recommendations in this section are good, although they continue to focus heavily on needs of the international system.

41. The report does not include sufficient evaluation of the experiences of Strategic Advisory Groups, cluster steering groups, or alternative forms of management. This is a major omission and should be addressed as there may be much to learn from these experiences.
42. Mention of cluster co-leadership belongs under management; not hidden in quality (recommendation 2). The findings regarding the advantages (and disadvantages) of cluster co-leadership are not clearly described so the argument that NGOs should play a greater role in co-management is not sufficiently justified. Please also see attached review of co-lead experience in four countries. To be presented to the IASC WG on this issue. This document can be quoted.
43. The role of OCHA is integral and the recommendation needs to be made stronger and more specific, e.g. inter cluster coordination, support to clusters in terms of inter-cluster skills, e.g., facilitation, establishment of local cluster and cluster coordinator of the last resort (COLR) . OCHA further needs to be held accountable for its performance; evaluations such as real time evaluations need to include evaluation of OCHA's role.
44. The role of the HC needs to be drawn out further in the report, both in the context of the findings section and the recommendations. The key accountability relationship should be between the HC and the cluster coordinator as much as with the head of the lead agency. As the overall coordinator of the humanitarian response, the HC should be able to hold cluster coordinators to account. This should be a clear recommendation from this evaluation. The 2006 IASC Guidance Note for cluster lead agencies states that sector/cluster lead agencies are accountable to the HC for ensuring that the tasks mentioned in the Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster Leads at the country level are carried out effectively. In practice mechanisms to operationalise this have not been spelled out clearly and in many cases HCs are not closely involved with ensuring that cluster lead agencies deliver on their commitments or perform to standard. The expectations and role of the HCs need to be much more thoroughly treated in the synthesis report and taken into account in the subsequent recommendations
45. The synthesis report and recommendations do not clearly describe any findings regarding the accountability of cluster coordinators to their heads of agency at a country level or the issue of mutual accountability of the cluster coordinator to the cluster membership, and the cluster membership to each other. Please be more specific about what you mean by accountability.

41. Nothing came from the 6 case studies...

42. This specific recom is now part of the global recommendation on management of clusters- too late to include more about this specific point... room for other work to be done!

43. Done

44. Our recommendation goes as far as we could in view of the fact that UN agencies have very strong and opposite view in terms of internal accountability within their own institutional set-up.

45. See country studies for example of peer accountability- which is one of the important finding of all country studies. The accountability of cluster coordinator to their head of agency is largely depending on whether there is or not dedicated cluster coordinator. The TOR of dedicated and non-dedicated cluster coordinator differ on that.

<p>46. In the global cluster lead retreat held in late 2008 it was suggested that lead agencies include cluster responsibilities in the ToR of their Heads of Agency/Country Representatives: the Synthesis Report does not adequately assess whether this has been done and what has the subsequent impact been in cases where it has been done (part of mainstreaming). We suggest this should be a clear recommendation coming from the Cluster Evaluation Phase 2.</p>	<p>46. no comment</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5: Clusters relationship with financing mechanisms:</b></p>	
<p>47. We agree with bullet point 3 on creating strategic links between clusters and bilateral donors. This echoes the findings and recommendations of the NGOs and HRP Synthesis Report and is something which the Humanitarian Coordinator, through his/her leadership role should take a primary role in achieving: cf the role of the previous HC in DRC in this regard, and the DFID evaluation of its own participation in clusters in Myanmar.</p>	<p>47. o.k.</p>
<p>48. The recommendation of cluster lead organisations having access to flexible budget lines and/or stockpiles is maybe a useful recommendation in terms of advocacy vis-à-vis donors, but we question how realistic this is, at least in the short run.</p>	<p>48. let's try.</p>
<p>49. "Further clarify what the 'provider of last resort' entails and strengthen this role". As mentioned above, this is not a very operational recommendation and efforts have already been made to clarify this concept several times with little success. There should be an analysis of why this hasn't worked recommendation on what else can be done, that hasn't already been tried (realising that the problem with the concept of PoLR is a more structural one).</p>	<p>49. no comment.</p>
<p>50. NGOs need to have access to flexible funding mechanisms, particularly for rapid response which the evaluation states is not the strength of the cluster approach at present. This recommendation needs to mention that rapid response and rapid response funding should not be compromised by giving more control of pooled funding to clusters.</p>	<p>50. not included</p>
<p>51. Given the lack of local actors in the clusters, proposals to increase funding going through the clusters will mean that their access to funding becomes more and more marginalised unless they really become fully integrated as cluster members. The recommendation should include the development of clear procedures that can be monitored by cluster stakeholders that ensure the participation of local actors in decision making as well as application to funding. Links to the evaluation of pooled funding mechanisms in this regard and their relevance to the clusters should be explicit.</p>	<p>51. o.k. specific mention added</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6: Address Political issues and define the limits of integration:</b></p>	
<p>52. We strongly agree with the need to address political issues and define the limits of integration.</p>	<p>52. no comment</p>
<p>53. We would like to see the specific recommendation on renaming the OneResponse website made within the body of the report, included here.</p>	<p>53. o.k. re-included</p>

<p>54. The last bullet point that strengthening the role of NGOs in the protection of humanitarian space must include the HC in the list of those responsible for making this happen. The HC is supposed to be neutral and impartial, safeguarding humanitarian principles. However the complicated issue of when the HC wears multiple hats (is also the RC or DSRSG) is not mentioned here.</p> <p>55. The HC must take a leading role in ensuring that NGOs, both national and international, where they wish to, are represented on and play an active role in the HCTs having a voice in evaluating and influencing cluster performance.</p> <p>56. We strongly agree that there is a need for clusters to be clearly separate from integrated missions and the political and military objectives of peacekeeping missions. Much more clarity is needed in this regard. Without this NGO's independence is undermined. This trend of increasing integration needs to be reversed if NGOs are to fully participate in clusters, HCTs and other governance structures.</p> <p>57. The last bullet point needs to be separated into 2. NGOs will only wish to participate in HCTs once humanitarian space is protected. This should be sequential and can only come afterwards.</p> <p>58. NGOs experience in relation to bullet point 3 would reinforce this recommendation and add the following. A food security and livelihoods cluster needs to include food and cash interventions, and agriculture. However it is unclear if this is already a decision and who is the cluster lead agency. This decision should also involve UNDP who also work in livelihoods and cash.</p>	<p>54. OK, reference to PoP included</p> <p>55. We included HC in the target audience of the recom.</p> <p>56. no comment.</p> <p>57. Difficult to do so... but inclusion of PoP</p> <p>58. OK, taken into account.</p>
<p><b>NRC (17.03.2010)</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [p.7] <b>Executive Summary:</b> Change the wording “downside” to “challenges”</li> <li>2. [p.8/p.9] <b>Recommendations:</b> “Conduct and analysis of existing coordination and response mechanisms and capacities”. Add to this recommendation: “before activating the cluster”</li> <li>3. [p.9] <b>Recommendation:</b> Change into: “OCHA has a key role to play in making clusters work at country level by providing the framework and infrastructure for coordination. (§36) but this role is often weak in practice”</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “shortcomings and challenges”</li> <li>2. “before implementing clusters”</li> </ol> <p>Comments 3-10: Recommendations have been revised in the “draft” version.</p>

4. [p.9] **Recommendations:** Change into: **Strengthen cluster management and implementation modalities;** Ensure that cluster coordinators have sufficient and dedicated capacities. Provide cluster coordinators with a common, basic cluster management handbook or tool kit. Clarify the criteria and processes for activating and closing clusters. Improve information sharing and knowledge management. Clarify and strengthen the crucial role of OCHA and enhance OCHA resources for field support to clusters. Strengthen the "mainstreaming" of cluster lead responsibilities. Define clear constituencies and terms of reference for different meetings and fora.
5. [p.9] **Recommendations:** Change into: **"Define adequate ways for linking clusters and financing mechanisms;** Further clarify what "provider of last resort" entails and strengthen this role. (POLR is a separate point from hum financing mechanisms); Strengthen the link between clusters in pooled funds in an adequate way this is vague, what is the purpose of a strengthened link?.; Create strategic links between clusters and bilateral donors.; Strengthen links to and the inclusion of non-traditional donors.
6. [p.9] **Recommendations- Comment:** These recommendations need to be developed further with a view to optimizing the relationship between clusters and hum financing mechanisms
7. [p.9] **Recommendations Comment:** The recommendation § 131 is an obvious point. "Clusters as coordination\*"" platforms are not in a position to address deeply rooted political and institutional questions. (§131)." Yet, these questions present an obstacle to the effective functioning of clusters, for example in the case of conflicts between status-based and needs-based approaches or governance This won't change with the cluster evaluation, UNHCR is mandated for a status group, refugees, and this is outside the scope of hum reform.
8. [p.9] **Recommendations Comment:** the following recommendation is too vague! "Focus the activities of global clusters on identifying and addressing conflicts and systemic incoherence".
9. [p.10] **Recommendation Comment:** Comment to the following recommendation: "Address political issues and define the limits of integration: Focus the activities of global clusters on identifying and addressing conflicts and systemic incoherence.; Resolve conflicts relating to the governance of the Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics Cluster" - **This seems to detailed to warrant a key recommendation**
10. [p.10] Recommendation Comment: "Implement the decision to create a global Food Security Cluster". **There is no such decision;** "Develop guidance on the relationship between clusters and integrated missions". **Yes, this is a key point for NGOs;** Ensure the

<p>confidentiality of sensitive information.</p> <p>11. [p.11, para. 2] Add: “Phase 2 assesses the operational effectiveness and main outcomes of the cluster approach, focusing on country level results and effects and aiming to bring the reality on the ground back to decision makers at the global level” <b>with a view to improving the operational impact of the cluster approach.</b></p> <p>12. [p.15, para.10, bullet point, 4] “Cluster and organizations: The evaluation analyzes all clusters activated and cross-cutting issues relevant to the six countries. The stand-alone country reports provide information on individual clusters and show that individual cluster performance varies strongly between countries and between clusters. However, common strengths and weaknesses can be found across clusters.” <b>Comment: What are they? Which are the consistently underperforming clusters?</b></p> <p>13. [p.20/21; para.18; bullet point 6]: “Terminology” – <b>Comment: Co lead as a term is only valid for agencies designated as co lead at global level, such as UNHCR-IOM for CCCM. It does not correctly describe the practice of NGOs assuming a co-chairing(facilitating role aside a UN agency at country level , mainly because the concept of cluster lead has accountability implications.</b></p> <p>14. [p.24/25; para.27, bullet point 5]: <b>add one further bullet point:</b> Guidance on cluster co-chair arrangements at country and sub-national level.</p> <p>15. [p.30, para. 36] NRC finds that OCHA plays a weak role in the start up phase after cluster activation at country level and that this is one of the main deficiencies when it comes to making those clusters operational or even understanding what they are supposed to do. Did the evaluation reveal similar findings? If so , it should be included here</p> <p>16. [p.30, para 38] to say that OCHA actually fills this function in practice is an exaggeration compared to NRC’s field experience</p> <p>17. [p.30, para. 39] Are these points drawn from actual field experience and generated from those benefiting from OCHA’s support functions, or are they drawn from OCHA’s own official list of what they do? This should be clarified.</p> <p>18. [p.33, para. 46] In oPt there is a mix of clusters and sectors, and a mix of whether they operate oPt or just Gaza. This is possibly an example supporting the findings of the study where formal arrangements can be confusing, especially at the field level and also relates to the activation and exit of the cluster approach / integration with existing mechanisms.</p>	<p>11. see section 3 bullet two</p> <p>12. This is the methods, not the findings section</p> <p>13. Included distinction between co-lead and co-chair or co-facilitation arrangements</p> <p>14. Ok / we did also find this.</p> <p>15. No, not necessarily. It really depends on the strength and quality of the country office.</p> <p>16. Ok – we have changed the “fulfills the following tasks” wording: These are roles that OCHA has assumed or works on, but that does not mean it does all of them well.</p> <p>17. see above</p> <p>18. no comment</p>
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<p>19. [p. 34, para. 51] Where was this synergy poor or non-existent; who works in accordance with the TOR for HC that stipulate that the HC is responsible for holding cluster leads accountable for the performance of clusters and for establishing mechanisms for inter-cluster coordination, needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>20. [para 53] So, no correlation between emergency funding tools and the gaps in response identified by clusters? If that is true, the eval. should make more of a point of it.</p> <p>21. [para 54] It would be helpful to make some field examples here as it sounds like pure NGO advocacy that is well known from before.</p> <p>22. [para 62] Exchange the words “lead” with “facilitator”</p> <p>23. [para 92] Is this saying that the whole POLR concept is unrealistic? If so, should it be scrapped?</p> <p>24. [para 119] here it would be useful to provide some examples</p> <p>25. [para.127] The report should argue this case/summarise how it arrived at the conclusion based on the evidence collected. As it stands, it sounds like a normative judgment. The main reasons for the benefits only marginally outweighing the costs should be focused on the weak field impact, gap filling, quality and speed of response etc.</p> <p>26. [para 127] exchange the word “downsides” with “challenges”</p> <p>27. [p.69, recommendation 2, bullet point 8] Exchange the words “lead” with “facilitator”</p> <p>28. [p.71, recommendation 4, bullet point 5] Proposal for other wording: <b>Clarify and strengthen the role of OCHA.</b> The country studies have shown that OCHA is crucial at field and national levels for implementing an effective cluster approach, e.g. through its functions in information and knowledge management, its role in promoting inter-cluster coordination and its potential role in hosting advisors on cross-cutting issues,</p>	<p>19. In all other cases (s. above / first sentence) &amp; Included in § 49</p> <p>20. Where they do exist and are significant (only DRC among the case study countries), there is a clear link.</p> <p>21. Amended to make clear that this was a frequently voiced concern at the field level.</p> <p>22. o.k.</p> <p>23. S. conclusion on this. We would suggest trying to strengthen the original concept again.</p> <p>24. Included some examples</p> <p>25. Section has been changed and placed after the summary of findings. It is our (subjective) judgment – everybody should use the findings summarized in the table and come to her own conclusions.</p> <p>26. see above</p> <p>27. o.k.</p> <p>28. o.k.</p>
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<p>as well as facilitation trainers and mentors. Member states should recognize this critical role as a matter of priority for the OCHA donor support group, strengthen the capacity of OCHA to fulfill it.</p> <p>29. [recommendation 5] This is vague, we need a clearer more forceful recommendation. What added value can clusters bring to funding decisions? Is it needs assessment, overview of who does what where, overview of operational capacity of each actor within the cluster, prioritization of projects, gap analysis or something else? Once these elements are provided by the clusters, what body (outside clusters) should take the funding decisions? Does not the HC-cluster link need to be enhanced in order to make this cluster-funding relationship work?</p> <p>30. <b>[recommendation 5, bullet point 3]</b> Proposed wording: <b>Create strategic links between clusters and bilateral donors</b>, not by regularly including donors in cluster meetings, but for example by inviting them to individual meetings and by informing donors of priorities and gaps identified by clusters. There may be opening for standing invitations of donors to “technical”clusters.</p> <p>31. [recommendation 6] This recommendation is overloaded and the ref to addressing pol issues is vague, so NRC suggests focusing only on the integrated mission point, or split the recommendation in two.</p> <p>32. [recommendation 6, bullet point 1] Comment : <b>“Focus the activities of global clusters on identifying and addressing conflicts and systemic incoherence</b> in humanitarian response (?), such as the definition of protection we have one in the IDP protection handbook, agreed by IASC or the use of status-based vs. needs-based approaches.” This is about mandates of protection mandated agencies, cannot be easily resolved, not an actionable recommendation.</p> <p>33. [recommendation 6, bullet point 3] Comment: no decision yet</p> <p>34. [recommendation 6, bullet point 6] <b>Strengthen the role of NGOs in the preservation of humanitarian space</b> through their increased influence in decision making of Humanitarian Country Teams, or their equivalents.</p>	<p>29. Recommendation changed in reaction to workshop, but in focusing how funding mechanisms can strengthen clusters.</p> <p>30. o.k. – but with regard to “there may be opening for standing invitations of donors to “technical” clusters. – we disagree - but invitations as needed are a good way to cover this</p> <p>31. no comment</p> <p>32. o.k. – deleted</p> <p>33. o.k.</p> <p>34. o.k. Current version: Strengthen decisions of Humanitarian Country Teams relating to humanitarian space through an increased involvement of NGOs, based on the 2006 Principles of Partnership and the 2009 guidance note on Humanitarian Country Teams.</p>
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**OCHA Consolidated (18.03.2010)**

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| <p>1. We have already had the opportunity to give you some general feedback and to commend you on very well-written and insightful report which we hope will help galvanize our collective efforts to improve the cluster approach. This paper will therefore focus on (1) terminology, (2) factual corrections, (3) specific comments on substance and (4) suggestions on areas not covered or in need of further elaboration in the report. There is also a final section specifically on the area of 'Information Management' as we received very detailed comments on this subject. The comments below have been collected from every section of OCHA.</p> <p>2. <b><u>(1) Suggestions regarding terminology:</u></b> We would prefer if you could refer to the "implementation" or "formalization" of the cluster approach rather than "activation" as in some countries, clusters lie dormant and are then re-activated, so the term "activation" is misleading. For similar reasons, "transition" is preferable to "exit" as clusters may morph/merge into sectors etc.</p> <p>3. Regarding terminology related to the cluster approach in general, the following definitions were agreed by the IASC Working Group in 2009 (we have sent you the letter regarding 'dual responsibilities' with these definitions separately). We try not to use the term 'Cluster Lead' any more as it has caused considerable confusion:</p> <p>4. <b>Global Cluster Lead Agency:</b> This is an agency/organization at global level that has been designated by the IASC as cluster lead agency for a particular sector.</p> <p>5. <b>Cluster Lead Agency (country level):</b> This is an agency or organization that has been designated by the Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) as cluster lead agency for a particular sector at the country level, following consultations with the Humanitarian Country Team. (A cluster lead agency at the country level need not necessarily be the same agency/organization as the Global Cluster Lead Agency for that sector.)</p> <p>6. <b>Global Cluster Coordinator:</b> This is a person who has been designated as global cluster coordinator by the Global Cluster Lead Agency. This person is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and facilitation of the work of global cluster</p> <p>7. <b>Cluster Coordinator (country level):</b> This is a person who has been designated as cluster coordinator by the cluster lead agency at the country level. This person is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and facilitation of the work of the cluster.</p> | <p>1. no comment</p> <p>2. We are now using "implementation" and "transition" as well as "exit"</p> <p>3. no comment</p> <p>4. no comment</p> <p>5. We speak of "organization" since there are non-UN actors involved in lead positions</p> <p>6. no comment</p> <p>7. no comment</p> |
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**(2) Corrections/questions of fact**

<p>8. Page 19, under 3.1, paragraph 17, Box 1, Service clusters: Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (OCHA/WFP) should be changed to include UNICEF as follows: Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (OCHA/WFP/UNICEF).</p> <p>9. Page 24: we have already discussed the corrections/additions to be made in terms of forthcoming IASC guidance related to the cluster approach (please contact <a href="mailto:quickr@un.org">quickr@un.org</a> if more information/clarification needed).</p> <p>10. Page 32, para 44: does “coordination through clusters” mean within or between clusters (or both)?</p> <p>11. Page 37, para 61: is the interpretation of NGO support for the cluster approach as a “pragmatic position” backed up with any evidence? The suggestion is that NGOs are supporting it because of strategic considerations rather than because they believe in it, but there is no evidence that this is the case.</p> <p>12. Page 42, footnote: the footnote that states that "OCHA is currently conducting a review of information management systems" should read: "The IASC Task Force on Information Management is undertaking a review of the IASC endorsed <i>Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector leads and OCHA in Information Management</i>".</p> <p>13. Page 60, <i>Illustration 3: Contours of a “practice model”</i>: At the bottom of the diagram, under INPUTS <i>provided by IASC global clusters, OCHA, cluster leads organizations, cluster members</i>, we would prefer to refer simply to ‘Information Management’ rather than ‘Information Management System’.</p> <p>14. Page 69, Recommendation 2, final bullet point: should read “enhance their readiness to act as cluster co-leads <u>and co-facilitators</u>”. Could also add to final line, “Donors should ensure NGOs receive adequate support for <u>these roles, both at the global and country level</u>”.</p> <p>15. Page 74, Recommendation 6, bullet point 2: regarding “<i>conflicts relating to the governance of the ETC and Logistics clusters</i>”, action should be taken by "the Global ETC and Logistics Cluster membership and the IASC WG" and not by "OCHA and WFP".</p>	<p>8. Ok. We had been informed by UNICEF that it no longer exercised this role, but are happy to include whatever is the current formal definition.</p> <p>9. Thanks – all included.</p> <p>10. Within – clarified.</p> <p>11. Tried to clarify this in the text: The finding is that many NGOs used to oppose the cluster approach for principled / fundamental reasons and largely no longer do so today.</p> <p>12. ok</p> <p>13. o.k.</p> <p>14. o.k.</p> <p>15. Ok – but now restricted to ETC</p>
<p><b><u>(3) General comments on substance</u></b></p> <p>16. <b>Overall conclusion, cost-benefit analysis and the use of the word ‘downside’:</b> The overall conclusion presented in para.127 (pg 61) states: <i>‘Based on the analysis presented in the table below, the evaluation team has come to the conclusion that the benefits currently achieved by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides’</i>. As already stated during the workshop, OCHA is concerned</p>	<p>16. § revised in executive summary and conclusion</p>

that this rather negative 'headline' (which will be seized on by detractors and donors) does not actually reflect the body of the report, which is actually quite positive about the logic of the cluster approach, its achievements to date and crucially, its potential to learn from experience and to improve. Much of the report indicates that we have moved beyond the point of justifying the validity of the cluster approach. A more effective appraisal would be to indicate where on the road map the approach has reached and what are the major impediments to better performance.

17. The table which follows this conclusion (page 61) is rather disingenuous and misleading because it does not provide a fair cost/benefit analysis; the part dealing with costs (56.7m USD at the global level and more at the country level) says nothing about off-setting these against the savings and efficiency gains the cluster approach has brought through better planning, less duplication etc. As the report states itself, there is no baseline against which to measure any gains in efficiency so it is counter-intuitive to present a cost-benefit analysis in this way. Moreover, there is little recognition that the initial investments in building the cluster approach should be spread over the years (amortized) throughout which the products of that investment will be used (e.g. tools, policies, training modules, field support etc.). Further, OCHA would suggest that if the overall conclusion is that the cluster approach deserves continued support and investment, the focus should shift from cost-benefit analysis to *how* a system-wide effort could strengthen the implementation of the cluster approach.

18. Most of the items listed in the column entitled '*Downsides of the Cluster Approach*' (starting on page 61) are not in fact downsides of the cluster approach *per se*, but are either descriptions of operational constraints relating to the *implementation* of the cluster approach or long-standing problems relating to humanitarian response in general (i.e. they were present before the cluster approach was adopted). For example, it is impossible to state that "very little participation of affected populations" is a downside of the cluster approach as there is no evidence in the report to suggest participation of affected populations was greater before clusters were introduced or that clusters have had any effect on this type of participation either way. The only observation this evaluation could justifiably make is that in the countries studied, the cluster approach has not improved the participation of affected populations. Similarly, many challenges read as opportunities. This may suggest that a more effective analysis could focus on opportunities and threats.

## 2. Inclusiveness versus speed

19. OCHA questions the finding in para.114 (page 55) that '*the strength of the cluster approach lies in its inclusiveness, rather than speed*', and Recommendation No. 2 (page 68) that '*Clusters should therefore prioritize inclusiveness over speed*'. The cluster approach was part of a reform aimed at ensuring more a timely, predictable and adequate response and clusters should focus on both inclusiveness and speed, rather than prioritizing one over the other. Donors have invested

17. Table re-labelled. The table is not meant as a strict cost-benefit analysis, but as a summary of findings split onto positive and negative findings. The evaluation team believes that it is necessary to analyze where the implementation of the cluster approach currently stands. This then provides the basis for recommending to stay with the approach and suggesting steps for improving / strengthening the implementation.

18. Columns relabeled.

19. Preparedness was not within the scope of this evaluation, we can therefore not make recommendations on the subject. We realized that our focus relating to speed was one-sided due to this perspective and have a) made it much clearer that preparedness was not included in the analysis and b) that the issue of speed is much more complex and

heavily in assisting global clusters to build up surge rosters, standby capacities etc. in order to be able to respond much more speedily and effectively in sudden-onset emergencies. While it may be a fair observation (para. 115) that the cluster approach has '*been found to slow the response*' in some sudden-onset emergencies, many examples could also be cited of where clusters have helped to speed up the response through having readily identified lead agencies, stock piles, surge capacity and so forth. Instead of presenting this issue as an 'either/or', it may be preferable to place the emphasis on how inadequacies in preparedness could be addressed by Cluster Lead Agencies, OCHA and cluster members so that they could function better during demanding emergencies. It would be helpful if the report made concrete recommendations concerning preparedness (e.g., preparedness workshops bringing together surge capacity in the clusters, OCHA's inter-cluster coordination surge capacity and emergency response teams such as UNDAC). It would also be helpful if there were specific recommendations on the resources and mechanisms Global Cluster Lead Agencies need/ should put in place to ensure that clusters get the right quality and quantity of staff on the ground early, including Cluster Coordinators or if necessary, Cluster Coordination Teams (including Coordinators, Information Managers etc.).

nuanced.

### 3. 'Weakened ownership' by national authorities (page 52, para 106 onwards)

20. OCHA would question the finding that the cluster approach 'strengthens international coordination capacities in country, *thereby* undermining national ownership' (para 107, emphasis added). Even if the team observed a weakening of national ownership in the countries they visited, it is simplistic to conclude there is a causal relationship between strengthening international coordination and decreasing national ownership in situations where (a) there is no baseline data against which to compare developments and (b) there are such an array of factors which might be weakening national ownership, from the nature of the humanitarian emergency to the political situation in the country. It is also false, not to mention potentially damaging to the relationship between international humanitarian actors and national authorities, to state, "the activation of clusters therefore *implies* undermining ownership" (para. 108, emphasis added). The cluster approach was intended to support national efforts and lessen the burden on national authorities by giving more structure and accountability to international relief efforts, with clearly defined lead agencies whose role it is to act as easily identifiable counterparts to government leads, and who also have a capacity-building responsibility. A number of host governments in crisis-affected countries have given positive feedback on the cluster approach (e.g. Mozambique, Pakistan and the Philippines), especially when comparing it to the lack of coordination which went before.

20. We have amended the wording of this paragraph to make clearer that the current implementation of the cluster approach has often led to weaker ownership, but that this does not logically or necessarily have to be the case.

### 4. Recommendations

#### *General comments:*

<p>21. Would it be possible to reference some of the recommendations made in Cluster Evaluation I and to indicate where there is overlap and why progress has/has not been made?</p> <p>22. It would be helpful if the recommendations could be prioritized.</p> <p>23. The recommendations could be enhanced if they provided more <i>detailed</i> guidance with regard to how they could be taken forward over the next five years of humanitarian reform.</p>	<p>21. S. Annex to indicate overlap. An in-depth analysis on why progress has or has not been made was unfortunately beyond the scope of the evaluation.</p> <p>22. We have reordered the recommendations by priority but expect to work further on prioritization together with the IASC.</p> <p>23. This is also a step we would expect to develop together with the IASC.</p>
<p><b><i>Specific comments:</i></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Recommendation 2:</u></b></p>	
<p>24. Bullet point 1: “<i>This also requires shielding clusters from excessive procedural, reporting and information collection demands made by OCHA, cluster lead organizations and funding mechanisms, as clusters should not be used to substitute for weak UN reporting mechanisms</i>”. The report seems to suggest that better information sharing and knowledge management is needed but at the same time, the clusters should be shielded from information requests from OCHA. OCHA is actively working on streamlining requests for information to clusters but firmly believes that IM and reporting are central to an effective response.</p>	<p>24. Agreed / Reworded</p>
<p>25. Bullet point 4: “<i>Strengthen the role of clusters in using and promoting participatory approaches... supporting the design of communication strategies with affected population</i>”. Could reference be made to the ‘Communications with Disaster Affected Communities’ (CDAC) initiative used in Haiti post-earthquake 2010 as an example of good practice to build on?</p>	<p>25. yes</p>
<p>26. Bullet point 8: NGO fora such as Interaction, ICVA and SCHR could also be encouraged to undertake reviews of their capacities to meet the challenges ahead, 5 years since the beginning of the reform.</p>	<p>26. Reference to NGO consortia included</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation 3:</u></b></p>	
<p>27. In general, this recommendation could be broadened to look at the cluster approach in relation to national response capacities from the preparedness stage through the humanitarian response, recovery and longer-term development. The order of the bullet points could be changed accordingly, e.g. with (1) analysis of existing capacity and coordination mechanisms, (2) identification of partners, (3) cooperation and coordination between international and national actors at every stage from preparedness through to development.</p>	<p>27. o.k.</p>
<p>28. Regarding development actors, specific reference could be made to links with</p>	<p>28. o.k.</p>

<p>PDNAs/PCNAs, PRSPs, UNDAF/National Development Plans etc.</p> <p>29. This would be a good opportunity to urge development actors to also ensure they strengthen their linkages and cooperation with humanitarian actors so there is more continuity following the emergency phase, particularly regarding needs assessments.</p> <p>30. Could also urge donors to bridge their internal divide between ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’ funding and to commit to funding early recovery projects and initiatives. There has also been a recommendation that the IASC should consider the establishment of a discrete funding mechanism for Early Recovery.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 4:</u></p> <p>31. Bullet point 6: just to observe that the recommendation to ensure “<i>the presence of cluster coordinators together with heads of lead agencies in HCT meetings</i>” actually runs counter to current IASC guidance (and the letter on dual responsibilities) which urges Country Representatives of Cluster Lead Agencies sitting on the HCT to ensure they represent the interests of their cluster <i>as well as</i> their own agency interests. Currently, Cluster Coordinators do not normally attend HCT meetings but they report to their Cluster Lead Agency Country Representative so that he/she can properly represent the cluster in strategic discussions.</p> <p>32. Could raise the issue of cluster membership and whether there is a need for guidance on inclusion/exclusion of donors and representatives of the military which is currently being decided on a case by case basis in the field.</p> <p>33. Final bullet point: it would be helpful if this recommendation could be broadened to include meetings and fora at the <i>global</i> level.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 5:</u></p> <p>34. The recommendation could be broadened to look at ways of improving the response of clusters to offers of support/capacity/resources from the military and the private sector.</p> <p>35. Regarding the military: If /when the military offers capacities that neither Cluster Lead Agencies nor cluster members have, the latter should be able to tap into or mobilize these assets/capacities if it is the only way lives can be saved and suffering alleviated. This is in accordance with the provisions of the IASC-endorsed Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil-Defence Assets (MCDA) in Natural Disasters, which provides among other things, the use of MCDA as a last resort, defining the hierarchy of military humanitarian tasks as: 1) Direct; 2) Indirect; and 3) Infrastructure Support. The UN-CMCoord Officers, when deployed in theatre, are there to assist the RC/HC and Custer Lead Agencies with this as a cross-cutting cluster service.</p>	<p>29. Development actors included as “addressees” of the recommendation</p> <p>30. o.k.</p> <p>31. Mainstreaming recommendation now refers more generally to the task force on mainstreaming</p> <p>32. s rec.6</p> <p>33. o.k.</p> <p>34. o.k.</p> <p>35. Since we did not look at this issue in great detail, we do not feel comfortable including so much detail in the recommendation.</p>
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36. Could recommend more strategic cooperation between cluster members and the private sector. Bullet point 4: It would be helpful if the recommendation “*strengthen links to and the inclusion of non-traditional donors*” could also suggest ways this might be achieved.

**(4) General gaps/ areas which could be elaborated upon (the following are taken directly from comments received and are in no particular order)**

37. There could be more on the importance of HC leadership. There is little focus on the need for strategic thinking and informed decision making by the HC and HCT.

38. More thought could be given to the improvement of the monitoring and evaluation component within the cluster approach, and how to improve accountability, e.g. by appointing a custodian for oversight. The issue of accountability within the cluster approach and to affected populations is repeatedly raised by evaluations and humanitarian actors but rarely with any concrete recommendations.

39. Reporting was hardly mentioned. The synthesis report talks about IM but only in the context of tools such as websites and the 3W. It could also be that the countries that were chosen were not in an acute phase (Haiti was supposed to be but the others were protracted crises and therefore would not have a sitrep). Public information, in the context of coordination of/between the clusters, is not mentioned at all. PI support to the HC is a key way of supporting him/her and advocating action/mobilizing resources. PI coordination has also been shown to be an effective component of OCHA's inter-cluster coordination role both in preparedness and response.

**Information Management (particularly referring to pages 41 to 46)**

40. It would be helpful if the report could recommend that clusters provide IM Focal Points for the clusters so that an inter-cluster IM network could be established. This would go a long way to addressing ‘weak inter-cluster coordination: These IM Focal Points should have an IM background with core skills in IM, knowledge and understanding of the current IM tools available to them and the ability to use them. We also suggest that the report contains a recommendation on how the humanitarian system might collectively leverage the increasing interest in crisis information management from academia and the private sector.

41. There needs to be a link between IM , Needs Assessment and analysis. We should not

36. We fear that the recommendations section is already too long and detailed and have therefore not included further details at this stage. [Please see GPPi's research project on “Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal?”]

37. This is because we did not observe this importance strongly. While it seemed to be beneficial in DRC, we observed that clusters could also function relatively well without HC leadership.

38. Our recommendations include specific suggestions on how to increase peer accountability and how to strengthen participation as well as the use of (local) standards to increase accountability to the affected population. The evaluation team does not believe that much stronger hierarchical / control accountability would be as important.

39. The evaluation did not focus on these elements (s. guiding questions) and we were not pointed to them as important elements by humanitarian actors in country. We can therefore not really comment on this issue.

40. We have no basis for such a recommendation as we did not observe how useful a role IM focal points play – this should rather be included in the IM review.

41. Agreed.

<p>look at these issues separately but as a process where all the components need each other.</p> <p>42. The pilot of the Interagency Platform (provisionally called OneResponse) is an attempt to give the clusters a consistent platform in which to share information. A single platform among the clusters and OCHA will help decrease learning cycles for people when they are deployed, serves as a central repository for all disaster information and becomes a type "institutional memory" which can be used to promote organizational learning for future disasters.</p> <p>43. The '3W' is a tool that was designed solely as a contact management database. Over the past four years, it has grown based upon ad hoc requests and has therefore lost its focus of simply providing information on Who is doing What Where. There will be a complete review of the 3W to examine what the expectations are of this tool (what it can and cannot do). The fourth bullet point under paragraph 73 underlines the importance of not introducing a new tool in the middle of an emergency. There is a lack of discipline across the system in the development, use and improvement of tools. Better governance of tools is needed. OCHA can promote this but clusters and agencies need to buy in too (which they often do not do).</p> <p>44. The fifth bullet point under paragraph 73 seems to touch upon the need for agreement between clusters/sectors/organizations and OCHA/coordinating entity on what to share with each other, what not to share, and why. Quite often more can be shared if treated in a confidential manner and shared at a level where protection concerns are not compromised. Regarding the sixth bullet point under paragraph 73, this is where OCHA, as included in the Operational Guidance Note on IM, needs to conduct inter-cluster analysis (together with the expertise - clusters) and come up with options for decision-makers.</p>	<p>42. Ok – if actively maintained and well managed. The issue raised in the report only concerns the name of the platform.</p> <p>43. Not sure it does. Switching IM tools and having no compatibility between them is certainly harmful. Yet, as discussed in the report, we have also observed cases where clusters developed their own (new) specific IM tools and these proved very beneficial.</p> <p>44. no comment</p>
<p><b>OCHA – DPSS (18.03.2010) (JESSICA JORDAN)</b></p>	
<p><b>General Questions re: Document</b></p> <p>1. How are the findings and recommendations related to OCHA and to its Strategic Framework? What homework is it giving to each of the objectives under Strategic Framework 2010-2013? (This is something that each SF objective needs to answer for itself and we can do as DPSS as well).</p>	<p>1. We could take a look at this in a next step, if desired. For this evaluation, there was not even a guiding question relating to OCHA in the terms of reference.</p>

### Specific Comments on Document:

#### Executive Summary:

2. It would be useful for the executive summary to state the overall Objective of the Cluster approach so that all the findings, conclusions and recommendations reached are in function of that objective. As it stands, it is an inference which weakening the overall evaluation conclusions. Suggest to add some of the information found on top of Pg. 11.
3. Because the Exec Summary will, in all likelihood, be the part that most readers will focus on, it is important to spend a little more time developing it, particularly in relation to the “important improvements” and “important downside parts.” As it stands, too many of the key findings are glossed over and condensed, minimizing their importance.
4. The word *potential* is used often through-out the Executive Summary, this begs the conclusion that “no real benefit from the cluster approach has been measured; hence, its “potential” continues to be the driving force behind its implementation. Is this correct? If so, then we need to state it and clearly present why we should still go on/beat on “potential.”
5. Also, what do we mean by “significant resources?” It is important to tie that specificity into the justification for the conclusion of “going ahead based on the potential.”
6. The table on Pg.8 is very useful. Suggest re-examining the challenges column to ensure all listed there is in fact a challenge. Also, there are a few key findings/recommendations that could be added:
  - i.e: *In the majority, the UN agencies and international NGOs that make up the clusters, both globally and locally, have development interventions around the world which for many years have been incorporating, at the least, participatory methodologies and gender into their operations? Why then it is that when these same organizations begin to do humanitarian work they totally disregard those methodologies and acquired lessons learned on those topics? Applicable development process lessons learned need to be carried over into humanitarian work by individual cluster members.*
  - All other suggestions listed in text.
7. The table on Pg.8 presents both challenges and recommendations for global and field clusters; hence it might be useful to organize them accordingly i.e highlight the findings

2. Ok (briefly)

3. Expanded this

4. No. Current benefits already (slightly) outweigh costs and shortcomings. New formulation hopefully makes this clearer.

5. Resources specified.

6. Relabeled as “findings related to recommendations” (they are mainly, but not all challenges)

Very interesting reflection, but not one that we really focused on as part of this evaluation.

? No additional text received

7. That’s not really possible: The findings are all based on the country studies, yet action from global actors is often needed to address them.

at the global level and the findings at the local level separately.

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| <p>8. “Mainstreaming of the leadership role”- how exactly is this being defined? Could we link it to accountability?</p> <p>9. Pg. 12: “Ingredients for effective clusters?”- Can this evaluation conclude on what are some of the minimum standards for effective cluster? Suggest we push for something that tangible, otherwise we will continue using words like <i>effective</i>, <i>bad</i>, etc without true objectivity and uniformity. (Linked to comment re: Pg 25).</p> <p>10. Pg. 13: Might be good to mention, if only in general terms, what the evaluation framework looked at i.e the 19 indicators. In other words, bring some of the diagram on page 58 to this part?</p> <p>11. Pg 18: “It is hard to define exactly how the cluster approach was or is intended to work, since it has only broadly defined at the beginning and continues to evolve.”- I am not sure this statement is accurate and/or captures where we are 4 years after the reform was launched. While the overall goal was noted, the how is what is evolving. Could we try to find some balance between those two notions in the text?</p> <p>12. Pg. 19: Is there any room for the “soft side” i.e strategies, plans, and concerted action to reduce vulnerabilities- in other words the description of the cluster approach focuses on the architecture only yet coordination is not an end in itself. It exists to save lives, something the report touches upon in its final pages. How can we add some of that into the responsibilities?</p> <p>13. Pg 22: The bottom of the page presents “humanitarian actors often perceive cluster meetings as inefficient.” This is an important and distinct finding from the <b>stronger and more predictable leadership</b> sub-heading it is a part of. Because of its preponderance, suggest it be treated as a separate finding considering it has its own recommendations.</p> <p>14. Pg. 25: Minimum requirements for clusters- are we in a position to at least mention 3 or 4? i.e a lead; national and international membership, including Government, when appropriate; a list of priorities; a strategic plan with objectives, activities, result indicators, timelines and responsibilities?</p> | <p>8. Since there is a task team on mainstreaming, we decided to defer mainly to that process. For more details on what is meant, see § 24</p> <p>9. Our category of “ingredients for effective clusters” is not normative, but descriptive: It just serves to structure our findings into those that relate directly to how clusters work, those that describe direct results and those that describe effects (i.e. elements related to “effective humanitarian response”.</p> <p>10. We think it would be confusing to the general reader if we did since we do not structure the report along this model. We did for all country reports, but as part of our conclusions think that the model should evolve further...</p> <p>11. Ok, have tried – though actors still disagree on the specific objectives of the cluster approach</p> <p>12. I think these “soft” points come out very clearly in the findings. This bit tries to describe how clusters differ from previous mechanisms (which in part tried to achieve the same “soft goals”.</p> <p>13. S. section 4.4 / rec. 4</p> <p>14. It may be interesting for OCHA / the IASC to develop these, but it is unfortunately not something you could take as a finding of the evaluation.</p> |
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<p>15. Pg 25: Bottom of page presents the explanation of the issue under scrutiny and then goes on to share findings in a way that has not been done in either Pg. 22 or 24. Suggest keeping as both Pg. 22 and 24 which is very useful and effective. This is more a comment on form and sticking to one format.</p> <p>16. Pg. 29: Anything on “guidance” as a useful contribution from global to field clusters?</p> <p>17. Pg. 29: Again suggest sticking to the Pg. 22 and Pg 24 model. Also, “not managed effectively enough”- what does that mean? What is the criteria being used? And how does this look like?</p> <p>18. Pg. 30: Doesn’t the last paragraph contradict Recommendation #1 on Pg. 8? Things have been created bottom up?</p> <p>19. Pg. 32: Bullet three from top should be a finding in itself- <i>Cluster, with the exception of CCCM rarely include and do not link systematically with area-based coordination.</i></p> <p>20. P. 32: <i>The activities of the Protection Cluster in these situations can duplicate the overall information collection and management role of OCHA-</i> can this be separate this out and elaborated upon?</p> <p>21. P. 33: Bottom of the page needs to be pulled out and highlighted in a recommendation i.e the need to better coordinate the cluster approach with UNDAC, INSARAG and OSOCC.</p> <p>22. P. 34: <i>Interaction between cluster and HCs remain very limited in most cases-</i> this is a critical finding that needs to be highlighted in Pg 8 table and needs very specific recommendations.</p> <p>23. Pg. 36: Does the evaluation have information that helps answer the questions: what happens when a cluster is not funded? What happens to those needs/requirements; to the cluster itself; and to the membership of that cluster? How can we link this to the provider of last resort? Critical issue that need to be highlighted/commented on in the report.</p> <p>24. Pg 39-40: Finding on <i>accountability to the HC is minimal</i> needs to be added to Pg 8 table with specific recommendations.</p> <p>25. Pg. 41: Is there something more we can highlight re: information management and how it is working? Or how its profile is increasing i.e as the speed at which cluster are</p>	<p>15. The format is essentially the same, we only included an additional box on those global support products. Many people in country really wanted to have this. For the final version, we will ask our layouter to find a way to present this next to, rather than inside the text.</p> <p>16. No, not really. What relates to standards is in 5.5.</p> <p>17. ? Format is the same. Details are in § 34</p> <p>18. No. Many things have been created bottom-up, yet most resources were invested at the global level. Have amended Rec 1 to clarify it is about resources</p> <p>19. Would agree if we had more detailed evidence on it.</p> <p>20. More specific reference to this is in § 73.</p> <p>21. Done more explicitly now in Rec. 3.</p> <p>22. Included in table.</p> <p>23. Some more detail included</p> <p>24. S. above</p> <p>25. Based on the findings for this evaluation, not really.</p>
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<p>organized increases so does the need for IM support.</p> <p>26. Pg 41: Information sharing, institutional memory and information management are 3 different things. These three should be separated and worked through individually; otherwise the document will promote confusion; minimizing some of the accomplishments and obfuscate the specific recommendations for each.</p> <p>27. Pg. 50: Protection cluster has an advisory function? Not clear what is meant by advisory function? Is this the name being given to the responsibility to help mainstream protection into other clusters? Would be good to clarify what this means and then develop accordingly.</p> <p>28. Pg. 52: Bottom page: “<i>thereby undermining national ownership</i>” requires to be highlighted in the Pg 8 table considering the importance of it. Also, it will help embrace the discussion of is the Cluster Approach a way to simply organize international assistance or is it a way to improve the way the State organizes itself and in turn the way the international community supports that effort. (Hugely critical for this work to comment on the different existing views).</p> <p>29. Pg 61: Table 2 is not clear. There needs to be a coherency between Table 1, Table 2 and the main findings in the body of the text- currently that is missing.</p> <p>30. Pg 64: The “limits of coordination” paragraph focuses on the why. This information should be moved/copied to the front of the Exec Summary considering its importance and context it sets.</p> <p>31. P. 65: Not really clear what the focus is here. The problems of the protection and the early recovery cluster? The reason why they were the weakest? Are they? The why behind their ineffectiveness? Need to clarify this part. Also, there are three UN Protection Mandated agencies, hence, when stating <i>lack of expertise</i>, what does that mean?</p> <p>32. P. 66: Bottom of the page is a major finding that needs to be highlighted and moved to the Pg 8 matrix with specific recommendations.</p> <p>33. P. 67-74: Please see comments throughout notes for the overall recommendations of report.</p>	<p>26. Included more differentiation</p> <p>27. Clarified that this indeed what is meant</p> <p>28. Is already included in the table, as well as the description of major shortcomings above. e did not really encounter different views on this at the field level: If the clusters are about making humanitarian response more effective, that automatically means that the inclusion of state (where appropriate) and civil society actors is crucial. This is also reflected in the “logic model” which we understand has been accepted by all global clusters.</p> <p>29. Working on it...</p> <p>30. Only partly agree: there is more now on the purpose of humanitarian reform in the executive summary. We think the executive summary should focus on the main findings. The conclusion offers space for more detail and reflections that put the evaluation in perspective, but do not directly come out of the evaluation.</p> <p>31. We found that most clusters are confronted with more or less the same issues, but that some clusters had specific, more systemic challenges and used the conclusion to pull these factors together – relating to ER, Protection, ETC and food / agriculture.</p> <p>32. Reference to organizational change process has been included in exec. summary</p> <p>33. no comment.</p>
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**OCHA – EGS (15.03.2010) (SCOTT GREEN)**

1. Para 36 observes that in most cases, OCHA has failed to create an effective system of inter-cluster coordination. We should not say, most cases here. How many of the six case studies confirm such a finding?
2. While it is understood that this evaluation could not attempt an impact assessment at the beneficiary level, the draft report does not present much on monitoring and evaluation issues under the cluster approach. Donors are very keen on this issue and on the capacity of clusters to bring about improvements. We had discussed with Francois that the team would have a look at how M&E systems were being set up (or not) both within the individual clusters and across clusters and that some recommendations would be forthcoming in this area. Does the cluster approach offer the potential for improved and more effective coordination in the area of M&E? Is there reasonable prospect to move forward with impact measurement and assessment in the sense of better reporting systems a common needs assessment? Perhaps recommendation 4 could identify some concrete steps forward in this area.
3. I noticed that the diagram on page 60 proposes some changes to the basic logic model which was developed for this evaluation. As the logic model was based on some of the existing guidance materials, are any decisions needed from the IASC with regard to amending or clarifying the basic objectives and goals of the cluster approach? In the team's view, do we have the right goals and objectives in place, or do we need to modify these based on the wider effects?
4. The report does not reference any of the previous IASC RTEs (Mozambique and Pakistan earthquake) which had relevant findings especially as regards the effects of the cluster approach on national coordination systems and capacities. These should be referenced as well as this had been discussed.
5. Para 125: it is noted that the new practice model includes affected population, which seems to imply the existing logic model does not. This is not the case.

1. Very clearly in 5 of the 6 case studies, and a little bit also in the sixth.
2. Sorry – we received these comments only a few hours before the deadline for submitting the report and could therefore not take this into account.
3. The new “practice model” pursues the same aims as the earlier “logic model” (improving the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance), but it tries to capture more clearly how the clusters could contribute to this.
4. Will include this in the final version.
5. It notes that the model now “centers” on the affected population (the round version of it).

## OCHA PDSB (22.03.2010)

### Cluster II Evaluation Comments from PDSB

1. The cost-benefit analysis does not seem to be the appropriate approach. The question is not anymore whether we should implement a cluster approach but “how”. Thus, the focus should shift to a reconfirmation of the cluster approach and to implementation concern. OCHA would suggest that a re-evaluation of the cluster approach is conducted in another 2-3 years.
2. The cluster approach has not dealt with building stronger links with national governmental. To this end, several positive experiences in this respect (as Real-time evaluations in Kenya, Philippines and Pakistan revealed) could have been noted (e.g. participation of governments in certain clusters, the government acting as the co-lead of the clusters) .
3. Often the threat to humanitarian principles is overstated. There are clearly anxieties around humanitarian financing issues in the cluster approach but they should not be mistaken to suggest that they are yet another tool of integration and thereby jeopardizing humanitarian principles. The study would benefit if it highlighted the safeguarding of humanitarian space, particularly vis-à-vis strong governments.
4. Needs assessment is rarely referenced in the study. Not enough prominence is given to improve NA practices. It would have been highly appreciated if practices or non-practices by cluster leads (e.g. lack intra-cluster NA work or existing inter-cluster coordination, multi-cluster needs assessment or lack of rapid NA tools) would have been considered to ascertain clear follow-up action. Overall, the study does not mention cluster leads' responsibility/ technical capacities to conduct needs assessment and ensure adequate IM. In addition, it does not relate the need of designing a specific but simple tool to do raw data processing for assessing needs and that is easily deployable at the onset of a crisis
5. Inter-cluster coordination: More information would have been appreciated regarding the relationship of country leads to existing coordination systems. Important issues of accountability, reporting, ownership and support structures could be identified. The study could have identified gaps, existing positive practices (e.g. where HQ sends staff regularly on mission as is the case with WHO and UNICEF).
6. While the important issue of cluster coordination and impact of humanitarian financing structure is touched upon, the study does not give due consideration to specifics of the complex but important issue. As has been shown, there is a disconnect between pooled

*The consultant team was not able to react to these comments, as there were coming in far behind the deadline. The consultant company will reconsider them when revising the draft.*

<p>funding in clusters (e.g. Sudan). Generally, clusters should exercise more responsibility to further strengthen cluster coordination, including in NA and IM.</p>	
<p><b>OHCHR (18.03.2010)</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On a general note: <b>The Executive Summary</b> (possibly the section of the report that will be the most widely read), needs to more thoroughly reflect the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report. On this basis, for example: It would be helpful to have more analysis/justification of the factors that led the evaluation team to conclude that ‘the benefits generated by the cluster approach <i>slightly</i> outweigh its costs and downsides’. (This point would also apply to the section in the report which addresses this - pg. 61 para.127 - It is difficult to understand how Table 2 allows one to come to this conclusion).</li> <li>2. One of the stated objectives of the evaluation is to ‘develop an understanding of the <i>added value</i> of the cluster approach’. There is however no reference to any such added-value in the executive summary.</li> <li>3. Some of the items listed under the ‘Challenges’ table are not in fact challenges: eg. ‘clusters enhance the ability of the humanitarian system to learn and have the potential to further increase this effect’; ‘in several cases, clusters were involved in adapting global standards to local circumstances or in developing local standards.</li> <li>4. Given the centrality of the goal of the Humanitarian Reform to <i>enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response</i>, it would be helpful to have more clarity in the executive summary of the explanation provided on this in Section 6.</li> <li>5. With regards to the concerns raised in para.131 on ‘political issues’: It is not mandatory for cluster members to share all kinds of information at cluster meetings. There are different means of sharing potentially sensitive information with relevant partners of the cluster - depending on what kind of information is concerned (this is also relevant to recommendation 6).</li> <li>6. It would be helpful to have more concrete information about the concerns that are being raised vis-à-vis the work of the clusters and peace keeping missions, as raised for example in this same para 131 (and others such as for example para 27 bullet point 4, para. 119. and para 131 bullet 3).</li> <li>7. It would also be useful to note that issues concerning humanitarian space and integrated</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Benefits and shortcomings are now explained in greater detail and our conclusion shows better what considerations led us to is</li> <li>2. The improvement (and benefits) are the added value. Since the terminology seems to be confusing, we have changed the wording for the stated objectives.</li> <li>3. Wording changed to “findings related to the recommendations”</li> <li>4. Goal of enhancing effectiveness included in first §.</li> <li>5. That is certainly correct. The problem highlighted in § 131 is rather that participants do not share information because of the participation of military and other actors, or are very unsure and confused about it, and thereby make it hard for the cluster to work effectively.</li> <li>6. Examples included in (former) § 119 &amp;</li> <li>7. Reference to ongoing processes at global level included.</li> </ol>

<p>missions are being discussed in a number of humanitarian fora with a view to providing guidance on these matters. With regards to OHCHR specifically: it is important to note that the Head of Human Rights Components in peace missions is also the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is in this capacity that OHCHR is represented at the Humanitarian Country Team, Protection Cluster and other humanitarian fora.</p> <p>8. We would like to suggest that the assertion made in para. 129 bullet three, which notes that ‘by its very nature humanitarian assistance does not address the root causes of emergencies ...’, is not accurate. The Protection Cluster and its individual members, for example, does in many instances address root causes and attempt to improve the situation of the population in a sustainable way through, <i>inter alia</i>, working with national and local actors to enhance their capacity on issues of rule of law, governance, policies concerning land ownership, etc.</p> <p>9. Human rights are recognized as a cross-cutting issue by the IASC (as represented in a number of key IASC documents, including the IASC Outcome statement concerning the clusters in December 2005). Despite this, however, the report does not make reference to human rights as a cross-cutting issue (eg. section 6.2 including para. 96; Box 1).</p> <p>10. Similarly, there is no mention of a ‘rights-based approach, but only of needs-based and status-based (eg. para. 84; para. 102; recommendation 2 on participatory approach). It would be important for the report to reflect this, as relevant throughout the report (eg. page 19; pg. 51 5<sup>th</sup> bullet point of para. 100).</p> <p>11. With regard to the second bullet point of para 99 on pg 50, it would be helpful to recognize that beyond Procap, protection-mandated agencies (eg. UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR) are amongst the principal first responders on ‘protection’ and other cross-cutting issues including human rights, and issues related to persons with disability, and the elderly.</p> <p>12. With reference to ‘mandate problems’(page 65, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet point): it would be important to note that, especially in highly political environments, such discussions could be argued to be inevitable. In the case of the protection cluster, this might be more pronounced given that it brings together both national and international actors from the human rights and humanitarian fields, which do not always necessarily have the same understanding of what might constitute the most appropriate response.</p>	<p>OHCHR example of double hatting that is seen as problematic by many other humanitarian actors included as an example.</p> <p>8. While we have at least in part a different opinion on this issue, the evaluation may not be the right place to discuss such fundamental / philosophical issues, especially since it is not central to our remaining arguments relating to the cluster approach. We have therefore deleted the bullet point.</p> <p>9. Ok. Box 1, however, only contains those cross-cutting issues that are formally included in humanitarian reform. (<a href="http://humanitarianreform.org">humanitarianreform.org</a>)</p> <p>10. The evaluation team only found evidence that the conflict between status based and needs based creates serious problems for the implementation of the cluster approach. While we agree that issues related to the right-based approach are very important to consider, they did not come up as relevant in this context.</p> <p>11. The elements referred to in these bullet points are reasons that explain why cross-cutting issues are not sufficiently taken into account within the cluster approach. The concern is therefore not with who acts as principal first responder (this is outside the scope of the evaluation), but whether or not there are any agencies or mechanisms for mainstreaming the issues into the work of other clusters.</p> <p>12. Included inevitability.</p>
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<p>13. The Protection Cluster lead agency at the field level is not necessarily the same as the global lead agency. In some instances UNICEF and OHCHR have the lead at the field level (pg. 22).</p> <p>14. On page 27, suggestion to add to the Protection Cluster’s list of support products recommended by global clusters: ‘Growing the Sheltering Tree, Protection rights through humanitarian action’; ‘Human Rights Guidance Note for Humanitarian Coordinators’; FAQs on International Humanitarian, Human Rights and Refugee law’.</p> <p>15. Is working with existing structures a question of ‘incentives’ or a desirable method of working to enable a more sustainable engagement, as possible within a given context (page 33, para 47 bullet point 3).</p> <p>16. It is not clear what issue/solution is being made/suggested with regards to the assertion on para 42 that ‘Several clusters, including ... Protection ... are thematically defined in such a way that they overlap with inter-cluster coordination’ (and similar assertion re the adoption of a rights-based approach)</p> <p>17. On page 32 para 43, beyond noting that coordination with or support for existing coordination mechanisms is critical, it would be important to also note that the primary responsibility for humanitarian response are in fact concerned governments.</p> <p>18. It would be important for the report to more thoroughly address the key issue (as is relevant, for example, to the DRC and Uganda) of the relationship between the 'National' Cluster (at the level of the Capital) and the decentralised (provincial or other) 'local' clusters. In some instances, cluster participants at the provincial or other level felt that the clusters' participants/leads at the national level failed their responsibilities in providing leadership and support on issues that needed to be addressed at the national level/with national counterparts.</p> <p>19. The report repeatedly refers to the clusters as ‘coordination’ mechanism (eg. pg 60 illustration 3), whereas clusters are coordination and response mechanisms; the two cannot be separated.</p> <p>20. With regard to concerns on inadequate/incomplete IASC guidelines (p. 28, para 30 second bullet point): The overall structure of the cluster approach (goals, functions, etc.) exists and</p>	<p>13. Specified in § 17</p> <p>14. ok</p> <p>15. It’s a desirable method, but the lack of incentives helps explain why it is not being done.</p> <p>16. Good point. The relationship definitely needs to be clarified and overlaps need to be avoided. In the opinion of the evaluation team, the clearest way to do this would be by giving OCHA a clear mandate for facilitating inter-cluster coordination. In addition, the cross-cutting elements of protection should be promoted through an advisory role.</p> <p>17. ok</p> <p>18. Included in rec. 1.</p> <p>19. While guidance is certainly a little ambivalent about this, we practically encountered clusters at country and field level almost exclusively as coordination mechanisms. We hope that our concept of a “coordination (+) platform” captures this.</p> <p>20. The evaluation team tends to share this view, but interviewees in countries really demanded more guidance and stated that they had been</p>
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<p>there is added-value for staff involved to own the process and adapt it to the specificities of the country situation in which they operate. Too much guidance risks hampering flexibility. Moreover, direct interaction with people with the relevant experience, similar or same challenges and with specific knowledge on the issues of concern would be much more effective in building the capacity of clusters members to deliver on their tasks.</p> <p>21. With regard to the point that the 3Ws is not detailed enough, we would suggest that the accent should actually be on extending this to the 'how and when' (with a view to be able to measure impact and not only performance).</p> <p>22. With regard to references in the report concerning OCHA's role(eg. para 35, 36 et seq), field experience has shown the need for OCHA to revisit its role vis-à-vis clusters, to better assess its added-value and strategic entry points/support role. It is also necessary to better define the need and objective of 'inter-cluster fora' and for OCHA to be rigorous in following-up on such inter-cluster discussions to ensure more effective impact and output.</p> <p>23. With regards to 'inclusiveness' vs 'speed', we would suggest that it should be a question of 'inclusiveness' AND 'speed', not OR. Inclusiveness is an issue that needs to be addressed at the contingency planning and preparedness phase; otherwise, the priority would automatically be given to speed in the aftermath of a crisis. On this basis, it would be important for the report to place more emphasis on the centrality of contingency planning for effective humanitarian response: (eg. para. 47, second bullet point about 'too little analysis being made'). Equally important to note is the fact that in large sudden-onset crisis, such as the recent Haiti earthquake, new humanitarian actors are deployed to the concerned country throughout the aftermath of the crisis, and it is not a given that clusters are aware of all new actors/their contacts, etc; this makes it more difficult to be inclusive.</p> <p>24. It would be important for the report to reflect the reality that in some instances governments might feel reluctant to recognize that there are humanitarian needs in the country and will not welcome international assistance. This may be one of the factors that may hinder response activities.</p>	<p>very lost, especially in the early stages.</p> <p>21. Good point. This was shared by many people in the field.</p> <p>22. We largely agree. Most of this is included in the current section on OCHA. The need to follow-up on issues has been added.</p> <p>23. Section on speed and inclusiveness has been revised to be more nuanced and differentiated. The issue of preparing better for the implementation of clusters is prominent in the recommendations</p> <p>24. s. § 18, bullet 2</p>
<p><u>Recommendations (only issues that have not already been referred to above)</u></p>	
<p>25. Re recommendation 2: We would not agree with the assertion that 'the strength of clusters lies in creating inclusive fora and in facilitating learning, not in coordinating the immediate response to sudden-onset disasters'. The strength of the cluster approach is and should be for both.</p> <p>26. Re Recommendation 3: please see notes of the Workshop working group.</p>	<p>25. amended</p> <p>26. ok</p>

<p>27. Re Recommendation: Suggestion to include human rights as a cross-cutting issue, as recognized by the IASC.</p> <p>28. Re Recommendation 4, bullet point 3: Is the aim of clusters to fill gaps or are clusters rolled out as part of the way we do humanitarian action/in every situation? If it is the latter, then there would be no need for criteria for activation. If the former, however, then there would certainly be a need to establish criteria for activation. In fact, beyond criteria, it would be equally important to ensure that any decision, particularly re activating the clusters, is based on a proper evaluation of existing capacities and needs.</p> <p>29. Re Recommendation 6, bullet one: We would suggest that the role of the Protection Cluster would not be to clarify ‘the definition of protection’ but to provide guidance and good practices on what ‘protection means in operational terms’.</p> <p>30. Re Recommendation 6: We would suggest that issues concerning membership of clusters, including of national civil society and/or national public institutions, be left to the field clusters to determine on the basis of an analysis of determinant factors in a given context (eg. issues of confidentiality, protection of victims and witnesses, security of national stakeholders taking part in such mechanisms, etc.). We would therefore discourage the establishment of criteria for the inclusion of cluster membership.</p>	<p>27. ok</p> <p>28. Even if clusters are the way to do business, it remains unclear when exactly they are implemented / formalized / activated &amp; S. Rec. 3</p> <p>29. Deleted this part since the Protection Cluster has already developed a definition.</p> <p>30. We found that actors at field level were confused about this and were asking for more / clearer guidance. Have clarified that the decision would still be with national / sub-national clusters.</p>
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**SAVE THE CHILDREN (19.03.2010)**

Overall Remarks

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overall, we appreciate the work that has gone into the report and find the recommendations helpful and constructive. The cost benefit analysis, saying that ‘benefits of the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides’ does not seem to be borne out by substantive evidence. In addition, we don’t find reference that the evaluation team would attempt such an analysis within the agreed framework for the CE2.</li> <li>2. The report misuses the word ‘downsides’ throughout, which implies a negative impact given the use of the cluster approach. A more appropriate wording describing these elements could be ‘factors that have undermined the cluster approach’.</li> <li>3. The evaluation covered a wide range of issues and makes recommendations on some crucial problem areas within the ‘system’. The report should make more effort to separate</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Changed both the “cost-benefit” terminology and tried to better explain &amp; embed the conclusion</li> <li>2. Agree that downsides is misleading. The elements listed, however, are not really factors undermining the cluster approach, but areas where the cluster approach falls short of expectations. New wording: “shortcomings”</li> <li>3. The recommendations are all derived from findings relating to the cluster approach, but indeed, some of the difficult issues are beyond</li> </ol> |
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<p>out system-wide observations from cluster-specific challenges and weaknesses. This is particularly important for the recommendations (particularly recommendation 6), which would benefit from a tighter focus on what’s within the realm of possibility for clusters to change and what isn’t.</p> <p>4. Would prefer the use of the term ‘sub-national’ rather than ‘local’, except in rare cases where the report is really describing local action in the sense of working at community level. In general this is not the case, so the term ‘sub-national’ would seem more appropriate.</p> <p><u>Executive Summary</u></p> <p>5. The conclusion that the benefits generated by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides appears overly negative given the important improvements that immediately follow. There should be more credit given to clusters for the major steps forward that have been taken over the last few years. The fact that the clusters have resulted in ‘greater coverage of humanitarian needs in some thematic areas’, and have allowed for ‘better identification of major gaps’, for example, are both major achievements and should be recognized as such.</p> <p>6. Good to note within the report that co-leadership of clusters has had positive effects. This comes out in several different sections of the report and was a recurring theme during discussions at the recent workshop to discuss the draft report. It could be better highlighted within the executive summary as one of the most important improvements.</p> <p>7. Co-leadership arrangements with NGOs having had positive effects certainly shouldn’t be referenced as one of the challenges in the executive summary (table on page 8). The challenges described later in the report around this issue – eg. capacity, unclear division of responsibilities, etc – are all valid however and should appear within the table instead.</p> <p>8. Once again, the bullets listed under the heading of ‘most important downsides’ do not describe downsides in the sense of negative impact. We would prefer that this list be relabeled as ‘elements within the cluster approach that have undermined effective coordination’.</p> <p>9. The comment that exclusion of local actors ‘weakens national and local ownership and capacities’ is questionable. This could be turned around to say that clusters do not currently draw sufficiently on the strengths of local actors – pointing both to a factor that has potentially undermined effective coordination and an area where there’s potential to do better.</p>	<p>the power of the clusters to change. The recommendations are therefore addressed to several different actors.</p> <p>4. o.k.</p> <p>5. Conclusion better explained &amp; embedded.</p> <p>6. to us, co-leadership is a factor improving cluster management, but not an achievement / improvement as such. The relevant achievement is improved partnership, which is highlighted in the executive summary.</p> <p>7. Correct – that’s not a challenge. The table heading has been changed to “findings related to recommendations” to highlight that not all findings are represented here, but only those directly supporting recommendations (which on the whole tend to be more negative, though not in this case)</p> <p>8. “shortcomings”</p> <p>9. New formulation: In their current implementation, clusters largely exclude national and local actors and often fail to link with, build on, or support existing coordination and response mechanisms. Among other reasons, this is due to insufficient analysis of local structures and capacities before cluster implementation, as well as a lack of clear</p>
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<p>10. The final ‘challenge’ listed in the table on page 10 is not well-supported by evidence within the body of the report. Many of the challenges listed in the table beginning on page 8 are not challenges. This heading needs rewording.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>11. Table 2 on page 61 is misleading. The heading ‘Downsides of the cluster approach’ should be replaced with ‘Factors undermining the cluster approach’.</p> <p>12. Footnote 56 on page 61 makes an important point on who bears the cost of coordination: donors in the case of direct costs and affected populations in terms of worse coordination in the absence of the cluster approach. This should be highlighted in the report, not buried in a footnote, and should perhaps even appear in the executive summary.</p> <p>13. Footnote 57 needs to be qualified. There are many different staff working on cluster coordination in one capacity or another. Who exactly is spending 25% of their time on coordination?</p> <p>14. Page 63 – the comment on greater inclusiveness of international actors and low participation of affected communities. We need to be clear on what the cluster approach was set up to do and who it seeks to bring together. At least in early days, the cluster were set up to strengthen the coordination of international actors.</p> <p>15. Page 64 – the statement on the ultimate goal of the cluster approach needs to be referenced.</p>	<p>transition and exit criteria and strategies. As a result, the cluster approach weakens <b>national and local ownership and capacities</b>. Furthermore, most clusters do not use or promote <b>participatory approaches</b>. The evaluation team found several examples where the failure to include local actors and to link with existing mechanisms actually undermined and weakened those mechanisms (see text)</p> <p>10. The findings is only that this “can” threaten humanitarian principles and that this makes some actors reluctant to engage. For related arguments, evidence and positions of humanitarian organizations, see § 119.</p> <p>11. Now: “Shortcomings”</p> <p>12. Ok – included in the main text / executive summary and conclusion.</p> <p>13. Qualified. Around 25% was the answer most commonly given to this question.</p> <p>14. The cluster approach was certainly originally mainly intended to strengthen coordination among international actors. Today, this feature emerged as one of the main shortcomings of the cluster approach and it is clear that it could create much greater benefits if it became more inclusive.</p> <p>15. o.k.</p>
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<p>16. Page 66 – the fact that the cluster approach has ‘become simply the way we do business’ is an important point and should appear in the executive summary.</p>	<p>16. That the cluster approach is becoming the way we do business is a statement of intention by John Holmes, not a finding of the evaluation. What the evaluation did find is that there is now almost no principled or fundamental opposition, but a pragmatic approach, to the cluster approach. This is now included in the executive summary.</p>
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p>	
<p>17. Further nuancing of the recommendations would be helpful: both in terms of their relevance in particular types of crises and contexts; and in some cases making recommendations more targeted towards particular clusters.</p>	<p>17. have tried to</p>
<p>18. Prioritization of recommendations would help with follow-up.</p>	<p>18. done</p>
<p>19. Recommendation two in particular reads like a ‘mixed bag’ of recommendations, not all strictly referring to issues of quality.</p>	<p>19. The workshop participants further developing this recommendation did not comment negatively on the composition of recommendation 2. The elements contained here all relate to the quality of response as understood by the evaluation team.</p>
<p>20. Under recommendation two, we would emphasize the sub-recommendation on focusing on global standards and go one step further in terms of clusters working together to come up with frameworks and mechanisms to monitor whether standards are being applied. Where standards are not met, clusters need to develop common tools to take corrective action.</p>	<p>20. We have included more on monitoring. However, we believe that the strength of the cluster approach lies more in adapting global standards to local circumstances or developing local standards and have highlighted this.</p>
<p>21. The recommendations on participation and using participatory approaches should be broadened to cover ‘accountability’ more generally. As above, clusters need to work together to define what is meant by accountability from the cluster perspective and agree on simple tools that could be applied to strengthen accountability to affected populations.</p>	<p>21. The concept of accountability is problematic because it tends to be not very well understood. We have therefore made clear that information and participation are elements of accountability and have placed the part on standards directly after participation, since this is also related to “accountability”.</p>
<p>22. Some of the recommendations simply describe the status quo of what clusters are trying to achieve and how, rather than setting out concrete steps that clusters could take to improve the way that they operate. One example of this is the recommendation on increased consideration for an mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (under recommendation two on page 69). If this evaluation is to be used to improve the performance of clusters, we perhaps need to identify new ways of approaching old problems; or ways to significantly reprioritize the way that we work.</p>	<p>22. trying to...</p>
<p>23. The recommendation on Provider of Last Resort should be taken out of the financing recommendation. POLR is about more than just money, and also has implications for</p>	<p>23. Our point is to strengthen the aspect of the PoLR that relates to the availability of resources – both financial and stockpiles. It is in that</p>

<p>other resources such as capacity.</p>	<p>sense that it belongs to other financing considerations.</p>
<p><b>UNAIDS (18.03.2010)</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [P. 50 / Para. 99]: A suggestion for making the last sentence slightly more explicit / informative (see addition in bold): “The Logistics Cluster, finally, driven by a strong position of WFP on the issue <b>of HIV prevention in the transport sector</b>, includes HIV/AIDS concerns in its programs that were implemented for example in DRC.</li> <li>2. [Para 100, first bullet point]: Could you please include an explanation / background of why in the case of Uganda HIV was integrated into a unique “Health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS” cluster (otherwise this might be misunderstood as a frequent occurrence).</li> <li>3. [Para 100, second bullet point]: We don’t understand the phrase “while UNAIDS as focal point for HIV/AIDS is undergoing a general reform process” – a.) not sure which “reform process” this refers to; b.) how is that linked to the rest of the bullet (we don’t think it is); c.) Suggestion: take out the current sentence and replace with a mention that <b>UNAIDS is currently planning specific support capacity for HIV/AIDS as well</b> (which is what we’re working on at the moment...)</li> <li>4. [On section 6.3]: we recommend a mention of working with Associations of People living with HIV (PLHIV) as a good example of where participation of affected populations is required to reach a vulnerable group of individuals that might otherwise not be “visible” and, due to fear of stigma and discrimination, might not identify themselves. – This point would also be very relevant for recommendation number 2 (p. 68), third bullet point.</li> <li>5. <b>Section on Recommendations</b> – there is nothing in this section on how Cross Cutting Issues as a whole can be more strongly integrated and adequately addressed by clusters, in spite of the findings in section 6.2. – We believe (and surely the other cross cutting issue focal points would agree) that this needs to be addressed urgently within the recommendations section. Recommendations could be, for example, dedicated XCI focal points within relevant clusters (not all clusters are relevant for all XCI) where they don’t already exist and close collaboration with other dedicated mechanisms that already exist for specific cross cutting issues, for example the Joint UN Team on AIDS for HIV/AIDS.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ok</li> <li>2. I am afraid, we don’t really know beyond the fact that it was considered most closely related to health issues (the decision to do this is so far back that it is difficult to find this out)</li> <li>3. Ok – that was admittedly pretty vague and potentially misleading.</li> <li>4. This is a good point, but we cannot include it into the findings as we did not find an example like this during our country missions. Included (in a more general form) in the recommendation as a suggestion.</li> <li>5. There is an entire section in recommendation 2 on this. Please let us know if you have any additional specific suggestions.</li> </ol>

**UNDP (BCPR) (19.03.2010)**

<p>1. Overall comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. good report (professionalism, ethics, intellectual honesty).</li><li>b. if these recommendations have a cost, they have to be addressed to donors as well in a more systematic way.</li><li>c. The role and linkages to national authorities is not emphasized enough throughout the report</li></ul> <p>2. The importance of the ER network's inter-cluster role may need to be emphasized here.</p> <p>3. Box 7. • Post-Conflict Needs Assessments, which are multilateral exercises typically implemented by the United Nations Development Group and the World Bank; the Early Recovery Cluster has developed a similar method for Post-Disaster Needs Assessments; and currently develops the Early Recovery module of the Post-disaster Needs Assessments.</p> <p>4. 99. bullet 4: No recommendation relates to this finding. If the advisory function is to be strengthened, it should be stated in Recommendation 2.</p> <p>5. Conclusions table 2: The financial costs [57.6 million] is not balanced by the amount saved as a consequence of efficiency, predictability, fewer duplications. If there is an added value, but difficult to measure, I would not mention the financial costs. 'downsides of the cluster approach' is not accurate. Other elements have to be taken into account.</p> <p>6. 131. CWGER recommends choosing an alternative title for naming the Cluster (for example: Governance &amp; Livelihoods) in order to make a clear distinction and avoid confusion between the Cluster and the Early Recovery Inter-Cluster Network.</p> <p>7. Recommendation 1. Some comment should be added on the need for donors to support the strengthening of coordination at local level. + bullet 1: strengthen coordination and skills</p>	<p>1. We have tried to collect all findings and arguments on this subject in section 6.4 on ownership. Chapter 6 is the most important of the findings chapters since it discusses the effects of the cluster approach. There is also the most part of one of the six major recommendations dedicated to this topic... We thus agree that it is a crucial issue, but also believe that it is discussed prominently in the report.</p> <p>2. In the country studies, we came across the Early Recovery Cluster playing a valuable inter-cluster role, but no similar examples of the network.</p> <p>3. Ok – thanks.</p> <p>4. We now included it in recommendation 6, which also has other elements relating to the “cluster architecture”</p> <p>5. We agree that the added value is difficult to measure in financial terms (and have therefore eliminated the term “cost-benefit” analysis). Yet, we believe that this information is important to enable readers to form their own judgment whether the investment in the cluster approach as “paid off”. We realize that “downsides” is the wrong term and have called it “shortcomings and challenges”.</p> <p>6. Cf. Rec. 6: The evaluation team recommends not to have an Early Recovery Cluster or Governance and Livelihoods Cluster at the country and local levels.</p> <p>7. In Rec. 1, we recommend to allocate whatever resources there are for implementing the cluster approach more at the local level.</p>
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<p>training at country level (rather than ‘shift’ facilitation...)</p> <p>8. Recommendation 2. Bullet 6: add Early Recovery Advisors to OCHA</p> <p>9. Recommendation 5. Add a bullet on underfunded clusters, linked to para 57.</p>	<p>In Rec. 5, we recommend that donors should fund coordination adequately, especially at the local level. We hope that these two taken together also reflect your intention.</p> <p>8. Interesting idea. Included.</p> <p>9. Special reference included in revised rec. 5, 2.</p>
<p><b>UNEP, Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (19.03.2010)</b></p>	
<p>1. <u>Page 8</u> : Under Recommendation 2. - Current text : Increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues. Should read as: <b><i>Ensure integration of Cross-cutting issues in policies, tools, training, guidance, strategic planning and operations</i></b></p> <p>2. <u>Page 25-27, Box 3</u>: Under Early Recovery Cluster: <b>Add: <i>Key things to Know About Environment as a “Cross Cutting” Issue In Early Recovery</i></b></p> <p>3. Under Environment: <b>Add: <i>Humanitarian Action and the Environment, OCHA-UNEP, PCNA-TRF Tool Kit - Note on Addressing Environmental Issues, February 2009</i></b></p> <p>4. <u>Page 49</u>: <b>Redraft § 96</b>: should read as - The integration of cross-cutting issues in <b><i>in policies, tools, guidance, strategic planning and operations contributes to mitigate aid dependency, additional loss of life, and prolonged vulnerability. In terms of environment, it also mitigates the negative impacts on available natural resources needed to rebuild livelihoods and to facilitate the recovery process.</i></b> Within humanitarian reform, age, gender, the environment and HIV/AIDS are formally recognized as cross-cutting issues with assigned focal agencies at global level (see box 1). <b><i>The clusters have the formal responsibility for ensuring adequate integration of cross-cutting issues in all stages of</i></b></p>	<p>1. o.k.</p> <p>2. o.k.</p> <p>3. o.k.</p> <p>4. Ok, except for “contributes to mitigate aid dependency, additional loss of life, and prolonged vulnerability. In terms of environment, it also mitigates the negative impacts on available natural resources needed to rebuild livelihoods and to facilitate the recovery process”: Which exact benefit the integration of cross-cutting issues has depends strongly on which type of cross-cutting issue one has in mind. Since the list of formally recognized cross-cutting issues is contested, we do not see how we could adequately include all possible beneficial effects and</p>

<p><i>the response.</i></p> <p>5. <u>Page 50:</u> Under § 100 - Under second bullet point: Redraft: “UNEP as focal point for environment is currently setting up a similar surge capacity,... “ Should read as: <b><i>In 2009, UNEP has increased its capacity to ensure the mainstreaming of environment into the humanitarian action. However, UNEP does not have an ‘Environment Cap’ to ensure support at country level where and when needed.</i></b>;</p> <p>6. <b><i>Add: Apart from GenCap, the cross-cutting issues did not receive support to build up their capacity to mainstream the respective issues into the work of the clusters. It is almost impossible for cross-cutting issue focal points to participate in all the relevant ongoing initiatives such as the development of policies, tools, guidance, coordination fora.</i></b></p> <p>7. <b><i>The fact that several cross-cutting issue focal point don’t have a presence in countries of concerns is impairing the mainstreaming of the respective issues in the decision making process and the strategy development at country level. A GenCap-like capacity for all the cross-cutting issues would enable the cross-cutting issues to provide technical expertise to the country team and other actors of concern during the emergency phase.</i></b></p> <p>8. <b><i>Apart from the cross-cutting issue Gender (lead by OCHA/UNFPA/GENCAP, the other cross-cutting issues are not IASC members. This is considered to be serious handicap to ensure the respective issues are well taking into account in policy and strategy related decisions.</i></b></p> <p>9. Page 69: Under Recommendation2: Redraft bullet point 5:<b><i>Ensure integration of Cross-cutting issues in policies, tools, training, guidance, strategic planning and operations. This requires .....vi) include integration of cross-cutting issues in funding strategies, vii) including cross-cutting issues experts in mission when relevant</i></b></p> <p>10. Page 77: Redraft: <b><i>Tom Delrue, UNEP, Focal Point Humanitarian Action and Early Recovery</i></b></p>	<p>therefore prefer to remain with the more general “quality of humanitarian assistance”</p> <p>5. o.k.</p> <p>6. I think that is clear from the preceding points already.</p> <p>7. This is already included in recommendation 2.</p> <p>8. Thanks – good point.</p> <p>9. o.k. (slightly adapted)</p> <p>10. ok – sorry!</p>
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**General comments on substance**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In general, the report looked in great detail at the functioning of the clusters which was on the whole, positive. However, it only recognized that the system was marginally worth the vast financial investments to date. It would be useful to look at constraints outside the cluster system that are making it so cost heavy. This includes better reprioritizing programs at country level for quicker immediate response and drawing on local human and financial resources as much as possible. It also doesn't address better contingency planning and risk mitigation.</li> <li>2. On coordination, the focus is highly on the role of cluster lead agencies. This doesn't allow for much dialogue and commentary on inter-cluster coordination, the role of OCHA therewith.</li> <li>3. Though the recommendations are well thought out, many are not structured enough to provide the basis for anything actionable. For example, the statement “Multi-dimensional and cross-cutting issues are neglected” is very strong and not entirely true.</li> <li>4. <b>Gender</b> has not been neglected in tool development or surge capacity and is better funded than education and some other sectors. Better to say that systematic integration and accountability of the clusters to ensure enforcement of mainstreaming tools is more correct</li> <li>5. The evaluation picked up on the fact gender and age disaggregation is still missing, but this is ”old” news to us. In fact that was the finding of the Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) report produced by the Sub-Working Group last year and there are plans to address it, including using Gender Markers/Gender E-learning to encourage a more participatory approach to programming and a better understanding the need for gender analysis. The evaluation should both note the gap but also processes in place to address it</li> <li>6. Cross-cutting issues (XCI) as a general recommendation are lumped together. However, more detail needs to be added in recommendations section (p. 68-69). For example, SADD should be a minimal requirement of any data collection mechanisms and analysis within the cluster system.</li> <li>7. p. 8:<br/>Chapter Three - BACKGROUND<br/>3.1 HUMANITARIAN REFORM AND THE CLUSTER APPROACH</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We agree that it would be desirable to analyze these issues, but this unfortunately beyond the scope of this evaluation.</li> <li>2. Yet, there is a dedicated section on this subject.</li> <li>3. We have tried to specify recommendations further. However, individual agencies and actors will have to further refine these recommendations for their own use since it is impossible for external consultants working with such a vast array of actors to take into account the specific situations and contexts of all of them.</li> <li>4. Ok – what we meant to say was “in the case study countries” – amended.</li> <li>5. Could you please provide more detail on those processes? How detailed / how far advanced are they? What kind of supporting evidence could we refer to?</li> <li>6. Has been included in rec 2 / point on needs assessments</li> <li>7. ? I am sorry, but I do not understand this point.</li> </ol> |
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### 3.2 IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

While the broad description of the architecture of the cluster system refers to the leads/co-leads on the clusters and does refer to the four XCIs as well as their 'leadership', there is no mention of the relationship - or even lack of one - either by design or default - between the Clusters, the inter-cluster coordination performed by OCHA it doesn't capture our concerns about how Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) is integrated into the system as a none cluster lead. This is particularly contentious when we start looking at the problems of needs assessments broader than the general cluster ones, the dashboard scoring and situation analyses based on the information.

8. Pgs. 20 and 21 - Is there any information about the establishment of XCI thematic groups within the cluster system and the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of their integration of the relevant issues across the Clusters?
9. The issues of the Early recovery cluster and how it will be dealt : There is a strong inference in the report that the cluster leads will be responsible for ER integration and that the cluster will not be justified in and of its own.
10. The other recommendation that is worth tweaking is in regard to taking the work of the clusters to the country level. While this is a positive measure, the recommendation should include sub-national coordination and allow for better country level identification of an appropriate cluster/sub-cluster coordinator
11. **Page 7, 46 and 48:** We are encouraged to see that Gender Based Violence (GBV) is noted as one of the improvements attributed to the cluster approach. A point that should be made in the cluster evaluation (and we can provide the data on this) while there are more project sheets in CAPS and Flash Appeals to prevent and respond to GBV, including across more and more clusters (including Early Recovery, Health, Education, Protection and Sanitation), there is still a gap in terms of funding, particularly to support the agency responsible for coordinating the GBV working groups. Part of this may be a result of issues within the FTS (voluntary reporting, definition of GBV, etc), but it does show that there needs to be more donor buy-in to all aspects of the cluster, and not the 'favorites'.

8. We have looked at this at the country and local levels and have barely heard any mention of them. While we could conclude from this that they are ineffective, we felt we did not have sufficient evidence for this statement.

9. That's partly correct: We believe that there should not be an early recovery cluster at the country and local levels, but that early recovery advisers should help clusters and organizations mainstream ER. Cluster lead agencies should play a leadership role in the sense that they should request advisory capacities and make sure there is sufficient expertise on these issues.

10. That's what we mean by "local" (as in "national and local"). Overall, we feel that the current system is pretty good on that front: There is a clear default option (which is good for predictability and speed), but HCTs and HCs have the flexibility to define alternatives – and have done so.

11. Ok – there is a point on this in § 36. So far, the systematic funding gaps reoccurring in pretty much all cases we have looked at are agriculture, education and early recovery. If you could send us additional data, especially relating to the six case study countries (and, if at all possible, in comparison to the other clusters), we would be happy to include GBV here.

12. There is something similar in the point on cross-cutting issues in

<p>12. It is good to see GenCap advisors noted as contributing to work on gender as a cross-cutting issue. Perhaps this is true, but when there is no GenCap or ProCap, gender and protection mainstreaming are still not well understood and require some concentrated attention. There should be clear recommendations on this including need for training/capacity building and guidance that all cluster leads would be held accountable for.</p> <p>13. <b>Page 52:</b> There are already on-going initiatives on communicating with affected populations for e.g. through the Communication with Disaster Affected Populations (CDAC) – an inter-agency mechanism tested in Indonesia and now active in Haiti.</p> <p><b><u>Anything crucial that is missing from the synthesis report, or needs elaboration:</u></b></p> <p>There are some things that are missing.</p> <p>14. For example, in the recommendation section, for <b>recommendation one</b>, 1. <i>Shift the focus of the cluster approach from the global to the local level</i>: An important bullet that should perhaps be added is to emphasise the need for <b>surge capacity</b>. The GenCap advisor is noted in the report, and now we will have GBV Advisors as part of the GenCap roster.</p> <p>15. One of the recommendations might include suggestion for more real-time evaluations – instead we keep doing after action and it is too late and we never learn going forward. This year the Pakistan real time inter-agency assessment mission may have been overwhelming, and perhaps could have been better planned and managed, but it did allow for corrections along the way.</p> <p>16. On <b>recommendation 2</b>, the two findings – <i>Increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues. And Improve mechanisms to deal with multidisciplinary issues and inter-cluster gaps.</i> The recommendations are too soft and not helpful. We encourage that there would be a strong and clear call for inter-cluster coordination groups... or something that could help us resolve the types of issues that Health Cluster and Protection Cluster have fought over the issue of where does GBV AoR (Area of responsibility) coordination belong.</p> <p>17. Section 5.3 on information management should note the value of the humanitarianreform.org (now onerresponse.info) – this is a valuable resource. The issue of OneResponse vs Collaborative response is semantics. We have invested in really developing the GBV AoR</p>	<p>rec. 2</p> <p>13. Since we have not observed this, we cannot include this as a finding. We have, however, included a reference in the recommendations (2)</p> <p>14. This is in rec. 2 / the one on cross-cutting issues.</p> <p>15. Good point. Specific reference included in the recommendation on learning.</p> <p>16. Something similar is included in recommendation 4, which is about the need to ensure cluster representation in strategic coordination meetings like the HCT (where competence questions would be addressed).</p> <p>17. Cautious reference included</p>
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<p>website and now we hope to connect a community of practice to this site.</p> <p>18. There is no mention of UNFPA results – we would be happy to weave at least one or two in if you agree. There are a number of good practices and achievements in coordination which we can share.</p> <p>19. Page 27 and 29 – GBV Coordination Handbook and GBV Coordination e-learning tools are in the final stages of development and will be ready for wider dissemination by 2010-2011</p> <p>20. Page 42, number 71: UNFPA, UNHCR and IRC have pooled resources to develop a GBV information management system that is now being adapted for roll out where there are integrated missions in theatre.</p> <p>21. Page 54, under 111: UNFPA was the GBV coordinator in Uganda and Myanmar (and co-led with UNIFEM in Haiti). It may be important to note that these AoR working groups were in place before the full protection cluster rolled out, and a testament to the fact that both agencies are in countries working on multi-year development programmes before the emergency response, and has good relations both with key government ministries as well as local NGOs. This strengthens the need to engage with traditionally development agencies that also have a humanitarian mandate in emergencies (and similarly for development agencies to come forward and be heard) and should be a point made in the evaluation.</p> <p>22. <b>Communication Gaps</b> – There is no mention of the lack of translation equipment in cluster meetings which is a barrier to participation by national partners. I would be encouraged to use stronger language on this gap which is so easy to address by each cluster lead agency investing in simultaneous translation equipment which are moderately priced and will encouraged inclusion.</p>	<p>18. UNFPA results relating to what? The report is based on findings from the country studies and we generally do not include other examples as findings. Where other examples can inspire other agencies, we can consider referring to them in the recommendations.</p> <p>19. Included</p> <p>20. Included a suggestion to look at this into rec. 6</p> <p>21. This is (in summary form) included in § 110. We have added a few ministry names to make clear that these are usually not the emergency departments.</p> <p>22. Clarified that “language hurdles” arise because of a lack of translation. Otherwise, see rec. 2.</p>
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UNHCR (18.03.2010)

1. **[Page 7 (executive summary) Para 127] “The benefits generated by the cluster approach ‘slightly’ outweigh its costs and downsides.”** : The evaluators should reach a clear conclusion on whether the results achieved by the cluster approach have justified the investment made to date or not. The report appears to be saying that the results have indeed been commensurate with the time and money invested, and that there is the potential to achieve even more. However the current terminology (and in particular the use of the word ‘slightly’) significantly undermines the force of this conclusion. We recommend redrafting this and similar statements accordingly.

The figure \$57.6 million is also not contextualised. There is no indication of where this investment went, what would have happened if this investment was not made, and whether this investment was too high or too low. It is not set off against how much was spent on humanitarian assistance overall for an objective reader to have an indication on whether this is amount of money was justified in the circumstances or not. We would suggest either deleting it or providing significantly more detail.

2. **[Page 7 (executive summary) Para 127 table 2] Table 2: added value and downsides of the cluster approach:** The vast majority of the elements listed under ‘downsides’ of the cluster approach are not negative consequences of the cluster approach as such, but rather areas which could be strengthened to improve its operational effectiveness. We suggest that the evaluators separate out the points which are indeed negative consequences (for example, undermining national ownership and weakening national / local NGOs) from those which are areas which could be strengthened (for example, limited integration of cross-cutting issues)
3. **[Page 25] List of guidance notes:** The following learning tools should be added to the list:
- a. Emergency Shelter:
  - b. Shelter Projects 2008
  - c. LENSS: Local Estimate of Needs For Shelter and Settlement (Field Version) 2009
4. **[Para 24] Lack of mainstreaming – agency representatives do not have cluster responsibilities in TORs:** For information: Cluster responsibilities have been mainstreamed in revised job descriptions of UNHCR protection staff.
5. **[Para 27 and Rec 4: Page 71-72] Clarify the criteria and processes for activating and closing clusters:** The report rightly depicts the lack of clarity around the issue of cluster

1. Statement has been redrafted to explain our position better.

We have tried to find out more on how exactly the money was spent. This turned out to be impossible. The only information we could get is that contained in box 4, p. 27.  
We have included total humanitarian assistance during that time as a point of reference.

2. We have changed the wording to “shortcomings” for both types since actions can be taken in both categories to improve the functioning and effects of the cluster approach

3. ok

4. Thank you. We have not included a reference to this in the text since the point refers to the TORs of heads of agencies / country representatives.

5. An interesting example, though we do not have enough evidence from our research to include this as a finding or base a

activation and de-activation. It may be useful to make reference to other types of coordination arrangements that are specifically employed to carry out cluster functions where a given cluster is not activated but the functions are necessary to the operation. The CCCM Working Group in DRC is a good example of this and demonstrates the willingness and commitment of lead agencies towards improved humanitarian response even where a given cluster is not formally activated. See also comment 19 on the need to reflect the operational context as one of the key factors that may influence the behavior and/or functioning of clusters is also relevant here.

6. **[Paras 29-31] Global clusters provide more support than acknowledged on the ground, but support in case study countries especially at local level, is low:** The evaluation report correctly notes that the global clusters provide more support than is acknowledged on the ground. The Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG), under the leadership of UNHCR, has made concrete efforts to ensure a predictable response to field based protection clusters seeking assistance and support in activating and implementing the cluster approach. Technical experts on ageing and disabilities as well as needs assessment and operational data management have been deployed to several field operations, including Sri Lanka, Uganda, the OpT, Zimbabwe and Indonesia, and their findings incorporated into protection strategies. During the missions the deployee would also travel to and undertake activities at the local level.
7. **[Paras 35-42] Weak inter-cluster coordination:** A guidance note on inter-cluster coordination is currently being elaborated by the clusters, under the auspices of OCHA.
8. **[Para 42] “CCCM implies inter-cluster coordination in camp-based IDP settings. Due to a lack of capacity however the CCCM cluster has not been found to exercise this role (as opposed to the camp management role) effectively.”:** The reference to the lack of capacity, though relevant, requires further clarification. Does it relate to (i) the lack of leadership ability of the Cluster Coordinator/s (the right skills and right profile) to effectively discharge coordination functions or (ii) the general lack of resources for the Cluster(s) to acquire the necessary coordination capacity (adequate coverage, etc) or (iii) both?

Whichever is the case, the catch is that donors have not yet fully acknowledged that clusters are not "cost neutral" and unless proportionate funding is made available, such gaps may never be fully addressed. This aspect, which is critical to many aspects including the mainstreaming of cluster coordination costs by Cluster Lead Agencies, does not seem to be concretely captured in the report.

9. **[Para 42] “The activities of the protection cluster can duplicate the overall information collection and management role of OCHA”:** The *Operational Guidance on*

recommendation on it.

6. Included as example in box 3

7. Thank you. OCHA had also mentioned this, now included in Box 2, as well as the footnote with documents for §§ 35-42.

8. Hard to tell. We think that camp coordination is really a major “meta-cluster” like activity which takes major efforts and risks duplication with inter-cluster coordination and the role of OCHA and would require major capacities in terms of staff time and money.

The revised recommendation 5 hopefully bears out better now.

9. We generally find the division of labour between OCHA and the clusters to be not ideal (as mentioned elsewhere in the report) since

*Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA in Information Management* (2008) clearly states that “(t)he responsibility for ensuring appropriate information management needed for an effective and coordinated intra-cluster response rests with the Cluster Lead Agency.” Accordingly, in instances in which the Protection Cluster has the requisite capacity, protection information management relevant for an effective and efficient coordination of protection is the responsibility of the Protection Cluster. In addition, as protection is cross-cutting this will also include information relevant to protection mainstreaming in other clusters. This responsibility is explicitly given to Cluster Coordinators in the current draft generic Terms of Reference of Cluster Coordinators as follows “in terms of inter-cluster coordination, identify issues of mutual interest and identify information which (i) should be proactively shared with other clusters, and (ii) should be acquired from other clusters to ensure a more effective overall response.” The Cluster Coordinators have the obligation to “facilitate adequate reporting and information sharing, both within the cluster and with other clusters through inter-cluster coordination mechanisms. This will involve collecting 3W or 4W information (who/what/when/where) from partners and ensuring it is shared with the inter-agency coordination body so that it can be processed and redistributed at the cluster level and to other stakeholders.” The Protection Cluster welcomes OCHA’s complementary support role in line with its responsibility for ensuring appropriate information management needed for an effective and coordinated inter-cluster response. The Protection Cluster understands OCHA’s role to be that of processing and redistributing relevant information emanating from all Clusters. Accordingly, in line with this understanding the issue of duplication does not arise as OCHA is not a primary source of information, but provides a service confined to the inter-cluster level.

**10. [Paras 60-63, Para 119] Partnerships: strengthened between UN agencies and with international NGOs, complicated when clusters are closely associated with integrated missions:** See comment 23 regarding integrated missions.

**11. [Para 66] Weak accountability to Humanitarian Coordinators (in part because of HC’s limited capacity linked to multiple roles (HC/RC/DSRSG):** Do the evaluators have any specific recommendations relating to the reduced capacity occasioned by the dual and triple-hatting of HC/RC/DSRSGs? Are there any other consequences of this arrangement for the working of the cluster system, for example in relation to humanitarian space? Is this an argument against such a structural arrangement?

**12. [Paras 71-73] Weak institutional memory / information management [Paras 71-73]:**

there are many overlaps between creating and / or collecting information within clusters and collecting it at the inter-cluster level. This problem shows most clearly in the case of those clusters that at least in some cases act as “meta-clusters”. We just note the duplication that we have clearly seen and believe that these relationships need to be clarified (s. revised rec. 4.4)

10. no comment

11. Since most HCs had little contact with the clusters, we could not observe a negative effect of the double / triple hatting on humanitarian space. We have not included a specific recommendation on this issue, because the case is ambivalent (can create better linkages, can create better advocacy opportunities for clusters, but can result in less time for humanitarian issues / less commitment to humanitarian principles). The question therefore depends too much on the circumstances to develop a generic recommendation.

12. In our understanding, institutional memory is a very closely linked

Institutional memory issues and information management, although linked, are two different things. *The Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA in Information Management* (2008) provides clear guidance on information management. Institutional memory is best secured through proper handover mechanisms.

13. [Para 84] **Tension between ‘needs-based’ and ‘status-based’ approaches:** The reference to ‘needs-based / vulnerabilities-based’ vs. ‘status-based’ approaches is not clearly elaborated. As used here, it appears to conflate two issues, each of which emerged in relation to one country context only. These are as follows:
- a. Links between refugee and IDP coordination mechanisms (Chad).
  - b. Different targeting strategies adopted by the CCCM and NFI clusters in the DRC.
  - c. *Links between refugee and IDP coordination mechanisms.*
  - d. This issue has arisen only in relation to Eastern Chad, where refugees, IDPs and host communities live alongside each other (sometimes referred to as ‘mixed’ populations). For reasons related to UNHCR's mandate for refugee protection (including through assistance), and in the absence of any clear evidence that bringing refugee coordination within the cluster system would result in enhanced operational delivery, the coordination of refugee protection and assistance activities remains the responsibility of UNHCR (for which it is legally accountable to the General Assembly through ECOSOC), and remains formally outside the cluster approach.
  - e. UNHCR nonetheless agrees that every effort should be made to link the two coordination systems and to achieve a coherent system of delivery that maximises benefits to both populations. The Chad country study notes that much progress has been made in this respect (see for example paragraphs 36 and 42 of the draft country study). In field locations such as Goz Beida, a strategy has been developed to ensure that appropriate and practical linkages are in place at multiple levels for the benefit of both IDP and refugees, without overloading participants by calling for separate meetings. A global-level change of policy is neither appropriate nor necessary.
  - f. UNHCR strongly opposes the definition of 'needs based' versus 'status based' coordination which is introduced in the evaluation. While this terminology provides a nifty label, it also suggests that there are two competing models of coordination, which misrepresents the underlying differences in mandate and lines of accountability as well as implying that a status-based response is not based on needs.
  - g. *Differences in approach between the CCCM working group and NFI cluster in DRC :* UNHCR has drafted separate comments on the references to this issue in the DRC country study. Whilst the NFI cluster and CCM working group in DRC have developed different approaches to targeting, both have subscribed to a joint

to the question of information management since the best information management system will not help if information is lost. For the main part, this is not a question of guidance, but implementation.

13. (a-e): This is all well and right, but our example in § 84 does not refer to links between refugee and IDP coordination systems, but to questions whether IDPs in non-camp situation, as well as host families affected by the crisis receive differential treatment, which can lead to tensions and incoherence. It is in that respect that the situation resembles that of DRC.

13. (f) The report does not distinguish between needs-based and status-based coordination, but approaches to humanitarian assistance. As the context in DRC clearly demonstrates, there is a real and tangible difference between these approaches that undermines attempts to create more coherence, address conflicts and achieve broad coverage of humanitarian needs.

13.(g) Waiting for input from DRC team

strategy, and efforts are being made to harmonise policies in such a way as to create synergies and complementarities between them. UNHCR is committed to continuing to pursue practical solutions at field level. This issue does not constitute a 'conflict or systemic incoherence' which requires action at global policy level.

14. **[Para 89 onwards] Coverage:** As noted below in comment 17, there is insufficient recognition in the report that when CLAs took on cluster leadership roles, they did not simply agree to coordinate and act as provider as last resort in the event that needs in the relevant sector were not covered, but undertook to re-orient their programmes in order to take a lead in delivery in that sector. For agencies such as UNHCR, this involved developing new programmes or significantly expanding existing programmes in certain countries or geographical areas – such as for IDPs in northern Uganda and DRC. The actions undertaken by individual CLAs to re-orient and expand their engagement at country level in line with their cluster responsibilities is not adequately captured in the report.

15. **[Para 100 Bullet point 4] Cross-cutting activities not fully addressed. Protection clusters prioritise cluster activities over advisory functions:** UNHCR has prioritised ageing and disability as cross cutting issues in protection responses (see more information

14. We are aware of this important point and we consider this partly as a grey zone in terms of clear guidance. There is no very clear guidance in official IASC guidelines to support a general filling of sector needs by the CLA. In the case study countries, CLAs mainly described their activities and responsibilities as those of “coordinating” and “Facilitating” response. The Generic Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster Leads at the Country Level (IASC 2006) state that: "Sector/cluster leads at the country level are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator for facilitating a process (!) at the sectoral level aimed at ensuring (...) inclusion of key stakeholders, establishment of mechanisms, M&E etc etc" For the Provision of assistance or services as a last resort (!) the guideline states "As agreed by the IASC Principals, sector leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet agreed needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard. This concept is to be applied in an appropriate and realistic manner for cross-cutting issues such as protection, early recovery and camp coordination".

The IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response (November 2006) describes the 'provider of last resort' concept in the following terms: "Where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response, it is the responsibility of cluster leads to call on all relevant humanitarian partners to address these. If this fails, then depending on the urgency, the cluster lead as 'provider of last resort' may need to commit itself to filling the gap. If, however, funds are not forthcoming for these activities, the cluster lead cannot be expected to implement these activities, but should continue to work with the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to mobilize the necessary resources."

15. Examples included, but this does not change the fact that we found little evidence for the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues. People also clearly stated that if they have to do both, run a cluster and look

under Comment 6). In addition, field based protection clusters are actively encouraged to include cross-cutting issues in the terms of reference of Protection Clusters and Protection Cluster Coordinators.

16. **[Paras 106-113] Weakened national ownership:** This section does not adequately explore the dilemmas associated with involvement of national authorities in certain clusters (in particular, protection) in certain circumstances. Any guidance would need to be flexible and to reflect such nuances. An inter-agency guidance note on working with national authorities is currently being finalised at the global level.

17. **[Paras 114-116] The cluster approach can slow initial response – it is best suited to coordinating and improving medium term response:** This reflects a misconception that the cluster approach is primarily about coordination (which also emerges in other parts of the report). One of the key achievements of the cluster approach is predictability of leadership – not only in terms of leading coordination, but in terms of preparedness and delivery. What the cluster approach does is to ensure that roles and lead responsibilities for delivery are clearly designated in advance, enabling a more prompt and effective response to new emergencies by cluster lead agencies. (In relation to protection responsibilities in natural disasters, this predictability has not yet been fully achieved, but new standard operating procedures to be presented to the IASC Working Group in April aim to address this). Therefore, the suggestion that the cluster approach can ‘slow’ the initial response reflects a distorted focus on the cluster approach as a coordination mechanism, and insufficiently reflects the responsibility to deliver that attaches to the cluster lead role. In any event, the essence of the cluster approach is to secure better partnership and coordination at the height of an emergency, when working together is essential. The recommendation appears to contradict the logic of the cluster approach.

18. **[Para 131, Recs ] Systemic obstacles to the functioning of early recovery, protection and other clusters; Time-consuming and often irresolvable debates concerning scope and mandate (debates around ‘what is protection’); Lack of expertise on protection / ER at field level ; Links between protection cluster and military / peacekeepers – issues around confidential information:**

a. The Protection Clusters have a clear and well understood definition of Protection. One of the major achievements of the Protection Cluster has been agreement to adopt and adapt the ICRC/IASC definition of protection which was reached after a long dialogue among the relevant actors. The Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG) provided, at the global level, a regular platform on which this discussion could be held and agreement arrived. The common protection definition adopted by the PCWG and subsequently endorsed by the IASC is as follows: *“all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law,*

after a cross-cutting issue (mainstream it into other clusters), they often have very little time left for doing the latter.

16. The earlier statement of “identify “suitable” national partners (i.e. government or civil society)” was changed to be clearer and the proviso of “where appropriate” was introduced. Thank you, Reference included.

17. This section has been rephrased significantly. The evaluation team paid little attention to preparedness questions since this was not part of the TORs for this evaluation (covered in phase 1).

18. (a) We have mentioned the existence of this common definition more clearly (earlier reference was only to its inclusion in cluster TORs). Yet, this definition has not (yet?) helped clusters at the country and local levels. They are still caught up in long debates on this issue and / or confusion concerning the mandate of the cluster.

*i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender)."*

Other actors with protection responsibilities beyond the remit of the Protection Cluster may have different approaches or definitions. The Protection Cluster is reaching out to some of these key actors in order to arrive at a common understanding of standards. Part of this effort has been the involvement of the Protection Cluster Lead Agency and other members of the Protection Cluster in the "Professional Standards for Protection Work" Project led by the ICRC, as well as discussions with DPKO/OCHA on protection in peacekeeping environments.

- b. The second bullet point is not clear – is it referring to cluster coordinators, cluster participants or the humanitarian community generally? If the first, it is difficult to understand the basis upon which this assertion is made as most cluster coordinators for the Protection Cluster in the Field have a functional protection job description.
- c. UNHCR as Protection Cluster Lead Agency has strict data protection and confidentiality guidelines which are applicable when sharing information with external interlocutors, including UN peacekeeping or political missions. Protection Clusters will be encouraged to raise awareness on applicable data protection and confidentiality rules and policies.
- d. UNHCR is providing separate comments on the references in the DRC study which appear to have given rise to this finding and which reflect a misunderstanding of the situation.

**19. [Page 67 onwards] Recommendations (general):**UNHCR staff participated in the recent workshop hosted by the evaluators in which the recommendations were discussed, and provided input in the course of working group discussions on individual recommendations. Many of the recommendations (as currently formulated) are likely to remain elusive if not properly tied to the core issue of limited resources and other external factors. For instance, the issue of linking emergency response to early recovery and developmental efforts cannot be realistically considered in isolation, and is in any event not specific to the cluster approach. Analyzing related (larger) factors is crucial, such as the consequence of donors' "artificial" divide between humanitarian and development funding.

Overall, the analysis and recommendations do not fully reflect the need to ensure that the shape and implementation of the cluster approach in a given operation must be tailored to the specific operational context. One of the positive elements of the cluster approach is its

18(b) Relates mainly to the humanitarian community generally / other actors.

18 (d) Awaiting input from DRC team.

19. We have included a reference to this in the recommendation, but cannot provide analysis on these issues in the context of this evaluation.

(cf. § 18)

The evaluation team recognizes the flexibility of the cluster approach as

flexibility, and the fact that a ‘one size fits all’ approach has been avoided. The flexibility to tailor the cluster approach to the operational context is critical, for example, in relation to linkages with national authorities/existing coordination mechanisms. The need to maintain a focus on analysing the operational context and designing and implementing cluster arrangements in a way which reflects the specific nature of the context is critical. Recognizing and reflecting this in the report will also assist in rephrasing/reorganizing some of the recommendations (which was strongly recommended at the workshop) and ultimately assist in managing the follow-up process.

Similarly, the report does not fully reflect the varied typology of contexts selected for inclusion in the country studies (new emergencies, protracted complex emergencies, natural disasters). It would be useful to have had more differentiated analysis of the role and effectiveness of the cluster approach in each of these types of situation.

The report currently fails to adequately capture the evolution of the cluster approach over time. Efforts should be made to analyse the progress made since the Phase 1 Cluster evaluation, and to understand the elements which have influenced the way in which the cluster approach has evolved. It would also be useful to analyse whether the cluster approach is working more effectively in those situations where it has had time to ‘bed down’ (ie. Where it was activated earlier, or indeed whether the reverse is true (for example, whether it has been more successful in operations where it was rolled out once a range of guidance tools had already been developed).

20. [p.67] **Rec 1: Shift focus of cluster approach from global to local level:** The PCWG has recognised the need to do this and its 2009-2011 Strategic Priorities are field-oriented. The 2010 Workplan is focused on delivering support to field operations. The Emergency Shelter Cluster has already noted that linkages between global and national clusters need to be improved by strengthening capacity at the national and local levels. In this respect, three training modules on training for coordinators, specialist-technicians, and information managers have been consolidated in a user friendly manner and are ready for use. Efforts will be made to build regional and country level capacity through a shift of emphasis from global to regional and country level training. The implementation plan is currently under discussion within the ESC.

one of its strengths, but was surprised to find that most of the findings and resulting recommendations were very similar to identical across very different situations. The final version of the report will contain a table showing all findings and indicate which country reports and other sources back it up.

Again, we were surprised to see that the very different contexts did not result in greater differences in the findings.

With the method adopted for conducting this evaluation, an adequate analysis of the evolution of the cluster approach was very difficult to achieve: The conscious focus (also in distinction to phase 1 of the evaluation) was on country studies. Since actors change relatively quickly in most emergency contexts, it was very difficult to recreate an accurate picture of the development over time. Since the cluster approach evolves simultaneously in countries (especially in protracted crises like Uganda and DRC) and at the global level, the only fair comparison in the eyes of the evaluators is that between the current status of the cluster approach in, say, Uganda and Haiti – not between Uganda 2006 and Haiti today. Slightly more information on developments over time for individual countries is contained in the country reports.

20. Great! Reference included in the recommendation

<p>21. <b>[p.74] Rec 6: bullet 1: Focus the activities of global clusters on identifying and addressing conflicts and systemic incoherence in humanitarian response, such as the definition of protection or the use of status-based vs. needs-based approaches:</b> See comments on para 84 and 131 above. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A clear definition of protection has been developed by the Global Protection Cluster and endorsed by the IASC. Efforts are under way to reach out to actors outside the cluster who may have different approaches.</li> <li>b. The terminology 'status-based vs. needs-based' is unhelpful and conflates a two separate issues, both of which have already been largely addressed at country level. This does not amount to a systemic incoherence which requires policy action at global level. Additional support and guidance from Global Clusters may be provided if needed. Accordingly, these two examples should be deleted. The recommendation as a whole is in any event rather vague.</li> </ul> <p>22. <b>[p.74] Rec 6: bullet 3: Create global food security cluster:</b> UNHCR understands that this would involve the merging of the current agriculture cluster into a new food security cluster. An increase in the overall number of clusters should be avoided.</p> <p>23. <b>[p.74] Rec 6, bullet 4: develop guidance on the relationship between clusters and integrated missions or PK operations at the political level, as well as clear criteria for the inclusion of cluster members:</b> UNHCR agrees that it would be useful to have clear guidance on the relationship between the cluster approach (and the coordination of humanitarian action generally) and UN peacekeeping / political missions, particularly where the integrated approach is being applied. This could draw on lessons learned in situations such as the DRC and Chad. Such guidance would need to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to a range of contexts and missions with different mandates. In developing criteria for the participation of UN missions in individual clusters, a distinction should be drawn between those parts which have a direct role to play in the cluster approach (such as civil affairs and human rights) and others such as the peacekeeping / political components. Consideration might be given as to whether in addition to general guidance on the relationship between integrated missions and the cluster approach, cluster-specific guidance should also be developed (for example, in relation to the protection cluster). The PCWG is already committed to working with OCHA/DPKO on guidance regarding protection strategies for integrated missions.</p> <p>24. <b>Rec 6, bullet 5: ensure confidentiality of sensitive information in situations where the protection cluster is linked to peacekeeping operations:</b> See comments on paragraph 131 above. This problem (which is not clearly defined) appears to have arisen in one country study only and should not be defined as an example of conflict / systemic incoherence. It could be covered in guidelines on the interaction between protection clusters and integrated missions suggested above. This sub-recommendation should be</p>	<p>21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ok / that part deleted</li> <li>b) The evaluation team has a different opinion in this respect (s. above)</li> </ul> <p>22. Correct, have specified this in the text.</p> <p>23. Reference to DRC and Chad included &amp; Context-sensitivity mre strongly emphasized</p> <p>24. Included in the previous bullet point</p>
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<p>deleted.</p> <p><b>25. [p.76] List of HQ-level interviewees:</b> It is our understanding that the majority of the individuals listed were not individually interviewed, but took part in meetings organised by global clusters. The list should be adjusted to reflect this.</p>	<p>25. Most individuals listed in the interview list were interviewed individually or together with a second person. Since several people were also interviewed twice, including this in the list would make the list very complex.</p>
<p><b>UNICEF (24.03.2010)</b></p>	
<p><b>Protection Cluster</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protection is cited as having received \$8.5m in the initial global appeals for global level cluster work. this gives the wrong impression with regard to Child Protection. We only received \$70k of this for one project (ARC). This is important if we are held up as an example of good practice - we never had the 'come down' that other clusters had when the global level funding dried up, and have always had to draw on the commitment and resources of colleagues across the CP community including in the field.</li> <li>2. The Protection Cluster is characterised as a cluster fraught with systemic problems and without a clear and consistent mandate in its application. There are two points to make in relation to CP on this: 1. This is NOT the same for the areas of responsibility necessarily, and CP sub clusters are typically very fast moving (often established before the protection cluster) and with a clear and widely understood mandate, and a programmatic as well as policy/ advocacy presence. 2. Weaknesses in the Protection cluster do put the CP sub cluster and other areas of responsibility in serious jeopardy of being poorly represented in important inter-cluster processes (e.g. those relating to strategy, advocacy and funding). For this reason and others it is good practice and accepted as such by the global protection cluster for there to be flexibility in country to allow side by side representation of AoRs along with the protection cluster.</li> </ol> <p><b>Nutrition Cluster</b></p> <p><i>General Comments</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3.</b> Many clusters are not managed effectively enough and cluster coordinators often have not enough time, insufficient coordination skills or are too junior. (§23, §33). In many cases bad cluster management and facilitation prevent clusters from reaching their full potential. <b><i>Response: Need to be specific in these areas. Although to some this is true, referencing of the specific aspect of the management referred herein would</i></b></li> </ol>	<p><i>The consultant team was not able to react to these comments, as there were coming in far behind the deadline. The consultant company will reconsider them when revising the draft.</i></p>

*beneficial. It is however true that skills development and capacity building is important and this is the focus of the Nutrition Cluster, especially for country level structures.*

4. The exclusion of local actors and the failure to link with, build on, or support existing coordination and response mechanisms weakens national and local ownership and capacities. Response: *At country level, local actors who are implementing: say Nutrition intervention would be members of the cluster as in Sudan for example; Local NGOs were beneficiaries of the CHF. The weak local ownership has sometimes got to do with the time needed for capacity building in the middle of an emergency. The speed at which we are expected to deliver humanitarian intervention is such that government cannot sometimes keep up with. This said, the real problem of ownership has got to do with the understanding of the cluster systems at national and local level. It is also worth mentioning that establishment of an emergency coordination mechanism is also a treat to the government as it shows failure in the systems from the part of government especially in a man-made disaster such as political unrest. Therefore, striking the right balance is not always easy.*
5. Multidimensional and cross-cutting issues are neglected. *Comments: This is could be true, but it has more to do with the lack of guidance in those areas. Just saying something is cross cutting with limited operational guidance and lack of monitoring systems for the implementation such component is not enough.*
6. A lack of clear guidance from the IASC and the political level on activation and exit strategies for clusters, the interplay between the cluster approach and financing mechanisms, as well as integrated missions undermine effective coordination. *Comment: Indeed there is a need to have a clear guidance on when to establish the cluster approach and when to phase out. There could also be more clarify on the fund mobilization role of the Cluster, but lot is happening in terms of fund raising e.g. through the CHF and Flash appeal. Partners also have their traditional donors, so what is needed is a consolidated cluster plan and resource mobilization strategy.*
7. *I do not agree that the integrated mission undermines the cluster approach. In any case, they do promote the provision of safe corridors and access to certain areas, e.g. in Darfur.*

*Specific Comments*

8. The international focus of the cluster approach undermines national ownership (§107) and many resources were invested into the cluster approach at global level, but global cluster

support at country level is low. (§127 (table),§29). *Comments: In case of the NC, for the first two years, this was true, where the focus was more on development of tools, and guideline for the cluster and the GNC also managed to galvanize support from the global cluster partners. This has however changed and now the emphasis is more on capacity building of Cluster country and support for existing cluster countries, mapping and consolidation of lessons learnt to feed into future directions of the Cluster.*

9. The use of short-term global coordinators creates turn-over problems and often lack relevant knowledge about the local context.(§30, §31). *Comments: This was true for the Nutrition Cluster and the gap in the position could clearly weaken our standing. We can however say that with both RR and OR we will ensure to ensure that these capacity gaps are minimized. At national level, how long the cluster systems will be needed will be determined by the the duration of the emergency. Fund to sustain those posts has also been the biggest constraint and this needed to be reflected.*
10. Currently, clusters often remain too abstract and not relevant enough to activities on the ground. (§34): *Comments: There should be specific examples provided here. In my view, the constraint are more on capacity and funding, and although we have a long ways to go in perfecting the cluster approach, there is some progress. The only issue is this progress is sometimes not properly attributed to the fact there is good coordination and we need to document the contribution of the cluster coordination structure better.*
11. Clusters rarely use or promote participatory approaches. (§102). *Comments:This might be true in other Clusters but not all. The Work Planning process e.g. in Sudan and Haiti shows how partners are involved. For the Nutrition Cluster, this is stronger at Global level and we need to improve at country level, but I do not agree that participation of other partners is absent.*
12. Clusters facilitate the sharing of assessment results, but do not use their potential to improve assessment methods through learning. (§75). *Comments: this is not entirely true, but it is more of a capacity issue, the tools are there but when it comes to implementation, but efforts are being made by OCHA (through the Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) and within the Nutrition cluster through the Assessment Working Group and the Capacity Building Working Group to improve on the specific indicators that can identify the problems, the gaps and the response needs and also the proper use of these tools.*
13. There is no general basic and practical guidance for cluster coordinators and critical general elements of guidance are missing.(§27, §31) – *Comments – Indeed we do not have a*

*general guidance tool for cluster approach per se but WASH and Health have hand book and this is the priority for Nutrition in 2010-2011.*

- 14.** Leadership responsibilities have not been sufficiently mainstreamed in cluster lead organizations. (§24). *Comments: Not entirely true, however, we might need to do more in fulfilling the indicators necessary for mainstreaming as were presented at the donor meeting in Geneva in February.*
- 15.** The roles and responsibilities for operational and strategic issues of different coordination fora are often not clear. (§40). *Comments: Not true for Nutrition. We have TOR for all working groups and for a, however what is weak is linkage between of these fora and the national level. We also need to improve on the effective implementation of those tools and guidance developed by the cluster partners at country level and this is a priority for us.*
- 16.** The involvement can be counterproductive when clusters are involved in allocation decisions because that can create conflicts between cluster members, lead to “horsetrading” in proposal selection and create conflicts of interest for cluster lead organizations. (§63, §119): *Comment: Am not sure what this exactly means. How can the cluster not be involved in this process of resource allocation (assuming this is CHF), when on the other hand, we are supposed to vet the project sheets and proposals submitted in a Flash Appeal. The involvement of the cluster coordinator is even more important especially in a situation where the contributions toward these appeals do not need the requirement or the proposed budget. In which case, the Cluster Coordinator has an important role in coordinating prioritization of the needs that required funding.*
- 17.** Cluster leads rarely act as real “providers of last resort”, yet this role would be important enable clusters to fill gaps. (§94, §130): *Comments: this may be true and if this means UNICEF recruiting staff to implement programme directly, we have not done it in many places. We have however to some extend been the provider of last resort in terms of provision of supplies. This role might need to be defined further.*
- 18.** Clusters as coordination (+) platforms are not in a position to address deeply rooted political and institutional questions. (§131). Yet, these questions present an obstacle to the effective functioning of clusters, for example in the case of conflicts between status-based and needs-based approaches or governance Address political issues and define the limits of Integration. *Comments: How are we expected to address deeply rooted political problems? Indeed we can mediate between government and partners when there are technical, managerial and programmatic misunderstanding, but not resolving political problems. This need to be clarified.*

19. When cluster members are financially dependent on cluster lead organizations and clusters maintain close relationships to integrated missions, peacekeeping forces or political actors involved in a conflict, clusters can threaten the humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality. This can contribute to an erosion of humanitarian space and make strictly humanitarian actors reluctant to engage in clusters. (§119). *Comment: What does this mean? We are never the only source of funding for the cluster work, so am not sure what this sentence means, so an example will be great.*

**WFP (18.03.2010)**

1. Please find attached WFP's comments on the initial draft of the Cluster 2 Evaluation Synthesis Report. You will note that several of the comments voiced at the recent workshop in Geneva are reiterated here.
2. As an overall comment, we feel that it is important to make a clear distinction between the service clusters (ETC and Logistics) from the other clusters, because most of the findings and recommendations in the draft report relate to issues that do not apply to the service clusters. This was addressed in the Cluster Evaluation Framework document:
3. *"Type of Cluster: Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications clusters function as 'enablers' for an operation, supporting partners and their respective clusters and programs. Therefore, their work should be evaluated in terms of its relationship to other clusters and partners (their 'clients'), not on providing services to affected populations. For these clusters, integration of cross cutting issues or indicators at beneficiary level should not be applied or measured."*
4. *"Cross-cutting themes: The cross-cutting issues should be examined individually. In order to be useful to the distinct agencies working on them, a disaggregated analysis of how each cross-cutting theme is or is not being integrated into the clusters is necessary. While the indicators to measure cross-cutting integration are similar, each theme should be analyzed on its own. Further, some clusters such as protection and early recovery work to ensure that these issues are integrated into other cluster work as well. These two clusters should also be evaluated as to the extent to which they have been incorporated into the work and planning of all other clusters (except ETC and logistics). Note that the indicators below supplement the indicators/questions for the overall approach. All of the clusters (except ETC and Logistics where indicated) will be evaluated on the generic indicators outlined in Section 4.1." A similar statement should be included in this report.*
5. Given the very short timeframe in which to compile these comments, we look forward to

Please find reactions by the GPPI&U.R.D. on the consolidated comments below:

further opportunities to provide feedback before the report is finalized.

Consolidated Comments by WFP:

1. **[Page 3 of Executive Summary]** “A key aim of the evaluation was “To provide an assessment of whether investments in the cluster approach were worth-while, based on an analysis of the benefits and costs or downsides associated with its introduction;”  
Comment: The report is weak on cost benefit analysis, it refers to the \$57.6 million raised through the Global Cluster Appeals but does not quantify the other costs and does not quantify in financial terms the benefits that have accrued. During the workshop the consultants confirmed that the finding that “the benefits currently achieved by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides” was highly subjective and not based on a detailed cost benefit analysis.
  
2. **[Page 7 of Executive Summary]** “The cluster approach created the following most important downsides:”  
Comment: It may be more accurate to rephrase this to: “In some cases the implementation of the cluster approach was constrained by a number of factors, including:”
  
3. **[Page 15]** “Lead agencies convene coordination meetings at global and country level and are supposed to act as “providers of last resort” where gaps arise in the response”.  
Comment: Convening of coordination meetings is a minor activity and the description trivializes the key roles of cluster lead agencies (CLA). CLAs are responsible for ensuring system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies, and for ensuring greater predictability and more effective inter-agency responses in their particular sectors or areas of activity. They are responsible for establishing broad partnership bases (i.e. “clusters”) that engage in activities in three main areas: Standards and policy-setting; Building response capacity; and Operational support.
  
4. **[Page 25 - Box 3] Comment: Add: Emergency Telecommunications Cluster**
  - ETC Description of Services
  - Terms of Reference local ETC Working Group
  - Assessment Template
  - Project Documentation Templates
  - Budget Preparation and Inventory Tool (Emergency Management Application)
  - Project Closure Report (SPR)
  - ICT Best Practices WebsiteOk. Apologies for the omission.

1. The text in the introduction has been amended to state the purposes of the evaluation as contained in the terms of reference (focus: main outcomes and operational effectiveness of the cluster approach).

That is correct. The concept of “cost-benefit analysis” has therefore been removed from the text.

2. We are now using the term “shortcomings” and emphasise that they are related to the current implementation of the cluster approach (not necessarily the cluster approach per se)

3. Some of these elements, which were represented through the direct quote from the IASC guidance note on using the cluster approach, have been included in the flow text as well.

4. Ok, included in abbreviated version; old entries deleted (overlap)

For Logistics Cluster please add

- Global Logistics Cluster Deployment Kit (IASC guidance notes, Logistics Cluster guidance, templates (e.g.ToRs), software, end of mission surveys)
- Information Management Kit (guidelines, tools, templates etc for start-up IM managers)
- Dedicated country pages on [www.logcluster.org](http://www.logcluster.org) with Global Cell support where meeting minutes and other relevant documents are posted.
- Country level mailing lists functions maintained with Global Cell support
- GIS Communication package (briefing material, guidelines, snapshots)
- GIS starter kit (map templates, assessment forms, UNSDI database extracts)
- Guidelines for conducting Logistics Capacity Assessments (LCAs), 2009
- Service Mindset Training SMT, e-learning tool, 2009
- Logistics Operational Guide (LOG), currently being developed, launch April 2010
- Customs Information Guide (CIG), 2008
- MapCentre on [www.logcluster.org](http://www.logcluster.org)

5. **[Page 48]** “United Nations Disaster Assistance and Coordination”

Comment: United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

6. **[Page 51]** “Interactions between clusters and Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) remain very limited in most cases”

Comment: The cluster approach and the HC are closely linked, this comment suggests a fundamental problem with functioning of HCs as some of the key responsibilities in the HC TOR are:

- Ensures that response efforts are inclusive and coordinated, by regularly convening and leading the Humanitarian Country Team
- Ensures that there is an efficient and effective division of labour among relevant organisations for implementing the strategic plan, by securing agreement on the establishment of clusters (sectors) and the designation of cluster leads
- Expend all necessary efforts to ensure that the strategic plan is implemented in a principled, timely, effective, and efficient manner, by holding cluster leads accountable for the performance of the functions outlined in the IASC Guidance Note,6 and by establishing mechanisms for inter-cluster coordination, needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation;
- Ensures that the response preparedness efforts of relevant organisations are inclusive and coordinated, by regularly convening and leading the Humanitarian Country Team

5. Ok – thank you.

6. We agree that the lack of an active role of the HC in most cases is sub-optimal. Some of the responsibilities mentioned here were included in the “grey” text § 49 to provide better background.

7. **[Page 61]** “In several cases, however, especially in clusters led by WFP, UNHCR and sometimes UNICEF, clusters were mainly composed of implementing partners of the lead agency”

Comment: Further clarification requested on this statement.

8. **[Page 62 – Box 5]** “Atlas Logistique is co-lead of Logistics Cluster in Haiti”

Comment: It is not correct to say that Atlas Logistique is the co-lead. While they are heavily involved in the cluster, were facilitating cluster meetings outside the capital during the 2008 hurricane response, and have a contract with WFP to manage the inter-agency truck fleet (i.e. paid for the management service with WFP Special Operation funds) they do not carry out the functions (nor accept the obligations) of a co-lead.

9. **[Page 64]** “The cluster approach conceptualizes accountability predominantly as hierarchical accountability between cluster lead organizations and the Humanitarian Coordinator”

Comment: This is an example of the misunderstanding of accountability under the cluster approach; it should not be seen as hierarchical with cluster leads reporting to the HC. The IASC Guidance note states “Sector leads are expected to report to the Humanitarian Coordinator on issues related to the functioning of the sector as a whole” The following clarification provided by Logistics last year is useful: WFP agreed to be held accountable to the ERC and the HC for leading, coordinating, planning, and responding and for being the Provider of Last Resort as per the IASC Guidance. WFP did not sign-up to create at the global level, measures of accountability to donors or the ERC that mirror/ duplicate what exists already with WFP’s Executive Board. Regarding governance, the way WFP implements the cluster approach cannot take precedence over existing levels of accountability.

10. **[Page 66]** “Cluster coordinators either report via their agency heads to the Humanitarian Country Team (or equivalent), which is problematic because agency heads often lack relevant information. Alternatively, cluster coordinators report to the local OCHA office, which informs the Humanitarian Coordinator”

Comment: Cluster coordinators report to their agency head, they do not report to the local OCHA office, or OCHA HQ.

7. The evaluation team repeatedly encountered especially local-level clusters that were described by participants as “relabelled implementing partner meetings”, meaning that participants were mostly NGOs in a contractual relationship to the lead agency who felt compelled to attend meetings for this reason.

8. Footnote 38 had explained that the term “co-lead” comprises “co-lead” and “co-facilitator” arrangements. We initially chose this approach because these terms are used interchangeably and there is no clear definition of them. Realizing that this creates confusion, however, we have introduced a clearer distinction between “co-lead” and “co-facilitator” or “co-chair” arrangements.

9. We agree that the conceptualization of accountability within the cluster approach requires amendment / clarification (especially relating to peer accountability and accountability to the affected population), but believe that it is accurate to say that accountability currently is mainly conceptualized as hierarchical accountability.

10. Clarified to show that formal reporting lines are via agency head and, since this often does not work, information is often channelled via OCHA (without there being a formal reporting relationship, as already stated in the earlier version)

11. [Page 71] "...information management and institutional memory remain a big problem in all country cases."

Comment: Information and institutional memory may be an issue in some country cases, but not all.

12. [Page 95] "Cluster lead organizations rarely act as providers of last resort in the sense of mobilizing their own resources in order to address critical gaps. Instead, most lead organizations focus on appealing to donors to provide resources for filling those gaps ("advocates of last resort"), in accordance with recent guidance by the IASC. **The exception are lead agencies such as UNICEF or FAO that can draw on emergency budget lines, borrow from their regular programs or offer access to emergency stocks to act as genuine providers of last resort at least for some priority gaps.** Other exceptions include common service clusters like Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications, in which lead organizations often act as providers of first resort."

Comment: This is not accurate; suggested replacement text: The exception are lead agencies such as UNICEF or FAO that can draw on emergency budget lines, borrow from their regular programs or offer access to emergency stocks to act as genuine providers of last resort at least for some priority gaps, **and WFP that has a special "immediate response account" which can be used by Food, Logistics and ETC for start-up funds during the initial stage of an emergency.**

Also, it is unclear whether the consultants find the provider of first resort to be positive or negative, some clarification would be helpful. However, WFP finds this to be a strength. We can act fast and utilize our own resources, with the capacity to provide predictable services when common services are appropriate. Please note that even though both oPt and Chad are given as "clearly observed" examples of provider of first resort in the footnote to this paragraph, paragraph 32 of the oPt report clearly states that WFP was a provider of last resort for logistics.

13. [Page 98 – bullet 3] "...this includes for example food distribution practices creating acute security risks for women in Haiti."

Comment: The reference to food distribution practices in Haiti is factually incorrect. WFP undertook extensive preparations before distributions started with the gender and protection staff of Minustah and NGOs to develop a way for women to receive rations while minimizing their exposure to violence."

14. [Page 114] "There is a trade-off between inclusiveness and effectiveness of meetings, as well as between the level of collective decision-making and the speed of response. Evidence points to the fact that the strength of the cluster approach lies in its inclusiveness, rather

11. It certainly was a problem in all of the evaluation's country cases – clarified that this is what is meant here.

12. Integrated

Clarified that this mainly relates to ETC. The role can be useful, but has also created significant tensions that risk undermining the cluster.

13. This was a clear observation by our evaluation team. Text clarifies that this occurred "despite preparations by WFP"

14. Section has been reworded following comments at the workshop

than speed.”

Comment: Timely response is a central to the objectives of the cluster approach, and there should not be a trade-off between speed and inclusiveness, both are important.

15. **[Page 115]** “The cases where the cluster approach was applied in sudden-onset emergencies (i.e. in Haiti, Myanmar and some regional emergencies in DRC) or where it was used to organize a collective response (e.g. in Chad) it has been found to slow the response.”

Comment: The cluster approach has strengthened system-wide preparedness and technical capacity and has ensured there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors or areas of humanitarian response, and this has resulted in more timely, effective and predictable response than in the pre-cluster period. However this does not mean that further improvements in speed of response are not possible.

Speed of response is particularly important for the service clusters (Logistics and ETC) and under the cluster approach there has been a significant improvement in the time to respond, which was demonstrated during the Haiti earthquake where a team was deployed in less than 24 hours and in the Philippines floods where the ETC already had staff on the ground.

16. **[Page 127]** “Based on the analysis presented in the table below, the evaluation team has come to the conclusion that the benefits currently achieved by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides.”

Comment: During the workshop the consultants agreed that the conclusion that benefits slightly outweigh costs is highly subjective and not based on a detailed cost benefit analysis and that Table 2 contained only partial information.

17. **[Page 130]** “The concept of provider of last resort - in the sense of organizations committing their own budgets to fill gaps if need be - is central to this goal”

Comment: The view expressed in the report is not accurate, as the consensus position on “Provider of Last Resort” concept is reflected in the current IASC Guidance.

In all cases, however it is chosen to define or rephrase the concept of provider of last resort it is most important that the basic tenant of the concept is not lost, that being that “the bucks stops” with the global cluster lead and the lead agency must step forward and do their utmost (be it in terms of lobbying for funds, providing funds, mobilizing others, using own resources etc) to ensure that any unmet critical gaps are filled. To weaken this will weaken the cluster approach overall

18. **[Page 131 – bullet 4]** “Similarly, institutional issues influence the working of the service clusters, Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics. Since cluster lead organizations in

15. s. above

16. Reworded conclusion to explain better what we mean be “slightly outweighs”, changed terms in table, checked table for completeness

17. § slightly rephrased

these cases most often also act as service providers, they face potential conflicts of interest, which have led to governance problems and questions regarding the frequency and necessity of cluster activations. The creation of this cluster has now been decided.”

Comment: The meaning of this paragraph is unclear, particularly as relates to potential conflict of interest. It is worth noting that the ETC leadership issue was raised in the Cluster Evaluation Phase 1 report and has been raised at the IASC Working Group level, but still needs to be resolved.

The creation of the Global Food Security Cluster is currently being explored.

19. **[Finding 6.5, Paragraph 114, 115 and 116 and Recommendation 2]** “Paragraph 115 makes the statement that “in cases where the cluster approach was applied in sudden-onset emergencies, or where it was used to organize a collective response, it has been found to slow the response”. Paragraph 116 states that “the cluster approach is better suited to coordinating and improving medium term response, rather than immediate activities in the first couple of weeks after a disaster”, which feeds into recommendation 2 which states (page 68) that “clusters should prioritise inclusiveness over speed”.

Comment: A read of the 6 country reports finds only one reference to a slowed response. The DRC report concludes (DRC Conclusions paragraph 102) that the “due to its inclusiveness the cluster approach becomes less reactive and thus has a tendency to reduce the timeliness of the response”. This appears to be based on a reference in section 5.3 of the DRC report (DRC, paragraph 43) which finds that the funding mechanisms used by the RRM and RRMP “clearly shows a trade off between speed of response and inclusiveness of the process”.

Given the above we do not find enough evidence in the reports to back up the finding of a slowed response. As the global lead of the two service clusters, whose role is to provide logistical and telecommunications support to all other clusters when required, and in a very short time frame when faced with the life-saving requirements of sudden onset emergencies such a statement is worry to us as it “paints all clusters with the same brush” and we do not accept the inference that the Logistics and ETC Clusters have been slow to react during sudden onset emergencies. If this was in fact highlighted during the evaluation process, then we would request some further details on this. Paragraph 116 in the Findings states that the cluster approach is not suited to the “immediate activities in the first couple of weeks after a disaster”. As the global lead for two service clusters whose role is key in this first critical period, and given the life-saving nature of humanitarian response, we are concerned by this finding. Again we do not find enough evidence in the 6 country level reports to substantiate this finding and would also draw attention to the different role of the service clusters as compared to programmatic clusters.

We would request that this statement be revised to include reference to the differences between service and programmatic clusters as we certainly feel that the cluster approach

18. The meaning of this paragraph is unclear, particularly as relates to potential conflict of interest. It is worth noting that the ETC leadership issue was raised in the Cluster Evaluation Phase 1 report and has been raised at the IASC Working Group level, but still needs to be resolved.

Ok, sorry, that has been a misunderstanding on our part.

19. See revised sections. We agree that there is a difference and that preparedness elements created by the cluster approach are not strongly included in the report – this has to do with the fact that an assessment of preparedness was not included in the TORs for phase 2 of the evaluation, since it was considered adequately covered in phase 1.

has lead to improved logistics and ETC responses in these first critical weeks after a sudden onset emergency.

We also find it concerning that recommendation 2 states “clusters should therefore prioritise inclusiveness over speed”. The two do not need to be mutually exclusive. With proper systems and procedures in place at the global and field levels ahead of time, it is possible to respond to a sudden onset emergency quickly and with inclusivity. We consider this recommendation to be too broad and potentially opening to misunderstanding vis a vis the life-saving role of humanitarian organisations and the roles of service clusters.

Overall we consider finding 6.3 to be too broad and inadequately supported with evidence in the country level reports.

20. **[Recommendation 1]** “Shift the focus of the cluster approach from the global to the local level.”

Comment: At the workshop we were advised that the intention here was to recommend the strengthening of the local level, but not at the expense of the global level, and that this recommendation would be rephrased.

WFP considers this important as the success of field clusters is dependent on adequate support from the global level. The success of the Logistics Cluster, for example, can in part be attributed to the existence of a strong Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell based in Rome that provides tools, conducts trainings, drives/undertakes preparedness initiatives, provides surge capacity and support to field level activations. If the wrong message is taken from the recommendation as it is currently written, and support (financial or otherwise) for the existence and activities of global support cells diminishes, and hence weakens their effectiveness then the field level clusters will suffer. The need to avoid this misunderstanding is reinforced by the strong message contained in the report with regards to the need for a strong level of global support to the field level.

21. **[Recommendation 1 Bullet point 1 – duration of cluster coordinator deployments of at least 6 months]**

Comment: While we all understand why this is desirable, realities at any given time will not always allow this to be the case. It may be more appropriate to suggest that cluster leads at the global level put mechanisms in place to ensure surge capacity/deployment rosters etc of suitably qualified staff in order to minimise staff turnover. This is a more concrete action that may hopefully lead to an outcome of longer deployments for cluster coordinators.

S. revised version

I assume you refer to 6.5, which has been revised to include more nuance and differentiation.

20. We agree that there needs to be more differentiation between service and operational clusters here. For the latter we believe that the focus of resources should indeed be changed.  
Reworded paragraph: **Increase the focus of resources for the cluster approach on the local level** In the first few years after the cluster approach was introduced, actors focused their resources on the global level first, the national level second and on the local level last. As the cluster approach matures, this order of priorities should be reversed especially for operational clusters to ensure that cluster coordination has more operational relevance and fits local circumstances.

21. We agree only partially here: We specified that a minimum deployment of 6 months is probably only realistic in protracted

<p>22. <b>[Recommendation 1 Bullet point 3 - “adopt a service mentality” ]</b>  <u>Comment:</u> Please note that the Logistics Cluster has already identified this need and has developed an e-learning product called “Service Mindset Training” (the SMT) targeted at all logisticians. While the scenarios are built around a logistics response it has benefits for all humanitarian workers. It is available at <a href="http://www.logscluster.org/smt">www.logscluster.org/smt</a></p> <p>23. <b>[Recommendation 4 – Bullet 4]</b> “Ensure the cluster coordinators, especially at the local level, have sufficient capacities and receive adequate training in facilitation and coordination skills.”  <u>Comment:</u> This is marked as the role of “clusters and OCHA”. This should in fact be a role for the global cluster lead.</p> <p>24. <b>[Recommendation 4 – Bullet 3]</b> “Clarify the criteria and process for activating and closing clusters”  <u>Comment:</u> It is important to note here the differences between the service clusters and the programmatic clusters. The need for activation/deactivation of service clusters is in some ways clearer and easier to define.</p> <p>25. <b>[Recommendation 6]</b> “Resolve conflicts relating to the governance of the Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics Clusters.”  <u>Comment:</u> At the workshop it was agreed that the Logistics should not have been included as having governance issues.</p> <p>This issue was raised in Cluster Evaluation Phase 1 where the need for clear leadership was recommended. Progress has been made with the UNICEF – WFP agreement to streamline responsibilities by consolidating security and data service provision under the sole leadership of WFP. The matter has been raised to the IASC WG where it needs to be resolved.</p> <p>The Conclusions section of the report (paragraph 131) states “Similarly institutional issues influence the working of the service clusters, Emergency Telecoms and Logistics. Since the cluster lead organisations in these cases also act as service providers, they face potential conflicts of interest, which have lead to governance issues and questions regarding frequency and necessity of cluster activations” which feeds into Recommendation 6 that states “Resolve conflicts relating to the governance of the ETC and Logistics Clusters”.</p> <p>Firstly, there is nothing in the “Findings” section of the synthesis report to back-up the conclusion made in paragraph 131 or recommendation 6 concerning governance issues, while a review of the 6 country reports finds only the following which does not substantiate</p>	<p>crises. As concerns global surge capacity, we found that surge capacity often had an extremely high level of staff turn-over and was therefore more part of the problem than a solution for it. Instead, we recommend that there should be more facilitation training for potential coordinators at national and local level.</p> <p>22. Thank you, very helpful. We have included a reference as other actors may find it useful to explore this.</p> <p>23. Ok</p> <p>24. Ok</p> <p>25. Yes</p> <p>S. above</p>
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<p>the conclusion in paragrepah 131:          -DRC, oPt and Uganda – no reference to conflict of interest, governance issues, or frequency or necessity of cluster activations for any cluster.          - Myanmar – Finding that double hatting “creates conflict of interest”. Based on paragraph 49 which states that during interviews cluster members questioned how one person can both represent the interests of his agency and the common interest. No reference to any specific cluster made. (Please note WFP has dedicated cluster coordinators for logistics, ETC and food in Myanmar).          - Haiti – Paragraph 54 “often no clear distinction between cluster lead and agency activities may lead to conflict of interest”. Examples of specific clusters are given, Logistics and ETC are not mentioned.          - Chad - Findings table mentions that some agencies in a cluster lead position have a quasi monopoly role in the distribution of CERF funds. No examples of specific clusters are given. Paragraph 98 refers to a complex power relationship between cluster leads and cluster members when the members are also implementing partners for the lead agency. Examples given are UNHCR and UNICEF. Not related to service clusters, no reference to Logistics and ETC made.</p> <p>Overall there appears to be no supporting evidence in the country reports to validate the conclusions raised in paragraph 131 regarding conflict of interest for leaders of service clusters, governance issues for the Logistics or ETC clusters or questions regarding frequency or necessity of activations. WFP finds this Conclusion and Recommendation concerning and without evidence and therefore requests that it be removed.</p> <p>26. <b>[Chad Country Report] <u>Comment</u></b>: It should be noted that the ETC Cluster was activated in Chad, with UNHCR as lead agency, but is not mentioned in the country report.</p>	<p>Section reworded to illustrate the issues more clearly.</p> <p>26. Passed on to Chad country team</p>
<p><b>WHO (18.03.2010)</b></p>	
<p>1. <b>“Many resources were invested into the cluster approach at global level, but global cluster support at country level is low. (§127 (table), §29)” [p.8]</b>: At the initiation of the Humanitarian Reform the global cluster appeal was launched to support the establishment of the global health cluster and the development of tools, trainings and guidelines. The purpose of the grants was not directed at the country clusters but at the global level. This was achieved.</p>	<p>1. Ok, and acknowledged in § 29. Yet the problem is still that not many of these elements trickled down.</p>

<p>2. <b>“Centralized decision-making can slow the pace of response (§115)” [p.8]</b> The decision making <b>should</b> stay centralized however, delegation of authority to lower levels should be encouraged, clear division of roles and responsibilities have to be done according to local context and nature of the crisis</p> <p>3. <b>“Co-lead arrangements with NGOs have positive effects. (§62) [p.8]</b> This is not a challenge. This sentence is not clear and should maybe be rephrased to capture the challenge with co-stewardship arrangements and not state that co-lead arrangements which exist only at global level have positive effects. Also, the sentence does not mention other partners, UN agencies. It would be useful to see if there were positive effects where another UN agency was a co-steward or a Sub-national coordinator.</p> <p>4. <b>“General Comment” [Pp 8-10]</b> Some of the bullets in the Challenges column are not worded as such as some are actually benefits.</p> <p>5. <b>“General Comment” [Pp 14]</b> Please provide dates when case study countries were evaluated to provide a context for the findings.</p> <p>6. <b>“Myanmar: Sudden onset / disaster, plus protracted crisis in some regions in transition. / strained political context” [Pp 14]</b> Query on the use of the phrase "strained political context" to describe the context i.e does not present an accurate description</p> <p>7. <b>“Health Cluster” [p.26]; Health Cluster Guide: a practical guide for country level implementation of the Health Custer (2009); Guidance on Gap Identification and filling (currently being developed); Guidance on health sector recovery following acute or protracted crisis situations (currently being developed):</b> Lists a selection of support products produced or recommended by the clusters. For the Health cluster the following list should replace the above section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Cluster Guide: a practical guide for country level implementation of the Health Cluster (English &amp; French) (2009)</li> <li>Gap Guidance Materials - Assisting the Health Sector Coordination Mechanism to Identify and Fill Gaps in the Humanitarian Response (2007)</li> <li>Health Cluster Guidance Note on Health Recovery (2008)</li> <li>Global Health Cluster Suggested Set of Core Indicators and Benchmarks by Category (English &amp; French) (2009)</li> <li>Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) Toolkit (English &amp; French) (2009)</li> <li>Health Resource Availability Mapping System (HeRAMS) (English &amp; French) (2009), which proposes the standard definition of the health services for relief and recovery phases</li> <li>Health Information and Nutrition Tracking System (English &amp; French) (HANDS) (2009)</li> </ol>	<p>2. Current recommendation: Define decision-making procedures between national and sub-national clusters so that decisions can be decentralized.</p> <p>3. Column relabeled as “findings related to recommendations”</p> <p>4. s. above</p> <p>5. Ok</p> <p>6. “complex”</p> <p>7. ok</p>
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<p>8. <b>“National and local clusters do not know what is on offer because global clusters do not proactively disseminate their support tools. Cases like the Health Cluster in Myanmar or the Early Recovery Cluster in the oPt, which received strong global support, are the exception rather than the rule.” [Pp27]:</b> A question as to the evidence/basis for the statement that the "Myanmar health cluster received strong global support"</p> <p>9. <b>“Training: Global clusters also provided the technical and coordination training for cluster coordinators (as well as clusters co-facilitators in the case of several clusters in DRC) and sometimes cluster members. While many cluster coordinators have not yet had the opportunity to attend coordination trainings because of scheduling and capacity issues, all those who did warmly welcomed the opportunity and judged them as useful. This included the coordinator trainings held in Zanzibar by WHO, the trainings offered by the Logistics and Shelter” [Pp28] :</b> The Global Health Cluster have organized the so far 6 trainings to prepare for the role as health cluster coordinators which are not adequately reflected in the document, for a total of 100 potential HCC trained, out of which 30% from international NGOs</p> <p>10. <b>“General comment” [pp.31]:</b> Why is information being collected but not analyzed to identify gaps? Please provide recommendations.</p> <p>11. <b>“Co-lead and co-facilitator arrangements” [p.38-p39]:</b> Page 38 and 39 discusses and gives examples of co-lead and co-facilitator arrangements. The co-lead is taking place at global level and country level for some clusters. It is important to clarify and define terms. The list of co-lead and co-stewardship arrangements is not exhaustive among the countries used as case studies; WHO is co-stewarding with Merlin in Myanmar at the national level and but also in DRC at the sub-national level.</p> <p>12. <b>“Stronger partnership between UN and INGOs and among INGOs (§60ff) [p.62]</b> It should be mentioned that stronger partnerships among UN agencies is also a result of the reform.</p> <p>13. <b>“Concrete step 1” [p.67]</b> Strengthen the cluster approach at the national and local levels (not shift the skills trainings). The cluster approach is much more than facilitation and coordinating skills. At country level, the cluster approach: (i) establishes a clear system of</p>	<p>8. Evidence: interview with latest health cluster coordinator. The evaluation team for Myanmar has now also included evidence from a mission report by ECHO, DFID, Merlin and WHO in 2008. Reworded §: Cases like the latest Health Cluster coordinator in Myanmar or the Early Recovery Cluster coordinator in the oPt, who emphasized the crucial support they received from the global level, are the exception rather than the rule.</p> <p>9. Reference included</p> <p>[10. (OCHA EGS: Comment is missing – GPPI&amp;U.R.D to provide comment later on)]</p> <p>11. ok</p> <p>12. We did not observe this - neither the statement, not its contrary.</p> <p>13. We agree that this is the case, yet our recommendation on how to strengthen the system is strengthen national and local training and to</p>
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leadership and accountability for international response in each sector, under the overall leadership of the humanitarian coordinator; and (ii) provides a framework for effective partnerships among international and national humanitarian actors in each sector. It strengthens, rather than replaces, existing sector coordination mechanisms.

14. **“Cluster/ Sector Lead Training Program at country level, and defining both a minimum duration for cluster coordinator deployments of at least six months and clear requirements to hand over relevant information before departure” [p.67]** It states that the minimum time for deployment should be 6 months, this is not feasible in the acute phase of an emergency. In the first, acute phase of an emergency the CLA should aim to deploy the coordinator for a period of 6 weeks and thereafter replace the person with someone that can stay for a period of 3 - 6 months.
15. **“Decentralize decision-making structures among cluster members so that decisions taken as close to the relevant area of operation as possible” [p.67]** Normative, policy and strategy decisions should always be made at national level. The nature of the crisis decides the structure needed for the cluster; in many cases sub-levels are not needed. If sub-levels exist, roles and responsibilities should be defined and decision making should be delegated.
16. **“Strengthen learning” [p.68]** Life saving interventions should not be sacrificed for capacity building exercises in the acute phase of an emergency. Capacity building should be in focus in the later stage after the initial response. This paragraph should clarify this.
17. **“Facilitate the participation of national and local NGOs” [p.68]** Life-saving interventions should be first priority for the cluster in the acute phase of an emergency. This section should be rephrased to capture this.
18. **“Increase consideration for and mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues” [p.69]** The cross cutting issues should be stated as per IASC guidance note on cluster implementation:

provide more resources.

14. We specified that 6 months is for protracted crises.

15. Revised version: **Define decision-making procedures between national and local clusters so that operational decisions can be decentralized** and taken as close to the relevant area of operation as possible. Include this task in the terms of reference for national cluster coordinators.

16. ok

17. Local actors often play a crucial role in life-saving interventions. Revised version: **Facilitate the participation of national and local NGOs and strengthen their capacities.** To do so, include national and local NGOs in management and strategy development. Explore options for encouraging their participation, for example by developing more proactive and creative communication and “outreach” strategies, building translation costs into coordination budgets, holding meetings in local languages, ensuring that more staff members have an appropriate understanding of the context and knowledge of the local situation, engaging NGO liaison officers focusing on national and local NGOs, facilitating internet access for local NGOs and enabling their participation in meetings through the provision of transport facilities.

18. We believe that the list of cross-cutting issues requires revision.

age, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS. Disability should be included in the work of many clusters but it is not a cross-cutting issue.

19. **“Forming thematic working groups around them following the model of the rubble removal task force in Haiti or the thematic working groups in the West Bank. Working groups require clear terms of reference and exit strategies” [p.69]** West Bank was not initially included in the cluster implementation. However after 1,5 month the HCT and Inter-cluster coordination group decided to integrate West Bank into the cluster implementation
20. **“Engage clusters in coordinating and improving needs assessments” [p.69]** Assessing the capacity, asset and constraints are part of a the assessment functions. The inter-cluster developed and agreed upon Initial Rapid Assessment tool (IRA) is a set of GHC approved indicators. Also the Global Health Cluster has developed a set of 26 indicators that have been agreed among partners to be used at country level.
21. **“Reinforce the role of NGOs in clusters” [69]** IASC has defined the modalities for co-lead at global level. At country level it is up to the country clusters to define the roles and responsibilities for co-stewardship.
22. **“Use clusters or the cluster preparation phase to support overall preparedness efforts by clarifying the link between clusters and rapid response mechanisms...” [p.70]** Contingency plans are the role of the cluster during preparedness phase as well as under the response phase of an emergency. It is part of the roles and responsibilities of the cluster.
23. **“Conduct an analysis of existing coordination and response mechanisms and capacities”** The country cluster is to clearly define its mandate and the purpose of the cluster vis-à-vis existing sectoral coordinating mechanisms.
24. **“Provide cluster coordinators with one common, basic cluster management handbook or tool kit” [p.71]** The Health Cluster has developed a health cluster guide. Available in hardcopy and on the web in English and French.

19. Correct – cf. oPt case study

20. Reference included

21. Global guidance (at least as a benchmark) would be helpful as well. Specific reference to national and sub-national clusters.

22. Revised version: Strengthen cooperation and coordination between clusters, national actors and development actors at every stage from preparedness to response and the transition to development. To do so, contingency plans should be shared between national and international actors. Joint simulation exercises and trainings should be held. Mechanisms for bridging the funding gap between humanitarian and development activities, including the provision of resources for early recovery, should be developed. Furthermore, appropriate links between cluster activities and plan and related processes, such as Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Needs Assessments, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and National Development Plans, should be established.

23. Agreed – this is implied in the recommendation.

24. [http://www.who.int/hac/global\\_health\\_cluster/guide/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hac/global_health_cluster/guide/en/index.html)  
Well understood – this is why the recommendations advises taking into

[http://www.who.int/hac/global\\_health\\_cluster/guide/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hac/global_health_cluster/guide/en/index.html)

25. **“Strengthen the “mainstreaming” of cluster responsibilities” [p.72]** The Global Health cluster has developed a matrix: 'Matrix of Roles and Responsibilities within the Humanitarian Architecture at Country Level' which aim to clarify the role of the key international actors and bodies in humanitarian settings in the main areas of work as outlines in the ToR of Cluster Lead Agencies at Country Level.
26. **“Focus the activities of global clusters on identifying and addressing conflicts and systemic incoherence”** This point is not clear and needs to be further explained.
27. **“Annex 2: Interviewees”** The list of interviewees is not exhaustive, concern raised whether or not WHO staff members at country level were interviewed for the report. Also, while several cluster leads were interviewed, the Global Health Cluster Secretariat was not interviewed. The list needs to be completed to avoid misunderstandings.

**Additional Comments:**

28. Although already mentioned in the document, the main constraint is that this evaluation doesn't measure impact. Can writers re-evaluate to see if they can attribute any effects on the affected population or potential funds saved through better coordination? For example, improved rapidity of response, better preparedness, provision of a uniform package of services, more consistent quality, less duplication and therefore less waste, better understanding of the gaps, etc. Have we contributed to any of this. The sentence "the evaluation team came to the conclusion that the benefits generated by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides" is vague and needs to be explained and substantiated better.
29. Evaluators should be more prescriptive and directive of what will save the cluster process. In particular: All coordinators should have management and facilitation training

account relevant resources that have already been developed, including cluster management handbooks developed by individual clusters,

25. This looks very interesting, but how is it related to mainstreaming?
26. Sorry, but we could not come up with a different wording that would have been clearer to us. There is incoherence in humanitarian response because some agencies use needs-based and others status-based approaches. This cannot be resolved at country level. Global clusters, however, could take this up.
27. WHO staff members were indeed interviewed at country level. Please refer to the country studies for detail (complete inclusion of all lists of interviewees at country level (approx 800) would make this document even more unwieldy

28. Sentence is now (hopefully) better explained. All findings in chapter 6 are relevant to the affected population.

29. Unrealistic. More realistic to strengthen national & local trainings on management and facilitation (rec. 1) and : 80 percent of potential cluster coordinators should get access to training within the next two years

<p>30. Coordinators should go in with a team including an information manager, admin support and a communication officer.</p> <p>31. The relationship between the head of the lead agency the cluster coordinator and the HC must be clear.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>32. In the executive summary is the sentence “the evaluation team came to the conclusion that the benefits generated by the cluster approach slightly outweigh its costs and downsides”. This is a very damning statement and does not seem to be entirely borne out by the body of the report. If the team does feel this statement to be true, then the conclusions and recommendations should be far more forceful.</p> <p>33. The evaluators write “many clusters are not managed effectively enough and cluster coordinators often have not enough time, insufficient coordination skills or are too junior. Also “Especially national cluster coordinators were often drawn from global rosters – either from clusters or individual organizations – which train them in facilitation skills.” It is clear from the report that Cluster Coordinators often lack essential skills, but which skills are lacking is not clear. I suggest that it is management and facilitation skills which are lacking and this is the training gap that urgently needs to be filled.</p> <p>34. The report states “The use of short-term global coordinators creates turn-over problems and often lack relevant knowledge”. Recent experience in Haiti confirms this. The evaluators should be more forceful in their recommendations regarding this.</p>	<p>30. Unrealistic, especially for the sub-national level. Priority from our perspective: <b>Provide dedicated part-time or full-time coordination capacities for local clusters</b> or those levels where operational coordination takes place</p> <p>31. Formally, this relationship is clear: the coordinator reports to the head of agency, who ‘reports’ to the HC</p> <p>32. Revised version seeks to explain the conclusion better (which is a positive, not a damning conclusion in the eyes of the evaluators)</p> <p>33. Agreed / clarified</p> <p>34. Current version: <b>Strengthen facilitation and coordination skills training</b> on the national and local levels and implement train the trainers programs at the global level (as currently considered for example by the Emergency Shelter Cluster). In protracted crises and as part of strengthening preparedness, use these trainers as coaches for long-term international or local staff in country. Update, disseminate and use materials of the discontinued global Cluster/Sector Lead Training Program at country level. Reduce the loss of institutional memory by standardizing e-mail addresses and telephone numbers for cluster coordination positions and by defining clear requirements in terms of references to hand over relevant information before departure. For protracted crises, define a minimum duration for cluster coordinator deployments of at least six months. And seek to extend</p>
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<p>35. Although the report does say that cluster coordinators are overwhelmed no recommendations are given to address this.</p> <p>36. The report observes that “The international focus of the cluster approach undermines national ownership”. Experiences in Haiti and elsewhere confirm this finding. This is understandable given that the lead agency is required to take responsibility for the performance of the cluster, while if the government is fully involved it should take leadership. This conflict of responsibility versus leadership must be resolved at a global level.</p> <p>37. The report notes that “Clusters facilitate the sharing of assessment results, but do not use their potential to improve assessment methods through learning.” Evaluators should recommend a lessons learned mechanism for all clusters.</p> <p>38. Disappointing that so few examples either good or bad of health cluster functioning were given. This may be because there appears to have been only one health expert on the evaluation team</p> <p>39. The report should give an overall performance score to each cluster. Otherwise the incentive to improve is absent. If an overall score is not possible, then clusters should at least be ranked. This is in the interest of the beneficiary which should be the primary concern.</p> <p>Cross cutting issues-</p> <p>40. Interesting to also note the findings that cross cutting issues are minimally addressed, if at all, in the cluster evaluation report.</p> <p>Co- Stewardship / definitions</p> <p>41. Definitions are not clear through-out the document. For example, what is sometime referred to as co-lead in the health cluster is actually co-stewardship (often also referred to as co.-coordinator). WHO is the Lead Agency for Health at the Global level and currently in all countries where the health cluster is implemented. However, there are countries that have co-stewardship with NGOS at the national level (such as Myanmar with Merlin being co-stewards with WHO), and co-stewardship at the sub-national level (in North Kivu, DRC, Merlin is the co-steward of the health cluster with WHO).</p>	<p>deployments in sudden-onset emergencies as long as possible.</p> <p>35. There are, see rec. 1</p> <p>36. The normative stance at global level seems to be clear to us: governments have primary responsibility, if international assistance is necessary, then lead agencies assume leadership – and create the contact point for governments / a “phone number” for the sector. It’s just that in practice, this rarely works and can have the opposite effect.</p> <p>37. See rec. 2</p> <p>38. See country reports on more detail</p> <p>39. We cannot use the indicators we developed to rank clusters. We are, however, working on a way to include the individual cluster scorings from the country studies in the synthesis report without aggregating them</p> <p>40. ? Section 6.2 is dedicated to this</p> <p>41. Have amended this and now use the terms of “co-chair” and “co-facilitator”</p>
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[Edited by : Andreas Schuetz / OCHA EGS]