

## The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project II

A chance to influence the humanitarian system

# NGO, HUMANITARIAN REFORM AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA IN SOUTH SUDAN



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## Foreword

The NGOs Humanitarian Reform Project Phase II activities focus on strengthening the role of national and international NGOs in coordinating and leading response. Building on the research and advocacy achievements of the first phase of the project, NHRP II is supporting NGOs – particularly local and national organizations – to improve humanitarian outcomes for communities affected by disasters and conflict. The focus is on enhancing NGO engagement in reformed humanitarian coordination, leadership, financial mechanisms, adherence to the Principles of Partnership, and promoting accountability to affected populations.



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OCHA in South Sudan for access to the Common Humanitarian Fund documents, staff time for interviews and allowing me to observe an Inter-Agency Assessment.

I would like to thank ACTED who graciously hosted me in South Sudan and arranged all the logistics of the trip, as well as DRC for the accommodation in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. Special thanks to the NGO Forum for lending me an office and assisting with background, information and introductions, and to ICVA for continual direction and guidance.

I am even more convinced now than ever before that coordination is not just *a* critical element in rapid onset and protracted humanitarian emergency responses but could be considered *the* critical element to a successful response. It is my hope that this report contributes to the ongoing conversation about how to make coordinated humanitarian responses even better, quicker, faster, more cooperative and more efficient to alleviate suffering, save lives and enable resilience. It has been a great pleasure to meet with the men and women who are tirelessly working to this end in the Southern Sudanese government and in humanitarian and development agencies, and with the people who themselves are affected by emergencies.

Kelsey Hoppe

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## Acronyms

CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process	RC	Resident Coordinator
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement	Res Rep	UNDP Resident Representative
DFID	UK Department for International Development	RoSS	Republic of South Sudan
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General	TA	Transformative Agenda
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office	ToR	Terms of Reference
EP&R	Emergency Preparedness & Response	TWiG	Technical Working Group
ERC	Emergency Response Coordinator	UNCT	UN Country Team
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster	UNDAF	UN Development Aid Framework
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan	UNHAS	UN Humanitarian Air Service
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership	UNICEF	UN Children's Emergency Fund
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	UNSM T	UN Security Management Team
HCF	Humanitarian Coordination Forum	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team	WFP	World Food Programme
IAAM	Inter-Agency Assessment Mission		
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee		
ICT	Information Communication Technology		
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies		
ICWG	Inter-Cluster Working Group		
IRNA	Inter-Agency Rapid Needs Assessment		
ISWG	Inter-Sector Working Group		
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army		
LSSAI	Local Services Support Aid Instrument		
MAM	Medium Acute Malnutrition		
MIRA	Multi-Agency Initial Rapid Assessment		
MoH	Ministry of Health		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations		
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance		
OIC	Officer in Charge		
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan		
PoLR	Provider of Last Resort		
PRT	Peer Review Team		

## Executive summary

This report was born out of the largely successful implementation of humanitarian reform in South Sudan. All of the pillars and mechanisms (funding, coordination and leadership) are present and have been praised as working well. With the initiation of the Transformative Agenda (TA) in 2011 and the field mission test in South Sudan in 2012, it became important to look, from an NGO perspective, at those elements of humanitarian reform that have succeeded and the reasons for their success.

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including interviews with 65 key informants in South Sudan, the report seeks to document the structure of humanitarian coordination and to highlight how this has affected the implementation of humanitarian reform and the TA. It shows the ways in which international and national NGOs engaged with reformed humanitarian coordination and funding mechanisms; assesses improvements and challenges; and highlights good practice on what has made reformed mechanisms credible and effective in the country.

Humanitarian reform was initiated in parallel to the beginning of a peace process in South Sudan, which meant that different mechanisms of reform were implemented at different times in a humanitarian context where partners were accustomed to working together and NGOs already held leadership positions. The South Sudan experience provides a number of good practices in humanitarian reform that could prove valuable to the international humanitarian community responding to other emergencies.

The TA was announced in 2011 without clarity on how it would affect reforms or how field practitioners should engage with it. Although the TA is not yet integrated or understood in South Sudan, it provides an opportunity to review existing shortcomings. The report highlights that further work is required at global level to provide clarity in this direction and to ensure appropriate country level implementation.

The coordination architecture in South Sudan is well developed and networked with a well-funded and representative NGO Forum that includes both international and national NGOs. OCHA also has a strong presence and large office helping to facilitate the response. Clusters started in 2010 and have become a by-word for almost all sector coordination in the country. NGO co-leadership is considered a strong element to the clusters' success. The report argues that more coherence needs to be sought between the cluster system in South Sudan and that of the global clusters and that the role of the humanitarian country team needs to be clarified and strengthened to become a representative forum in which key humanitarian directions are discussed and agreed upon.

The Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) was introduced in the country in 2012 following South Sudan's independence. It is regarded to be an equitable fund with transparent administration enables the clusters to prioritise areas for the entire response. At the same time, data collected for this report points out that the CHF could be strengthened to increase its effectiveness and efficiency; in particular, pipelines need to be clarified and decisions on them need to become more consultative.

Humanitarian accountability is one of the most challenging aspects of humanitarian reform and of the TA. There is an overall lack of clarity amongst partners as to whom the response is accountable to and what accountability should look like in practice. The report highlights the need for accountability lines between and within coordination bodies to be clarified so that progress is made in this direction.

Leadership in the humanitarian community related to humanitarian reform tends to concentrate on the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and, to some extent, on the members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). Personalities matter on both sides. The role of the HC is complicated when operating in an integrated mission with “multiple-hatting” where humanitarian principles can be surpassed by other mission priorities. While multiple-hatting has its advantages, the report argues that it needs to be reassessed and its use avoided where necessary.

Cutting across all aspects of humanitarian reform and the TA is the need to reach clarity between humanitarian and development action and to distinguish between coordination processes that relate to each.

# I. Introduction

## 1. Background and rationale

When South Sudan gained its independence on 9 July 2011, following a peaceful referendum conducted earlier that January, both jubilation and expectation ran high. The newest country on earth had successfully manoeuvred through the 6-year interim period mandated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and experienced a peace it had not seen in the 22 years of the second civil war in which 1.5 million people died and approximately two million were displaced.<sup>1</sup>

Elation at independence was soon replaced with the sobering challenge of addressing the stark deficiencies with which the country was born. According to South Sudan's National Statistics Bureau, the country – with an area the size of France – has a population of 8.26 million.<sup>2</sup> To serve that population, there are only 120 doctors and 100 nurses in the country.<sup>3</sup> Seventy-five percent of the population are illiterate and half live below the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Fifty percent of the population have no access to clean water and less than ten percent have sanitation.<sup>5</sup> Parts of the country remained mined, subject to severe flooding and diseases such as polio, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), and guinea worm.

The new government is still in the process of building systems, procedures, legislation and capacity considered normative in neighbouring Kenya and Uganda. There is limited regulation for international or national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

While the government might be starting from scratch, the international community is not. Given the ongoing complex humanitarian situation in South Sudan, it is little wonder that there has been a 30-year intervention characterised by occasional high impact. Each year the amounts expended by the international community on humanitarian response seem to be dwarfed by the vastness and complexity of needs. Virtually every sector imaginable would find a welcome home in the response operation – and it has done so to date.

Many UN agencies and international NGOs (INGOs) have been operating in the region since the 1960s. Some were partners under the 1989 Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), which provided a joint UN/NGO umbrella agreement signed with the Sudan People's Liberation Army and enabled humanitarian relief to be brought into the region. National NGOs (NNGOs) were fewer in number, as working in South Sudan during the CPA period would have required registering in Khartoum with a government that the region was fighting. Most local organisations were founded between 2003 and 2007 as more INGOs sought local partners to work within the region.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BBC (03 October 2012) Sudan Profile. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094995> [Accessed on 28 February 2013]

<sup>2</sup> South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics *Fast Facts*. Available from <http://ssnbs.org/> [Accessed 28 February 2013].

<sup>3</sup> Reuters (10 July 2012) *Special Report: In South Sudan, a state of dependency*. Available from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/10/us-south-sudan-aid-idUSBRE86909V20120710>.

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank *South Sudan Country Data*. Available from . <http://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>. [Accessed 28 February 2013].

<sup>5</sup> Global Water Intelligence (March 2011) *South Sudan Faces up to its Water Challenge*. Available from <<http://www.globalwaterintel.com/archive/12/3/general/south-sudan-faces-its-water-challenge.html>> [Accessed on 28 February 2013].

<sup>6</sup> Wani, Musa Ali Hafeez (2012) *South Sudanese Local Organisations Data Analysis Report*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

The signing of the CPA coincided with the initiation of humanitarian reform in 2005 and the move of INGO and UN operations to Juba in 2006-7. Many UN agencies went from running separate offices out of Nairobi to being subsidiary field offices reporting to Khartoum. NGOs were able to continue a “two country” approach, running their North and South Sudan operations separately. This made some INGO operations larger and with greater presence than that of UN counterparts.

Sectoral coordination in the South pre-dates humanitarian reform. Following coordination activities that took place in Nairobi, meetings feeding into the UN workplan (Consolidated Appeals Process – CAP) were conducted in Juba with NGOs acting as sectoral co-leads as early as 2007; CAP documents were only submitted to the North after they had been finalised in the South. With the Sudan Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), a separate “envelope” was issued each year from the overall CHF commitment and the South was left to its own devices to divide it up. Likewise, while a formal Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was not convened until February 2010, NGOs took part in both UN Country Team (UNCT) meetings and UN Security Management Team (UN SMT) meetings as part of OLS (which was never formally ended).

The cooperation necessary for successful reform was built on a foundation laid during the OLS and CPA period, where UN agencies and NGOs had greater parity of size and influence with each other than in many other humanitarian contexts. Maintaining and building on this long history of joint cooperation despite disagreements and differences became easier with time as trust was built and knowledge of each organisation’s priorities and constraints became known and accepted. The existence of sectoral working groups with NGO co-leads transitioned naturally into the cluster system. Likewise, INGOs had been historically represented at the UNCT and the UN SMT; with the establishment of an HCT, this naturally continued. Any reformed mechanism to change this co-leadership would have been unacceptable to both UN agencies and NGOs. Thus the issue of requesting NGO inclusion – either in humanitarian leadership or in cluster coordination – was never an issue.

The fact that humanitarian reform has been a success in South Sudan is not debatable. Over the last five years, the humanitarian community has implemented all three pillars of humanitarian reform (funding, coordination, leadership) and there is broad agreement that it does work and that it works, more or less, well. In light of the focus placed by the TA on humanitarian reform in South Sudan, where it was field tested in April 2012, knowing whether these successes and challenges are replicable in other contexts is important and relevant within this context and to the international humanitarian community more broadly.

## **2. Aim of the study and research questions**

This report identifies elements of humanitarian reform that have succeeded or have faced challenges and the reasons for this, from an NGO perspective in South Sudan. It seeks to document the structure and architecture of humanitarian coordination and to highlight how this has affected the implementation of humanitarian reform and the TA. The report shows the ways in which international and national NGOs engaged with reformed humanitarian coordination and funding mechanisms, assesses improvements and challenges, and highlights good practice on what has made reformed mechanisms credible and effective in the country.

## **3. Methodology and scope**

Baseline and quantitative data rarely exists in relation to humanitarian reform systems, processes and coordination. The outcomes and recommendations of this report are based less on quantitative indicators and outputs and more heavily on qualitative data collected by the author during interviews, observations, conversations, internal and external reports, the country

directors' survey and professional assessment. Data was interpreted using professional opinion and practice established both in South Sudan and in other humanitarian contexts.

### ***Data Collection***

Desk-based research: Approximately 160 documents were reviewed as background to this report. Many of the public documents that informed this report can be found on ICVA's NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project (NHRP) webpage<sup>7</sup>. Documents specific to South Sudan were collected either from the author's personal documents or were passed by key informants as a result of interviews during visits in South Sudan.

The TA's Field Mission Report on South Sudan and the related Good Practice Guide are both key documents referenced throughout this report. Each of these has informed some of the topics covered in the current report.

Interviews: Most of the report is based on information collected through interviews with 65 key informants in South Sudan. The majority of interviews were conducted in person; most of them lasted an hour or more. Four interviews were conducted by email. Informants were selected based on their engagement with, or input into, humanitarian coordination in South Sudan. These included 24 INGO representatives (19 interviewed in Juba and 5 in Maban, Aweil and Malakal), 7 NNGO representatives (interviewed in Juba), 22 UN representatives (18 interviewed in Juba, and 4 in Maban, Aweil and Malakal), 4 representatives from the government of South Sudan (interviewed in Juba), and 8 donor country representatives (interviewed in Juba).

Interviews were semi-structured but varied according to the individual interviewed, their engagement, and role with humanitarian reform processes and systems. (Interview structure included as Annex 1). Questions tended to focus on the three pillars of reform (funding, coordination, leadership), with additional focus on the TA. A generalised list of questions asked in interviews can be found in Annex 2. Interviews were conducted with an understanding of non-attribution and this has been honoured.

Meeting observations: During the trip to South Sudan between 30 October 2012 and 04 December 2012, the author of this report was invited to observe a number of meetings of direct relevance to this study. These included: the monthly NGO Forum Country Directors' Meeting, the bi-weekly HCT meeting, the weekly Maban Refugee Response Coordination meeting, the weekly Emergency Preparedness and Response meeting, the bi-weekly National NGO Forum's Steering Committee meeting, and the monthly NGO Forum's Cluster Co-Leads Working Group meeting. In addition, an inter-agency assessment mission to an area of displacement near a disputed border region (Gok Machar, north of Aweil in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state) took place and the consultant was invited to observe this mission.

Online survey: Given the large number of NGOs in South Sudan and the limited time available for interviews, the NGO Forum facilitated the dissemination and data collection of a survey for INGO Country Directors. While it would have been valuable to also collect data from national NGOs (NNGOs), their participation in a web-based survey was difficult to secure due to lack of access to the Internet. The survey utilised the online Survey Monkey software ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) and 78 respondents completed it. The survey consisted of 15 questions utilising either the Likert scale or yes/no answers (See Annex 3). Several questions gave the option of leaving additional comments and these have also informed the report. The survey summary results are included as Annex 4.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.icva.ch/ngosandhumanitarianreform.html>.

### ***Limitations and delimitations***

South Sudan is a diverse country with each state and region bearing its own complexities and challenges. Only three states were visited during this trip: Upper Nile State where there is an ongoing refugee crisis; Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state where there are ongoing and chronic humanitarian needs; and Central Equatoria state where Juba, the capital of South Sudan, is located. Therefore, some findings and recommendations might not be relevant to those states not visited.

NNGOs play an important role in the humanitarian response yet have a vast geographic spread and limited access to Internet. This made it difficult to set up meetings and garner information through surveys and other online forms of communication. This results in more weight being given to the opinions and information provided by representatives who were accessible in Juba, mostly working for NNGOs that tend to be larger, better-funded and better-established than some of their field-based counterparts.

While respondents to the Country Directors' survey represent a large number of the INGO community, their perceptions on relevant sectors as indicated in some questions of the survey might not be representative of activities of the INGO community as a whole (e.g., 44 percent of respondents stated their organisation attends food security cluster meetings outside of Juba. A statistical correlation cannot therefore be drawn that 44 percent of all INGOs attend food security cluster meetings outside of Juba).

One important background document to this report was the TA Field Mission's Findings from April 2012. However, it was difficult to obtain even a qualitative picture of the impact of the TA as the high turnover of both UN and NGO staff results in a lack of institutional memory and engagement with the reforms by which any elements can be measured from year to year. Much of the TA Field Mission's Findings – and indeed this report – relies on people's *feelings* and *perceptions* about reformed mechanisms, systems and processes.

The author of this report has worked previously in Sudan (in 2006-7 in Darfur and 2008-11 in South Sudan). During this time, she worked for an NGO as the Secretariat Coordinator of the NGO Forum, and for a management consultancy establishing a payroll system for the government of South Sudan. While this experience allowed an understanding of the history, context and implementation of humanitarian reform in Sudan and South Sudan, it could also contribute to certain bias presented in this report.

## **4. Structure of the report**

This report is structured into five main sections, with each focusing on a different element of humanitarian reform in the South Sudan context, as follows:

**PART I** introduces **humanitarian reform** and provides a brief overview and analysis of the different components of humanitarian reform and NGOs' engagement with them.

**PART II** has a close look at the **humanitarian coordination** architecture in South Sudan and how HR and TA were implemented. Partnership approaches are also discussed in this section, alongside the HR/TA impact and influence on coordination and vice versa.

**PART III** examines **humanitarian financing** related to the CHF and how it was structured in South Sudan, enabling factors contributing to its success and outstanding challenges that remain.

**PART IV** highlights difficulties that exist related to **humanitarian accountability** and to whom the humanitarian community is responsible, including national government structures and affected populations.

**PART V** discusses **humanitarian leadership**, the impact of the HC's leadership and the challenges presented by an integrated mission, and "multiple-hatting".

Each of the main sections of the report follow a similar structure and include: a description of the topic-relevant processes and structures in place in South Sudan; an analysis of what has worked and what hasn't worked so well; emerging good practice with broader application to other contexts; and main challenges that remain and recommendations for addressing these in the South Sudan context.

## **II. Part I – Overview of the humanitarian reform and the transformative agenda in South Sudan**

This section provides a brief overview of the context in which humanitarian reform and the Transformative Agenda (TA) were introduced in South Sudan. It presents some of the overall perceptions of field practitioners in relation to the two processes based on data collected during this study. In concluding, it highlights some emerging good practice; main remaining challenges are discussed and ways of addressing these proposed.

### **1. Humanitarian reform in South Sudan**

South Sudan has experienced over 30 years of sustained humanitarian intervention, part of which was in response to the civil war with Sudan. Humanitarian reform (HR) coincided with the implementation of the CPA, which ended the war and eventually led to the creation of the country of South Sudan.

Between 2005 and 2011, those responsible for implementing HR made a choice between following a “one country, two systems” approach or integrating South Sudan mechanisms with those in the rest of Sudan. For example, the cluster approach to sector coordination was instituted in Darfur in 2009, but not discussed in South Sudan until 2010 when it was implemented in isolation from Sudan’s system. A Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was not created until 2010 and then it operated as a “satellite” from the HCT in Khartoum. For the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), on the other hand, South Sudan was treated like any other region of Sudan.

At the signing of the CPA, many UN agencies went from running separate offices out of Nairobi to being subsidiary field offices reporting to Khartoum. INGOs were able to continue a “two country” approach running their North and South Sudan operations separately. This, effectively made some NGO operations larger and with greater presence than that of UN counterparts. Mostly due to the relationships established under OLS, NGOs had a seat at both the UN Country Team (UNCT) meeting and the UN Senior Management Team (UN SMT) meeting. Throughout the establishment of humanitarian reformed mechanisms, the question of NGO inclusion was where and how many rather than to do it or not. Similarly, when the clusters were created, NGOs already had an active role in sector coordination; co-leadership of clusters was largely assumed and not seriously questioned.

From the government’s perspective, interest in HR remained limited to the CHF mechanism from 2005 to 2010. During those years, the work of setting up a government prevailed over interest in what UN agencies and NGOs were doing on a day-to-day basis. The government welcomed most initiatives by the international community; when the cluster system was presented to the government in 2010, it received nominal approval.

### **2. The Transformative Agenda joins Humanitarian Reform**

Started in December 2010 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the TA was meant to result in more effectively coordinated humanitarian responses that meet the needs of, and are accountable to, affected populations.<sup>8</sup> While HR was broadly accepted in South Sudan as beneficial, there has been less understanding or acceptance of the TA and its added value.

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<sup>8</sup> ICVA (2012) *The IASC Transformative Agenda: Operational Implications for NGOs*. Geneva: ICVA.

Arguably, this could be attributed to the confusion surrounding the levels at which different elements of the TA were to be operationalised.

When the TA was announced by OCHA in Juba, there was no clear understanding among humanitarian actors of what it entailed. Interviews with both UN and NGO representatives in South Sudan revealed a lack of clarity on the purpose of the TA, on how it would be applied in the country, and how different organisations involved in the humanitarian response should engage with it. Some interviewees during this study considered it humanitarian reform repackaged; some considered it a reincarnation of HR; some called a “refocusing”, “re-energising”, “re-branding”, “adjustment” and “correction” of HR. The most common sentiment was captured by one senior UN official who called it, “Same beer, different label. It is written with such nuance that I can’t understand what’s new.”

The NGO Forum in South Sudan (discussed in detail in the next section) has been the main channel for most NGOs’ engagement with the TA. This approach was considered appropriate by most Country Directors (CDs), who viewed the TA as something they did not need to engage with substantively. Only 40 percent of CDs who responded to the survey had previously heard of the TA and, of those, 85 percent felt that it had no impact on their programming.<sup>9</sup> The NGO Secretariat Coordinator of the NGO Forum said that the TA did not mean a lot to NGOs in practice and it did not have any demonstrable effect on humanitarian systems in South Sudan.

More substantial engagement by INGOs with the TA occurred during a field test mission conducted by OCHA to South Sudan in April 2012. Presumably this took place at the invitation of the HC and due to the fact that the HR process was well underway (through coordination, financing, and leadership pillars). The OCHA Field Team visited Juba for three days in order to learn “how they have implemented some of the recommendations and proposed actions of the TA and, where appropriate, validate these and identify good practice which can be adapted to other contexts.”<sup>10</sup> While it was initially introduced as a field test for the TA, those interviewed for this report only later understood the purpose of the mission was to capture good practice related to HR rather than test the TA.

The resulting Field Mission Report praised HR in South Sudan and derived a good practice document from observations.<sup>11</sup> The document, however, did not distinguish between good practice implemented as part of HR pre- and post-TA, which made it difficult to draw conclusions on the impact of the TA. Since the release of the Field Mission Report, a number of processes seem to have stalled and no communication has been received on their delay. For example, the pilot on Accountability to Affected Populations has not been forthcoming; the same applies to the standardised indicators, which were to be established at a global level, and to the development of a centralised information management system and performance framework with indicators at a global level.

The TA is very much in nascent stages and has yet to reach its full potential in strengthening humanitarian coordination and effectiveness. However, despite the current lack of clarity at the field level, it has the opportunity to increase impact of humanitarian reforms if clearer guidance were provided on how humanitarian actors in South Sudan can engage and take ownership of it.

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<sup>9</sup> Hoppe, K (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director’s Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>10</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2012) *Transformative Agenda: South Sudan Mission Final Report*. New York: OCHA.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

### 3. South Sudan: A natural environment for humanitarian reform

The length of the humanitarian intervention in South Sudan necessitated the constant and close coordination between key UN agencies and NGOs. Through regular interaction, communication was strengthened and trust was built amongst different organisations. Such continuous engagement promoted the development of an overall parity of influence in coordination. In this context, all partners welcomed the humanitarian reform process, as it enabled structures already in place and codified, and sanctioned relationships already operational.

The purpose of the TA, however, remains somewhat vague at the field level. Without clarity on how field practitioners can engage with it, when, and why has resulted in the TA remaining largely ignored.

The sustained nature and lack of clarity in defining “humanitarian” interventions juxtaposed to basic service delivery or development interventions have resulted in over-dependence on humanitarian funding mechanisms – including CHF – and made difficult the transitioning of coordination to longer-term funding and development programmes.

### 4. Emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations

The following general points are worth noting in terms of what worked well in general in the implementation of humanitarian reform processes in South Sudan:

- Organisational parity in terms of size and influence of UN agencies and NGOs contributed to an environment where humanitarian reform could be successful.
- Having a collegial and cooperative working environment between UN agencies and NGOs led to smooth implementation of humanitarian reform processes.
- NGO engagement in leadership meetings and sector coordination pre-dated humanitarian reform and was naturally included in HR processes.
- Humanitarian reform processes were not all rolled out at once; different elements were introduced as needed, and their implementation discussed by all relevant partners.

**Table 1.** Humanitarian Reform and Transformative Agenda: Challenges & Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations
Duplication of “good working relationships” in other humanitarian contexts.	Recognise that all elements of the South Sudan context and good practice will not be replicable in other contexts.
Confusion over what the Transformative Agenda is and its significance for field practitioners.	Issue guidance on the Transformative Agenda and its practical implications for different levels of the humanitarian response.
Lack of feedback on the Accountability to Affected Populations pilot, standardised indicators, development of a centralised information management system, and performance indicators.	Recommendations from the Field Mission Report should be followed up.
Lack of feedback on how/if learning from the South Sudan field test have been incorporated prior to the proposed 2013 field implementation.	Improve communication on and follow up from the April 2012 Field Mission.

### III. PART II – Coordination

In 2010, prior to HR being implemented in South Sudan, an independent evaluation of the NGO Forum called coordination mechanisms here,

*confused and confusing, with bodies created at different levels and in different sectors by the GoSS, donors, UN agencies and NGOs with no overall framework connecting them.*<sup>12</sup>

While there was some UN-led coordination around annual UN processes – such as the CAP workplan, or the CHF allocations – these had limited NGO input. Allegations by NGOs that the CHF allocations were unfair and the process opaque were common. There was no joined up overall planning process, clarity on who is implementing what projects where (3Ws), contact sheets, inter-agency assessments or OCHA capacity to coordinate it all.

The coordination structure has since evolved and is enabled by an active, well-funded NGO Forum, a strong OCHA, and well-functioning sector coordination through clusters, which are present both in the capital Juba and at state level. These bodies are represented in the HCT, the highest-level humanitarian group in South Sudan. This section presents the function and relationship between each of these bodies in some detail.

#### 1. The NGO Forum

*The presence of a well-organised, well-resourced and articulate NGO Forum, when the scale and complexity of the response justifies it, will make coordination more effective and less time consuming. The NGO Forum has been welcomed by NGOs as well as donors and UN agencies. The HC and HCT should advocate for such an NGO forum, which should be supported systematically by donors.*<sup>13</sup>

The NGO Forum was established in 1996 in Nairobi to enable INGOs operating under OLS to discuss common issues such as programming, access, and aid delivery.<sup>14</sup> As UN agencies and INGOs began moving their South Sudan headquarters to Juba in 2006-7, the NGO Forum began to meet in Juba where both former OLS and non-OLS members were welcome. As this meeting grew in scope and size, a new Country Directors' meeting was initiated to hone the focus of the Forum. This group created the full-time NGO Secretariat.<sup>15</sup> By the end 2009, the NGO Forum: formalised its structure based on a Statute of Operations; instituted a paying membership model; clarified meeting compositions, ToRs, and membership requirements; detailed the scope of its representation; and added several full-time positions to its operational plan.

The current NGO Forum is partially funded by membership fees as well as by international donors. It is a composite of meetings and groups (See Graph 1) represented by an elected twelve-member Steering Committee that is facilitated by the NGO Forum Secretariat.

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<sup>12</sup> Currion, P. (2010) *Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO Coordination in Southern Sudan 2007-2011*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>13</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2012) *Transformative Agenda: South Sudan Mission, Catalogue of Good Practices*. New York: OCHA.

<sup>14</sup> Currion, P. (2010) *Coordination at the Crossroads: NGO Coordination in Southern Sudan 2007-2011*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

**Graph 1:** South Sudan NGO Forum Structure



In December 2012, the NGO Forum had 280 members: 140 INGO and 140 NNGO. This is an estimated 90 to 95 percent of all INGOs and 33 percent of all NNGOs working in the country. NNGOs were not actively involved in the NGO Forum until 2008 when an ad-hoc group of NNGOs began meeting; this same group became the catalyst for the National NGO Forum, a meeting that is held monthly and has its own Steering Committee. The initial reasoning behind creating a separate meeting was to address some issues specific to nascent NGOs, such as capacity building, funding and governance.

The NGO Forum has become an established and integral part in the overall humanitarian coordination structure. Forty-two percent of CDs who participated in the survey for this study agreed that the NGO Forum facilitates their NGO's work, and forty-three percent moderately

agreed. No respondents strongly disagreed and only two percent moderately disagreed.<sup>16</sup> While concerns had been raised that a “parallel OCHA” had been created by the NGO Forum, both Forum members and OCHA representatives were quick to point out that their work is complementary and neither would be able to function as efficiently without the other. In fact, the NGO Forum strongly supported the OCHA scaling up to a more appropriate level in 2010 and 2011, and OCHA strongly advocated for and sought continued funding for the NGO Secretariat.

The NGO Forum also played a very active role in initiating the cluster system and establishing the HCT. While support and engagement of the NGO Secretariat in the HCT has remained high, engagement with the clusters has waned as NGOs have become engaged in clusters directly. The NGO Forum now continues to facilitate cluster requests for greater connectivity to a wider breadth of NGOs than those in any specific cluster.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. OCHA

OCHA’s operations in South Sudan have varied significantly over the CPA period. The current OCHA in South Sudan has been referred to as the “Rolls Royce” of OCHA anywhere, having 5 different units<sup>18</sup> and 81 staff (26 international, 20 national, 35 general).<sup>19</sup> Each cluster has a focal point within OCHA, and field offices were created in each state with the exception of Central Equatoria (where the national OCHA is located) and Western Bahr el Ghazal (where there are few humanitarian actors). From its different offices, OCHA coordinates sub-national clusters through an Inter-Cluster Working group, which meets monthly and maintains monthly coordination calendars and contact sheets.

OCHA also has a mapping unit and produces maps and information used at the bi-weekly HCT and provides them for free to the humanitarian community. Items like contact lists and who is operating what programmes and where are also maintained, updated quarterly, circulated at state level and available on request.

NGOs perceive OCHA’s performance at a state level differently depending on the state and personality of the OCHA Head of Sub-Office. One state of notable OCHA success is Northern Bahr el Ghazal where the OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer links his approach to his time working for an NGO:

*I am coming from a programme management perspective. And when I took up this appointment I thought about the kind of support I would have wanted when I was in the programme.*

Additionally, his state cluster colleagues have appreciated his determination to use coordination to make fieldwork easier instead of creating additional work, which can often be the case. Specifically, they cited his being proactive in advocacy for the humanitarian community as a whole rather than distinguishing between NGOs and UN agencies. For NGOs, this has included ensuring they are invited to UN security meetings.

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<sup>16</sup> Hoppe, K (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director’s Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>17</sup> Specifically for the ETC and Logistics Clusters who need to survey NGOs to determine if a specific problem or issue should be prioritised and addressed. The NGO Forum will pose the question to its membership and collect responses or disseminate information upon request.

<sup>18</sup> OCHA Structure 2012: 1) humanitarian financing and donor relations; 2) communications; 3) field coordination; 4) ICT; and 5) Operations.

<sup>19</sup> The NGO Forum and the HCT advocated for an increase in OCHA staff and presence between 2009 and 2010 given the level of humanitarian activity and ongoing emergencies during that period.

### 3. Humanitarian Country Team

The first Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meeting was held on the 10 February 2010. Five NGO representatives and one NGO Secretariat staff representative were invited to the NGO Forum. The HC at the time indicated that the meeting would include representatives from UN agencies, ICRC/IFRC, NGOs and donors to, “provide overall guidance on the humanitarian operation in Southern Sudan ensuring, where appropriate linkages to recovery and development planning.”<sup>20</sup> Over time, the meeting has evolved to include cluster coordinators, MSF (as an observer), and embassy officials (Norway, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands and Japan) in addition to ECHO, DFID, OFDA and the SDC.

With six representatives on the HCT, NGOs regularly add agenda items and give presentations on issues relevant to NGOs. Having the NGO Secretariat Representative at the HCT provides continuity in circumstances where other NGO representatives might not be at all meetings, as well as an easily accessible point of contact with whom NGOs can raise HCT issues. The NGO Forum developed a ToR for these five representatives and also facilitates their election on an annual basis.

HCT meetings offer primarily a forum for information sharing. Several HCT members interviewed felt that the HCT was a decision-making forum but none could elaborate how those decisions were taken. In general, many people felt it was a meeting to inform HC decisions. In the meeting observed for this study, no decisions or actions were required; there was no follow up or new action points that needed addressing. A representative of a bilateral donor in attendance felt that it was up to the HC to shape the meeting saying,

*It is a forum by which, in theory, NGOs, donor can question/challenge or ask an explanation about what's going on... It can be an information sharing forum...It can be a decision making body. It comes down to the personality of the HC and what you want from HC.*

Cluster representation at the HCT was another topic surrounded by lack of clarity. When asked who was responsible for representing the clusters to the HCT, some interviewees felt that it was OCHA's responsibility as the chair of the Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG); some felt that it was the responsibility of cluster leads. In reality, when engagement or input into decisions is needed, many are ready to offer it, albeit with limited clarity on what body they represent (the NGO, the UN agency or the respective cluster). One cluster co-lead from an NGO said,

*I'm not sure that anyone sits in the HCT thinking, "I'm representing the cluster." I think they usually are thinking of representing their agency but will, at times, remember the cluster.*

### 4. The clusters

#### *i. Background and structure*

Between 2006/7 and 2010, in the absence of a centralised humanitarian coordination structure, a number of NGO-led coordination meetings emerged to cover both humanitarian and development issues. For example, the NGO Health Forum had over 100 representatives attending any given monthly meeting; Medair and Tearfund initiated a WASH Forum

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<sup>20</sup>Grande, L. (2010) *Invitation Letter to the HCT*. South Sudan: Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

In April 2010, the HC and head of OCHA asked partners in the HCT if they would support a “cluster roll-out”; OCHA circulated documents and facilitated meetings on cluster implications. NGOs were given time to debate the pros and cons of the roll-out prior to a decision being taken. Clear feedback by the NGO Forum in support of the cluster roll-out relied on strong NGO co-leadership; this was well received by the HC and HCT.

The lack of a formal process guiding the setting up of clusters in South Sudan resulted in clusters being activated based on sectors in the workplan. For example, the NGO-led WASH forum was rolled into the cluster, while the NGO Health Forum was not. The NGO Forum Policy Focal Point who was present when the clusters were rolled out said,

*The problem is that each cluster has evolved very differently and if you discuss with each cluster you’ll be told why their cluster is specific and why they shouldn’t be told to standardise; but standardising also has some validity – like how much of the cluster does development.*

Amongst cluster leads in South Sudan, there is a lack of understanding of how clusters operate at a global level as defined by the IASC guidelines.<sup>21</sup> Most have no contact or support from the global cluster and do not see a need to increase that engagement. Only three of the fifteen cluster leads had either heard of, let alone read, the IASC guidelines for clusters. Those that had heard of them but had not read them cited that they were either too long or not relevant to the context.

Despite all this, the cluster system in South Sudan closely mirrors the global cluster in structure and leadership, with a few notable exceptions: *Livelihoods* has been added to *Food Security*; *NFIs* has been added to *Emergency Shelter*; and a *Conflict-Reduction* sub-cluster has been added under *Protection* (See Annex 5).

The only global cluster not present in South Sudan is Early Recovery. While South Sudan seems to be a natural fit for such a cluster, it is decidedly absent due to the definition of humanitarian action applied by the former HC as being “ifesaving alone”. Items like early recovery and capacity building were assumed to have no place in the prioritisation of the CHF or workplans as defined at the outset of the cluster system.

When NGO representatives were asked during this study if they knew of or noticed a difference between sector coordination and the clusters, it was largely believed that clusters function better and that what they are called is “purely semantics”. They also mentioned that, in the absence of other coordination structures, the cluster system has become entrenched and rooted very quickly in South Sudan, with clusters having become a byword for “coordination” itself. In the survey, several CDs identified the NGO Forum Security “Cluster” or the NGO Forum “Cluster” as cluster meetings attended by their NGO, in addition to the standard cluster meetings.<sup>22</sup>

While the TA shared concerns that the clusters had become “overly process driven” and “in some situations, perceived to potentially undermine rather than enable delivery,” this is not the case in South Sudan.<sup>23</sup> All CDs who responded to the survey considered themselves members of one or more of the clusters, with 85 percent either strongly or moderately agreeing with the statement: “Coordination through the clusters improves my organisation’s ability to respond and/or programme”. Reasons cited for this response were that the clusters: increased their

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<sup>21</sup> Supporting Service Delivery, Informing Strategic Decision-making of the HC/HCT, Planning and strategy development, advocacy, monitoring & reporting, contingency planning/preparedness/capacity building. IASC (2006) *Cluster Guidance Note*. New York: OCHA.

<sup>22</sup> Hoppe, K (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director’s Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>23</sup> IASC (2012) *Chapeau and Compendium of Actions*. IASC

organisation's efficiency; gave better access to pipelines,<sup>24</sup> information and assessments; and facilitated technical strategies across the sector. The 15 percent who did not agree that clusters improved their organisation's performance listed as reasons: the high level of participation demanded; weak follow-up in some clusters; and non-emergency issues being coordinated. The Food Security, Education, Health, WASH, and Logistics are the most well attended clusters.

One cluster co-lead said that having clusters has helped to focus donors on what they should support by providing good, accurate, and coordinated information about the needs in that sector.

Cluster meetings in all clusters (with the exception of multi-sector) take place monthly in Juba. These tend to be regularly scheduled and well attended. This regular scheduling, value of meeting content, and applicability of issues discussed were all cited as reasons why there is strong NGO involvement in the cluster meetings. Eighty percent of respondents said that their organisation spent between one and five hours weekly attending cluster meetings.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to regular cluster meetings, Technical Working Groups (TWiGs) are also used to discuss specific technical issues of relevance within the cluster. These tend to be ad-hoc committees, without formal ToRs.<sup>26</sup>

An innovative function of the clusters in South Sudan has been the use of websites in order that partners can more easily access documents and check on meetings. This has improved the institutional memory of the cluster and reduced the workload for cluster leads, who would otherwise be responding to one-off requests for information.

## **ii. Cluster governance**

**Terms of Reference (ToRs):** While some clusters had ToRs for their work or that of the co-leads, some had neither. It was not clear whether generic ToRs had been developed for either the cluster or the cluster leadership. Full-time cluster leaders tended to point to their job descriptions as the document governing their activities and focus.

**Membership:** No cluster had a defined membership or membership requirements. The IASC Guidelines suggest that there should be minimum commitments for participation in the cluster, such as commitment to humanitarian principles and contributing to collective work. However, clusters in South Sudan tend to be open and inclusive of anyone who would like to attend. Most clusters define their membership as those on their contact lists, those who submit technical reports, or the partners included in the CAP.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is not known how many members are in each cluster and how accountability lines (if any) run from the cluster or cluster leadership to membership.

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<sup>24</sup> Pipelines are not officially defined but are a commonly applied concept where a UN agency buys a large amount of core humanitarian supplies (such as water pump parts, nutrition supplies, or vaccines) that are then used in project activities by the UN and partners in the emergency. This is presumably based on the UN Agency being able to utilise economies of scale and thus reduce procurement costs.

<sup>25</sup> Hoppe, K (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director's Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>26</sup> For example, within the nutrition cluster a Medium Acute Malnutrition (MAM) technical working group was convened when WFP was developing MAM guidelines and requested that the Nutrition Cluster review and contextualise them. The MAM TWiG stopped meeting after the guidelines had been finalised.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the Education cluster has 133 organisation on its mailing list. This includes donors, US government contractors, both humanitarian and development NGOs, INGOs, 40 NNGOs, UN Agencies, other cluster leads, a parliamentarian, and Ministry of Education Government officials at both a national and state level.

Given the blurred lines between humanitarian and development work in South Sudan and the lack of other coordination structures, the cluster system lends itself to an open approach, where development issues are also discussed. As one Cluster Lead said, *“I want to be as inclusive as possible because there’s no other coordination mechanism for development or rehabilitation work. Clusters are just a mechanism.”*

Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs): The SAGs were praised in the TA Field Mission Report as cross-fertilisation, i.e., “being members of one or several cluster(s) participating in the Strategic Advisory Group of another cluster.”<sup>28</sup> However, SAGs only exist in the Nutrition cluster, with a plan to start one in WASH in 2013. In the Nutrition cluster, the Peer Review Team (which comes together to review proposals in each cluster prior to CHF allocations) evolved into a SAG with responsibility for providing strategic guidance for the cluster through a workplan, monitoring and prioritising cluster work, overseeing appointment/re-confirmation of NGO co-lead on an annual basis, ensuring harmonisation with government, and backstopping and helping cluster leadership with representation. Both the Nutrition and the WASH SAGs will have ToRs and, in the absence of election, the SAGs appear to be the primary form of accountability to the cluster “membership” at present.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation: “Everyone says we should do it but no one tells us how to do it,” said one of the cluster leads in response to questions about monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Pinpointing cluster performance in the absence of any membership, election of cluster representatives or cluster goals and workplan is difficult. Response time was the most frequently quoted form of measurement used, with the caveat that this can be affected by external factors such as security or funding.

A number of interviewees had high hopes that UN Volunteers (UNVs) brought in to undertake monitoring and to report as part of the CHF would also address the issue of cluster monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. At the time of the current study, however, the UNVs were just arriving and had yet to develop the framework through which they would work.

Activation, deactivation, and “cluster creep”: Many questions remain regarding how new clusters may be activated and current ones deactivated, and if this is necessary.

A source of some debate was the “activation” of the Conflict Prevention sub-cluster under Protection. The cluster meetings started in order to help partners better understand the dynamics and factors of conflict in the complicated context of South Sudan. After some time, the group’s leaders argued for, and were included in, the 2012 CAP. They hold well-attended meetings every two weeks, have an agenda, and circulate minutes.

Perceptions on the Conflict Prevention sub-cluster differ: some see it as an official sub-cluster, others as an unofficial sub-cluster, with some regarding it to be an official working group of the Protection Cluster. While its title might be semantics to some, the name does matter to members of the group, who believe that being an official part of the cluster system in South Sudan adds legitimacy and credibility to their work and enables them to have a say in the system and to seek funding for a coordinator.

While no one argues about the value added by the Conflict Prevention group, it is unclear if it should be part of the cluster system. This expansion has raised questions on whether more clusters are created than necessary and regarding whether the focus and purpose of any given

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<sup>28</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2012) *Transformative Agenda: South Sudan Mission, Final Mission Report*. New York: OCHA.

cluster is “creeping” beyond the original intent of the cluster system (e.g., incorporating and addressing development issues). In the absence of guidelines clearly defining and focusing the clusters as a whole, such perceived cluster-creep is both possible and likely to continue.

The IASC Guidelines state that clusters are supposed to be a temporary coordination solution with the aim to establish national, development-oriented coordination mechanisms as soon as the humanitarian emergency phase ends.<sup>29</sup> This is complicated in the South Sudan context where there are differing and often conflicting definitions of “humanitarian emergency” and where few national, development-oriented coordination mechanisms exist.

When interviewees for this study were asked if the clusters would deactivate, the answers were mostly a variation of “no”. Clusters were deemed to be working too well and there is an expectation that large-scale humanitarian action will continue in the country. The clusters were also seen to fill the gap of a government-led development coordination framework.

In theory, cluster leadership in South Sudan could see the need to eventually deactivate or “transition” the clusters, but there was an appeal for pragmatism whenever deactivation was discussed as part of this study. It was widely agreed that a four to five year timeframe would be too short and that eight to ten years was more probable. That said, there is no exit strategy or plan in place for any cluster. There is clear recognition that government-led coordination would be a necessary and important element, but there is no plan to build that capacity; therefore, there is a real risk that a temporary and emergency systems will be perpetuated.

*Sub-National Clusters (state and county)*: Cluster coordination at sub-national level is delegated to the states, with OCHA overseeing the inter-cluster working groups (ICWGs) in state capitals and state focal points for clusters reporting both there and to their respective cluster leadership in Juba.

Cluster coordinators (also know as “focal points”) at the state level do not usually receive funding – with WASH being the exception having funded NGO co-leads in both Jonglei and Upper Nile states given those states’ susceptibility to emergency. The WASH cluster coordinator in Upper Nile is full-time and felt that his most important role is having time to help build the capacity of cluster members through the creation of tools or organising workshops on specific technical topics.

All clusters are active at a state level with the exception of the Mine Action, Land Coordination, and Conflict Prevention sub-clusters, the ETC, and the multi-sectors. Finding 100 volunteers at a state level so that each cluster and sub-cluster can have a focal point is no small job. But it was achieved with the help of cluster leadership who took a “soft sell” approach making the requirements for the state focal points as light as possible. The generic guidance note for state level cluster focal points is one page and, while the amount of support provided by cluster coordinators to their state focal points varies, the state focal point responsibilities can be as light as, “someone who can work alongside the cluster lead in an emergency.” However, many state focal points do far more than this and also organise regular cluster meetings, participate in the ICWG and are part of inter-agency assessment missions (IAAMs).

While the IASC indicates that the sub-national clusters can be activated and deactivated quickly, it is probably more beneficial in a context like South Sudan that they operate in a consistent and regularised way. South Sudan’s emergencies tend to not have a quick onset, so having regular state level coordination allows for early warning (coming from cluster participants) and quick

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<sup>29</sup>IASC (2012) *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level*. New York: IASC.

response. There is also the benefit of having the people who need to respond to an emergency able and used to working together on various issues.

NGO attendance in state level cluster is also high; all of the respondents to the CDs' survey indicated that their organisation attends one or more of the cluster meetings held at a state level.<sup>30</sup> NNGOs are fairly active at the state level, with a number of clusters having NGO cluster co-leads.

While having dedicated cluster coordinators or focal points at a state level is helpful, most interviewees for this study thought that resources could be better allocated elsewhere. It was suggested that one cluster coordinator might be able to facilitate several clusters or handle several states.

### *iii. Cluster leadership*

Cluster leadership election and evaluation: Discussion about election or confirmation of cluster (co-)leads is difficult in the absence of a defined membership. With the exception of the WASH, Nutrition and Education clusters (where signed MoUs require NGO co-lead election within the cluster), a range of selection modalities were employed at different times by different clusters: one cluster just asked for a show of hands of who would like to be the NGO co-lead and the NGO who did so was selected; another read off a list of NGOs that participated regularly in the cluster (much to the surprise of those NGOs) and then those in attendance voted for the one they wanted; still another asked NGOs who wished to be co-lead to give a short presentation on why they should be selected. Several others were just handed the co-lead role based on them being the NGO co-lead in the sector system. It is not clear what would happen if NGO co-leads decided that they would like to resign or be replaced, or if another feels they would be better for the position.

No formal mechanism is in place for cluster members to monitor their leads' performance. In those few instances where either cluster members, or the UN or NGO co-lead had to address an issue of poor performance, this was addressed promptly by either the head of the respective UN agency or the NGO Country Director.

Cluster Leadership "Personality": Time and again the answer to the question, "why do the clusters work in South Sudan?" came back with the answer, "the personalities of the cluster leads" – both UN and NGO. But what is that personality or skill set?

The IASC Guidelines suggest that the criteria for cluster management should be, "operational relevance in the emergency, technical expertise, demonstrated capacity to contribute strategically and provide practical support and a commitment to contribute consistently."<sup>31</sup>

NGO CDs were asked in the survey: "If you attend cluster meetings and had to pick the most important characteristic/skill for a cluster lead – whether UN lead or NGO co-coordinator – what would it be?" Previous experience with coordination (33 percent) was the skill most highly valued in a coordinator, followed by technical experience with the sector (21 percent), experience in South Sudan (19 percent) and other skills like: UN experience, communication skills and "soft skills" such as being responsive, respectful and supportive.

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<sup>30</sup> Hoppe, K. (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director's Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>31</sup> IASC (2012) *Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level*. New York: IASC.

Cluster coordinators also expressed the belief that coordination was a highly valued skill in and of itself; they also felt that technical experience is currently given too much weight in selection. “Coordinating is difficult,” said the Representative of a UN Agency.

*More and more we’re looking for people with experience in coordination. You can bring technical people to look at technical output but the biggest function is being able to coordinate 45-50 partners and keep the government on board at the same time. Globally there’s a dearth of these people.*

## **5. Partnership**

The Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in July 2007 form the basis on which partnership under Humanitarian Reform occurs. The Principles seek to bring UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations together on equal footing focusing on equality, transparency, results-oriented approaches, responsibility and complementarity. Partnership in delivery of South Sudan’s humanitarian intervention is between the UN, INGOs, NNGOs, and the government.

### ***i. Partnership with INGOs***

INGO inclusion and active participation in the clusters is one of the examples of good practice identified in the TA Field Mission Report. However, while NGO inclusion in clusters is supposed to be done by the HC in consultation with the HCT (based on agencies’ coordination and response capacities) and to mirror global level arrangements where possible, it developed in a much more informal way in South Sudan.

There is a UN Coordinator (Lead) and NGO Co-coordinator (Co-Lead) for every cluster. Coordinators and co-coordinators fall into three categories: 1) those that are fully funded for their cluster leadership role specifically; 2) those that have a role in their organisation that substantially facilitates their cluster leadership by including it in their job description and relieving them from other substantive roles; and 3) those that are not funded and do not have cluster leadership as a substantive element in their job description or substantive support from their organisation.

In general, clusters with coordinators (either UN or NGO) who are funded fully to carry out cluster coordination tend to be perceived to be “better coordinated”. The representative of one UN agency believes this to be due to the NGO co-leadership, the history of cooperation under OLS, mutual UNICEF-NGO advocacy for full time coordinator funding, and good dialogue on the partnership issue. In addition, the support that UNICEF now offers its clusters is quite extraordinary. The same UN agency representative said,

*UNICEF has managed to mostly separate UNICEF as operations and UNICEF as a cluster coordinator. Cluster coordinators don’t have UNICEF work. Previously it didn’t work that [an NGO] was just giving a part-time co-coordinator. It required negotiation between the UNICEF representative and the head of agency. [The UNICEF clusters] are supported by an information manager. The person helps set up the database collecting reports and are the ones who service the database and produce the reports. Having those three people with an organisation set up to back it up – with R&R cycles, with people getting malaria – makes it work. You need to have a pool of four to five people who know what’s going on. If we didn’t have dedicated people we would have said get rid of the cluster system because it wouldn’t have worked.*

Cluster coordinators and co-coordinators usually work together in a very informal way. Few have any agreed divisions of responsibility and even those that do admitted that most of the time they

simply share tasks as issues arise. To many, the suggestions that there be some formal division of roles seemed an overprescribed and unwelcome approach.

NGO co-leadership has been globally recognised as valuable. Shared responsibility of the cluster is accepted as normative in South Sudan, with even donors insisting that the clusters have two people leading and one must be from an NGO. Arguably, a one-size-fits-all approach to NGO co-coordinators is difficult – each cluster has different requirements, as do donors.<sup>32</sup>

Respondents to the survey were asked if they would consider hosting an NGO co-lead if funding were made available. Forty-six percent of CDs responding said “no” citing staffing and capacity issues of their organisation. Fifty-four percent said that they would consider it, if their organisation were already attending that cluster and this was deemed important to their organisation.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, INGOs also valued the partnership in the HCT. Of the INGOs surveyed in the CDs’ Survey, 61 percent knew who the representatives were on the HCT and 57 percent felt that these representatives gave either excellent or above average representation on behalf of the NGO community, while 43 percent felt that representation was either average or below average.<sup>34</sup> Seventy-two percent of respondents felt that the HCT meetings directly affected the work of their NGO, citing that it helped coordinate with the government on issues such as work permits and tax. Those who felt it was average or below average cited the lack of NNGO participation and the discussions being too high-level to affect day-to-day operations.<sup>35</sup>

## **ii. Partnership with NNGOs**

While INGOs and UN agencies work together relatively well, and INGO inclusion in coordination bodies is normative, NNGO involvement is more sporadic and less well defined. Yet NNGO involvement in the cluster system has increased as compared to previous years, mostly thanks to the National NGO Forum assisting in connecting NNGOs to the clusters’ mailing lists.<sup>36</sup> NNGOs now sit on technical working groups of clusters and are beginning to take up co-leadership positions at state level; for example, the Health Cluster has a national NGO representative as the deputy NGO co-lead.

NNGO involvement varies by cluster and depending on how proactive the cluster coordinator is to engage NNGOs. The Education Cluster was praised by the NNGO Steering Committee for having very proactive coordinators who travelled out to state capitals with the direct purpose of engaging and facilitating NNGO involvement. A former state cluster focal point said that a change in mindset was necessary within the cluster system,

*We need to stop expecting NNGOs to be INGOs. We need to look for ways to maximise their value instead. CBOs didn’t have resources to, say, ship things somewhere but were able to get involved and send a rep into Pieri [remote location] to do community mobilisation.*

NNGO representatives interviewed for this study have been critical of processes managed through reformed systems, such as the CAP and CHF. NNGOs felt that these processes were not transparent and favoured members of the cluster peer review team (PRT). While this could be

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<sup>32</sup> For example: ECHO/OFDA do not recognise education as a humanitarian issue.

<sup>33</sup> Hoppe, K. (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director’s Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Most clusters at a national level identified between 5-10 NNGOs attending and participating regularly in cluster meetings and process out of an overall attendance of 30-40 people.

due to the PRT members being more active in emergency response, having a higher capacity, and having better understanding of the proposal process, the perception remains.<sup>37</sup>

There is no NNGO representative on the HCT, except through the NGO Forum Secretariat. The reason given for this by interviewees during the study was vague and related to NNGOs not being able to represent the sector objectively. While the NNGO Forum accepts this, it has resulted in increased frustration with the system. The representative of an NNGO said,

*There's always this element of "your simply not on the level to be able to dialogue with us on these issues"...but you have to be involved in the system to change it and know how to engage with it and speak the language.*

This echoes the problem identified by ERC John Holmes when he wrote on Humanitarian Reform in 2007 saying, "International humanitarian response is still a Western-dominated enterprise and one which urgently needs to be adapted to reflect the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>38</sup>

### **iii. Partnership with government**

The South Sudan government responds to emergencies mainly through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM). This Ministry, responsible for accrediting and facilitating the work of NGOs, was formed in 2010 and has gone through several restructuring processes since then. Prior to 2010, NGOs worked with the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), which was the liaison arm of the SPLA. Following the signing of the CPA, SSRRC evolved into the RRC, which is a commission that now sits inside the Ministry. According to MoHADM, the Ministry is responsible for policy and RRC is responsible for implementation. In fact, the two are still developing their structures and operations. In MoHADM and in other line ministries with which the cluster system coordinates, staff are frequently shuffled and moved, making it difficult to engage with the same person on a regular basis. Couple this with the high turnover of humanitarian staff and relationships formed can quickly dissipate entirely. Partnership between the humanitarian representatives from MoHADM (or RRC) and the international humanitarian coordination system could be strengthened.

At a national level, line ministries sit as co-chairs in the Education, Nutrition, and Health clusters. At times, they attend meetings as participants in the WASH, and Food Security and Livelihoods clusters, but are largely absent from the rest of the clusters. At a sub-national level, the picture is clearer as NGOs have worked and continue to work closely with the RRC at a payam and county level. Few line ministries have staff at this level, but both OCHA and the clusters in the states engage them actively. While it varies according to state, most sub-national clusters are co-chaired by line ministry officials.

The government – through either MoHADM, RRC or line ministries – has been increasingly involved in humanitarian action and some government officials view the cluster coordination as an effective way to do this. A representative of a government ministry involved with the clusters felt that clusters were a positive approach to addressing immediate needs, since international organisations were better placed to respond.

No one interviewed had complained about government involvement and all cluster leadership felt the clusters were a good way to engage the government constructively. Most cluster

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<sup>37</sup> Ali, A. (2012) *Narrative Report on Pre-Meeting with NNGO and INGO Representatives*. South Sudan: Samahi Research.

<sup>38</sup> Holmes, J. (2007) *Humanitarian action: a Western-dominated enterprise in need of change*. Oxford, UK: Forced Migration Review.

leadership felt that the government could and should influence cluster response plans and be involved in assessments. There was no feeling that the government was using its presence to place undue pressure for response in a certain way or a certain area.

A representative of a government ministry involved with the clusters recognised this saying,

*In the past there was no government and as we speak now the department is trying to develop guidelines and ToR for the partners because we have realised that most of the partners are still going the old way as in the time when there was no government. They decide where they want to go and what they want to do...This is what we are looking at and maybe that is what will make the partners feel that the government is hard on them because we are diverting them from their interests.*

A number of interviewees pointed out that the government does not understand the distinction between humanitarian and development programming as drawn by the international humanitarian community. They also highlighted that this distinction is difficult to make when the government raises development-related issues in a humanitarian forum, as there is no other place for them to be discussed.

## **6. Emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations**

The following general points are worth noting in terms of what worked well on coordination in South Sudan:

- An atmosphere of inclusion and partnership in humanitarian reform mechanisms and between stakeholders led to all partners to act in a transparent and consultative manner.
- Establishment of a well-funded, active, NGO Forum – which includes NNGOs if they are not already represented in other fora.
- OCHA office staffed and resourced to an extent suitable to the intervention.
- OCHA field staff understand the priorities of all partners and principles of partnership.
- An HCT with substantial, standing NGO representation was created.
- The diverse nature and wide number of stakeholders in any new mechanism or major change introduced with all stakeholders given time to consider and discuss was recognised instead of being presented fait accompli.
- When the cluster system was implemented, an informal mapping was done of sector structures that already existed and meetings were held with the leadership of those fora to determine if they should be integrated into the cluster system or left in parallel.
- Cluster development has been given room to grow organically while still balanced against global standardisation.
- Clusters engaging with donors helped them to understand donor priorities and constraints and helped donors to focus and prioritise.
- Regular, well-attended cluster meetings that provide value for members have been critical to good engagement.
- Clusters using new technology and actively engaging with members as well as the wider humanitarian community.
- Clusters have been having documented governance methods such as ToRs, SAGs or oversight groups.
- Joint UN-NGO cluster leadership led to improved transparency, increased trust, and fostered a cooperative environment.

- An emphasis has been put on cluster leadership having experience in coordination and not just technical skills.
- Clusters have been working at a sub-national level.
- “UNICEF-type” support offered to clusters has included: advocating for full-time funded leads and co-leads, information management assistance, and cluster lead and co-lead backstopping for leave or absence of leads.
- Cluster leadership funding has been made available should it be required by the cluster.
- Expertise of leads and co-leads has been utilised to focus on including NNGOs, building NNGO capacity in coordination leadership, and in technical implementation in the sector.

**Table 2:** Humanitarian Coordination: Challenges and Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations
<p>Both INGOs and NNGOs cited the vast geographic spread of the country and the lack of infrastructure as a challenge in engaging with coordination (meetings specifically, but also getting onto mailing lists and accessing information in a timely way given the lack of electricity and internet in most places). This is particularly true for NNGOs who might not have access to UNHAS flights or transportation to get them to state capitals. NNGOs are unable to meet short turnaround times of process submissions, especially if this requires Juba representation or reliance on internet.</p>	<p>Creative approaches should be sought to ensure that information reaches as many people as possible. This could include OCHA or an INGO with access to internet and electricity acting as a “hub” for NNGOs in field locations. Additional time for submissions could be granted to NNGOs.</p>
<p>Some NNGOs feel they are being “marginalised out of the system” because they are unfamiliar with terminology and submission requirements and receive no feedback when they do engage.</p>	<p>The NGO Forum facilitated a one-day workshop in 2012 inviting OCHA and the CHF Secretariat to help NNGOs better understand how cluster coordination and the CHF worked. It also aimed to help OCHA and the CHF Secretariat better understand NNGO concerns and constraints to involvement. Both OCHA and the NGO Forum should consider repeating and expanding these meetings.</p>
<p>At times, NNGOs require assistance and capacity building in order to engage with international coordination systems.</p>	<p>In engaging with NNGOs, the capacity expected for inclusion in coordination mechanisms should be explicit. Understanding NNGOs’ backgrounds, capacities, strengths and weaknesses is critical to ensuring they are true partners. Consider a liaison function within OCHA to work specifically on helping NNGOs engage with/understand reformed mechanisms.</p>
<p>While NNGOs are represented by the NGO Secretariat on the HCT, they lack a separate voice.</p>	<p>Consider a seat for NNGOs on the HCT, possibly expanding the NGO Forum Secretariat’s permanent seat to include the Chair of the NNGO Steering Committee.</p>

Main challenges	Recommendations
While each of the clusters developed separately, there is a lack of standardisation as well as knowledge about what assistance is available to them.	Develop a “toolbox” for clusters including template ToRs for clusters and cluster leadership, TWiGS, SAGs, membership, state focal points, and MoUs between leadership agencies if necessary. These documents should set clear parameters on cluster activities to ensure they don’t “creep” either through the activation of sub-clusters or through the creation of TWiGs.
As cluster leadership turns over, it will be necessary to introduce new leadership which might lack the in-country experience.	IASC Guidelines should be required reading for cluster leadership. Global clusters should ensure they have a relationship with cluster leads in the country (at least briefing on what services/links are available at the global level).
There is no formal membership, nor are there membership requirements for clusters, which could lead to confusion if non-humanitarian actors were to attend.	Consider parameters for cluster membership and for granting observer status to development NGOs or others whose inclusion is important.
Not all cluster leaders have cluster leadership in their job descriptions nor do their organisations recognise the level of commitment and time required for the role.	Ensure that all cluster leadership have cluster leading in their job description; evaluate whether the role should be full-time and funded. This should be reviewed annually.
Election or appointment of leadership is currently vague in many clusters.	Clarify election of NGO co-leads and cluster leadership evaluation for both.
There is confusion over how clusters should monitor, report and/or evaluate both their coordination activities and the activities of their implementing partners.	Get global assistance in upscaling cluster monitoring, reporting and evaluation.
There is a dearth of NGO cluster co-leads.	Consider creating a roster of NGOs with experienced practitioners who are willing to serve as co-leads in certain clusters.
While the mechanisms implemented with humanitarian reform have brought clarity to some coordination, some challenges remain. In the absence of UNDP or government-led development coordination, some NGOs feel at a loss as to where to coordinate activities that are not strictly humanitarian.	Create a cluster transition/exit plan to government/development mechanisms; where those don’t exist note or create them. Consider transitioning for certain clusters in certain states to a government-led meeting with cluster/OCHA support as technical secretariat only.
The Field Mission Report states that, “While coordination has a price-tag, effective coordination...reduces the overall cost of delivery.” This is impossible to validate or quantify given the lack of a baseline or initial information against which to measure this reduction in cost delivery post-TA. In general there was an overall feeling that coordination has improved in South Sudan, but from when and by what measurement is unclear.	Develop a standard tool for measuring coordination in humanitarian responses, which links to the cost of delivering that coordination vis-à-vis the response.

Main challenges	Recommendations
The HCT has no ToR for members. There is no unified understanding of the purpose of the meeting or if it is a decision-making forum.	The HCT needs a ToR with regular review. If it is a decision-making forum, it should be clarified how decisions are made and who has a vote.
There are a variety of opinions on who represents the clusters at the HCT.	Clarify, formalise and document who represents the clusters on HCT and how.
The term “humanitarian” has become broad and encompasses a variety of activities.	The HCT should agree a definition of humanitarian action and apply it to the parameters of the clusters, CHF, and humanitarian activity.
The presence of multi-sector clusters in the cluster system is a global anomaly and confusing to many stakeholders.	The HCT should clarify what “multi-sector clusters” are, their function, ToRs, leadership, meetings, etc.
There are no processes for activating or deactivating clusters. There is no regular review of each cluster’s relevance in the overall system or of annual performance.	Institute processes for activation, deactivation and parameters for clusters with regular review by the HCT of clusters and annually remind cluster membership of their purpose and parameters.
Cluster coordination as “the only show in town” has meant that other coordination mechanisms haven’t developed, thus leaving non-humanitarian NGOs with no other alternative coordination.	Consider Early Recovery cluster to start building links to non-existent development mechanisms.
The cluster system currently lacks linkages and a plan to build linkages or capacity, of the national and sub-national government to acquire leadership of coordination.	OCHA should consider a liaison function with the government. Consider facilitating technology and assistance for those partners.

## IV. PART III – Humanitarian financing

This section presents the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) as it operates in South Sudan. It discusses, in turn, the scope of the fund, how the fund is administered, how it is used, and how it is monitored and evaluated. At the end, the section highlights emerging good practice in relation to the CHF, followed by some of the current challenges to CHF in South Sudan and possible ways for addressing these.

### 1. Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)

Until 2012, the CHF, like most humanitarian reformed mechanisms and processes in South Sudan, was closely linked to that of its neighbour in Sudan. Most of the money given the southern region through the CHF – from 2006 to 2011 – was through a designated envelope or portion allotted to the South. By mid-2011, when South Sudan had become independent, USD 43 million had been allocated to the South and talks had been initiated about the creation of a new CHF.<sup>39</sup> By the end of January 2012, guidance for the allocation of the new CHF had been issued and, by February 2012, a new ToR was approved.

Yet, despite the quick move to establish a new CHF in South Sudan there is some debate about what the CHF is to be used for. Is it truly a fund at the disposal of the HC? Is it truly for humanitarian response alone? Or, is it simply another funding mechanism into which any range of projects can fit? Donors seemed to agree that it is intended to be humanitarian alone but, given the complexity of responses, some of it does end up funding services to the general population.

The funds accessible through the CHF are limited by the definition of humanitarian action as defined by the HC and HCT at any given time. To date, the definition has been ‘life saving’ and any project that contained elements of recovery, rehabilitation, or capacity building have been subject to what the previous HC called “ruthless prioritisation” down to the “most critical humanitarian needs” alone. While having some parameters has helped the clusters weed out what should and shouldn’t be funded under the CHF, both UN agencies and NGOs have repackaged a number of programmes to fit that definition. As one NGO Country Director said,

*I know that I can just throw in enough ‘life-saving, emergency words’ into the title and it will make the cut. Everything in South Sudan can be painted as an emergency you just need the right brush.*

While helping to limit submissions, this prioritisation has meant that the OECD DAC’s definition of humanitarian action is not being applied (as it includes saving lives, reducing suffering and actions up to the point of return to normal life and livelihoods). This definition could include basic services and early recovery.

### 2. Administration and standard operating procedures

Beyond discussion of the parameters and what is “in” or “out” of consideration for CHF funding, there is little debate over the process and how that works. As one senior OCHA official said, “it works because there’s a shared understanding of how it should work.” It also works because those setting it up had experience with the Sudan CHF to compare it against. Donors, UN agencies and NGOs involved were conscious to avoid the opaqueness and issues observed in previous CHF

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<sup>39</sup> OCHA *Humanitarian Financing*. Available from: <http://www.unocha.org/south-sudan/financing/humanitarian-financing> [Accessed 28 February 2013].

experiences. As one donor noted, it pulls the clusters together in a cohesive way and forces a systematic prioritisation, unlike in other countries.

Like in other countries, the CHF Allocation Process Guidelines detail that the CHF is a rapid onset funding mechanism with funding effective 12 months from the allocation date. Unlike other CHFs, there are no designated “envelopes” or funding ceilings per sector.<sup>40</sup> While a majority of the funding is allocated in two standard allocation processes, there is also a reserve of up to twenty percent of the overall funding that is kept for unforeseen emergencies throughout the year.

The HC, in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat in OCHA, begins the annual standard allocation process by issuing a policy paper. UN agencies and NGOs submit project proposals to cluster leadership who work through Peer Review Teams (PRTs) to rank the projects against the criteria determined by the HC. OCHA sits on the PRTs as well. These projects are ranked and presented “blindly” (i.e., the requesting organisation’s identity is hidden) to the CHF Advisory Board. In consultation with the CHF Advisory Board, the HC then allocates funding to each cluster. The entire process is meant to take 55 days from the development of the policy paper to disbursement to implementing agencies. Clarity of the roles of the Advisory Board, Cluster Coordinators and Co-Coordinators, Peer Review Teams, OCHA and the Technical Secretariat are also set out in the Guidelines.

Funding requested through the reserve envelope is also subject to review by the Technical Secretariat, Cluster Peer Review Team and Advisory Board prior to allocation.

The CHF Advisory Board meets regularly and is comprised of donors to the CHF, UN agencies, an NGO Steering Committee representative and NGO Forum Secretariat representative. One donor mentioned that the reason it works well is because there is a strong NGO voice and representation,

*Having NGOs on it is excellent and provides a useful forum to get direct feedback on what the issues are or required.*

Non-traditional donors are notably absent from the CHF, although they are present as donors in South Sudan. Kenyan, Indian and Chinese governmental donors are all present, albeit they usually fund more development activities. When queried as to why they are not present in CHF, one donor said,

*This system is still very western-centric and someone needs to approach them but who is going to take that initiative?*

Contention around the CHF has reduced since the new fund was established with the clarity issued in the Guidelines, although NGO concerns remain that UN agencies use it as a ‘pass-through’ to NGOs taking large portions of administrative fees or to fund their core functions.

Like in other countries, UNDP acts as the managing agent applying an indirect costs (6 to 7 percent) and audit fee (1 percent) to each NGO project to fund the management of the grant. However, in the Sudan CHF, there have been instances of audits being announced but never occurring, meaning that the funding allocated for this purpose has been utilised elsewhere.

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<sup>40</sup> OCHA (2012) *South Sudan Common Humanitarian Fund Allocation Process Guidelines*. South Sudan: OCHA.

### 3. Current participation and usage

#### i. INGO / NNGO Allocations

Given that there is no official count of NGOs in South Sudan, it is difficult to determine what percentage access CHF funding. However, of the 280 INGOs and NNGOs registered with the NGO Forum in 2012, 63 (22 percent) received funding through CHF from 2012 to date.

Of the overall USD 98,447,528 that was disbursed by the CHF in South Sudan in its first year, the following table breaks down the total further by UN, NGO and NNGO.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 3.** 2012 CHF Disbursement in South Sudan

	Number of Projects	Amount Funded	Average Project Amount
UN Projects	46	US\$ 53,200,601	US\$ 1,156,534
NGO Projects	133	US\$ 45,246,927	US\$ 340,202
NNGO Projects <sup>42</sup>	30	US\$ 6,333,821	US\$ 211,127
<b>Total CHF Allocation</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>US\$ 98,447,528</b>	

According to the CDs' Survey, 61 percent felt that the CHF was a transparent and equitable funding pool. Those who disagreed cited funding going to projects that were the "flavour of the month", a bias toward larger INGOs, the large percentage of funding that went to the UN, lack of accountability and review of projects, and too many small amounts going to NGOs to have an impact.<sup>43</sup>

While the CHF Allocation Process Guidelines mention that all participants will be treated equally wherever possible and that steps will be taken to ensure that national organisations are able to appropriately access CHF, NGOs still have a range of concerns related to the funding mechanism.<sup>44</sup> These concerns included perceptions that the clusters are biased toward INGO proposals, that NNGOs receive their allocations in South Sudanese Pounds (SDG) which is subject to currency fluctuations while INGOs and UN agencies receive their allocations in US dollars, that NNGOs are unable to meet the quick turnaround times and deadlines mandated by the CHF, and that there is no option for funding capacity-building under the CHF – an element critical to NNGOs at present.<sup>45</sup>

Pipeline funding is another part of the CHF that NGOs consider opaque. While almost all other allocations are subject to cluster prioritisation and defence before the CHF Advisory Board, pipelines are not. There are no criteria of what comprises a pipeline but these are generally large UN allocations for items like vaccinations or spare water pump parts. The NGO Forum Secretariat Coordinator felt that, while NGO access to pipelines was improving, there was still some way to go in a transparent utilisation and funding, with a general, implicit, unquestioned understanding

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<sup>41</sup> A breakdown of the allocation by cluster for UN, NGO, and NNGO as well as a chart of the allocations can be found in Annex 6.

<sup>42</sup> NNGOs are included in the overall total of NGO projects total as well as broken down here

<sup>43</sup> Hoppe, K (2012) *NHRPII NGO Country Director's Survey*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

<sup>44</sup> Common Humanitarian Fund Allocation Process Guidelines, 27 January 2012.

<sup>45</sup> NGO Forum (2012) *Presentation by OCHA and the Technical Secretariat to NNGOs*. South Sudan: South Sudan NGO Forum.

that pipelines must be funded by CHF. NGOs involved with the CHF felt that this should be more rigorously questioned and transparent.

**ii. Engagement with government aid coordination**

While there is some reporting of CHF funding to the government, there is no direct government involvement in the allocation. The government representatives who attend or co-chair cluster meetings are not on PRTs and are not part of the CHF Advisory Board. While this could be argued to be due to the pure humanitarian nature of the fund, it is complicated by the need to build government systems in South Sudan and the reoccurring nature of emergencies and the projects funded. The government ministry responsible for monitoring aid flows in the country, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), is not engaged in any substantive way in the CHF.

In the National Budget Plan for 2012-2013, some donors or NGOs reported USD 23 million of the total USD 98 million allocated, meaning that at least USD 75 million of CHF money is being spent in the country with no government knowledge of where or how.<sup>46</sup> While this could be attributed to CHF operating on a calendar year and the national budget on a fiscal year (July-June), only USD 41 million of the overall 2011 allocation (less than half what was allocated) was reported to the government and by either donors or NGOs rather than by UNDP or the CHF Technical Secretariat.

**iii. CHF's WASH cluster expenditure – a case study**

While a full analysis of the CHF expenditure clusters by cluster was not possible during the timeframe of this study, the WASH cluster was selected for analysis given its place as the largest cluster allocation under the CHF 2012. UNICEF (as the cluster lead and main supporting agency of the cluster leadership) and Medair (as the co-lead) facilitated this analysis, which was undertaken using CHF proposals and budget documents submitted, accepted and funded under the CHF 2012. The analysis excluded special disbursements and refugee response projects in order to get the most generally applicable outcome possible.

While the findings here are informative, they should not necessarily be extrapolated to other clusters although the recommendations can be broadly applied.

The table below breaks down the WASH cluster budget submissions in the CHF against the main required categories for overall UN projects (both with, and without the pipeline<sup>47</sup>) and for NGO projects. The UN had five projects funded by CHF and NGOs had thirteen.

**Table 4.** CHF WASH Cluster Project Submissions Budget Analysis

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<sup>46</sup>The Government of South Sudan (2012) National Budget Plan Fiscal Year 2012-2013. South Sudan: Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning.

<sup>47</sup>UN without the pipeline were analysed separately given the large amount spent by the WASH pipeline on supplies (US \$4,010,018) which is a special category.

WASH Cluster CHF Budget Submissions	Overall	UN w/out pipeline	UN w/pipeline	NGOs
Supplies / Commodities / Transport	44%	19%	44%	25%
Personnel	24%	35%	24%	39%
Staff Travel	2%	2%	2%	2%
Training / Workshops / Campaigns	2%	4%	2%	5%
Sub-Contracting	11%	17%	11%	6%
Vehicle Operating	5%	7%	5%	7%
Office Equipment and Communications	3%	5%	3%	6%
Other costs (bank, generator fuel)	3%	4%	3%	4%
Indirect	6%	6%	6%	6%
Audit	1%	1%	1%	1%

The main categories of expenditure are “supplies” and “personnel” for both UN agencies and NGOs. Personnel costs are the largest percentage spent within both UN and NGOs budgets; the average UN amount per person per month is USD 3,203 whereas for NGOs it is USD 1,445.

One NGO concern frequently expressed is that UN agencies are using CHF as a “pass-through” for funding NGO partners to do implementation and taking a portion of administrative costs to do so. While this fear has been largely allayed through a more transparent peer review process, there does seem to be some validity in this.

Between 29 and 62 percent of the 4 UN budgets analysed in the WASH cluster (excluding pipeline project which is managed differently) is passed through to contractors or NGOs. When NGOs are contracted, this often requires another pass through to a contractor who does drilling or construction work.

**Table 5.** CHF WASH Cluster Project Submissions Sub-Contracting

UN Agency	Sub-Contracting Total	Total Budget	%
UNICEF	US \$436,000	US \$750,000	58%
UNICEF	US \$280,000	US \$450,000	62%
IOM	US \$147,000	US \$350,000	42%
IOM	US \$220,550	US \$750,002	29%

One cluster coordinator felt that accountability of CHF money within the cluster could be improved:

*No one's got the time. Everyone loves that it's a pooled fund and it's easy and it works but donors don't have the time and leads and co-leads don't have the time to apply a rigorous evaluation process.*

NGOs feel that the process has become increasingly transparent and would like to see that trend continue. Rigorous analysis of budgets and audits in order to evaluate and determine value for money would be welcome.

#### 4. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The TA's Field Mission Good Practice Guide stated that the strong collective approach to CHF management resulted in a system that was, "incumbent on donors to grasp this investment opportunity – providing, of course, that the monitoring framework is able to clearly demonstrate that improved coordination results in better delivery."<sup>48</sup>

This monitoring framework does not yet exist. A policy paper setting out the monitoring and reporting framework was set out and approved in May 2012, but the framework itself has been put on hold until the eight UNVs (funded by CHF<sup>49</sup> and expected to work with each cluster in developing monitoring and reporting frameworks) are in place. As of November 2012 the UNVs were just arriving in country, meaning that the first allocation of the CHF in South Sudan will likely not be subject to rigorous analysis. This monitoring and reporting will be further complicated by the CHF bias toward co-funding projects (15 percent of the overall project amount) and providing "top up" fund for most projects.

The CHF Technical Secretariat mentioned that it is difficult to develop systems as they go along and that it would be helpful to have global guidance on best practice related to CHF Monitoring and Reporting.

Donors to the CHF seem to have taken a "watch and see" approach giving the new CHF time and space to set up their monitoring systems, with one donor saying:

*[At] the moment, we're ok with it [level of monitoring and reporting] because it's just the first year and we haven't finished that year yet but it will become more of a focus... We need to ask OCHA how it will audit as we are effectively giving the money to the UN system and need to hold it accountable for auditing it.*

## **5. Emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations**

The following general points are worth noting in terms of what worked well in relation to the CHF in South Sudan:

- A good, mutual understanding exists of how the process works and how allocations are made.
- The allocation process is standardised across all clusters.
- The current CHF allocation process pulls clusters together and enables prioritisation at the lowest level by those with the best technical understanding of the sector in context.
- There are no designated "envelopes" or "sector ceilings" meaning that the most pressing needs can be met.
- Peer review teams in every cluster mean that prioritisation takes place within the cluster in a democratic way.
- All advisory board members have clear roles and meet regularly.
- NGO involvement in the Advisory Board is viewed as critical.
- The blind review process of cluster-prioritised project submissions by the Advisory Board increases equitable high-level review.
- A short turn-around time from the issuance of the policy paper to disbursement each year is important and critical to quick responses.

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<sup>48</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2012) *Transformative Agenda: South Sudan Mission, Catalogue of Good Practices*. New York: OCHA.

<sup>49</sup> The eight UNV Monitoring and Reporting Specialists are contracted for one year and funded by CHF directly at US \$800,000.

**Table 6.** Humanitarian Financing: Challenges and Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations
The definition of humanitarian action is not clear from year to year.	Apply OECD DAC guidelines with additional clarity given each year by the Advisory Board.
Non-traditional donors are not involved.	Given the scale of humanitarian need each year, OCHA should pursue the inclusion of non-traditional donors in country.
Applicants to the CHF use the fund to pass-through funding to sub-contractors or implementing partners.	The Advisory Board with the Technical Secretariat should clarify when/how/how much money can be used to pass through to implementing partners and under what circumstances.
NNGOs are concerned about bias in the allocations, a turnaround time that is too short and that capacity building is not funded.	The Advisory Board and Technical Secretariat should consider a seat for NNGOs in the Advisory Board as well as additional support to foster NNGOs understanding of the process. The need for NNGO capacity building in grants should be considered.
Pipeline funding is automatic, not subject to a peer review process, and not well understood by all partners.	If pipelines are not subject to the same process as other projects, the Advisory Board and HC should make this clear in the policy paper each year with justification.
The South Sudan government has no knowledge of where CHF money is spent in the country unless donors or NGOs report it through the budget planning process.	The Advisory Board and/or Technical Secretariat should build reporting linkages and relationships with MoFEP in order to increase transparency of humanitarian funding and ensure that the CHF is not a parallel aid flow undermining good budgeting practice.
Donors and cluster leads do not have adequate time to rigorously evaluate individual CHF budget submissions to determine value for money.	CHF monitoring and evaluation should look closely at individual budgets within clusters to set guidelines on determining value for money.
There is no global guidance on CHF establishment and good practice.	A comprehensive observation, and evaluation of CHFs globally should be undertaken to create guidance for those establishing CHFs and to enhance current CHF operations. This should include guidance on how to conduct monitoring and reporting.

## V. PART IV – Accountability

Within the humanitarian community there is probably no word more widely used and less commonly understood than accountability. Both HR and the TA suggest it is something that humanitarian interventions strive toward. But what is it? And to whom should a humanitarian intervention be accountable?

In South Sudan, the question of defining the term “accountability” is the critical element in any conversation. Accountability to whom? To taxpayers for public money? To donors as the caretakers of that money? To the national government at whose request the humanitarian intervention takes place? To the standards and requirements of the NGO or UN agency? Or to the recipients of goods and services provided by the humanitarian intervention? The humanitarian community in South Sudan are increasingly faced with the difficult task of determining to whom they are accountable and how to demonstrate accountability. This challenge is further compounded by a lack of clarity on the accountability between and within coordination bodies.

Vague language is often applied when it comes to accountability with phrases like, “the response was better, quicker, faster, etc.” Despite the cyclical nature of most emergencies, there is little collective evidence against which a subsequent response can be compared. An OCHA representative explained this saying,

*On a regular basis we get asked, “how many of those IDPs went back?” We struggle just to register 15,000-20,000 people and when we return three months later they’ve left. The monitoring process should be part of the intervention and show how well we do our interventions. But how do you measure responding faster and better when you can’t even find the people? It’s difficult.*

This section does not aim to tackle these big questions, but it highlights the government’s engagement and capacity to demand accountability and presents some of the issues linked to accountability of the intervention towards affected populations in South Sudan. As in the previous sections, some emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations are highlighted at the end.

### 1. Accountability to government

The TA states that, “In high-risk countries, HCT and IASC organisations will work with national governments and civil society organisations to develop longer-term coordinated preparedness programmes to strengthen resilience and enhance response capacities.”<sup>50</sup>

While there is agreement that government-led development coordination is one of the prerequisites to an exit from humanitarian action led and coordinated by non-state actors, linkages to the national government, or any coherent plan to build those linkages, it is almost absent. There is no regular high-level (HCT-level) meeting with the government (MoHADM) and there is no regular mid-level engagement with the OCHA representative responsible for regular liaison. The Humanitarian Coordination Forum (HCF) is a meeting that is supposed to be led by the government and held quarterly, but might only be meeting once or twice a year. NGOs engage with the government either at a field level or to complete a bureaucratic process in Juba. As detailed earlier, part of the reason provided for this is that the government structures are just

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<sup>50</sup> IASC (2012) *Transformative Agenda: Chapeau & Compendium of Actions*. New York: IASC.

being developed and that, in the face of humanitarian needs, it is difficult to justify building government capacity.

A UNICEF emergency specialist said that,

*We provide support to the Commission [RRC] and MoHADM. People don't see that life saving and capacity building go together so we've only recently been able to introduce capacity-building into the CAP. We're facing lots of challenges. We have to convince people to put money into this and not just supplies and distribution.*

One donor confirmed that this type of prioritisation was short-term and not sustainable saying that,

*We like the [coordination] system because it works. It is not sustainable and there's no one to turn it over to but we like it because it works for us right now.*

The overarching question is how accountable can a humanitarian response be to a government that does not have the capacity to hold it accountable? The question of whether a response builds on local capacities or substitutes for them assumes that capacity is present. Whose responsibility is it to build the capacity for humanitarian response when it is almost entirely absent or starting from scratch? At what level should capacity building happen? By whom? And who should fund it?

In discussions with NGOs and humanitarian UN agencies, UNDP is normally named as the one responsible for helping ensure that the government has the capacity and ability to assume leadership of coordination. Yet, when OCHA is present, as it is a cluster system comprised of UN agencies and NGOs with tremendous capacity and knowledge on how humanitarian responses should be coordinated in South Sudan, why are they not funded to do this? OCHA would like to be more involved but says it does not have the capacity and are now operating on a zero growth basis. The NGO Forum Steering Committee said they do not want to become operational in the sense of conducting project activities beyond coordination. Specific UN agencies and NGOs have independent plans but there are no joined up approaches to building the MoHADM into an agency capable of engaging with the clusters or OCHA.

Despite a general lack of rooted involvement at a national level, there were good examples at a sub-national level. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, for example, one UN agency representative said, "We have government counterparts and we always work closely with government so when you talk about humanitarian partners that involves the government." Additionally, recent training on how to conduct rapid needs assessments included government (RRC) counterparts.

## **2. Accountability to affected populations**

Whereas the humanitarian community in South Sudan has been good at increasing buy-in and engagement amongst itself, it has been poor at any form of collective accountability to affected populations. Fundamentally, the question is: does any humanitarian financing, coordination and leadership make any difference to people affected by emergencies? The frank answer is – probably, but no one really knows. While there is qualitative evidence to suggest that the humanitarian community *feels* that performance is improving, there is little quantifiable data to suggest that the responses in South Sudan *are* more timely, more efficient or better coordinated.

Accountability to affected populations is difficult because of the unregulated environment in which humanitarian responses take place. As an OCHA consultant familiar with both the Sphere Project and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) said,

*No one is in a position to say “this is the correct answer” and no one is adjudicating it and defining what accountability is and what we should do about it.*

Even in South Sudan where there are so many NGOs – many of whom have a strong organisational commitment to monitoring, evaluation and accountability to affected populations – there is no clarity on how that can be brought in a collective manner to the reformed mechanisms. At the end of 2012, 24 of HAP’s 69 full members were present in South Sudan, including 8 of 14 members fully certified in compliance with the HAP Standard. Despite this, accountability is not commonly understood to be practical or necessary for some types of responses.

The understanding of accountability to affected populations was varied and discussions about collective accountability – through the clusters or HCT – was even more vague. Much like the humanitarian and development debate, accountability is a term that means different things to different organisations and people.

No cluster prioritises accountability to affected populations in a comprehensive way. Most cluster leaders recognise and encourage their members to be accountable to affected populations but view the interventions as joint only up to the point of delivery. It is then up to each organisation to monitor and evaluate according to its own standards or related donor requirements. The most that any cluster involves itself in monitoring and evaluating is the follow up observation to make sure that what was promised is indeed delivered. While monitoring and evaluation does not equal accountability to affected populations, it is a key first step toward it. Many cluster leads felt that accountability to affected populations was the prerogative of implementing agencies alone and not necessarily something for which clusters are accountable.

Cluster leadership identified the following elements as means for ensuring accountability to affected populations:

- Training: Conducting training at a state or county level on the cluster approach, preparedness and response;
- Post Intervention Monitoring: The NFI and Emergency Shelter Cluster released post-distribution monitoring guidelines in July 2012. Until then, no guidelines existed. Monitoring is meant to be conducted between two weeks and four months of a distribution;
- Field Monitoring Visits and Reports: Some clusters have created their own field monitoring reports which are completed at an appropriate interval following a rapid needs assessment and intervention. These reports document what was delivered, by whom, and what is still outstanding. Some of these field monitoring trips incorporate opinions of affected populations about the intervention;
- Documenting lessons learned and reviewing responses after they were conducted to ensure the proper intervention was done and proper techniques used, if there were gaps, and why.

Most of the listed activities are simply linked to monitoring and evaluation and only begin to incorporate elements of accountability to affected populations. Many cluster leaders expressed that they would like to know how to make a cluster response accountable to the local population and how to monitor and measure this. Almost all said that they do not have the time, knowledge or staff to do it themselves.

The view on accountability from the side of the local population is also complex as pointed out by a representative at the NGO Forum saying,

*Accountability is a relative term. The understanding of it is varied from one organisation to another. One thing to understand is that this country has been at war for a long time. There are certain cultures that haven't been nurtured through that and one is the culture of accountability – meaning that as your representative I'm supposed to report you. That is not there. There is a culture of "zol kabiir" – the big man. No one asks the big man where that 50,000 pounds that was given to us went. People don't feel that this is their right to hold them accountable. It's a general culture... You can't draw a line to accountability. The community is not empowered in a way that they feel it's their right to ask questions.*

There is a debate in South Sudan about the point at which humanitarian activity is truly life saving and that permission and input do not have to be sought to preserve life. Because humanitarian interventions often take place under the blanket "life-saving" approach, many perceive that a range of activities can be conducted without accountability to affected populations. As one NGO field staff worker said,

*Some of the basic services are being provided because it's what we do. It's in line with people's rights. We don't ask them if they want a tent. They'll get a roof over their head. You deliver NFIs, you set up clinics. In a mass emergency phase it's "this is what we have, go". It's a standard kit. There needs to be this and things just need to get done. After that phase, there needs to be consultation on what is appropriate and what it is people need compared to what is being received. This happens on some things more than others... But it's the emergency phase so there's some acceptance of some margin of error. It's not about beneficiary accountability; it's about delivery.*

Measuring the outcomes of efforts to improve accountability to affected populations and whether they have had any impact is as complex as measuring the outcomes and impact of coordination. Most field workers involved in humanitarian responses explained it as a "feeling" or "mood" of the response. How welcoming and involved the local people are in the response; how much dialogue and engagement happens between the providers and recipients; how "tense" is the environment in which the response is being conducted and how is the international humanitarian community and response perceived by the recipients of aid? There was also some resistance to the suggestion that accountability to affected populations should be measured, with some interviewees saying that it was like trying to describe a "good relationship" when different people have different definitions of what attributes a good relationship has.

The TA suggests that there will be improved outcomes for affected communities but it appears to be the element that has received the least focus and is the most difficult to measure.

*"This is lost as far as I'm concerned," said one NGO representative. "The TA doesn't provide any guidance on how that will be done. Except real time evaluations and that's not community focused that's agency focused."*

As part of the TA, the IASC endorsed five Commitments on Accountability to Affected People/Populations (CAAPs). These are: 1) leadership; 2) transparency; 3) feedback and complaints mechanisms; 4) participation; and 5) design, monitoring and evaluation. As part of the endorsement of the CAAPs, a pilot IASC draft Operational Framework and tools were to be produced. From the South Sudan perspective, little to no progress has been made on the Accountability to Affected Populations project.

### 3. Emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations

While accountability to affected populations is yet to permeate the debate and practice in South Sudan, the following points can be highlighted as emerging good practice:

- Good engagement with sub-national (state, payam) level government in some states where they are considered partners in humanitarian responses and implementing partners are accountable for interventions.
- Use already existing organisational processes – such as monitoring and evaluation – to build or strengthen accountability to affected populations.

**Table 7.** Accountability: Challenges and Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations
Lack of a shared understanding of what accountability means in South Sudan.	Clarify expectations around accountability in any response so implementers can operate by mutually agreed definitions.
Accountability is not commonly understood and often reduced to monitoring and reporting.	Clarify how monitoring, reporting and evaluation contribute to accountability and where that contribution ends.
Government does not have the capacity to hold the humanitarian community responsible for interventions.	Determine who/how government capacity can/should be funded and if it is the responsibility of the humanitarian community to do so.
Confusion exists as to whether only individual agencies are responsible for accountability or the cluster is accountable for the response – or both.	Differentiate expectations for clusters and implementers between accountability in project implementation as part of the response and accountability for the coordination of the response.
Guidelines to help clusters understand and implement accountability are lacking. Cluster leadership lack knowledge and/or time to develop them.	Utilise 24 HAP partners present in South Sudan to develop guidelines for clusters clarifying what is meant by accountability and how it can be strengthened and measured. This should include practical ways and means of ensuring accountability to affected populations in emergency responses.
Government and affected populations often do not understand accountability in the same way as the humanitarian community.	Information sharing related to the development of cluster guidelines should be shared and explained with both government and at field level.
Expectation around the promised Accountability to Affected Populations guidance is high but has not been forthcoming.	Accountability to Affected Populations Operational Framework and toolkits should be produced and disseminated.

## VI. PART V – Humanitarian Leadership

The TA states that, “From the outset of a large-scale humanitarian emergency, humanitarian leadership of the right level and experience will be in place to lead the response.”<sup>51</sup> But what does this leadership look like, how has it looked in South Sudan and what has worked? This section addresses these questions in brief.

### 1. HC Leadership

Much like with cluster leadership, the perceived success or failure of the HC tends to ride on their personality and priorities, as these are believed to focus and drive the agenda. An NGO CD said,

*If you go looking for something in South Sudan, you’re certain to find it. If you want a humanitarian crisis, you can find it. If you want a development context, it’s there. Good leadership – either in UN or NGOs or donors – is being able to represent the complexity without underplaying or overplaying any one aspect. There’s always the temptation to follow the money or to career-build based on your own agencies interests but good ones don’t do that.*

While the previous HC was very focused on humanitarian emergencies, the current one is more focused on development cooperation, state building, and further integration within the UN Mission. Did the context change drastically in the past 12 months? Not really, yet the personality and priorities of the HC has a large impact on the direction the humanitarian community takes.

The interviewees for this study, identified the following as attributes of a good HC:

- Ability to make decisions and live with them;
- Prepared to take off their “parent” agency hat and represent the humanitarian community in its entirety with no expected repercussions for doing so on their return to the parent agency;
- Prioritising NGO presence and voice in forums without having to be requested to do so;
- Able to make mistakes and take ownership and responsibility for them;
- Proactive in resolving problems.

A huge amount rests on the ability of this single person. Perhaps this is unfair given that the strength of the humanitarian response is equally reliant on the strength of a handful of key players who sit on the HCT. How coordinated and proactive is the donor community? How strong is the NGO community and is it able to have “unity in diversity” with a relatively strong voice when it needs to? How effective is the leadership in key UN agencies in supporting the cluster system? Without strong leaders in these positions even the strongest and most capable HC would struggle to ensure that the response is coordinated and effective.

While the skills, strengths and weaknesses of the HC and the support offered to the person in that role are hugely important in shaping the response, the strengthening of the entire humanitarian community’s leadership is equally important and should not be discounted. Arguably, strong leadership by the entire humanitarian community in South Sudan has helped drive the perceived success of the HC. No one interviewed in the course of this study could remember a time when the HC’s objectives and decisions deviated from the objectives or opinion of those on the HCT. An HC acting against the advice or consensus of the HCT would probably find the implementation

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<sup>51</sup> IASC (2012) *Chapeau and Compendium of Actions*.

of isolated decisions difficult and experience significant push back from other HCT representatives.

## 2. Integrated missions and “multiple-hatting”

South Sudan has an integrated mission which results in multiple-hatting<sup>52</sup> for the HC. In South Sudan’s case, the HC is “quadruple-hatted” serving as the Humanitarian Coordinator, Resident Coordinator (RC), UNDP Resident Representative (Res Rep) and the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General (DSRSG).

Requiring one person to play so many roles is difficult and “the cases of these exemplary RCs/HCs are, however, few and far between and the ability to juggle their different roles always seems to come down to unique skills and personalities”.<sup>53</sup> This feeling was reflected by those interviewed during this study, with one HCT member saying,

*Having a triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC is like expecting one person to be Deputy USG of DPKO, UNDP Administrator, and ERC all at the same time. No-one thinks that could work in New York – so why do they think it could work at country-level?*

While some felt that quadruple-hatting was inappropriate because there was simply too much for one person to do well, others felt it was unsuitable because humanitarian principles were the first to lose out when the HC has to choose what “hat” to put on. For example, one incident was cited regularly in interviews where the previous triple-hatted HC was the acting Officer in Charge (OIC) of the UN mission in the absence of the DSRSG. As such, she made a decision to use UN Mission military assets to move military personnel who could have been perceived to be belligerents in the conflict at the same time as a humanitarian assessment was conducted. Many in the humanitarian community felt this was a dangerous blurring of the lines that was directly attributable to the multiple hatting.

When asked if this multiple hatting worked in South Sudan, there was a strong consensus that it was generally a bad idea but also resignation that it would be something impossible to change. One donor representative said,

*It never works. It never works anywhere. That’s where it is and that won’t change. It’s a hell of a job just understanding all the complexities with the different mandates. We can’t fix it from here though.*

The location of the HC’s office is a ready analogy of the choice that the HC must make in South Sudan. Historically, the HC/RC’s office has been located in the middle of Juba in the OCHA compound, close to, and easily visited by UN agencies and partners (almost all of whose offices are located in a three mile proximity of the OCHA compound). In 2011, with the selection of a permanent DSRSG and the additional “hat” the RC/HC/ResRep/DSRSG’s office was moved to the new UNMISS compound located a half an hour’s drive from Juba town, forcing either partners to make the trip over bad roads to see the HC or the HC to travel from their office to conduct meetings – such as the HCT – in the OCHA compound.

Two suggested ways to prevent this blurring were: 1) to have the HC state plainly in every meeting – and especially with the government – what hat they were wearing when they were speaking in

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<sup>52</sup> There are 11 countries where HCs wear multiple ‘hats’: Afghanistan, CAR, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, DRC, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Liberia and South Sudan.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas, M. (2007) Neglect of the Third Pillar. Oxford, UK: Forced Migration Review.

that meeting, and 2) to appoint a Deputy HC who could act with delegated responsibility only on HC matters, especially if the HC was acting as the DSRSG.

The current HC, on the other hand, felt that multiple-hatting was fine and that, perhaps, too much was made of the multiple-hatting. He suggested that other officials are involved in a range of activities and that the workload should be manageable if the right people are supporting the role.

### 3. Emerging good practice, challenges and recommendations

The following general points are worth noting in terms of what worked well in relation to leadership in South Sudan:

- Recognition that the HC’s personality and perspectives are a large part of what drives the humanitarian agenda in a response.
- Good leadership from all humanitarian leadership (UN agencies, donors, NGOs) is equally important to HC leadership.

**Table 8.** Humanitarian Leadership: Challenges and Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations
Humanitarian leadership tends to focus on the strength of the HC alone when other HC members’ leadership is also critical.	Investigate ways to provide leadership support to other members of the HCT in addition to the HC.
Multiple-hatting can result in confusion over which ‘hat’ the person has on when speaking or conducting meetings.	The HC should clarify which hat he/she is wearing when engaging on a subject – especially with the government.
Multiple-hatting can be perceived as resulting in humanitarian principles being overridden by other ‘hats’ priorities.	Multiple-hatting at senior levels in the UN and that include the HC role should be re-evaluated and reconsidered.

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1. Interview structure**

Typically, interviews were between 60 and 120 minutes. Interviews were organized several days in advance by either phone or email and took place either at the office of the interviewees, at the NGO Forum Secretariat Offices, or at local restaurants. All interviews were conducted in private either in private offices, conference rooms, or in areas segregated from others.

Interviews included:

- NHRPII Introduction and Purpose of the Report;
- Review of terms under which the interview was being conducted and permission to use the information;
- Variety of questions (listed in Annex 2) posed to the interviewee based on their engagement with HR and TA;
- Gathering any other information or documents the interviewee wished to share;
- Closing.

## Annex 2. General interview questions

1. How long have you been working in South Sudan?
2. Is the cluster, in your opinion, working?
3. If so, why?
4. Are there historical reasons for this and if so, what?
5. Are there personality reasons and if so, what is the skill set that enables good functioning of a cluster lead/co-lead?
6. How is the government involved in the cluster? At what level? How does that work?
7. Is there any M&E or M&reporting in the cluster - how does that work?
8. Does the cluster have a ToR - or how do the cluster leads know what they're doing?
9. Is there any form of election of cluster leads or if they're doing a bad job is there a feedback mechanism?
10. Does the cluster evaluate itself or how is it directed? How does it set goals/move in any direction?
11. What documents exist at the cluster level/created by the cluster? Is there a cluster website?
12. How does the relationship look between the cluster lead/co-lead?
13. Who represents the cluster at the HCT? How do issues get fed up the chain?
14. How does the state/sub-national cluster coordination look?
15. Where does the NGO Forum fit in with the clusters/HCT?
16. Will clusters ever go away? Is there an exit strategy?
17. How do you define the context in South Sudan? (e.g., humanitarian, development, etc.)
18. How does the CHF work?
19. How does your cluster feel about the CHF?
20. Do you think the CHF provides value for money?
21. What strategic documents/processes is the cluster involved in?
22. How does your cluster monitor or evaluate projects in the CHF?
23. How well does the quadruple-hatting of the HC/RC/Res Rep/DSRSG work?
24. Have you ever heard of the Transformative Agenda? Does it impact anything you do?
25. How are NNGOs involved in the cluster - and if they are how has it worked/been successful/failed?

### **Annex 3. Country Directors' survey questionnaire**

#### Question 1:

Which of the following best describes your NGO's area(s) of work? [respondents choose as many as applicable]

- Humanitarian
- Development
- Early Recovery
- Basic Services
- Stabilisation
- Relief
- Other

#### Question 2:

What cluster meetings does your NGO attend in Juba? [respondents choose as many as applicable]

- Food Security
- Education
- Health
- Logistics
- Nutrition
- Protection
- Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster
- Mine Action Sub-Cluster
- Land Coordination Sub-Cluster
- Conflict Reduction & Peacebuilding
- Water & Sanitation
- Emergency Telecoms
- NFIs/Emergency Shelter
- Multi-Sector Emergency Returns
- Multi-Sector Refugee Returns

#### Question 3:

What cluster meetings does your NGO attend outside of Juba? [respondents choose as many as applicable]

- Food Security
- Education
- Health
- Logistics
- Nutrition
- Protection
- Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster
- Mine Action Sub-Cluster
- Land Coordination Sub-Cluster
- Conflict Reduction & Peacebuilding
- Water & Sanitation
- Emergency Telecoms
- NFIs/Emergency Shelter
- Multi-Sector Emergency Returns
- Multi-Sector Refugee Returns

Question 4:

If funding were provided for an NGO cluster co-lead position in Juba would your NGO consider hosting the position?

- Y/N

Question 5:

To what extent do you agree with this statement: Coordination through the clusters improves my organisation's ability to respond and/or programme.

- Strongly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Neutral
- Moderately Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 6:

If applicable, please select the below meetings your organization attends in Juba in addition to the aforementioned cluster meetings.

- Maban Refugee Coordination Attendance
- Yida Refugee Coordination Attendance
- Both
- None

Question 7:

If you attend cluster meetings and had to pick the most important characteristic/skill for a cluster lead – whether UN lead or NGO co-coordinator - what would it be?

- Experience in South Sudan
- Experience with clusters
- I don't know
- Other
- Previous experience in coordination
- Previous NGO experience
- Technical experience in the sector

Question 8:

How many hours per week, on average, do your staff in Juba spend attending cluster or HCT coordination meetings?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 5-7 hours
- More than 7 hours

Question 9:

How important is the NGO Forum in the facilitation of the work of the clusters?

- Very important
- Important
- Moderately important
- Of little importance

Question 10:

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The NGO Forum facilitates your NGO's work

- Strongly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Neutral
- Moderately Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 11:

Do you know who the NGO representatives to the HCT are and how to contact them?

Y/N

Question 12:

How well do you feel the NGO representatives represent NGOs interests on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)?

- Excellent
- Above average
- Average
- Below average
- Poor

Question 13:

Do you think that the work/meetings of the HCT have any effect on your NGOs operations?

Y/N

Question 14:

Does your organisation receive money through the Common Humanitarian Fund?

Y/N

Question 15:

Do you feel the Common Humanitarian Fund is a transparent and equitable funding pool?

Y / N / I don't know

Question 15:

Do you feel the Common Humanitarian Fund is a transparent and equitable funding pool?

Y/N

## Annex 4. Country Directors' survey results

### Question 1: Which of the following best describes your NGO's area(s) of work?

6 didn't answer questions	72	
Humanitarian	49	68.06%
Development	55	76.39%
Early Recovery	27	37.50%
Basic Services	33	45.83%
Stabilisation	7	9.72%
Relief	23	31.94%
Other	13	18.06%
Humanitarian & Development	36	50.00%
Relief & Development	18	25.00%

### Question 2: What cluster meetings does your NGO attend in Juba?

8 didn't answer question	70	
Food Security	32	45.71%
Education	20	28.57%
Health	31	44.29%
Logistics	17	24.29%
Nutrition	11	15.71%
Protection	11	15.71%
Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster	12	17.14%
Mine Action Sub-Cluster	3	4.29%
Land Coordination Sub-Cluster	2	2.86%
Conflict Reduction and Peacebuilding	18	25.71%
Child Protection Sub-Cluster	10	14.29%
Water & Sanitation	27	38.57%
Emergency Telecoms	5	7.14%
NFIs/Emergency Shelter	13	18.57%
Multi-Sector Emergency Returns	5	7.14%
Multi-Sector Refugee Response	12	17.14%
Other		
	Security	

### Question 3: What cluster meetings does your NGO attend outside of Juba?

Food Security	31	44%
Education	20	29%
Health	24	34%
Logistics	8	11%
Nutrition	8	11%
Protection	8	11%
Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster	8	11%
Mine Action Sub-Cluster	0	0%
Land Coordination Sub-Cluster	0	0%
Conflict Reduction and Peacebuilding	7	10%

Child Protection Sub-Cluster	6	9%
Water & Sanitation	27	39%
Emergency Telecoms	0	0%
NFIs/Emergency Shelter	12	17%
Multi-Sector Emergency Returns	4	6%
Multi-Sector Refugee Response	11	16%
Other		

**Question 4: If funding were provided for an NGO cluster co-lead position in Juba would your NGO consider hosting the position?**

6 didn't answer question	72	
Yes	39	54.17%
No	33	45.83%

**Question 5: To what extent do you agree with this statement: Coordination through the clusters improves my organisation's ability to respond and/or programme.**

8 didn't answer question	70	
Strongly Agree	22	31.43%
Moderately Agree	38	54.29%
Neutral	9	12.86%
Moderately Disagree	1	1.43%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

**Question 6: If applicable, please select the below meetings your organization attends in Juba in addition to the aforementioned cluster meetings.**

3 didn't answer question	75	
Maban Refugee Coord Attendance	14	18.67%
Yida Refugee Coord Attendance	8	10.67%
Both	6	8.00%
Of the 6 that attend both		All also attend a variety of cluster meetings on topics covered in Maban/Yida meetings
None	56	74.67%

**Question 7: If you attend cluster meetings and had to pick the most important characteristic/skill for a cluster lead – whether UN lead or NGO co-coordinator - what would it be?**

6 didn't answer question	72	
Experience in South Sudan	14	19.44%
Experience with clusters	6	8.33%
I don't know	1	1.39%

Other	9	12.50%
Previous experience in coordination	24	33.33%
Previous NGO experience	3	4.17%
Technical experience in the sector	15	20.83%

**Question 8: How many hours per week, on average, do your staff in Juba spend attending cluster or HCT coordination meetings?**

6 didn't answer question	72	
less than 1 hour	15	20.83%
1-3 hours	28	38.89%
3-5 hours	18	25.00%
5-7 hours	7	9.72%
more than 7 hours	0	0.00%

**Question 9: How important is the NGO Forum in the facilitation of the work of the clusters?**

7 didn't answer question	71	
Very Important	23	32.39%
Important	34	47.89%
Moderately Important	11	15.49%
	0	0.00%
Of Little Importance	3	4.23%

**Question 10: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The NGO Forum facilitates your NGO's work**

6 didn't answer question	72	
Strongly Agree	30	41.67%
Moderately Agree	31	43.06%
Neutral	9	12.50%
Moderately Disagree	2	2.78%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

**Question 11: Do you know who the NGO representatives to the HCT are and how to contact them?**

7 didn't answer question	71	
Yes	43	60.56%
No	28	39.44%

**Question 12: How well do you feel the NGO representatives represent NGOs interests on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)?**

13 didn't answer question	65	
Excellent	8	12.31%
Above Average	29	44.62%
Average	24	36.92%
Below Average	4	6.15%
Poor	0	0.00%

**Question 13: Do you think that the work/meetings of the HCT have any effect on your NGOs operations?**

9 didn't answer question	69	
Yes	50	72.46%
No	19	27.54%

Question 14: Does your organisation receive money through the Common Humanitarian Fund?

7 didn't answer question	71	
Yes	26	36.62%
No	46	66.67%

Question 15: Do you feel the Common Humanitarian Fund is a transparent and equitable funding pool?

7 didn't answer question	71	
Yes	43	60.56%
No	22	31.88%
I don't know	6	8.45%

## Annex 5. Cluster structure – November 2012

Cluster	Coordinator	Co-coordinators	Global Cluster?
Education	UNICEF	Save	Yes
Food Security & Livelihoods	FAO & WFP	VSF-B	Yes <sup>54</sup>
Health	WHO	Merlin	Yes
Logistics	WFP	None	Yes
Emergency Telecommunications	WFP	None	Yes
NFI, Emergency Shelter	IOM	World Vision	Yes <sup>55</sup>
Nutrition	UNICEF	ACF	Yes
Protection	UNHCR	NRC	Yes
Child Protection Sub-Cluster	UNICEF	Save the Children	Yes
GBV Sub-Cluster	UNFPA	ARC	Yes
Mine Action Sub-Cluster	UNMAS	Handicap International	Yes
Land Coordination Forum Sub-Cluster	UN HABITAT	NRC	Yes <sup>56</sup>
Conflict Reduction Sub-Cluster <sup>57</sup>	DRC	None	No
Water and Sanitation	UNICEF	Medair	Yes
Multi-Sector Emergency Returns	IOM	UNHCR	No
Multi-Sector Refugees	UNHCR	None	No

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<sup>54</sup> There is no 'livelihoods' at the global level.

<sup>55</sup> There is no 'Non-Food Items (NFI) at the global level.

<sup>56</sup> The global cluster is called, 'Housing, Land and Property Rights'

<sup>57</sup> There is debate at the national level (Juba) as to whether this is a cluster. It is generally accepted as a cluster and included in the CAP.

## Annex 6. CHF allocation by cluster for UN, NGO and NNGOs

Cluster	Total Amount (USD)	Total Projects in Cluster	Total UN Projects	Total NGO Projects	Total NNGO Projects*
Coordination & Common Services	1,589,325	2	2	0	0
Education	7,823,951	13	3	10	5
Emergency Telecommunications	210,248	1	1	0	0
Food Security & Livelihoods	9,542,268	23	3	20	3
Health	12,506,057	38	10	28	7
Logistics	15,257,537	7	7	0	0
Mine Action	2,110,147	6	1	5	0
Multi-Cluster	9,563,188	9	5	4	0
NFIs & Emergency Shelter	7,015,449	9	3	6	1
Nutrition	11,471,576	35	3	32	5
Protection	5,460,580	15	3	12	5
WASH	16,404,305	21	5	16	4

The following chart shows the cluster allocations:

