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Tsunami Inter-Agency Assessment Mission: Hafun to Gara'ad, Northeast Somali Coastline 28 Jan - 8 Feb 2005

Executive Summary

Origin & Mandate of the Task Force

In response to the Tsunami that struck the Somali coastline on 26 December 2004, a Humanitarian Response Group meeting, chaired by the acting Humanitarian Coordinator, was convened in Nairobi on 28th December 2004. As a result, the HRG decided to develop a Tsunami Task Force to facilitate on daily basis, coordination of humanitarian response with interagency initiatives in Garowe and Bossaso (Puntland) in addition to sharing information with OCHA HQ for inclusion in the daily regional Tsunami situation reports issued by Geneva. Following the drafting of the Somalia section of the Regional Tsunami Flash Appeal, the activities of the Task Force came to an end.

The Humanitarian Response Group (HRG) subsequently assumed these responsibilities. In a meeting on January 11th, the HRG requested OCHA and FSAU/FAO to form an inter-agency Tsunami Assessment Task Force, with the mandate to conduct a humanitarian assessment to:

- (1) identify any gaps in the present humanitarian response, and*
- (2) identify mid/long-term recovery needs of affected communities.*

The assessment focused on the analysis of the impact and livelihood recovery and not on chronic poverty, per se. The Tsunami Assessment Task Force comprised of technical and managerial representatives for relevant sectors (water/sanitation, food/livelihood security, fisheries, health, shelter/infrastructure, education, and governance) and agencies (UN, NGO, donors, and the Somali Transitional Federal Government). In total, 18 people served on the Task Force, and 27 people participated in the field work. In total around 20 agencies served on the Task Force. See Annex 1 for the acknowledgement and the list of Task Force and field mission participants. Refer to Annex 2 for the assessment terms of reference. The success of the mission was due to the close collaboration of these agencies and individuals.

Methodology

The technical component of the Task Force developed sector specific guidelines and tools to be used in the field assessment. Based on existing reports of where the Tsunami had the most impact, as well as limitations in access due to security concerns, the field mission encompassed the areas between Hafun and Gara'ad¹. The field work was conducted from 28th January to 8th February 2005 with two days of training in Garowe prior to the field work and two days of field analysis after the field work. Three

teams covered the areas from Hafun to Bender Beyla, Bender Beyla to Eyl and Eyl to Gara'ad. In total 25 villages were visited. Each team had sector specialists covering food, nutrition and livelihood security, fisheries, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter and infrastructure and education. Governance, gender, HIV/AIDS, protection and environment were identified as cross-cutting issues to be considered by all sectors. After the analysis process, including the final Nairobi-based analysis, findings per sector were presented to the Task Force for endorsement and general consensus.

General Findings

Based on the assessment team findings and triangulation with other sources, the total coastal population in the area between Hafun and Gara'ad is estimated to be 44,000 people, roughly 7,300 households.

The reported deaths and missing persons totalled 289, although this was not certified by the assessment mission.

Estimates of the overall impact of the Tsunami in terms of infrastructure damage, number of people affected, and overall severity are generally less than previously reported by earlier rapid assessments.

The areas most affected by the Tsunami are Hafun, Bender Beyla, Dharin Raqas and Kulub (11,520 people in total), where substantial damage to housing and infrastructure occurred (of these towns, Hafun stands out as being the most devastated, with the majority of infrastructure destroyed by the Tsunami).

Existing emergency responses in the form of health, water, shelter, non food items and food have largely met immediate humanitarian needs.²

5% of the total population (around 2,300 people) were in a state of humanitarian emergency and 40% of the total population (17,000 people) were facing livelihood crisis. This is based on the Food and Livelihood Security Classification developed for the Tsunami context.

In addition to strategic inputs for livelihood recovery (see specific sectors), an estimated 50% of the assessed population (i.e. 22,000 people), based on the wealth group shift, will require sustained resource transfer in the form of food and/or cash assistance until the next fishing season in October 2005. This is necessary in order for households to access basic food needs and alleviate severe financial pressures due to reduced fishing incomes. This is based on the contingency that fishermen have access to fishing equipment for this fishing season (Oct 05).

Contextually, the northeast region as a whole has been affected by six different shocks over the past year (drought, floods, freezing temperatures, continued livestock ban, civil tension, and the Tsunami), straining social support mechanisms and dampening the regional economy.

Sector Findings

Food, nutrition & livelihood security

The resident communities occupying the coastal areas stretching from Hafun peninsula to Gara'ad mainly depend on commercial fishing of lobster, shark and kingfish for export. There is limited livestock husbandry and minimal small-scale shallow-well and spring-fed farming of vegetables and rain-fed cowpeas, mostly in Eyl.

Except for the main towns, the settlements primarily subsist on fishing for their livelihood.

Pre Tsunami, all households purchased 90-95% of their food needs using income from fishing (75% of income sources from fishing related income generation).

The effect of the Tsunami was on the households' income rather than on food production, thus the resultant food insecurity is due to lack of food access rather than lack of food availability. Traders have been and will continue to be able to provide necessary food stuffs, assuming local populations have adequate purchasing power.

Coping strategies employed by the assessed communities after the Tsunami vary per population category and wealth group. Residents employed activities to maintain food security after the Tsunami 'shock', whilst seasonal migrants and to some extent recent migrants (20 - 30% of the total population), migrated inland to their original homes or relatives.

Residents' coping strategies include reducing expenditure on food (buying less food/less meals and less expensive food); dependence on gifts and remittance within the community and externally; seeking credit in the form of food, cash and/or fishing equipment; sell assets; and migrating in search of employment opportunities to urban centres or villages less affected by the Tsunami.

Due to the strained overall economy of these communities and the abrupt end to the fishing season, it is necessary to promote livelihood recovery and support the fishing livelihood before the next season starts (October 2005).

The Tsunami caused a shift in wealth groups. A proportion of the middle became poor as a result of the impact. The poor wealth group made up 30 - 40% of the population before Tsunami. This became 45 - 55% after the Tsunami. Therefore, if we look at supporting the poor households until the next fishing season, approximately 50% of the population (22,000 people) are in need of sustained resource transfer for the next 8 months (on the contingency that resource transfer in regards to fishing equipment is in place).

In these most affected areas (Hafun, Bender Beyla, Kulub and Dharin Raqas) roughly 20% of the population (2,300 people) are facing a Humanitarian Emergency and 30 - 40% are facing a livelihood crisis (around 4,000 people). In all other localities, no one was in a state of humanitarian emergency and roughly 40% of the total population are facing a Livelihood Crisis (12,888). Therefore, of the total assessed population (from Hafun to Gara'ad), 2,300 people are in a state of humanitarian emergency and 17,000 people are facing a livelihood crisis.

Fisheries

Somalia has some of the richest fishing grounds of Africa in terms of abundance and diversity of marine life³. In the 1980s the government operated a fishing fleet that employed over 30,000 people and contributed about 2% to GNP⁴. During the civil war

The evolution of the fishing industry has recently been revitalised due to the realized value and strained economy elsewhere.

The fishing industry is by far the most important in terms of household income for the coastal population. This sector has been the worst hit by the Tsunami, not only in terms of equipment losses, but also by the fact that the disaster occurred in the middle of the peak fishing season.

Fishermen are either individual fishermen operating alone in the shallow waters with nets and lobster pots, or skilled fishermen who are employed on the boats or boat owners.

An estimated number of just over 600 boats were lost or destroyed by the Tsunami. An estimated 75% of the fishing gear has been lost or damaged beyond repair.

Due to poor resource management, the fishing industry is following an unsustainable trajectory. Additionally, the exploitation of Somalia's rich coastal fisheries by foreign trawlers means that Somalia is left with few benefits from this important resource.

Considering the key role of fisheries in the livelihood of the coastal communities, a quick response to address the identified needs is essential. However, it is not realistic to expect that such assistance will be in place in time to salvage the present fishing season. Every effort should be made though to ensure that the benefits of proposed interventions (support fishermen to replace fishing equipment) are in place prior to the start of the new season in October 2005.

Proposed interventions should take into account existing actors in the area, including private traders, when designing project modalities.

In order to optimize the output of the fishing sector, the whole industry requires an overhaul. It is estimated that at present only 30% of the marine resources available are actually utilized.

A professionalisation of the industry is required, including the establishment of pertinent institutions in centrally located areas (Hafun, Bender Beyla, Eyl and Gara'ad), to assume the responsibility for the management and distribution of the inputs.

The formation of fishermen associations (not co-operations) - with voluntary membership - in the four major centres is recommended, serving all satellite villages in their catchment area.

Health

Even prior to the Tsunami there were very minimal health facilities, expertise and medicine supplies available.

The Tsunami has not posed any major additional health risks so far. However, in the current context and if water, health and nutritional concerns are not addressed, there is

Immediately following the Tsunami, there was an increase in diarrhoea occurrences throughout the affected area. In some places where medication was available and applied, the situation quickly went back to normal. However, in places where no ORS (oral rehydration salts) and appropriate health education was (and is) available, this remains a problem.

The response should ensure that adequate health services and programs are in place to address the health needs of the affected areas, including the prevention and response plans and resources to address any potential disease outbreaks in a timely and effective manner.

Water and sanitation

The water sources throughout the area, with the exception of Eyl where there is a functioning drinking water system, have been badly affected. Even in places where water quality was already questionable pre-Tsunami, the situation has now further deteriorated.

Poor water quality has a distinct negative effect on the livelihood of people: unclean water affects the health status of people; poor health affects their productivity; low productivity in turn has an adverse effect on their livelihood and as a result increases their vulnerability.

Water trucking should continue in the most affected areas, until alternatives are put in place.

At the same time, agencies should prioritise the rehabilitation and/or new construction of more sustainable and reliable new water sources. This by far being the priority area of intervention, agencies with already existing resources should strongly consider addressing the water needs in the Tsunami affected coastal areas.

Improving the understanding of hygienic procedures, including garbage disposal and putting these into practice, is strongly encouraged by capacity building as a means of addressing the high level of hygiene-related health problems noticed.

Shelter and infrastructure

With the exception of Hafun, Bender Beyla, Dharin Raqas and Kulub, there was no major long term impact on the housing and building infrastructure. This is largely due to the fact that most people normally live in huts made from local materials. Those huts that were damaged or destroyed were quickly replaced and rebuilt, either with external assistance or by the communities.

The main findings of the mission indicate that about 2,000 concrete structures were destroyed and/or damaged of which 1400 were houses.

Road infrastructure, except for the access road to Hafun immediately after the Tsunami, was not affected. However, the existing road network is poor. This disaster has highlighted again the critical importance of road construction and improvement to ensure quick access during a disaster response as well as market access for inputs and export of the areas main source of income, the fishing industry. There is a high potential here for improvement through resource transfer activities, improving the infrastructure while creating temporary employment for those who lost their income as a result of the

While recognizing that Hafun, Bender Beyla, Darin Ragas and Kulub have been badly affected in terms of damage to permanent infrastructure, the need for immediate reconstruction is highest and most critical in Hafun due to its location, exposing it to strong winds.

Education

The education infrastructure along the coast was already very weak prior to the Tsunami. With the exception of Hafun, Bender Beyla, Eyl, Kulub, Gara'ad and Dhinowda, no formal schools existed.

Education is considered as a critical sector as each child has the right to go to school.

In villages where people reported that their children were going to school elsewhere, they indicated that they would prefer to educate children within the villages if the facilities were available.

Availability of teachers and sustainability of salary payments is a major challenge.

Future curriculum development should better reflect a practical application to the daily lives of the youths.

The improvements in this sector requires comprehensive discussions between donors, implementing agencies and the authorities to identify sustainable ways of rehabilitating the damaged infrastructure and expand the education services to the more inaccessible areas. In places where rehabilitation work has to be implemented, an increase of capacity should be planned.

Special consideration should be given to the creation of an enabling environment to the increase in girls' enrolment.

The fact that children are engaged in the fishing industry should be taken into consideration in the type of school system to be adopted. Flexibility in school hours, concentrating on the slack fishing season and daily hours that youth are not engaged would benefit the enrolment.

Governance

The recovery plans should be integrated across sector and geographically to ensure gaps and overlaps in the response are minimized. A workshop engaging the Task Force, funding agencies, and implementing agencies should be introduced into the process to provide an opportunity for multi-sectoral integration within the aid community

prior to mobilizing the region. Once the implementation actors and resources have been identified and committed, a second workshop should be convened in the Puntland region (ideally in Garowe, away from the immediate impact areas).

While time is already against effective immediate response, it is important not to dismiss the recommendations above simply because of the lack of time. While the recommendations will prolong the actual distribution of recovery resources, the negative impact of dismissing the volatile threat inherent in the distribution of resources, or dismissing the importance of engaging both local mechanisms and regional governance could lead to far greater damage to the region than the Tsunami.

This process could serve as a foundation for additional development work in the region. Actors can be identified, roles defined and structures established to allow for stronger mechanisms to be called upon in the future both for integrated disaster response and for development purposes. In other words, instead of this being a “one-off” approach, this process can lay the foundation for future development efforts throughout the region.

Conclusion

The Tsunami has attracted significant amount of international attention with generous amounts of funding available. This report is intended to give direction to the appropriate use of resources to meet the humanitarian and livelihood recovery need of the assessed population between Hafun and Gara'ad.

In the wider context of serious food insecurity in Somalia (affecting over 1 million people), it is important that the Tsunami response be proportionate to and take into consideration other needs in Somalia for both ethical and security reasons. This factor was made very apparent when one of the assessment teams met a nomadic pastoralist on the road who complained of the suffering he had gone through during the last 4 years of drought in the areas. He stated that “the only thing they get to eat is the dust left behind by your trucks”. As highlighted in the 2005 CAP, livelihood insecurity and overall vulnerability persist in numerous regions of Somalia in addition to the Tsunami-affected areas of the Indian Ocean coast. In its post-Deyr assessment released in early 2005, FSAU highlighted areas of continuing need resulting from the compounded impact of environmental natural shocks, civil insecurity, and ongoing barriers to trade throughout the country. International actors should take care not to allow the emerging needs from the Tsunami to eclipse these continuing areas of need, some of which carry the status of Humanitarian Emergency and Livelihood Crisis.

International attention on the affected areas of the Tsunami does present an opportunity for investment in the under developed marine resources along the Somali coastline. The humanitarian and rehabilitation response should aim for long-term, durable solutions to the disasters, to break the cycle of vulnerability. At the same time, attention should be given to the establishment of disaster preparedness systems at regional and local levels that will enable the authorities and local communities to better prepare and respond to any future natural calamities.

The Tsunami disaster, while having a disastrous impact on the livelihood of the coastal communities, also presents an opportunity for coordination and cooperation between the various players, first and foremost the Puntland authorities, the affected communities, the donor community and implementing agencies.

In particular, it is critical for the Puntland authorities in Garowe and the Humanitarian Response Group (HRG) in Nairobi to coordinate the efforts of the various implementing agencies, taking into account existing operations and plans, in order to avoid overlap in assistance as well as to ensure that all affected areas are receiving assistance proportionate to the needs and funds available. In this regard, consideration should be given to strengthening the existing co-ordination mechanisms in Garowe.⁵

Any response to the Tsunami disaster should take into consideration the fragile environmental situation to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainable interventions are implemented and put in place.

Footnotes:

¹ Please refer to the TFG assessment report (Jan 14th 05) for details of the impact of the Tsunami south of Gara'ad

² For more details please refer to the attached response matrix.

³ UNDP Human Development Report 2001

⁴ IUCN 1997

⁵ This report was shared with the Puntland Authorities and Task Force on 9 March 2005. Please find in annex written comments from the Puntland Authorities.