

Meeting Minutes
Agriculture Cluster - Meeting 21

Thursday, 9 October 2008, 13 hrs, Chatrium Hotel, Yangon

Agenda

1. Matters arising from the previous meeting
2. Presentation on Livelihood Programming by the Red Cross Movement (International Federation of the Red Cross, IFRC)
3. PONREPP
4. Advocacy Efforts for Agriculture sector Projects
5. Upcoming Workshop on Livestock interventions and Animal Health (Thanawat Tiensin, FAO ERCU Livestock Expert)
6. Soil Salinity
7. Update from sub-cluster TWG Fisheries and Aquaculture (Dirk Lamberts, FAO ERCU Fisheries Expert)
8. Update on Agriculture cluster field coordination
 - Bogale: Focal Point GAA
 - Dedaye: Focal Point CESVI
 - Labutta: Focal Point UNDP
 - Khungyangon: Focal Point IDE
 - Field level technical support priorities
9. AOB
 - announcements
 - agency updates
 - other

Minutes

The meeting was opened by Rene Suter, Agriculture Cluster Lead.

1. Matters arising from previous meeting.

No comments were received on the minutes of the previous meeting

2. IFRC Presentation

In his presentation IFRC Recovery Coordinator Arjan Blanke outlined the main facets of the IFRC Programme. Through the Relief phase 260,000 families have been assisted; this phase which will last till November. This will be followed by a two-year Recovery Phase involving the 13 townships (11 for shelter and livelihood) covering 100,000 households and is estimated to cost US \$ 40 million. The selection of Village Tracts is ongoing and is based on 4 criteria viz. damage, vulnerability, NGO presence and Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) presence. This assessment will be completed by November and IFRC is pleased to share it with anyone interested.

The IFRC Livelihood Programme (estimated to have a volume of some US\$ 7 million) will consist of 4 sub-programmes as follows:

- Cash for work
- Asset Recovery
- Diversification/new employment, and
- Community infrastructure and environmental restoration

Under asset recovery programming conditional household grants will be given to beneficiaries. These grants are subject to a ceiling of \$ 200 and are usually given in two installments accompanied by a training component.

FAO stated that it may be in a position to contribute to the IFRC programme through the provision of technical support/advice on boat building and livestock interventions / animal health.

3. PONREPP

The Cluster Lead provided an update on the PONREPP. Immediate next steps ahead are the formation of the two Inter Cluster PONREPP Technical Working Groups on Livelihoods and Disaster Risk Reduction. The Agriculture Cluster established a list of agencies and individuals that wish to participate in these working groups. Recovery plans of the Line Ministries concerned with the Agriculture Sector are being translated. English versions of the plans for Fisheries and Livestock will be ready within the next few days. All available documents will be distributed to the participants of the PONREPP technical working group for Livelihoods. FAO is currently in the process of identifying an expert (“drafter”) to work with the technical groups. The World Bank earlier announced that they also intend to field an agriculture expert for the process. Other agencies that wish to provide a drafter for the working groups were invited to share such plans with the Cluster Lead. A Consultative Meeting with the Government, PONREPP technical working groups and Cluster Leads is due to be held in the capital on 4/5 November.

4. Advocacy Efforts for Agriculture sector Projects

The Cluster Lead referred to the various efforts to prioritize needs across and within sectors. For the agriculture sector direct discussions have also been held with individual agencies to ascertain what gaps, problems and difficulties exist in regard to the implementation of their planned activities. It is also important to ascertain the extent to which the activities proposed in the Flash Appeal are being funded. In order to complete the picture, which may also be the basis for further discussions / cluster advocacy with the donor community, a questionnaire focusing on the agency/organization needs for the next six months was circulated. It was requested that the required information including any geographical gaps that may exist be conveyed as early as possible to the Cluster Lead.

5. Upcoming Workshop on Livestock interventions and Animal Health (Thanawat Tiensin, FAO ERCU Livestock Expert)

Mr. Thanawat Tiensin referred to the Workshop on the distribution of Livestock /Animals on Friday 10th October and Saturday 11th. It will provide guidelines for distribution of livestock and poultry and provide an understanding of the Myanmar Animal Health & Development Law and where and how to get healthy animals for distribution among other aspects. All those interested in distributing animals were invited to send appropriate personnel for this Workshop. They were also requested to ensure that the Township officials of the LVDB are duly consulted before procuring/moving animals for distribution. Related technical/publicity material is available and can be obtained through the Cluster Lead or the Technical Working Group on Livestock and Animal Health. Those who are interested in obtaining such materials were requested to indicate their requirements.

6. Soil Salinity

Mr. Aung Kyi, FAO Agronomist, presented laboratory test findings of 3 soil and water samples provided by Mingalar Myanmar. He also referred to possible measures recommended for countering salinity which can include the application of gypsum in the rainy season and foliar fertilizer of potassium during the tilling and panicle initiation stage of rice. Other possible recommendations include the use of salt tolerant varieties of rice and the use of organic fertilizer with chemical fertilizer. An attempt is being made to come up with maps showing where salt intrusion is suspected to be or become a problem for agriculture. The participants were requested to forward to the Cluster/FAO (Mr. Aung Kyi) any information they had on this matter. It was noted that some information on the movement of the Saline Water Front is already available in the Pyapon area.

7. Update from sub-cluster TWG Fisheries and Aquaculture (Dirk Lamberts, FAO ERCU Fisheries Expert)

Mr. Dirk Lamberts mentioned that an evaluation of the work done by the Technical Working Group has been carried out and the participants have confirmed the usefulness of the discussions as well as the Technical Fact Sheets and the other technical information disseminated. Today's meeting will include a presentation on Traditional Fish/Shrimp Processing and the tools and utensils used. All those interested were invited to attend.

8. Update on Agriculture cluster field coordination

- **Bogale: Focal Point GAA** - It was noted that the Kadon Kani area is not covered by the existing coordination arrangements and a meeting is scheduled to be held on 17th October at 5.00 pm in the NCV office in Bogale to discuss this issue.
- **Dedaye: Focal Point CESVI** – Distribution of seed and fertilizer is Continuing
- **Pyapon: Focal Point Mingala Myanmar** – A meeting was held at the

OCHA office where several NGOs including CARE, Save the Children participated. There was much interest in the results of the soil tests and in getting technical advice on agriculture particularly on the use of pesticides.

- **Labutta: Focal Point UNDP** – There was a meeting last Friday. Urea donated by the Government of Singapore is now being distributed. There were two Action Points viz. 1. OCHA to include MRCS and MBEA in the 3W matrix; 2. OCHA to print a new 3 WWW matrix to replace the existing one.
- **Khungyangon: Focal Point IDE** – Cash transfers and rice distribution is underway in the township area.

9. AOB

Announcements

Agriculture Cluster Technical Fact Sheets are being translated in the Myanmar language. In order to prepare technical support and trainings at the township level NGOs were encouraged to indicate details on the type of training they wish to have.

There was a suggestion that the Cluster meeting be held once a fortnight instead of weekly. It was decided to discuss this further at the next meeting.

The meeting concluded with the Cluster Lead thanking everyone for their presence and participation. The next Agriculture Cluster meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 16 October 2008, 13 hrs, Chatrium Hotel, Yangon

Cyclone Nargis Agriculture Cluster website:
<http://myanmar.humanitarianinfo.org/agriculture/default.aspx>

