

Situation Reports at OCHA: Annexes

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Annex 1: Sitrep Overview

"Several different types of assessment reports, often called 'situation reports,' may be used to broadcast the analyzed information to users.... Reports are generally presented in a numbered, sectioned format that describes specific response tasks within separate sections. This format makes it easy for responders to find and use the information that pertains specifically to their needs, and all subsequent interim reports will display information related to those response functions in the same numbered category."¹

"We don't think about what we want to achieve with situation reports. Twenty-five page reports are a waste of paper, time and effort... For me, they should be very short and focused, as a piece of journalism: the key central message, two or three points that are essential for us to get across. But we don't do that now." P31, OCHA

"Without feet on the ground, situation reports are one of our main sources [of emergency information]. It is never easy to get information that is reliable and clear, that clearly states what is unverified, what the sources are, what is fact." Donor Roundtable 2

Situation reports, or "sitreps," are at the crux of this complex issue of information sharing in the work of NGOs and UN agencies in humanitarian intervention. Sitreps are loosely structured documents, usually in Word format, sometimes converted to PDF, that aim to give a concise snapshot of the current situation on the ground. Generally written by field staff on a regular basis for the duration of an emergency response, sitreps are intended primarily as a tool for sharing information within the responding organization, especially with key managers and executive staff who rely on this information in their decision-making. They may contain both qualitative and quantitative assessments of the situation, and may cover a broad range of topics, including security issues, analyses of the humanitarian situation and political context, reports of damage, program planning and progress information, advocacy and media issues, and more. Though most NGO sitreps are confidential documents meant for internal use, sitreps from organizations such as OCHA and the Red Cross are also meant for a public audience. These sitreps collect information from different sources in the field, and have a dual purpose: to inform the wider public, often abroad, about developments in the field, and to help all the parties involved in the humanitarian emergency to be aware of what each of them is working on, as well as of all existing needs, and potential gaps in intervention.

Sitreps represent to their readers – often geographically distant - the main source of information regarding what happens in the field. The quality of the information they contain depends heavily on data collected through assessments in the field, but currently there are very few procedures and standards in place to assure a systematic and cohesive process of data collection.² Moreover, field office staff and

¹ Damon P. Coppola. "Introduction to International Disaster Management." Elsevier: Oxford, UK, 2007, p. 260

² Paul Currion, a consultant in the field of humanitarian ICT who has been writing extensively about information sharing in emergencies, writes that "Data is rarely collected in a systematic way across the humanitarian sector...data continue to be collected on an ad hoc, organizational basis. The result is that it is almost impossible to build an accurate picture of needs on the

headquarters often have diverging goals and priorities. Staff in the field spends considerable time gathering data and writing the reports, often fulfilling requests that they consider unreasonable,³ and see little benefit for their own work in the process.⁴ From the perspective of headquarters, sitreps frequently do not contain enough or suitable data to compile reports for donors or for the press, important stakeholders for any organization, which can be overlooked by staff in the field.⁵ OCHA sitreps, in particular, are trying to provide information to a variety of audiences, from actors in the field to the local and international press, to donors, and each of them requires different details. Moreover, they have to gather and collate information from all of the parties involved in the emergency intervention, which presents a set of challenges that we will explore more in detail later.

Public sitreps like OCHA's depend heavily on the information they can collect from other humanitarian actors in the field. However, the way OCHA and NGOs look at information is very different. NGOs tend to focus most on information flows from the field office up to headquarters, and information generally moves up a vertical chain, from field teams to field offices to country office, and then on to the regional and/or global headquarters. They devote far less attention to horizontal information flows, and to exchanges of information between organizations and even between members of a single organization at the local level.⁶ Most significant communication in the field is verbal: within an organization, staff members share information in general meetings, and, between organizations, staff share information during coordination meetings or informally.⁷ One result is that individuals often hold key pieces of valuable information, and organizations seldom have a systematic way to collect and aggregate this information. While this verbal-based communications system does provide value, it does not scale across large organizations with multiple offices around the world.⁸ More generally, many organizations lack formalized and systematic processes for information management.⁹ High turn-over of staff and lack of appropriate training in information gathering and management further complicate the process.

ground, the activities that are being carried out to meet those needs, or the impact of those activities." Currian, Paul. "Assessment Report: Pakistan Earthquake Response". Emergency Capacity Building Project, November-December 2005, p.18.

3 "Requests that seem reasonable and realistic at headquarters may not be so reasonable from a field perspective. The question of how many beneficiaries we are serving seems a simple proposition – until you consider that we might be working on a household rather than an individual basis, in a political situation in which statistics are a sensitive issue, with multiple groups of overlapping beneficiaries across different projects, or simply in a situation where numbers are unclear." *Ib*, p.27

4 "It is...unclear to field staff what purpose the situation report serves at the headquarters level. There is little or no feedback on sitreps except in the most general terms, and the connection between the information they provide and any decisions that are taken are not apparent." *Ib*, p.22

5 "(for headquarters, sitreps) contain insufficient information for needs such as donor reporting, fundraising and advocacy. This often leads to multiple queries from headquarters to field for additional information, with corresponding duplication of effort." *Ib*.

6 *Ib*, p.19

7 *Ib*.

8 *Ib*, p.20

9 "In most agencies this flow of information is institutionalised (that is, it is considered part of the organisation's policy and practice), but not necessarily systematic (i.e. formats and systems to support it are not applied across the organisation). Even where reporting is a clear part of staff job descriptions (which is not always the case), there are frequent problems in ensuring that staff do report, because these systems have not been formalised." *Ib*, p.19

Collaboration requires time, which many NGO staff members do not have,¹⁰ and can be a drain on resources and get in the way of actual humanitarian intervention.¹¹ The work of coordinating bodies like OCHA can also be perceived as an attempt to direct the work of NGOs, and as a threat to their independence,¹² as the literature shows, and as many of our NGOs interviewees have mentioned; moreover, it has very limited powers in enforcing compliance to coordination guidelines.¹³ Another considerable obstacle to information sharing is that actors in the field are often in competition for funding, publicity, and resources. Information is a valuable commodity that enables organizations to gain a competitive edge, and donors tend to reward program expansion,¹⁴ which is not always compatible with inter-agency collaboration. This situation is exacerbated by the increase in the number of NGOs intervening in humanitarian emergencies, a phenomenon that has become particularly visible in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. An evaluation report of the tsunami intervention noted that “NGOs, even with available standardized templates for recording and sharing information, opted to keep information from other agencies. In Aceh, there was so much competition between agencies over beneficiaries that they even concealed information from each other... Coordination is easily undermined by competition, and has been one of the most challenging and least successful aspects of the tsunami response.”¹⁵

Sitreps have their roots in the military, where they were – and are – used by operations officers to provide to their superiors an overview of the conditions of their unit and of the general situation, including enemy capacities and possible courses of action.¹⁶ The transition from military to humanitarian document hasn’t necessarily been a natural one. In the process, the document lost the clear mandate and the strict structure of its military origins. Sitreps are also the remnant of an era where communication between field and headquarters happened through telex and fax, and a single document represented the available overview of the situation and a request for assistance. As more communication tools became available, “gradually the

10 Mashni, Ayman, Sheila Reed, Virza Sasmitawidjaja, Danai Sundagul, and Tim Wright. "Multi-Agency Evaluation of Tsunami Response: Thailand and Indonesia Undertaken for CARE International and World Vision International". May to July 2005
<http://ecbproject.org/publications/ECB2/Tsunami%20Multi-Agency%20Evaluations%20-%20Thailand.%20Indonesia.zip> ((Last accessed on February 5, 2008), p.56

11 Ib.

12 Marcus Dolder, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is an important supporter of information sharing to reduce redundancy and to increase saturation of provisions, stated that "in order to preserve our independence, we cannot be coordinated by others." Kemp, Randall B. "Information Communication and Coordination Immediately After the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 by the Sumatra Humanitarian Information Center". June 28, 2006

<http://depts.washington.edu/mlcenter/assets/docs/casestudies/hiccase.pdf> ((Last accessed on February 5, 2008), p.8

13 Report of the Translating Standards Into Practice Conference: NGO Accountability and Impact Measurement in Emergencies Conference, p.33.

14 Tsunami Multi-Agency Evaluations - Thailand, Indonesia, p.12

15 Kemp, Randall B. "Information Communication and Coordination Immediately After the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 by the Sumatra Humanitarian Information Center". June 28, 2006

<http://depts.washington.edu/mlcenter/assets/docs/casestudies/hiccase.pdf> ((Last accessed on February 5, 2008), p.8

¹⁶ See for example John E. Edwards. *Combat Service Support Guide*. Stackpole Books: 2004. P.140 and following.

monopoly of the sitrep was lost, as information spread to other places." (P33, OCHA). OCHA (and its predecessor) created different information products to serve specialized functions: IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks) was started in 1995 to provide humanitarian news and analysis;¹⁷ financial tracking databases were set up to record humanitarian aid and highlight appeals for assistance;¹⁸ and the website GDACS (Global Disaster and Coordination System) with its section for humanitarian operators only, the Virtual OSOCC (On Site Operation and Coordination Center), allows actors in the field to facilitate the coordination and exchange of information.¹⁹ These topical areas now effectively function outside sitreps, which are however left with plenty of redundant legacy information, and a confused identity.

¹⁷ See <http://www.irinnews.org/about.aspx> last accessed on May 2, 2008.

¹⁸ For example, FTS (Financial Tracking System), at <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts2/pageloader.aspx?page=home>, and CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund), at <http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/CERFHome/tabid/1705/Default.aspx>, last accessed on May 2, 2008.

¹⁹ GDACS is at <http://www.gdacs.org/coordination.asp> and Virtual OSOCC at <http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosoccc/>, last accessed on May 2, 2008.

Annex 2: Interviews

"The work you are doing is very interesting and I would very much be interested in knowing the outcome of it. As far as providing information to you regarding sitreps from our organization, I am not in a position to respond to your questions and requests." (A potential NGO interviewee)

This section is meant to provide more background on the interviews conducted that is not included in the main document.

When we began our project, in October 2007, we were focusing on NGOs internal sitreps. We knew that gaining access to the range of participants and documents we needed for our research was going to be a challenge. NGO staff are hard-to-contact and typically very busy, and, as we quickly found, NGOs can be very protective of their internal data. Despite having a reasonable network of personal contacts, and despite intense efforts to find interviewees and organizations willing to work with us, we couldn't find any NGO ready to commit to the project to the point of sharing their situation reports. Earlier this year, we extended our outreach efforts, but did not get better results. Many people expressed a great deal of interest in our project, and a few agreed to talk to us on a personal basis, but as the quote above shows, most of the people we contacted commented that it was a long overdue project, and expressed interest in seeing the results of our research, but not to participate in it. We are still unclear about the reasons for this behavior. Partly, it is due to the hectic and often unpredictable environment where these people work. Partly, sitreps are seen as an inevitable evil, used as the quickest way to keep management at headquarters "informed and off the back of field staff" (P11, NGO) but without enough value to justify the investment in time and in institutional energy necessary to change them. And finally, part of this reluctance may perhaps be understood through the lens of the academic literature on NGO accountability and learning, which points out how NGOs often lack effective ways of learning from what they do and improve upon it, not in the least because they lack effective information systems.²⁰ These outreach efforts, nonetheless, yielded a few, extremely useful interviews with NGO staff from different organizations, which complemented the ones we did during Fall 2007, and allowed us to better understand the issue of information sharing and cooperation at field level from the NGO viewpoint.

An email we had sent to the Humanitarian ICT mailing list²¹ as part of our outreach efforts was forwarded to OCHA, which contacted us to see if our work could inform the revision of their own situation reports. As mentioned earlier, the Information Management Review that OCHA had just conducted indicated several issues with sitreps, and OCHA was keen to address them. OCHA sitreps are public, which was very useful for us as we could have access to a corpus of documents large enough to be meaningful from a document analysis viewpoint; moreover, if OCHA sitreps showed enough similarities with NGO sitreps to justify a shared data model, OCHA would be in a good position to implement and diffuse sitrep standards among different humanitarian operators, making information sharing more effective for all parties involved.

²⁰ See David Lewis and Shirin Madon. "Information Systems and Nongovernmental Development Organizations: Advocacy, Organizational Learning, and Accountability." *The Information Society*, No. 20, 2004. pp119-121.

²¹ <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/humanitarian-ict/>

With funding from the UC Berkeley *Big Ideas @ Berkeley* office and from the UC Berkeley School of Information ISD Clinic we went to New York during the week of March 24 – 28, where we conducted two roundtables and a series of interviews with OCHA staff, in person and over the phone. In the following weeks, we continued to interview OCHA staff over the phone, and we conducted two phone roundtable with donors, also organized by OCHA. We will discuss the details of our interviews in the findings section.

Methods

Because of our unfamiliarity with the field, we chose a qualitative approach to studying. During the first part of the project (October to December 07) we experimented with different methods, and identified interviews and document analysis as the most useful ones for our purposes. Interviews, in particular, were a natural choice, since they allowed us to understand the process as a whole and explore how it fit in the culture of different organizations. Our goal was to understand the role sitreps play in the wider information exchange and cooperation in humanitarian intervention. Semi-structured interviews uncovered issues that we would not have found by simply looking at the documents.

The principal method of data collection for this research was through in-depth semi-structured interviews of a variety of people involved in information sharing in emergencies, and more particularly in the sitrep process. We developed a main interview protocol, and the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed us to adapt it to the organization (OCHA or NGOs) and to the specific role of the interviewee (field or headquarter, operational staff or senior staff), and left us enough space to follow up on interesting themes that surfaced during the interviews. The questions were centered around:

1. the involvement of the participant with sitreps,
2. the role that sitreps play in the organization,
3. the process around information sharing at a field level and between the field and headquarters,
4. the main challenges, and the main advantages of sitreps.

We interviewed 12 people from different NGOs (four in person, eight over the phone, all interviewed on their experience as field staff). Four of the NGOs are among the largest NGOs in the world, the others are medium size or small organizations, focusing mostly on development projects. All of the NGOs interviewees were found through personal contacts, and they were all speaking to us on a personal basis, not on behalf of their organization. Within OCHA, while in New York we conducted two roundtables, one with about 20 desk officers, the other with OCHA's Information Advisory Group, half a dozen people in New York and three in teleconference from Geneva. We also interviewed 39 individuals, 28 in person, the others by phone. Finally, we conducted two phone roundtables with two different groups of institutional donors, that is governmental agencies whose mandate it is to provide development as well as emergency assistance.

In this report, interviewees from NGOs are identified with their participant number and the generic acronym NGO – e.g. P1, NGO; interviewees from OCHA with their participant number and OCHA – e.g. P15, OCHA. Sentences in double quotation marks "" are verbatim transcriptions; sentence in single quotation marks " are accurate but not verbatim transcriptions, typically from interviews that were not recorded.

OCHA Interviewees

- **Operational Staff** (desk, field and regional officers, and/or individuals interviewed in their capacity as sitrep writers/editors): 21 people
- **Senior Management:** 8 people
- **OCHA Staff that work indirectly with sitreps:** 8 people

DONOR Interviewees

- **Donor Roundtable 1:** Western government agency whose mandate it is to provide development and emergency assistance. Telephone roundtable with 6 individuals
- **Donor Roundtable 2:** Western government agency whose mandate it is to provide development and emergency assistance. Telephone roundtable with 4 individuals

NGO Interviewees

- **Organization 1:** large international NGO active in development and emergency relief; P11
- **Organization 2:** large international NGO active in development and emergency relief; P1, P8
- **Organization 3:** large international NGO active in development and emergency relief; P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P12
- **Organization 4:** medium-size NGO mainly focused on development projects; P2
- **Organization 5:** very small NGO focused exclusively on development projects; P7
- **Organization 6:** small-size NGO focused on migration during conflicts; P9

Results and Limitations

The main limitation in working with OCHA was that most of our interviewees were at the New York headquarters rather than in the field, or in Geneva, where the second headquarters of OCHA is located. Moreover, a few people commented that more senior desk officers in New York were not interested in participating in the project, possibly because they had seen several attempts to reform sitreps that were never completed, and are skeptical about the entire process. This means that our findings are very skewed toward the view of the New York headquarters, and that the concerns and viewpoints of a significant part of this constituency may anyway be missing from our results. We are well aware of this, and we believe that by triangulating our findings between interviews and document analysis, speaking with people involved at different levels and in different roles in the process, and conduct interviews with external stakeholders such as donors and NGO staff, we have at least partly mitigated the effect of this partiality.

The biggest limitation of our research, however, is that it is all based on second-hand sources about information sharing processes in the field. We did not visit the field, even though we believe that participant observation is a fundamental part of this project. Users at a field level are those who will bear the brunt of any change to the sitrep format, and it is important, as already noted in the OCHA Information Management Review, that any change be implemented with the full support of and input from the field, lest it fail. By looking at current practices in formatting sitreps that are implemented at field level, and building a series of recommendations around those, we hope that we have made a first step toward including all parties equally in our project. If the project is to move forward, however, and we are to develop more

fully an OCHA sitrep data model, field research will be a necessary component of our research.

From our interviews, we understand that there are a few generalized scenarios that illustrate how information is collected by OCHA. The first is when OCHA has a solid infrastructure in place, typically in countries with complex, long-running emergencies (e.g. Occupied Palestinian Territories, Colombia, Sri Lanka):

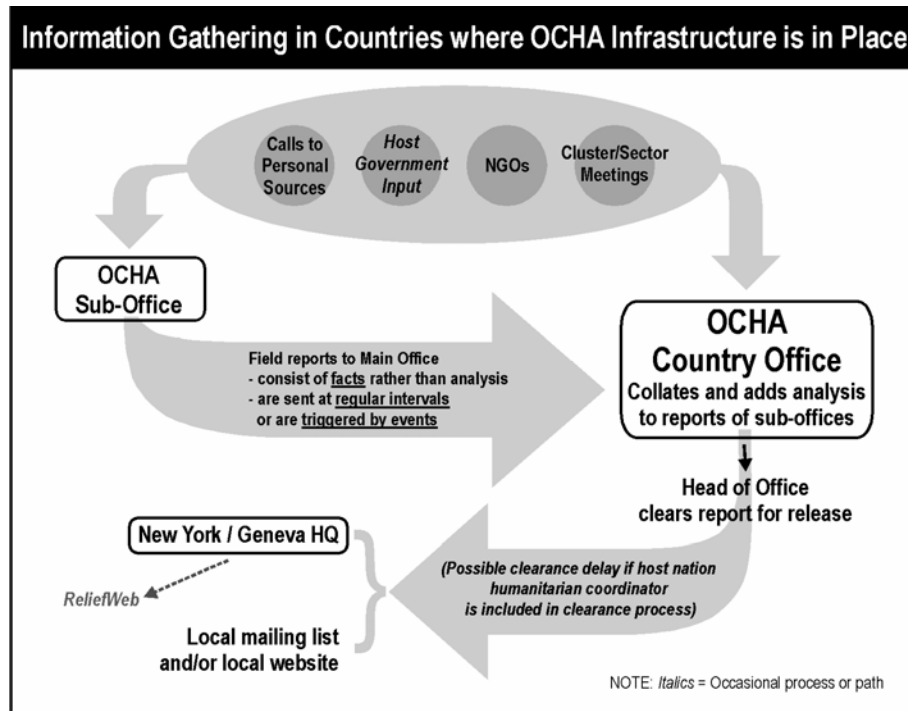


Fig. 4 – Information gathering in countries with an OCHA infrastructure in place

Because OCHA does not have processes maps, we have pieced together this information flow from different interviews. It may or may not be accurate, but it represents the *mental model* that some OCHA field and headquarters' information officers share. In this first scenario, OCHA has a stable network of informants and/or sub-offices, information is fed constantly to the main country office, which sometimes collects them into databases, and has sufficient manpower to analyze it, provide cumulative data, and be ready in case of sudden emergencies: "It's not like all the sudden we are drafting a report – we have our regular sources." (P28, OCHA).

The second scenario is information gathering in a country where OCHA is not present. It is divided into two sub-scenarios, and we are not clear to which extent they coexist, or if they are mutually exclusive scenarios. None of the interviewees mentioned an emergency where the two modalities of information gathering were deployed at once, but this does not mean that they are not/cannot coexist:

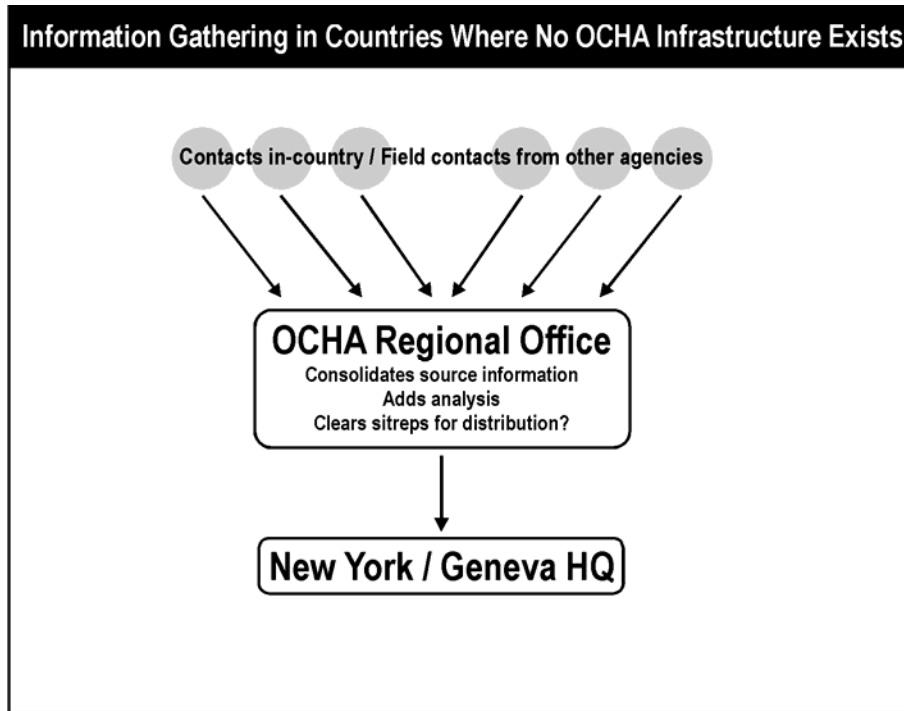


Fig. 5 – Information gathering in countries without an OCHA infrastructure in place

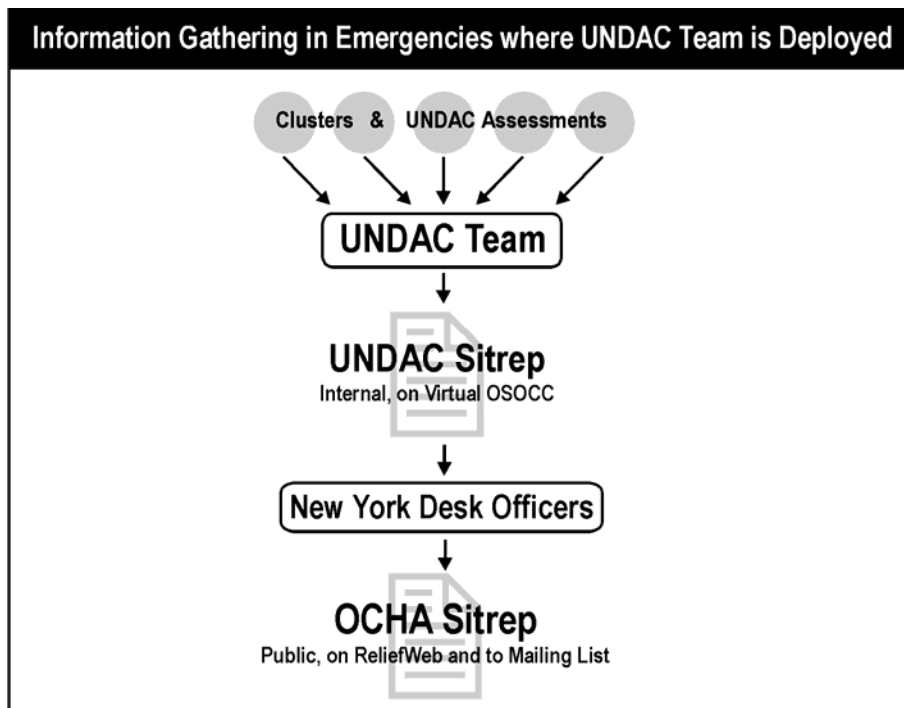


Fig. 6 – Assessment by the United Nations Disaster Assessment Team

Figure 5 could be a model for much of Latin America, where OCHA has a regional office in Panama that acts as a hub for collecting information from more or less formal contacts in countries where it does not have a presence. Figure 6 shows how information is gathered when the UNDAC team – a group of specialized disaster management personnel financed by OCHA and other UN agencies, ready to be

deployed on short notice²² – is deployed. UNDAC intervention has to be requested by the host country, and the team can be deployed and carry out initial assessments very rapidly. These assessments are collated into internal sitreps, that are then posted on the Virtual OSOCC website and sent to OCHA, where information can be added before the documents are issued as OCHA sitreps. UNDAC does not issue public sitreps, although its internal sitreps are accessible by all humanitarian actors that have access to Virtual OSOCC.

Given that it is easier to do well in an emergency what one does well in regular situations, countries with a stable OCHA office and network should be the best prepared to collect information in extraordinary circumstances. However, two of the interviewees that worked in offices with stable infrastructure express concern that, despite collecting longitudinal data, “It is not useful information at the moment, because we are not able yet to quantify the gaps.” (P18, OCHA) and “We’re very efficient in capturing information about the context, but weak in the coverage/response.” (P37, OCHA). Not having access to the entire corpus of data these offices collect, it is difficult to say definitively why this is. The absence of common indicators, however, seems a reasonable explanation. Moreover, it is common for donors and NGOs to have a more stable presence and a more reliable flux of internal information in countries with complex, long-running emergencies, so they consider OCHA sitreps as particularly important for sudden emergencies in countries where nobody has a presence, which is exactly OCHA’s weakest point at the moment.

22

<http://ochaonline.un.org/Coordination/FieldCoordinationSupportSection/UNDACSystem/tabid/1414/Default.aspx> last accessed on May 6, 2008.

Annex 3: Document Analysis

This section is meant to provide more background on the document analysis that is not included in the main document.

In order to understand better the context that was emerging from the interviews, and to see if we could substantiate (or not) some of the practical issues that came up around sitreps, we decided to conduct document analysis to proceed side-by-side with the interview findings. Document analysis was also a natural choice, to allow us to look in a systematic way at the corpus of documents, and as a complement to the interviews. By analyzing actual sitreps, we were able to cross-reference and ground the interviews, find answers to questions that emerged from the interviews and discover questions to ask interviewees. To a certain extent, document analysis served as our proxy to being on the ground.

Method of analysis

For each document, we recorded the issuing office, the date on the sitrep (which at times was different from the date when the document was sent out by ReliefWeb), the number of days covered, if specified, how the document was named besides (or in addition) to "sitrep." Two people looked at different dimensions of the documents, and assigned either a grade on a scale 1 to 10, or chose one of two dimension. The grades were compared and averaged. We looked at the following dimensions:

- **1 to 10 scale:**
 - o unstructured to structure: 1 corresponds to an entirely narrative document, 10 to an entirely structured (with tables, maps, etc); this doesn't refer to the amount of data or analysis in the document;
 - o data-driven: 1 corresponds to a document with very little hard data (e.g. amount of population affected), 10 entirely data-driven;
 - o needs-response-gap: 1 corresponds to a complete absence of needs-response-gaps coverage, 10 to the entire document devoted to needs-response-gap; reference to NRG can be in a separate section or woven through the text;
 - o sourced: 1 corresponds to a practically unsourced document, 10 to a very well sourced document. Documents that hover around 3/4 tend to feature laundry lists of NGOs and other UN agencies' activities that are reported as is without external corroboration or other context;
 - o mentions of UN agencies (percentage); mentions of NGOs (percentage): indicates the number of times UN agencies are mentioned in the document vs number of times NGOs are mentioned.

- **Binary (either/or or yes/no):**
 - o UN or OCHA: whether the masthead of the document belongs to the UN or to OCHA;
 - o natural or complex: whether the emergency is natural or complex; there are a few documents where it's both, and one where it's neither;
 - o chronic or acute: whether an emergency is chronic or acute. Note that although most emergencies are natural and acute, or complex and chronic, there are cases of acute episodes in chronic emergencies;

- sitrep used in the title: whether the document calls itself a sitrep or not;
- header entitled 'gaps': whether or not there is a specific and clearly visible section dedicated to gaps (or needs)
- English or other language; the majority of reports not in English are in French; there is one in Spanish.
- Pdf: documents that are not in Pdf format were sent out as email text;
- Maps: whether or not the document has maps;
- sectorial or geographical grouping of information: indicates how the information is organized. On occasions, it can be 'both' or 'neither'.
- availability of contact information.

Results and Limitations

Evaluating some of the chosen dimensions described above was a judgment call that might have yielded different results if the analysts had been humanitarian operators: for example, is Zimbabwe a chronic or an acute emergency? Is the aggravation of the fuel crisis in Gaza an acute episode in a chronic emergency (as we decided after reading the sitrep), or a 'regular' update in a chronic emergency? Document analysis revealed interesting issues that sometimes supported, and sometimes contradicted evidence from interviews, and it made certain points raised by interviewees much clearer. For example, both donors and NGO staff mentioned that they often get OCHA sitreps from ReliefWeb, rather than from OCHA's mailing lists or main website. It is interesting to note that in our month-long corpus of documents there wasn't a single document from, for example, Sri Lanka, even though we know from the OCHA Sri Lanka website²³ that in the same period it issued no fewer than 6 reports. It may be that these reports were just for in-country circulation, but by comparing them with reports from other countries sent through ReliefWeb, it is not clear what criteria are used to choose what to send out through which vector.

The most common type of OCHA sitrep in our corpus presents information as follows:

ReliefWeb/OCHA Situation Report : Burundi Weekly Humanitarian News 10 - 16 Mar 2008

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

Repatriation of Burundian refugees: During the reporting week, UNHCR facilitated the return of 4,578 Burundian refugees from Tanzania and 29 spontaneous returnees. The increase in the number of returnees is quite remarkable considering that in January only 435 persons were registered while in February 1,980 Burundians returned to their country of origin. Due to this increase in the number of returnees, UNHCR has increased the number of weekly convoys to Muyinga Province from 2 convoys to 4 per week. This massive registration for returns is in anticipation of the Lukole camp closure in June as earlier announced by the Tanzanian Government. On 10 March UNHCR received the first convoy of 262 refugees who left Burundi in 1972. Since the beginning of 2008, UNHCR has registered a total of 7,004

²³ <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/srilanka%5Fhpsl/Catalogues.aspx?catID=1> last accessed on May 6, 2008.

returnees.(...)

Update on food aid distribution: WFP supplied 240 MT of food aid to 51,476 beneficiaries mainly through its programs which cater for nutritional centers and return packages for repatriated refugees.

The report does not specify how many Burundian refugees there are in Tanzania. It doesn't show the trend of returns, even though it notices that the numbers are increasing. It doesn't specify whether there are unmet needs in the repatriation process. It does not mention if there are other agencies (NGOs or governmental agencies) involved with the returns, despite the fact that many OCHA interviewees remarked that if they don't include information from the government or NGOs, these entities will complain.

The sitrep from Kazakhstan, on the other hand, seems closer to the ideal of consolidated needs-response-gap. But it is a rare document, and even in this document the needs-response-gap information was relegated to an annex while the fact that "UNICEF has indicated that the placement of a water filter is a priority to allow water purification at the source" was featured prominently in the "highlights" section at the top of the sitrep, without context and without overview.

Annex. Table of Priority Needs

Relief item	Quantity	Quantity provided	Organisation	Outstanding need
Shelter items (tents/yurtas)	500 based on government assessment	650 tents 460 yurtas 100	Government Government UNHCR	400 based on government assessment
Bed sheets, mattresses, blankets	770 family sets	100 family sets 370 family sets	UNHCR IFRC	300 family sets
Cooking sets, kitchen utensils	770 family sets	370 family sets 100 family sets 100 kerosene stoves	IFRC UNHCR UNHCR	300 family sets
Food	370 family rations	370 family rations of one month	IFRC	---
Clothing incl. children's clothing	400 family sets, especially children's clothing	Unspecified	KRCS	400 family sets, especially children's clothing
Vacuum flasks for families with young children	150	--	--	150

Fig. 3 – Annex from Kazakhstan Floods Sitrep No. 2, 19 March 2008

We also spent a considerable amount of time analyzing sitreps from the WFP and IFRC, based on the suggestion from donors and others that these organizations issued particularly useful sitreps. We analyzed all the sitreps from WFP, IFRC and OCHA posted on ReliefWeb from April 1, 2008 to May 14, 2008. The details of these analysis are not covered here (although we are happy to provide this information upon request). Because these organizations are not chartered to represent the entire humanitarian consensus, and only their own agenda, we did not find a comparison with OCHA to be particularly fruitful. Arguably the most difficult task for OCHA is to find the right information to include in a sitrep, and these organizations

simply do not have this issue. NGO and agency sitreps provide a useful ideal for OCHA in that they are fairly consistent across all emergencies, but the content of them is radically different. In the future, it will be important to observe other humanitarian organization's best practices, particularly in the area of formatting to design future sitrep templates.

101 Document Analysis

We analyzed a corpus of 101 documents, representing all the OCHA situation reports sent out by OCHA's website ReliefWeb between March 18 and April 25, 2008. The number 101 has a fitting resonance with the famous Disney movie *101 Dalmatians*, because sitreps are like Dalmatians – all the same on the surface, but in reality each with its quirks and personality.

LEGEND:

unstructured - structure(1): 1 corresponds to an entirely narrative document, 10 to entirely structured; this doesn't refer to the amount of data v analysis

data-driven(2): 1 corresponds to a document with very little data, 10 entirely data-driven

NRG(3): 1 corresponds to complete absence of needs-response-gaps, 10 the entire sitrep is devoted to needs-response-gap; reference to NRG can be in a separate section or woven through the text

sourced(4): 1 - practically unsourced; 10 - very well sourced. Sitreps that hover around 3/4 tend to be laundry lists of NGOs and other UN agencies' activities.

N- C (5): indicates whether the emergency is natural or complex

C – A (6): indicates whether the emergency is chronic or acute

GAPS (7): indicates whether or not there is a specific and clearly visible section dedicated to gaps or needs

ENG (8): indicates whether the report is in English or in other languages (typically French)

G - S (9): geographical or sectorial, indicates whether the information is organized geographically or sectorially

CONTACT (10): indicates whether or not there is contact information

DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	EMERGENCY	SITREP?	ALT NAME	CHRONIC OR ACUTE
March 19	1	Kazakhstan	natural	Y	-	acute
March 7-17	10	Colombia	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
March 20	1	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
March 21	doesn't say	Albania	natural	Y	-	acute
March 20	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
March 25?	doesn't say	Bolivia	natural	Y	-	acute
March 26	doesn't say	Albania	natural	Y	-	acute
March 24-28	5	Zimbabwe	complex	Y	weekly situation report	acute
March 27	1	Ethiopia	natural	Y	-	acute
March 28	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
February 28	doesn't say	Madagascar	natural	Y	-	acute
April 1	doesn't say	Tajikistan	natural	Y	-	acute
April 2	doesn't say	Iraq	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 1	doesn't say	Ecuador	natural	Y	-	acute
April 3	31	West Africa	both	Y	monthly situation report	chronic
March 29 - April 4	7	Zimbabwe	complex	Y	weekly situation report	acute
April 10	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
April 11	doesn't say	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
March 1 - 31	31	Uganda	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
no date	doesn't say	doesn't say	natural	Y	-	acute
April 15	doesn't say	Baghdad	complex	Y	-	chronic
April 16	doesn't say	RDC	natural	Y	rapport de situation	acute
April 16	doesn't say	Tajikistan	natural	Y	-	acute
April 18	doesn't say	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
April 17	doesn't say	Gaza	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 20	14	Ecuador	natural	Y	-	acute
April 23	doesn't say	Gaza	complex	Y	-	acute
April 5 - 21	17	Colombia	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 16 - 25	10	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic

These represent only the documents with "sitrep" in the title.

The following pages are the complete corpus of 101 and documents.

#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	SCALE 1 TO 10						
				Structured(1)	Data-driven(2)	NRG (3)	Sourced (4)	UN agencies	NGOs	UN or OCHA
1	March 9-15	7	Sudan	2	4	3	2	95	5	UN
2	March 1-17	17	Nepal	1	2	1	3	95	5	OCHA
3	27 Feb - 4 Mar	7	OPT	4	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
4	March 19	doesn't say	Kazakhstan	7	8	10	8	80	20	OCHA
5	March 7-17	10	Colombia	5	7	1	10	50	50	OCHA
6	March 20	doesn't say	Somalia	2	6	1	7	30	70	OCHA
7	March 5-11	7	OPT	4	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
8	February	29	OPT	9	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
9	March 12-18	7	Katanga	2	4	3	5	25	75	OCHA
10	March 10-16	7	Burundi	2	6	1	7	90	10	OCHA
11	March 21	doesn't say	Albania	5	7	5	10	80	20	OCHA
12	March 20	doesn't say	Southern Africa	5	4	1	6	80	20	OCHA
13	March 11-17	7	Province Orientale	2	3	1	7	90	10	OCHA
14	March 25?	doesn't say	Bolivia	2	4	4	9	95	5	OCHA
15	March 15-21	7	DR Congo	2	2	1	3	50	50	OCHA
16	March 18-23	6	Province Orientale	2	3	3	4	80	20	OCHA
16b	March 26	doesn't say	Albania	5	7	7	10	0	0	OCHA
17	March 19-25	7	Sud Kivu	2	4	3	3	10	90	OCHA
18	March 20-26	7	Kenya	3	3	2	9	45	65	UN
19	March 24-28	5	Zimbabwe	4	1	1	2	85	15	UN
20	March 19-25	7	Katanga	3	3	2	4	25	75	OCHA
21	March 8-27	20	RDC Province Centre/Ouest	1	2	1	4	90	10	OCHA
22	March 17-23	7	Burundi	1	1	1	4	50	50	OCHA
23	March 27	1	Ethiopia	2	3	7	4	30	70	OCHA
24	March 12-18	7	OPT	3	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
25	March 28	doesn't say	Southern Africa	5	5	2	4	70	30	OCHA
26	March 17-20	4	RDC	2	3	2	4	70	30	OCHA
27	March 28	doesn't say	OPT	3	7	4	7	100	0	OCHA
28	March 27	7	Darfur	3	4	1	5	75	25	OCHA
29	February 28	doesn't say	Madagascar	2	6	3	3	50	50	OCHA
30	March 18-31	14	Nepal	1	1	1	3	100	0	OCHA
31	April 1	doesn't say	Tajikistan	2	3	4	6	80	20	OCHA
32	March 31	doesn't say	Latin America & Caribbean	2	4	1	9	100	0	OCHA
33	March 25-31	7	RDC Province Orientale	2	3	1	3	50	50	OCHA
34	April 2	doesn't say	Iraq	2	5	4	5	70	30	OCHA
35	April 1	doesn't say	Ecuador	4	5	4	7	100	0	OCHA
36	March 26 - April 1	7	Katanga	2	2	3	8	70	30	OCHA
37	April 3	29	Gaza	3	8	1	4	100	0	OCHA
38	April 3	31	West Africa	2	2	3	4	95	5	OCHA
39	March 23-29	7	Southern Sudan	2	4	4	4	80	20	UN
40	March 28 - April 3	7	Congo	2	2	4	6	85	15	OCHA

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#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	SCALE 1 TO 10						
				Structured(1)	Data-driven(2)	NRG (3)	Sourced (4)	UN agencies	NGOs	UN or OCHA
41	March 22 - 28	7	North Kivu	2	3	1	4	30	70	OCHA
42	March 24 - 30	7	Burundi	1	2	1	4	55	45	OCHA
43	March 27 - April 2	7	Kenya	2	3	1	3	70	30	UN
44	March 19-25	7	OPT	3	8	1	7	0	0	OCHA
45	March 29 - April 4	7	Zimbabwe	2	2	1	2	100	0	OCHA
46	April	doesn't say	Africa	1	1	1	3	0	0	OCHA
47	March 26 - April 1	7	OPT	3	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
48	April 7	doesn't say	Ethiopia	2	3	3	2	50	50	OCHA
49	April 7	50	Timor-Leste	6	5	3	7	50	50	OCHA
50	March 30 - April 4	6	Southern Sudan	3	5	1	4	80	20	UN
51	March	31	Somalia	1	2	1	4	40	60	UN
52	March 31 - April 7	8	RDC Province Orientale	2	3	1	7	30	70	OCHA
53	April 10	doesn't say	Southern Africa	4	5	5	6	65	35	OCHA
54	MISSING									
55	April 2 - 8	7	Katanga	2	3	3	4	30	70	OCHA
56	April 2 - 8	7	Sud Kivu	2	2	2	5	5	95	OCHA
57	April 4 - 10	7	RDC Provinces Centre-Ouest	3	3	3	7	95	5	OCHA
58	March 31 - April 6	7	Burundi	1	2	1	3	70	30	OCHA
59	April 11	doesn't say	Somalia	1	3	2	6	50	50	OCHA
60	April 3-9	7	Kenya	2	2	2	4	75	25	UN
61	April 7 - 11	5	RDC	3	3	4	4	20	80	OCHA
62	March 1 - 31	31	Uganda	2	2	3	3	100	0	OCHA
63	April 1 - 14	14	Nepal	2	1	1	3	95	5	OCHA
64	same as 63									
65	Feb 20 - March 4	14	OPT	7	9	1	7	0	0	UN
66	no date	doesn't say	doesn't say!	3	3	1	10	0	0	OCHA
67	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	2	3	4	4	65	35	OCHA
68	same as 67, but in English									
69	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	3	4	4	4	90	10	UN
70	April 15	doesn't say	Sadr City, Baghdad	2	7	4	5	10	0	OCHA
71	April 6 - 12	7	Southern Sudan	2	4	4	7	90	10	UN
72	April 16	doesn't say	RDC	2	3	4	7	40	60	OCHA
73	same as 72, but in English									
74	April 16	doesn't say	Tajikistan	4	3	4	8	80	20	OCHA
75	Feb - March	doesn't say	Iraq	4	4	4	8	10	90	OCHA
76	April 17	7	Darfur	2	3	4	4	40	60	OCHA

101 Document Analysis – 3

#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	SCALE 1 TO 10						
				Structured(1)	Data-driven(2)	NRG (3)	Sourced (4)	UN agencies	NGOs	UN or OCHA
76b	March 5 - 18	14	OPT	7	9	1	7	0	0	UN
77	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	2	4	4	4	90	10	UN
78	April 18	doesn't say	Uganda	7	6	1	4	30	70	OCHA
79	April 10 - 16	7	Kenya	3	5	4	4	90	10	UN
80	April 18	doesn't say	Somalia	1	4	3	3	80	20	OCHA
81	April 18	31	Gaza	3	3	4	4	60	40	OCHA
82	March	31	Somalia	4	4	5	4	30	70	UN
83	April 17	doesn't say	Gaza	3	2	1	1	0	0	OCHA
84	April 7 - 12	6	Burundi	2	3	4	4	80	20	OCHA
85	April 22	doesn't say	Burundi	1	2	1	2	50	50	OCHA
86	April	doesn't say	OPT	8	8	1	7	0	0	OCHA
87	April 20	14	Ecuador	3	2	4	3	60	40	UN
88	April 2 - 8	7	OPT	3	9	1	7	0	0	OCHA
89	April 23	doesn't say	Gaza	2	6	3	7	70	30	OCHA
90	April 15 - 21	7	Province Orientale (sic)	3	3	3	4	50	50	OCHA
91	April 16 - 22	7	Sud Kivu	3	2	4	4	10	90	OCHA
92	April 23	doesn't say	Chad	2	4	3	3	95	10	OCHA
93	April 23	doesn't say	Chad	2	3	5	3	10	0	OCHA
94	April 13 - 19	7	Sudan	3	5	3	4	90	10	UN
95	April 10	7	Sudan	2	3	3	4	70	30	OCHA
96	April 24	7	Sudan	2	3	3	3	60	30	OCHA
97	March 1 - 31	31	Central & East Africa	1	2	2	3	95	10	OCHA
98	April 14 - 20	7	Burundi	2	2	3	3	90	10	OCHA
99	April 18 - 24	7	RDC	2	2	3	4	40	60	OCHA
100	April 5 - 21	17	Colombia	5	3	1	8	30	70	OCHA
101	April 16 - 22	7	Katanga	2	3	4	4	30	70	OCHA
102	April 16 - 25	10	Somalia	1	1	1	4	60	40	OCHA
			AVERAGE	2.8	4.0	2.5	5.0	53.3	23.9	17 UN
			'SITREP' IN TITLE	3.1	4.1	3.2	5.8	60.0	23.1	2 UN
			'NO SITREP IN TITLE'	2.7	4.0	2.3	4.8	51.4	24.6	15 UN

101 Document Analysis – 4

#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	N - C (5)	SITREP IN TITLE?	ALT NAME	BINARY						
							C - A (6)	GAPS (7)	ENG (8)	# PAGES	MAPS	S or G (9)	CONTACT (10)
1	March 9-15	7	Sudan	C	N	weekly bulletin	C	N	Y	6	N	s	Y
2	March 1-17	17	Nepal	C	N	fortnightly situation overview	C	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
3	27 Feb - 4 Mar	7	OPT	C	N	tection of civilians weekly re	C	N	Y	28	N	g	Y
4	March 19	doesn't say	Kazakhstan	N	Y	-	A	Y	Y	4	N	s	Y
5	March 7-17	10	Colombia	C	Y	humanitarian situation repor	C	N	Y	4	Y	g	Y
6	March 20	doesn't say	Somalia	C	Y	-	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
7	March 5-11	7	OPT	C	N	tection of civilians weekly re	C	N	Y	21	N	g	Y
8	February	29	OPT	C	N	ion of civilians summary data	C	N	Y	19	Y	g	Y
9	March 12-18	7	Katanga	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	8	N	both	N
10	March 10-16	7	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
11	March 21	doesn't say	Albania	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	3	N	neither	Y
12	March 20	doesn't say	Southern Africa	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	8	Y	g	Y
13	March 11-17	7	Province Orientale	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	N	N	3	N	both	N
14	March 25?	doesn't say	Bolivia	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	2	N	g	N
15	March 15-21	7	DR Congo	C	N	humanitarian situation update	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
16	March 18-23	6	Province Orientale	C	N	humanitaire - rapport hebdo	C	N	N	2	N	g	N
16b	March 26	doesn't say	Albania	N	Y	-	A	Y	Y	3	Y	neither	Y
17	March 19-25	7	Sud Kivu	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	5	N	both	N
18	March 20-26	7	Kenya	C	N	humanitarian update	A	N	Y	6	N	s	Y
19	March 24-28	5	Zimbabwe	C	Y	weekly situation report	A	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
20	March 19-25	7	Katanga	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	5	N	g	N
21	March 8-27	20	C Province Centre/Ou	C	N	humanitaire - rapport hebdo	C	Y	N	4	N	both	Y
22	March 17-23	7	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	1	N	s	N
23	March 27	1	Ethiopia	N	Y	-	A	Y	Y	4	N	g	Y
24	March 12-18	7	OPT	C	N	tection of civilians weekly re	C	N	Y	20	N	g	Y
25	March 28	doesn't say	Southern Africa	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	5	Y	g	Y
26	March 17-20	4	RDC	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	N	N	3	N	both	N
27	March 28	doesn't say	OPT	C	N	humanitarian situation update	C	Y	Y	4	N	both	Y
28	March 27	7	Darfur	C	N	humanitarian action weekly bull	C	Y	Y	4	N	both	Y
29	February 28	doesn't say	Madagascar	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
30	March 18-31	14	Nepal	C	N	fortnightly situation overview	C	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
31	April 1	doesn't say	Tajikistan	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	5	Y	s	Y
32	March 31	doesn't say	in America & Caribbe	both	N	weekly note on emergencies	C	N	Y	3	N	both	Y
33	March 25-31	7	DC Province Orienta	C	N	humanitaire - rapport hebdo	C	N	N	3	N	both	N
34	April 2	doesn't say	Iraq	C	Y	humanitarian situation repor	C	N	Y	2	N	both	N
35	April 1	doesn't say	Ecuador	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	6	Y	s	Y
36	March 26 - April	7	Katanga	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	8	N	s	N
37	April 3	29	Gaza	C	N	humanitarian fact sheet	C	N	Y	3	N	s	Y
38	April 3	31	West Africa	both	Y	monthly situation report	C	Y	Y	9	Y	both	Y
39	March 23-29	7	Southern Sudan	C	N	kly bulletin - humanitarian ad	C	Y	Y	6	N	s	Y
40	March 28 - April	7	Congo	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	Y	3	N	both	Y

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#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	BINARY									
				N - C (5)	SITREP IN TITLE?	ALT NAME	C - A (6)	GAPS (7)	ENG (8)	# PAGES	MAPS	S or G (9)	CONTACT (10)
41	March 22 - 28	7	North Kivu	C	N	humanitarian situation update	C	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
42	March 24 - 30	7	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	2	N	neither	N
43	March 27 - April	7	Kenya	C	N	humanitarian update	A	N	Y	6	N	s	Y
44	March 19-25	7	OPT	C	N	protection of civilians weekly report	C	N	Y	20	N	both	Y
45	March 29 - April	7	Zimbabwe	C	Y	weekly situation report	A	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
46	April	doesn't say	Africa	neither	N	pastoralist voices	neither	N	Y	4	Y	neither	Y
47	March 26 - April	7	OPT	C	N	protection of civilians weekly report	C	N	Y	20	N	g	Y
48	April 7	doesn't say	Ethiopia	C	N	humanitarian bulletin	C	N	Y	2	N	s	N
49	April 7	50	Timor-Leste	C	N	humanitarian update	C	N	Y	14	N	s	Y
50	March 30 - April	6	Southern Sudan	C	N	weekly bulletin	C	N	Y	5	N	s	Y
51	March	31	Somalia	both	N	humanitarian overview	C	N	Y	4	Y	s	Y
52	March 31 - April	8	DC Province Oriental	C	N	humanitaire - rapport hebdomadaire	C	N	N	3	N	both	N
53	April 10	doesn't say	Southern Africa	N	Y	-	A	N	Y	3	Y	neither	Y
54	MISSING												
55	April 2 - 8	7	Katanga	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	9	N	both	N
56	April 2 - 8	7	Sud Kivu	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	5	N	both	N
57	April 4 - 10	7	5 Provinces Centre-Orientales	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	4	N	both	Y
58	March 31 - April	7	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	1	N	s	N
59	April 11	doesn't say	Somalia	C	Y	-	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
60	April 3-9	7	Kenya	C	N	humanitarian update	A	N	Y	8	N	s	Y
61	April 7 - 11	5	RDC	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	N	N	2	N	both	N
62	March 1 - 31	31	Uganda	C	Y	humanitarian situation report	C	N	Y	6	N	both	Y
63	April 1 - 14	14	Nepal	C	N	fortnightly situation overview	C	N	Y	4	N	s	Y
64	same as 63												
65	Feb 20 - March	14	OPT	C	N	of the agreement on movement	C	N	Y	8	N	g	Y
66	no date	doesn't say	doesn't say!	N	Y	-	A		Y	2	N	both	N
67	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	C	N	bulletin d'information hebdomadaire	C	N	N	3	N	s	Y
68	same as 67, but in English												
69	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	C	N	humanitarian action snapshot report	C	Y	Y	5	N	s	Y
70	April 15	doesn't say	Sadr City, Baghdad	C	Y	-	C	N	Y	3	Y	s	N
71	April 6 - 12	7	Southern Sudan	C	N	weekly bulletin	C	Y	Y	6	N	s	N
72	April 16	doesn't say	RDC	N	Y	rapport de situation	A	N	N	2	N	s	Y
73	same as 72, but in English												
74	April 16	doesn't say	Tajikistan	N	Y	-	A	Y	Y	4	N	s	Y
75	Feb - March	doesn't say	Iraq	C	N	UN ERF and NGO micro-grants	C	N	Y	6	Y	both	Y
76	April 17	7	Darfur	C	N	humanitarian action weekly bulletin	C	N	Y	4	N	both	Y

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#	DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	BINARY									
				N - C (5)	SITREP IN TITLE?	ALT NAME	C - A (6)	GAPS (7)	ENG (8)	# PAGES	MAPS	S or G (9)	CONTACT (10)
76	March 5 - 18	14	OPT	C	N	of the agreement on movem	C	N	Y	8	N	g	Y
77	April 16	doesn't say	Chad	C	N	tion humanitaire: fair et chiffe	C	Y	N	4	N	s	Y
78	April 18	doesn't say	Uganda	C	N	joint factsheet	C	N	Y	2	N	both	Y
79	April 10 - 16	7	Kenya	C	N	humanitarian update	A	N	Y	7	Y	s	Y
80	April 18	doesn't say	Somalia	C	Y	-	C	N	Y	1	N	neither	Y
81	April 18	31	Gaza	C	N	humanitarian fact sheet	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
82	March	31	Somalia	C	N	monthly cluster report	C	Y	Y	7	Y	s	Y
83	April 17	doesn't say	Gaza	C	Y	humanitarian situation repor	A	N	Y	3	N	s	Y
84	April 7 - 12	6	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	2	N	s	Y
85	April 22	doesn't say	Burundi	C	N	update on insecurity	C	N	Y	1	N	g	N
86	April	doesn't say	OPT	C	N	socio-economic fact sheet	C	N	Y	14	N	s	N
87	April 20	14	Ecuador	N	Y	-	A	N	N	5	N	s	N
88	April 2 - 8	7	OPT	C	N	tection of civilians weekly re	C	N	Y	20	N	both	Y
89	April 23	doesn't say	Gaza	C	Y	-	A	N	Y	2	N	s	N
90	April 15 - 21	7	Province Orientale (sic)	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	2	N	both	N
91	April 16 - 22	7	Sud Kivu	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	3	N	s	N
92	April 23	doesn't say	Chad	C	N	weekly information bulletin	C	Y	Y	4	N	s	Y
93	April 23	doesn't say	Chad	C	N	etin d'information hebdomad	C	Y	N	3	N	s	Y
94	April 13 - 19	7	Sudan	C	N	weekly bulletin	C	Y	Y	4	N	s	Y
95	April 10	7	Sudan	C	N	humanitarian action weekly bull	C	N	Y	2	N	both	Y
96	April 24	7	Sudan	C	N	humanitarian action weekly bull	C	N	Y	4	N	both	Y
97	March 1 - 31	31	Central & East Africa	C	N	regional humanitarian update	C	Y	Y	4	Y	both	Y
98	April 14 - 20	7	Burundi	C	N	weekly humanitarian news	C	N	Y	2	N	s	N
99	April 18 - 24	7	RDC	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	3	N	both	Y
##	April 5 - 21	17	Colombia	C	Y	humanitarian situation repor	C	N	Y	3	Y	both	Y
##	April 16 - 22	7	Katanga	C	N	situation humanitaire	C	Y	N	10	N	both	N
##	April 16 - 25	10	Somalia	C	Y	-	C	N	Y	1	N	neither	Y

Annex 4: User-centered Design

The following sections outline the phases OCHA might pursue in the course of a user-centered design process.

Phase 1: Analysis

The initial phase would build on the research we have already done to create design documents and specifications to guide further work.

1.1 Identify the Users

Who are the users? As our research has made clear, this is by no means a simple question. A user-centered approach requires a comprehensive understanding of each type of user within the system, grouped by needs and prioritized by OCHA. While our project to date includes significant groundwork for this step, further research is needed to fully understand the actual makeup of the sitrep audience and the full range of field staff involved in the reporting process.

PROCESS

In addition to further interviews, research methods that may be useful in this phase include a survey sent to recipients on the sitrep distribution lists and an analysis of list members in both the Lotus Notes system and ReliefWeb.

DELIVERABLES

- A comprehensive list of user groups, including priorities assigned by OCHA.

1.2 Identify the Users' Needs

What does each identified group need and desire from sitreps, and how well are they served by the process as it stands? Our research to date, along with the IM review, has largely addressed this question as it pertains to headquarters staff, but there are significant gaps in our (and OCHA's) understanding of the needs of both sitrep audiences and field staff. Further investigation should provide a clear picture of the many different ways each user group may interact with sitreps and their stated or implicit needs.

PROCESS

More interviews with donors and other sitrep recipients at both the international level and the field level, possibly in conjunction with the survey mentioned above, could offer a much more robust picture of audience needs. For the case of field staff, in addition to more interviews, visits to one or more field offices could help to flesh out the picture of how sitreps are currently produced.

DELIVERABLES

- Prioritized needs for each group in the list produced in Phase 1.1.
- User profiles, i.e. descriptions of fictional users whose needs and context represent generalized versions of real members of each user group.
- User scenarios, describing different use cases that may apply to each user group.

1.3 Identify Criteria for Success

What are the key benefits we aim to offer to each user group? To what extent can we propose and benchmark criteria for success for each benefit? Examples might

include improvements in subjective measures of audience satisfaction, reduction in time spent by OCHA staff producing and disseminating sitreps, or availability of previously unattainable data for analysis.

PROCESS

Working closely with interview data and the prioritized needs from Phase 1.2, identify the specific benefits the redesign process can reasonably offer to each user group. For each benefit, list at least one measurable criterion that could be used to assess the success of that goal. Data from interviews and the survey mentioned in Phase 1 might offer some baselines against which future measures could be compared; where such benchmarks are lacking, we may need to establish them through further interviews or surveys. Once benefits and criteria for success are established, they should be confirmed with representative users from each respective group and revised as necessary.

DELIVERABLES

- A list of benefits the design process aims to offer to each user group
- At least one criterion for success for each benefit.
- Current baseline measures, where possible, for each criterion.

Phase 2: Creating a Better Format

The design documents from Phase 1 would provide the basis for a redesign process for the format itself. While not the end goal, solidifying a better static format for the sitrep document is an intermediate step that could offer real benefits, especially to recipients; form the basis for a standardized format that could be shared with other organizations; provide and test an example of what an integrated system should produce; and highlight those needs that a static document may not be able to address.

2.1 Initial Prototypes & Testing

Starting with a variety of prototypes allows users to see the range of possibilities under consideration.

PROCESS

Based on the needs and benefits outlined for different groups of sitrep recipients in the previous phase, develop a variety of different document formats and create example reports with content from existing sitreps. Work with a range of sitrep recipients to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype formats.

DELIVERABLES

- Notes on the strengths and weaknesses of each prototype, focusing on common themes
- One to three refined versions of the prototypes users liked best

2.2 Field Testing

Getting reactions from field staff can help further refine the formats and identify problems or missing elements.

PROCESS

Either in person or remotely, work with field staff to evaluate and improve the refined prototype formats. Ask staff in several ongoing emergencies to switch to the new format, and follow up to learn their reactions and help address any problems or

concerns they have encountered. Potentially conduct a short survey of the recipients of these sitreps to assess any reaction to the change. Revise the format as necessary to address these evaluations.

DELIVERABLES

- A single refined format, possibly with variations appropriate to different reporting needs
- Documented input from key stakeholders in the field on the benefits and potential challenges of the new format.

2.3 Develop Guidelines

Preparing and testing clear guidelines for the use of the new format can help to ensure its use in the field.

PROCESS

Based on the initial needs assessment and the feedback from field staff and recipients, create simple, clear guidelines explaining the different elements of the new format and offering advice on how to fill them out, including an explanation of recipient needs and how the format meets them. Test the guidelines with staff who have not written sitreps, asking them to create a report with the new format. Refine the guidelines based on their feedback.

DELIVERABLES

- Short, simple guidelines to accompany the new format.

2.4 Rollout

Roll the new format out to the different field offices. Emphasize the participatory approach used in its development and the needs the new format will address. Solicit feedback, making it clear the format can still be refined, and test against the agreed criteria.

Phase 3: Toward an Integrated System

As noted in the IM Review, a technical approach that could integrate the process of sitrep creation with other OCHA systems has the potential to provide a better interface for authoring sitreps, facilitate faster and more accurate information sharing both inside and outside of OCHA, and disaggregate the information in each report to allow for easier analysis and custom reports.

As we have found in our research, however, such a project may also meet with resistance from staff in the field if it imposes constraints on their work or fails to demonstrably improve the process of reporting. Field staff may feel dubious of the benefits a new system could offer to their work, concerned about its reliability in critical situations, or threatened by technology perceived as shifting more power to headquarters. Without adoption at the field level, the benefits of an integrated system will be impossible to realize.

These considerations provide a strong argument for a flexible, iterative design process focused on the context and needs of staff in the field and engaging the participation of individuals in multiple country offices. Efforts should be made to find and address exceptions that test the new paradigm – what benefits could a new system offer to offices like OPT, where established, successful reporting processes tackle unusual requirements?

While it is outside the scope of this document to flesh out a full project plan for the implementation of an integrated system, the following steps briefly outline a potential design process.

3.1 Participatory Design Workshop

Bring users from different field offices together for a design session to brainstorm and create paper prototypes of desired features.

3.2 Low-Fidelity Prototypes

Create simple prototypes based on the results of the workshop and the earlier design documents.

3.3 Field Testing

Work with field staff to evaluate and refine the key features of the new prototypes. Is the interface clear? Are the features desirable?

3.4 Working Prototype

Create a working prototype that implements or simulates the key features of the design.

3.5 Field Testing

Work with field staff to evaluate the new prototype. Observe as they walk through standard tasks and note problems or potential improvements.

3.6 Revised Prototype

Revise the working prototype based on user feedback, fixing issues and implementing additional features. Test again and repeat if necessary.

3.7 Full Implementation

Implement fully working interface. Test again.

3.8 Limited Pilot

Roll out the new interface to one or two field staff who have been involved in the design process. Evaluate success against established criteria. Revise as needed.

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