



**Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi
United Nations' Integrated Office in Burundi**

BINUB

Bureau du Coordonnateur Humanitaire

Bujumbura, 28 October 2008

Dear Mr. Holmes

Subject: Confirmation on Cluster approach arrangement in Burundi

With reference to my letter of 18 August 2008, our teleconference on 8 October, and very much based on important Humanitarian reform workshop held on 24-25 September, I am pleased to share with you our recommendations and confirmed the interest of UN Agencies and several international NGOs to formalize the cluster arrangements within the context of the UN Integrated operations in Burundi.

Although we have not had formal clusters until now, key principles of the cluster approach are already being applied in the existing integrated Theme Groups. This came about largely as the need of our ongoing efforts to adapt coordination mechanisms to the peculiar post-conflict and recovery environment in Burundi. The discussion in the workshop was therefore particularly important in highlighting the importance of ensuring that the integrated approach should include in a more explicit manner other more emergency and humanitarian responses that may need early coordinated action.

In my earlier letter, I outlined the current setup for sector leads which also does involve a lead role in emergency situations: FAO (agriculture), UNICEF (nutrition, water/sanitation and education), WHO (health). Furthermore, together with the Government, we set up an ad-hoc Integrated Commission for Repatriation and Reintegration which constitutes a UN-Government-Donors strategic forum under the chairmanship of the Minister for National Solidarity, Human Rights, Gender and Reconstruction, Human Rights and Gender.

With the establishment of the Integrated Commission the important strategic links between the early recovery and protection objectives towards sustainable solutions have become even more apparent and we have therefore included both in the UN repatriation and reintegration theme group under UNDP and UNHCR leadership. In the context of a new humanitarian emergency, this group would, as needed, be the starting point for ensuring both the inter-sectorial lead in the development of the humanitarian response as well as addressing protection requirements.

Due to an improving security situation and gradual stabilization throughout the country, others sectors can be activated. WFP has expressed its willingness to lead logistics and emergency telecommunication clusters in case of an emergency.

As earlier indicated, the operation in Burundi involves a highly participatory approach, not only between the UN agencies but also with key partners such as, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, key donors on ad-hoc basis (mainly ECHO, DFID, as well as the Belgian, Dutch embassies) and RESO (a federation of international NGOs working in Burundi). During a meeting on 15 October, to endorse the cluster arrangements under my leadership, participants were unanimous in seeing the clusters activated in case of new serious emergency requiring additional support to the Government.

The RC/HC's office will be supported by a small humanitarian unit which will continue to provide regular monitoring and reporting, play an important role in information sharing and management and assist me in activating timely UN humanitarian response in case of emergency.

Let me finish this letter by once more stressing the importance focus of the joint UN program that is being developed for the benefit of war affected population to facilitate their sustainable socio-economic reintegration at the community level, in ensuring the recognition of the linkages between humanitarian and early recovery efforts.

We very much welcome that UNDP/BCPR has agreed to appoint an Early Recovery Advisor, and an integrated early Recovery/humanitarian team to be part of the RC/HC office in order to better integrate these linkages in our approach.

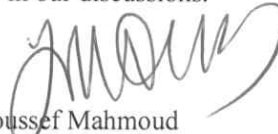
Because of climate change, chronic food insecurity, the nature of the terrain in Burundi and the limited capacities of the government, we are increasingly realizing that humanitarian emergencies are no longer exceptional occurrences, and therefore humanitarian dimensions (including disaster preparedness, management should be integrated into all key or sensitive peacebuilding, early recovery and development activities. The Government (namely the National Committee for the Coordination of Aid) and my office have agreed not to create additional levels of coordination for the above but to integrate these humanitarian dimensions into existing relevant sector groups of the PRSP.

Please note that the following arrangements are currently in place for the humanitarian operations in Burundi:

| <i>Sector</i> | <i>Lead agency (in support of Government)</i> |
|---|---|
| Agriculture/Food Security | FAO |
| Reintegration and Early Recovery/Protection | UNDP/UNHCR |
| Education | UNICEF |
| Health | WHO |
| Nutrition | UNICEF |
| Water, Sanitation & Hygiene | UNICEF |

For your information, a revision of the Inter Agency Contingency Planning under the co-leadership of the Civil Defence Office (Protection Civile) and my Office will take place on 5 – 6 November 2008. Our aim is to ensure a fully transparent and participatory process involving key humanitarian partners (including regional ones) as well as the Government. Impact in Burundi of the troubling situation in Eastern of DR Congo will prominently feature in our discussions.

Yours sincerely,



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for Burundi

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