



Evaluation of Regional Humanitarian Work in West Africa

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Introduction

A regional humanitarian programme review was undertaken in the Oxfam GB (OGB) West Africa Regional Management Centre (WARMC) from 5 October to the 2 November 2007. The Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC) requested the review. This is part of an ongoing effort to improve programme quality through regular cycles of reviews and feeding into the next phase of strategy development. The aim is to improve the effectiveness and coherence West Africa regional humanitarian work.

Methodology

The current review employed a combination of methods for data triangulation. The methodology of the regional humanitarian strategy evaluation or review consisted of mainly a qualitative data analysis in the process utilising the following data collection methods: documents review and interviews (face to face and telephone interviews). To wrap up the review process, a debriefing session was held with some members of the WARMC RMT to review and present the main findings from the data analysis and recommendations for the future development of the regional humanitarian strategy.

Overview of Results

The regional humanitarian strategy implemented by the RHT is successful in many areas. A number of highlights among these successes were:

- As part of ongoing advisory support, there is high level and good quality support being provided to the country programmes.
- Appreciation amongst its constituency with respect to building of local capacity to respond to emergencies through the development of the humanitarian rapid deployment register.
- Good reputation in terms of technical coordination with regional stakeholders such as the UN agencies and donors this includes participation in technical working groups such as the food and nutrition group and the CAP process.

However, the successful implementation of the regional humanitarian strategy has faced some challenges which include among them:

- Limited in-country capacity to implement early warning systems despite several attempts to the implementation of these.
- Absence of regional PH capacity to sufficiently support in-country water and sanitation programming including technical representation of the organization in regional water and sanitation meetings.
- Slow progress on the contingency planning process despite the lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the OI contingency planning process.

Strong support was expressed amongst review respondents regarding the focus of the RHT in future in the following areas:

- Emphasis on the integration of crosscutting issues into humanitarian programmes.
- Emergency preparedness in terms of the contingency planning process and further strengthening the capacity of the countries to respond to emergencies.
- Leadership role in defining the critical importance of disaster risk reduction in both humanitarian and development contexts including the development of an all-inclusive regional disaster risk reduction strategy.

- PH support in line with OGB global organization priorities such as the public health growth initiative and the increase in funding from donors such as ECHO in long-term water and sanitation activities.

The West Africa RHT team should be commended for efforts made over the past 3 years to streamline, restructure and initiate activities aimed at delivering quality humanitarian programmes in the region. These efforts should be supported if the region is to achieve its 2010 vision, “By 2010 30% of country programmes will have significantly integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into their programmes, we will be capable and able to scale up to and manage all category 2 crisis with regional resources alone, and regional, country and HD dialogue will promote timely and appropriate support to our all our programmes”¹. However, to play this broader strategic role, the RHT needs to continue engaging with the country teams in ongoing emergency preparedness efforts activities through the strengthening of the rapid deployment register and country contingency planning, building regional technical PH capacity including engaging with wider organisational initiatives.

¹ West Africa Humanitarian Team off-site, 24 – 26 July.

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