

District Task Team Meeting

19 September 2008

Meeting Notes

Duncan Breen, from CoRMSA: introduction and explanation that he is observing meetings to learn something from how the Western Cape is doing. Explained a bit of how the process went in Gauteng, etc.

I. Conditions Update

a. Bluewaters (B)

- i. Nothing new, still the same bad conditions
- ii. No extra people and no one has left
- iii. Reintegration – Cape Town Refugee Centre, UNHCR and UNICEF visit
 1. Most people didn't go because they didn't understand what was happen
 2. No direct information on what the packages are
 3. Most of the people did not go because they did not understand it
 4. Ready to give R750; the head of household needs to find a place and get banking info from the landlord and they will deposit the money

b. Bluewaters (C)

- i. Conditions are worse and worse
- ii. Tents are blowing away and leaking
- iii. Food not adequate for the small children and old people
 1. No milk
 2. Somalis want to be repatriated, infighting and competition over cards given
 - a. Arrest 17 in camp this morning because there is fighting amongst groups
- iv. Mobile toilet but no shower – to take a shower you must go to site B
- v. Still no privacy in the large tent
- vi. There is no order, everyone is doing what they want to do

c. Harmony Park

- i. Weather
 1. Water was passing through the tents, inside the tent; even if reinforced
 2. Mattresses soaked
 3. Wind gets through the tent easily; very cold
- ii. For the first time in 3 weeks 20g of soap were divided up
- iii. Volunteers set up a **school**; started as a preschool
 1. All children in one place; no grades or separation for children of different ages

- iv. This goes against what the MEC spoke about the importance of having children leave the camp and go to an actual school.
- v. Most of the children refuse to go to the school on site because of the lack of grade separation
- vi. 4 days ago they asked for CVs of IDPs in the camp to find qualified teachers to teach at the camp
- vii. TB/HIV patient:
 - 1. ARVs were not initiated because now he says that he wants to go back to Mozambique – letter – HOPE to follow up to find sites to access treatment in Mozambique

d. Youngsfield

- i. Access Cards
- ii. Counting people tent to tent; taking people's names
 - 1. Are not disclosing why they are doing this.
- iii. Fight last week between Congolese and Somalis over a cell phone
 - 1. Leadership should be consulted and asked to help mediate problems and not just have police arrest people.
- iv. Small container for central food but there is only one person who has access and there are allegations that she is taking the supplies
 - 1. FATIMA: we need names, times, dates, witnesses, how to contact the witness in order to lodge a formal complaint
 - 2. Leaders want to be involved to ensure proper quantities arrived.
 - 3. Children are not getting what they are supposed to get.
 - 4. Leadership believes that the key should be held by the site manager and he should liaise with leadership to get access to supplies
- v. Children still not going to school, there is no transport to the Wynberg area schools as the MEC has promised.

e. Other Updates/Issues

- 1. REINTEGRATION in BWs (yesterday): Zimbabweans were told that this was not a process that Zimbabweans were taking part of.... Then they were told that they could be a part
 - a. UNHCR is going to go through a particular process for Zimbabweans
 - b. *Write to Province about forcing people out of camps within 48 hours*
 - i. Inquire about why community development workers are being involved and not social workers (who Trauma Centre said must to assess people)
 - ii. SAHRC to convene/facilitate a meeting between CTRC, refugee leadership, UNHCR and others
- ii. JOC Update

1. Tuesday is usual JOC meeting
 - a. Told Natasha that there were no more meetings. Only cluster group meetings....
2. After press conference Thursday we were “re-invited”
 - a. At the Friday JOC we were told that the CS Report was written in bad faith and that there are several issues that were not brought to the JOC in the report. JOC officials upset.
 - b. Fatima: must be made clear that we are not under any duty to consult them before we issue reports. We sent letters about the issues that were raised and they did not respond

II. DHA Rapid Assessment Process

- a. DHA are coming in the camps (after Monday)
 - i. Told us that we would be told when they coming, BEFORE they start coming to camps
 1. Told us that they would be setting up on the weekend preparing to start next week. NO INTERVIEWS BEFORE MONDAY
 - ii. Fast-tracking the determination of your status
 - iii. Not compulsory – it is completely voluntary to participate
 1. If people choose not to get documented they may have to deal with being undocumented or waiting in the long queues at RROs
 - iv. If you already have status you do not have to go through with the interview again
 - v. UCT Law Clinic, LRC, AIDS Law Project, SAHRC, PASSOP, LHR (in JHB) to consult
 - vi. They have given us assurances that there will be:
 1. Civil Society will be able to observe
 2. There must be interpreters in the interviewees’ language of choice
 3. Prepare pamphlets this weekend (hopefully in different languages) about the process and what DHA is doing
 - vii. Civil Society is preparing a document about the legal rights... will be given this weekend
 - viii. Make sure that there is a monitor, mention that there is clarification about right to appeal
 - ix. If you are rejected:
 1. You CAN appeal
 2. Can’t be deported, taken to holding cell until your entire process is over – the appeal process can take a very long time
 3. At appeal hearing, you have the right to ask for a lawyer

- a. they do not have enough lawyers for the possibility of denying everyone
- x. Have arranged that the mobile unit to stay after work hours so the those who work can still participate in the process
- xi. They should be making available photocopying facilities to assist with the appeal process.
- xii. The Deputy-Director General gave an assurance that there will be **no shortcuts**, and everyone's rights will be respected
 - 1. All processes will be followed.
- xiii. Zimbabweans
 - 1. If you are a political refugee, recognize the deal, but remind the interviewers that it will be a while before things will be stable.
 - 2. Clarification needed from UNHCR and HA regarding any special terms regarding reintegration assistance and status.
- xiv. When the mobile units begin the process there will be people from UCT Law and civil society to answer questions and help.
- xv. People must understand what a refugee is and understand what they are applying for:
 - 1. Gauteng info: don't be afraid to ask more questions and make sure
 - a. *Refugee status is about telling a story in 2 ways: why have you left your country and why you can't go back (i.e. your life is in danger)*
 - b. Many people applied again for refugee status because they were told that they could get papers (in Gauteng)
- xvi. 1 hour workshop after meeting about rights and the process
 - 1. Leadership will work with Duncan about the process of the interviews and what people must know they have a right to during the whole process from interview to appeal
 - 2. Important to ensure the information to get back to the people in the camps
 - 3. Pamphlets to be finalized

III. Press Conference

- a. Conditions Report
 - i. Civil society released update on the conditions
 - ii. Compiled by different organizations
- b. Role of UN
 - i. Discussion of the UNHCR Press statement responding to civil society criticism
 - ii. Everyone in the camp should write a page or two statements about how the UNHCR has helped or not helped them.

1. Civil Society will forward this to the UN in Geneva with formal complaint and request for investigation
2. Will provide supplies: pen and paper

IV. Outstanding Issues

- a. The leadership needs to be a part of the delivery of supplies so they know how much was delivered. Important to be aware of supply quantities. (*Natasha to raise with Hildegard Fast; Leadership to raise this issue with site management*).
- b. Education as possible protest action.
 - i. Teryn will follow up with MEC Gabru
- c. Reintegration in Gauteng
 - i. Jesuit Refugee Centre (Gauteng equivalent of CTRC) gives some funds to help with reintegration; but in Gauteng they expect people to leave the camp immediately.
- d. Cape Town Refugee Centre
 - i. Should have come to explain what the assistance meant and what it was about: terms/conditions
 - ii. Letters to CTRC have been sent but there has been no response about what the role on CTRC
 - iii. Have been disingenuous about their role in the crisis
 1. A letter was not responded to in a meaningful way; unknown how much was given by UNHCR, after questioning this role, CTRC stopped attending meeting.
 2. Their role: they have been initiated the reintegration interviews (at request of Province) knowing full well that there had been no consultation about what accepting the money meant
 - iv. *REFUGEE REPORT INTIMIDATION*: UNICEF Lady said that the camps will be closed very soon and if you don't get interviewed now, then there won't be any assistance after they leave
 1. UNICEF was training community development workers
 - a. NANCY was the name of one of the people training the community development workers
 2. Should have materials or time to brief.
 3. Community Development workers helping with the Province's Reintegration Program, of which CTRC is a part.
 - a. Once you get the money; there is a 48 hour cap on remaining in the camp
 4. Government using UNHCR and UNICEF to facilitate getting people to leave the camp.
 - v. **Maybe another letter to CTRC.**