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**Review of the Humanitarian Situation
and DFID-funded Operations in the
Lower South Area of Iraq**

23 July 2003

(DFID-Basrah)

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1) INTRODUCTION:

This paper, prepared by the DFID team in Basrah, seeks to provide a snapshot of the general situation in the lower south of Iraq (Missan, Thiqr, Muthana and Basrah governorates). It analyses the needs of the population, from a humanitarian and reconstruction perspective, alongside ongoing interventions funded by DFID to meet those needs by the multiple players contributing to the reconstruction process. It is the result of a rapid monitoring exercise that DFID-Basrah has undertaken over the period of one week only. It was also limited, both by time and security constraints, to interviews in Basrah city alone, and did not permit a wider assessment of field realities in the other governorates. Nevertheless, a consistent and reliable overview of the situation has been gained from extensive meetings with the following partners and agencies: CPA-South, UK-military, technical directorates, UNOHCI, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNHCR, UNDP, IOM, UNOHCHR, UNJLC, UNSECOORD, ICRC, IMC, GOAL, ACTED, PINF, WarChild, Premier Urgence, CRS, SCF, RI, MDM, MSF.

As it is widely agreed that the humanitarian phase of the Iraq operation has rapidly passed, DFID-Basrah is withdrawing its current humanitarian team from the lower south. Since their primary role has been, to-date, to facilitate capacity-building within CPA-S, this exercise represents the first comprehensive operational monitoring exercise undertaken by DFID in the lower south since the conflict. It should serve as a baseline upon which future evaluations can build, and should provide insight and guidance as to how additional humanitarian resources might be channelled in the immediate future.

2) SITUATION OVERVIEW:

a) Political:

The recent political situation in the lower south has been one of dramatic flux and complexity, as multiple bodies have proliferated to fill the apparent vacuum left after the demise of the former regime. Of course, the concept of a post-Saddam vacuum is somewhat inaccurate. Even after the purges of de-Ba'athification, much capacity and competence remains in public administration and public services. However, the focal link which bound it all together has been erased, and thus the entire system is searching for form, at local, governorate and national level.

The most critical structure that is attempting to bring form and capacity to the system is the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), established by the occupying powers of the military coalition that overthrew the former regime. In Basrah, this consists of a "regional" CPA-South office, originally designed to preside over the four governorates of the lower south. CPA-S has, over the past 2 months, had priority attention and support in building its capacity to meet the strategic challenges of the entire lower south. However, recognising that such a federal model is too much of a dramatic departure from the pre-existing centralised (Stalinist) model of government,

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and needing to treat each governorate equitably, the CPA model has recently shifted. Now CPA-Baghdad plans to deal directly with each governorate, through planned CPA Governorate Coordination Teams (GCTs), and lines of authority, policy and budgetary support will theoretically flow directly between them. CPA-S will continue to exist, but as a regional hub for technical and coordination capacity to be shared between all four governorates, and without explicit authority. Such a dramatic change in direction typifies the uncertain and ad-hoc evolution of the CPA in Iraq, and whilst eminently sensible, poses an entirely new set of challenges in terms of establishing and staffing the other governorate offices, and ensuring that four offices rather than just one receive adequate support and guidance from Baghdad. To date, CPA-S's biggest shortcomings have stemmed from: its lack of technical capacity to engage with counterpart directorates and priority sectoral activities (much improved recently); its rapid turnover of staff with only limited relevant international experience (also improving); the disconnect between Basrah and Baghdad on information, policy, budget support and coordination. These same problems could apply fourfold with the establishment of four separate governorate CPA offices, and whilst the lessons learnt and the resources brought in to CPA-S (such that it now has form and momentum) should inform and support the establishment of effective GCTs, the expansion of CPA into the other governorates is still at an embryonic and unpredictable stage.

The critical link for the CPA in terms of their political integrity is with the newly appointed Iraqi Interim Council. In Basrah, this council has been a carefully nurtured and highly publicised entity, whilst in other governorates the councils have formed more organically and indigenously in the absence of largescale CPA presence. The council is subdivided into a Political Council and a Technical Council, the former to advise and decide on the political process, the latter to support the technical directorates and the reconstruction process. The head of the Basrah Interim Council was also recently elected, and effectively sits as Governor of Basrah. There is concern that his profession as a Judge compromises a desired separation of powers. CPA-S has made a great noise over the democratic progress that the formation of these councils represents. However, how they are really empowered, the real level of authority that they have, and the degree to which they are truly representational, are all highly contentious issues. There is certainly a risk that if CPA-S over-inflates the significance of the Councils, then it will raise the democratic expectations of the population, which then might be dangerously frustrated as the more pragmatic realities emerge. How CPA handles and works with the Councils in the other governorates where it has had less influence over the processes, is another critical concern.

In terms of its operational capacity to fulfil its obligations and meet the basic needs of the population, CPA's key link is with the Iraqi directorates (arms of the sectoral ministries) in the southern governorates. Different directorates are in differing states of functionality, depending on the extent to which their senior management survived de-Ba'athification, their ability to elect interim or replacement leadership, and the degree of war damage and looting that affected their various premises and facilities. One pattern is consistently clear, however, which is that the directorates have become used to a highly centralised system of government, and they are not at all used to independent responsibility and initiative taking (highly reminiscent of post-Soviet Russia). Thus, the CPA at governorate level has a critical role to play in

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empowering directorates, building their capacities, and guiding them towards a position of decentralisation. In practice, CPA has been slow to engage effectively in the sustainable recovery and development of the directorates, pressured instead to meet the immediate needs of the population any which way, cobbling together the diverse but poorly coordinated efforts of government departments, the military, the UN, NGOs etc. Emergency payments took precedence over formalising payrolls, and in effect most government employees in the Lower South are only now receiving their salaries for April, May and June. In many respects, a clearer delineation of post-conflict roles would have saved much time and effort, with, say, CPA focusing primarily on reactivating the directorates, their capacities and their services, and the military, the UN and NGOs concentrating on the short-term immediate needs. However, at least in Basrah governorate, progress is now being made in reviving and empowering the directorates. Overdue salaries are being paid, buildings and premises are starting to be rehabilitated, and directorates themselves are involved in their first proactive budgeting exercise for July-December, with the help of CPA-S. In the other governorates the same processes are ongoing, but without the same careful attention from CPA, and certainly without the same dedication of resources.

Short-term priorities in the political arena in the lower south are: devolution of CPA resources and attention more equitably to the other three governorates, through the rapid establishment of planned GCTs; strengthening of links between CPA-governorate offices and CPA-Baghdad; rapid staffing, housing, equipping and financing of technical directorates; focusing on directorates as points of coordination, and linking them to CPA decision-making processes; realistic presentation of the political process, and its challenges, to the population; more efficient and compatible interface and role definition between CPA and the UN.

Mid-term priorities on the political front include: linking directorates to the technical and interim councils; real and transparent involvement of interim and technical councils in CPA decision-making; civilianisation and internationalisation of CPA's orientation; fostering of continuity and institutional consistency within CPA; greater integration of Iraqis into CPA.

b) Security:

Inextricably linked to the political process, security in Basrah and the wider lower south remains the single most important factor that will determine progress in the region's reconstruction. The current security situation is at best fragile, at worst anarchic. An explosive mix of newly-liberated expectation, lack of basic needs, poor service provision, frustration, crime and looting, limited law and order capacity, gun-culture, revenge traditions and tribal differences all conspire to render the lower south an unpredictable and volatile security environment. To tackle this, priority attention must be dedicated to managing the population's expectations, improving the level of basic services, and imposing a stricter climate of law and order.

On a more positive note, given the south's Shia dominance, there is less of an indigenous threat from anti-coalition supporters of the former regime, compared to the centre and north. However, this reduced direct threat means that agencies

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operate in a more open and exposed manner, so the south could be seen as a soft-target for any determined anti-CF activity. In that context, the clear erosion and blurring of distinctions between different entities, in the eyes of the population, is a concern. Few Iraqis understand or care to note the differences between the US, the wider military CF, the CPA, the UN, the NGOs and even the Red Cross. A number of recent incidents have seen locals targeting their frustration at foreigners in general, regardless of their role or affiliation.

Whilst anti-coalition threats are comparably less in the lower south, crime is abundant, and becoming more organised. Powered by the proliferation of small arms, fuelled by opportunistic greed, antagonised by political or tribal enmity, and unchecked by any substantial capacity in policing and judicial processing, armed robberies, car-jackings, abductions and looting have all spiralled out of control since the conflict. Gun battles are commonplace, especially at night, and there is a risk of getting caught up, in the wrong place at the wrong time, or of being deliberately targeted once the association between foreigners and wealth is made. This environment has a double impact on the psyche of the Iraqi population. The persistent looting of equipment from essential facilities has seriously impeded the delivery of adequate electricity and water in to Basrah, which has generated serious frustration and resentment against the coalition. In addition, the abduction of key figures from the community has perpetuated a sense of fear and antagonised the frustration felt at the coalition's apparent lack of control. All these negative sentiments often find a natural outlet in further acts of protest, defiance, crime, or sabotage.

In spite of these fragilities, recent weeks have seen a number of improvements, and positive indicators. A fledgling Iraqi police force is now armed and on the streets of Basrah, albeit in initially small numbers. UK and Danish police are due to arrive to expand training and recruitment. The newly arrived UK 3-Div are taking a tougher stance on security, and have established checkpoints across the city which they man jointly with Iraqi police. The CPA has registered 7000 and mobilised 600 former River Police as armed security guards for public installations. The law courts are starting to function and the first criminals have been prosecuted and charged. Other indicators of progress and growing confidence in the community include the increasing volume of people (including women) and traffic on the streets, up until dark; the reopening of shops, restaurants and businesses; and tentative reconstruction of damaged private property.

The situation in the other governorate capitals is reported to be calmer than in Basrah, and no significant incidents affecting the international community have occurred with the exception of the isolated killing of UK forces in Missan in June. Crime and looting remain the key problems, but with greater community cohesion and control, smaller international presence, and less extensive damage to infrastructure and services, the atmosphere is less charged. On the roads around the lower south, however, numerous incidents of banditry have been reported, especially on the main northern highway between Safwan and Nasiriyah, so whilst security conditions in other towns are better than in Basrah, travel is still considered risky, and the lower south operation remains unduly focused on Basrah.

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Short-term priorities for security in the lower south include: rapid mobilisation, training and deployment of a core Iraqi police force; rapid increase in the capacity of the legal and judicial system; more extensive interim deployment of river guards to public facilities, supported by coalition forces taking a tougher stance on looters; management of community expectations through regular information and media campaigns; improved provision of services to meet basic needs (especially fuel, electricity, and water).

Mid-term priorities for security include; a deeper expansion and training of a substantive Iraqi police force, backed by adequate judicial capacity; disengagement of coalition military from law and order; development of free-press and civil society as checks on the police and legal systems; increasing sense of self rule, under good governance, for Iraqis.

c) Health:

The health services in the lower south can be summarised as an extensive and quite sophisticated network of primary, secondary and tertiary facilities, with good coverage over the majority of the population, but suffering from many years of structural neglect and insufficient resource allocation, with an inefficient and ineffective system of centralised management, and with outdated protocols and procedures. All this was antagonised by the upheaval that followed the recent conflict which saw extensive damage to property, looting of equipment, insecurity restricting access of both patients and staff, and the dissolution of established management structures.

In spite of these deficiencies in the health sector, and in spite of major shortcomings in the provision of clean water and sanitation throughout the vulnerable hot season, services have been sufficiently robust to prevent any major outbreak of disease. The emergence of a virulent epidemic strain of cholera vibrio has been successfully contained, with only 108 cases in the whole lower south reported since May, and no related deaths. This achievement, against the context, can not be underplayed, and demonstrates the inherent capacity of the health services, as well as the effective impact of multiple parties rallying together and pooling emergency resources around a critical issue, even in the absence of strong central leadership. Generally, the challenges facing the health sector are not of a humanitarian nature, but relate to reconstruction and development. Problems lie in the quality of service, rather than availability of service, and in its management and resourcing. Tangible gaps are noticeable at the more sophisticated end of the service spectrum, for instance with chronic diseases, oxygen supply, and complex laboratory procedures, rather than with basic essential needs.

From a humanitarian perspective, the public health risks arising from dilapidated and damaged power, water and sanitation systems, still present the greatest concern. The incidence of diarrhoeal disease increased by 68% in all four governorates combined throughout June, and with higher numbers of cases than in previous years, according to health professionals. However, in Basrah governorate alone, the last week of June saw a 25% reduction in diarrhoeal disease incidence compared to

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the previous week (from 2976 cases to 2221), and the first week of July has seen a levelling of cases in all governorates, suggesting, preliminarily, that recent improvements in urban water supply and sanitation might be beginning to bear fruit.

Regardless of recent trends, the public health threat remains high, and the key to controlling the situation lies in a rapid, reliable and responsive disease surveillance system. WHO and the Directorates of Health (DoH) have established an improvised sentinel site surveillance system which is currently receiving reports from 167 out of 174 enlisted health facilities (96%). Whilst it is felt to be an adequate interim tool to detect major epidemic trends, it is far from perfect. First, it still incurs a 10-day reporting lag, which could delay the timeliness of outbreak identification and response. Second, poor case definitions, limited diagnostic capacity, and a historical tendency to exaggerate to attract greater assistance, renders this surveillance system inaccurate for anything more than trend monitoring. Improvements in disease surveillance, through training, monitoring, communications support and improved diagnostic capacity, is now vital to confronting the threat of communicable disease outbreaks effectively.

Drug supply, immediately after the conflict, was propped up by agencies and authorities either accessing remaining stocks in warehouses, or providing parallel supplies direct to clinics. Since then, the drug supply system, under the state corporation of Kimadia, has been reactivated, and in principle, with medicines still coming in under the OFFP, there are ample supplies of essential drugs throughout the country. However, both Thiqr and Muthana governorates have recently reported serious shortages of essential drugs (IV fluids and antibiotics), and it appears that facilities there have been unable to reach Baghdad for replenishment, due in part to insecurity, and in part due to lack of funds following the CPA's suspension of cost-recovery. Provision of more sophisticated supplies, such as chronic drugs or medical oxygen, remain dependent on the efforts of outside agencies until procurement can be arranged through the OFFP (or its successor), or local production can be harnessed. A project to install an oxygen generating plant in Basrah to meet the needs of all four governorates, is currently under consideration by the UK military.

Laboratory and diagnostic facilities were widely looted after the war, and efforts are now underway at least to ensure the provision of basic services at clinic and hospital level. Strategic lab facilities are being re-equipped by individual agencies, a more sophisticated capacity in an interim public health laboratory is being established in Basrah to serve the needs of the whole lower south until the main central facility is rebuilt. And provision of supplies and reagents are being secured through the replenished Kimadia system.

Structural rehabilitation of looted, damaged or dilapidated clinics and hospitals is now gathering pace. Whilst progress was initially slow, the numerous players involved in this work, collectively carrying a vast multi-million dollar pot of funds, are commencing work, taking over from the limited work of the military to date. The challenge of coordinating the many inputs and actors is being well handled by WHO and the HIC, through a health facility database. However, the differing operational framework of the many partners means that, across the board, clinics are not yet being prioritised according to need, geographical spread, and population vulnerability. On one extreme, NGOs are generally targeting their work according to

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vulnerability, but in a very focussed and small scale way. On the other, the massive US Contractors, who have the budget and scope to spread assistance to the most vulnerable across the region, appear to be prioritising according to "ease of work", clustering projects around common plant-sites, and shying away from any facility that requires more than minor rehabilitation.

EPI services have recovered well since the conflict, with the resupply of looted cold-chain equipment and replenishment of most vaccine stocks. Now, 70 out of 76 primary health facilities in Basrah governorate are able to conduct routine immunisation against most diseases, with target coverage of 6000 children per month, and a monthly immunisation week planned to boost the campaign. Minor gaps in vaccine supply from Kimadia have been noted in the lower south, most recently with BCG vaccines, although it is thought that this relates to similar security and logistics constraints between governorates and Baghdad, as identified above. Security and transport problems between clinics and governorate warehouses are also inhibiting weekly delivery of vaccines, and in stead monthly consignments are provided, increasing the risk of wastage in the event of the cold-chain breaking, and inhibiting regular reporting and monitoring.

Short-term priorities in the lower south's health sector, to summarise, include: improved reliability and responsiveness of the disease surveillance system; reactivation of a cost-recovery system as a sustainable means of securing the resources on which drug supply and other lifelines depend; reactivation of vertical control programmes for priority communicable diseases such as diarrhoea; basic functional rehabilitation of health facilities in vulnerable, less accessible areas.

Mid-term priorities in the health sector include; review and retraining for common disease protocols; reactivation of other vertical control programmes (eg for Leishmaniasis, TB); decentralisation of key aspects of health service management, such as provision of supplies and financing, from capital to governorate level; reviewing and revising the national drug supply system to ensure reliable flow of appropriate medicines and equipment before the exhaustion of supplies from the OFFP (early 2004).

d) Nutrition:

In the nutrition sector, progress has been slow, although with the resumption of food distributions it is suspected that immediate needs are also less. Reporting on incidence of malnutrition from health facilities appears very unreliable, using inappropriate methodologies and criteria, and to-date, no agency has managed to undertake a proper nutritional survey, although some are in the pipeline. The former Targeted Nutrition Programme (TNP) utilised volunteer-based Community Child Care Units (CCCUs) to screen, identify and refer malnourished children to PHCs. Currently, in Basrah governorate, only 15% of these CCCUs are estimated to be functioning. Urgent remobilisation of volunteers and resupply of nutritional supplements (HPBs and therapeutic milk) is required. Reorientation of the old TNP to better respond to acute malnutrition, through changed methodologies, is also

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urgently required if a reliable safety net is to be in place before the end of the OFFP. On a nationwide basis, this will require retraining of 15,000 nutritional staff.

Short-term priorities for nutrition focus on the need for rapid and strategic reactivation and reorientation of the TNP as an appropriate and responsive nutritional safety-net; rehabilitation of CCCUs; retraining of volunteers; emergency supply of food inputs.

Mid-term priorities for nutrition include building of capacity to undertake extensive nutritional surveys and household food economy assessments; securing longer-term food supplies for the TNP beyond the OFFP, particularly through use of local commodities; nutritional education for mothers; promotion of sustainable livelihoods.

e) Food:

After the conflict, concerns over the continuation of food distribution under the PDS brought the spotlight onto this sector. Successful cooperation between the military, the Ministry of Trade (MoT) and WFP in the weeks after the war avoided any major problems and this is now one of the lowest profile sectors. The scale of the programme in the south is significant – in the June distribution, rations were distributed to around 4.7 million beneficiaries: 1.9 million in Basrah province, 0.5 million in Muthanna, 1.5 million in Thi-Qar and 0.8 million in Missan. The ration consists of 9 kg of wheat flour, 3 kg of rice, 2 kg of sugar, 200g of tea, 1 kg of vegetable oil, 250g of pulses, 250 g soap, 500g detergent. Infants under one receive 3.6 kg infant formula, 250g soap and 500g detergent. This is the same ration as received pre-war. WFP/MOT has newly registered over 16,000 beneficiaries who were not previously included: this includes returnees, those who had not completed military service, children born out of wedlock and other groups previously excluded. The major current issue concerns how the PDS will function after the WFP EMOP ends, and how the MOT will take on more responsibility for PDS. In the medium term, the issue of how to phase out the PDS needs to be addressed as it is ultimately unsustainable to be feeding 60% of the population through a centralised ration system. It is not clear that vulnerable groups are sufficiently understood and targeted for supplementary feeding. While unemployment remains high – estimated at 50%, there are implications for the nutrition status of the population as typically the PDS ration is supplemented by other required elements from wage/salary purchases. Understanding of the impact of limited livelihood opportunities on nutrition is insufficient.

Short term priorities in the food sector are: effective continuation of PDS, obtaining a better understanding of household food economy; and diversification of the food basket.

Mid-term priorities in the food sector are: effective transition to post-EMOP; planning for the phasing out of PDS; and livelihood development.

f) Water:

In simplified terms, Basrah city's water supply and distribution system is a technical network that brings sweet water down from the Tigris, pumps it through 12 main water treatment plants, and into distribution pipelines that serve approximately 80-90% of the city's population, either through household taps or public standpipes. Even before the war, much of this system had fallen into disrepair, and after the conflict, mass looting of pumping stations and treatment plants severely compromised Basrah's water supply. Since then, the water supply system has been the single greatest emergency concern for all players. A combination of rapid ad-hoc repairs, provision of inputs (fuel, chemicals), commencement of longer term rehabilitation, and temporary water tankering, have all meant that the water supply has gradually improved, although there are still major deficiencies and challenges that plague the system.

Optimal water supply into Basrah, with a fully functioning system, should reach 400 million litres per day (ie 200 l/p/d). However, the main supply is known to be radically diminished by weeds, silting and sedimentation in the primary sweet water canal. Further down the system, in the distribution network, breaks and leakages reportedly contribute to a further 50-60% loss of water. With neglected or looted pumping and treatment plants, and with breakages in electricity supply up to 8 hours per day until recently, net water supply to end-users has, at its worst, been reduced to 10% of its capacity, at 40 million litres per day (ie 20 l/p/d), fast approaching minimal acceptable thresholds, especially in an urban context. Furthermore, this reduction has not been shared equitably across the city, and some areas where pumps were completely stripped have suffered a total lack of piped water. Recent surveys of the network leading from the 12 main WTPs showed that 20% of areas surveyed had no water whatsoever. In these areas, the population has been dependent on water tankering, purchasing from private vendors, or using highly contaminated river water, for their survival. The same surveys recently found that between 10 and 30% of water outlets carried bacterial contamination, regardless of upstream chlorination, resulting from breaks and negative pressure in the piped network. Some WTPs have been pumping water direct from the river, as an emergency measure to compensate for shortages in the main line, further increasing the risk of contamination.

From the outset of the operation, varying quantities of treated water have been tankered into Basrah to meet the needs of people without access to piped supply. In July, this has averaged between 1.5 and 2 million litres per day, sufficient for survival rations for 300,000 people, or 15% of the population. This actual delivery rate has been consistently below the target rate of 2.5 million litres for 20% of the population, and, furthermore, has been criticised for omitting significant areas of the city entirely, with very poor monitoring of final distributions. Nevertheless, the tankering operation has filled some crucial gaps, and in the meantime, urgent works on the pumping, treatment and distribution systems have improved the output of clean water substantially in recent weeks. Restoration of electricity supply and provision of generators, in spite of continuous looting and sabotage, has had the most significant impact, and primary pumping is now almost continuous. Purchase and distribution of chlorine gas and other treatment chemicals, and current stockpiling of 3-6 months' supply for the lower south, has enabled some of the Water Treatment Plants?? which have power to purify the water. And ongoing repairs to leaks and breaks in the

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distribution network, antagonised by persistent illegal tapping, have been undertaken by 9 teams from the Department of Water, supported by UK military and UNICEF, and have to date repaired 158 leaks. However, as pressure builds up in the water system with upstream improvements, more and more leaks appear. Two weeks ago, 332 leaks had been identified, with 78 repaired. This week, 407 had been identified, with 158 repaired. Whilst the rate of repair is still higher than the rate of new bursts, this vital activity requires sustained effort if the estimated 50-60% wastage of water is to be curtailed. Urgent work on the main sweet water canal is also required, to improve the overall capacity and throughput of the system. ICRC is just commencing work on a mid-way pumping station which has hitherto been recurrently looted, following the deployment of Danish military to guard the site, and RTI will imminently start with emergency de-sedimentation and weed clearance, prior to Bechtel's more substantial rehabilitation work on the entire system (from source to endpoint) towards the end of the year. Thus, rapid gains already made through ad hoc and focused interventions look set to be enhanced by more substantial repairs in the months ahead, although the fragility of the system remains acute. Any slackening in the ongoing effort, or any major shock to it such as continued largescale looting of power, pumping or treatment facilities, could easily return Basrah to a state of critical water shortage.

Elsewhere in the lower south, water tankering is ongoing in many urban and rural areas, with at least another 2 million litres being distributed per day. Urban towns appear to suffer similar problems of decrepitude in their poorly maintained water supply systems, although they reportedly have less problems with looting, and so have managed to stabilise water supply more quickly, at least through temporary stop-gap measures. Rural water supply in the lower south depends on mechanised Compact Units that pump, treat and store water from boreholes. The majority of these are judged to be either broken or suboptimal, so the few operational agencies in these areas are either running water tankers to priority villages, inputting fuel and spares to kickstart deficient units, providing re-start support to local water authorities and, over the medium term, are starting full repairs to the most strategically located systems. In Thiqr governorate, there are currently 58 such quick impact projects ongoing, and in Muthana there are 13, in the water sector.

Short-term priorities in the water sector include: ensuring adequate security and inputs to sustain sufficient power supply into the water pumping, treatment and distribution network; expanding and monitoring water tankering activities to better cover areas without regular water supply; expanded capacity for more rapid repair of network leakages.

Mid-term priorities for water works include: strategic prioritisation of water rehabilitation work to facilitate a phase-out of water tankering; in urban settings, promotion of water storage to stabilise pressure flux and reduce cross contamination; empowerment and financing of local water authorities to undertake priority water works independently; establishing a sustainable system for resupply of essential treatment chemicals.

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g) Sanitation:

Management of sewage in Basrah was a major problem even before the conflict, with only 11% of the city connected to a mains system that pumps waste to a sewage treatment plant and on into the desert. With lack of maintenance and looting of pumping stations, even this system fell into disrepair, and only now, with recent provision of pumps, is it starting to clear sewage again, although it remains dependent on power, and the treatment plant remains dysfunctional. Bechtel is currently considering repair of this existing system, and possible completion of the network in the longer term to cover 49% of the city's inhabitants. For the time being, 89% of the city is served by septic tanks, connected to storm-water channels and open drains, emptying into the Shat Al Arab river. There is no immediate short-term solution to this scenario, other than ensuring that the city's drinking water is not dependent on the polluted river, as has sometimes been the case in recent months. Of greater immediate concern is the fact that many of the open drains through the city are blocked by sewage and/or garbage, and waste is therefore building up. This presents an immediate public health risk, and a far more serious prospect for when the rains start in October, causing flooding of sewage in streets and homes.

For solid waste, great improvements have been witnessed over recent weeks, with teams of cleaners tackling the appalling build-up of municipal garbage as part of the Basrah Clean-up Campaign. This has employed more than 300 people, and has involved the loading of trucks to transport waste to a landfill site 60 km into the desert.

In other towns in the lower south, sanitation is said to be less of a concern. Immediate needs are being tackled through quick-impact projects run by the military or NGOs, primarily as support to municipalities in pumping sewage, clearing drains and removing garbage. In Thiqr, there are 50 such projects completed or underway, and in Muthana, 6.

Short-term priorities for sanitation in the lower south include: the clearance and pumping of drains and canals before the rains start; the expansion of the Basrah clean up campaign, and similar campaigns in other urban areas, run by municipalities.

Mid-term priorities include: repair of the piped sewage mains system in Basrah, and eventual expansion to cover 49% of the population; commencement of community financing schemes for garbage clearance; education for improved household management of waste.

h) Power:

Intense looting immediately after the war, and continuing looting and re-looting, have seriously undermined the effective functioning of the power infrastructure. This has had implications for other services, in particular water and sewage (see above). The disrepair of the infrastructure that had accumulated during the years of sanctions

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was tipped over the edge by damage and looting, to the extent that there is apparently little ability to provide a predictable pattern of loadshedding. This is the single greatest cause of frustration among Iraqis in Basrah. Significant resources have been deployed towards rebuilding the power infrastructure, primarily through the Bechtel contract, but this is currently in an assessment rather than implementation phase. Considerable numbers of emergency generators are now coming on stream, but there appears to be little coordination of where they are placed despite this being one of the most critical areas where there are the most players. Work continues to patch up looted power infrastructure, and the UK military are taking steps to protect power lines where possible, as well as apprehend smugglers, but the problem remains. The directorate is increasing in capacity, but does not appear to be leading coordination in this sector.

Short term priorities in power are: reduce looting; ensure actual implementation; encourage effective coordination of projects.

Mid-term priorities in power are: enhance directorate capacity; accelerate large reconstruction projects; ensure ongoing maintenance.

i) Infrastructure:

The looting of infrastructure after the conflict has affected almost all ministry buildings very seriously. This has had a detrimental effect on restarting the work of technical directorates, with public servants unable to work without even the most basic furniture, let alone the computer systems that were used previously. Rehabilitation and reconstruction of civic buildings is beginning, but progress has been slow as agencies and contractors gear up, carry out assessments and attempt (or not) to coordinate activities. Again, coordination is poor and disjointed in this sector. Almost every agency is involved in some form of rehabilitation work, but standards differ, duplication of assessment is common, and progress is elusive. Bechtel has a weekly meeting on rehabilitation, but more needs to be done to ensure that directorates can begin to work. The DFID-funded Recovery and Infrastructure Group (RIG) in CPA S should be developing an overview, but this needs to be re-emphasised to avoid the same effect as other contractors, who focus on rehabilitation of buildings that can show results rather than those which are a priority, and developing an overview of who is doing what becomes a secondary issue.

Two other infrastructure issues are of importance. There is no clear focal point for Umm Qasr port in CPA, despite its vital importance for the south and the rest of the country as the only deep water port. In addition, there is no coverage of the oil sector, which considering the fragile state of the oil infrastructure and the extreme importance to the Iraqi economy, is a major omission. In both these sectors, interlocutors report that the US contractors are operating with little oversight from either USAID or CPA, so that they are not necessarily prioritising according to need or humanitarian priority.

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Short term priorities in infrastructure are: getting directorates up and running actual implementation in a coordinated way; prioritisation of rehabilitation; agreement of common standards; sharing of information; avoiding continued looting.

Mid-term priorities in infrastructure are: ensuring ongoing maintenance; larger capital projects.

j) Education:

In line with national timings, schools are now on their summer break, due to return for the new school year starting in early September. The conflict interrupted the school year, leaving children with incomplete preparation for exams, particularly as even after the conflict ended, teachers and students were reluctant to return to school in the insecure environment, and salary payments to staff were delayed, as well as operating budgets for examinations. It remains to be seen how this cadre of graduating students will be treated despite (or because of) the exam content being reduced. Education has been a sector demonstrating the practical disconnect between Baghdad and Basrah. Locally developed proposals for decentralised exams resulted from effective coordination between UN, CPA and Directorate teams in Basrah. Approval was sought from Baghdad and assumed to have been given after a deadline for a response was given, but a subsequent contradictory directive from Baghdad has seriously set back relationships in this sector, and by extension in others. Rehabilitation of schools should be a priority, but appears to be going slowly and little is likely to have been achieved before schools re-open; coordination is also a significant concern.

A number of important developments remain to be clarified from Baghdad, including the revision of the curriculum.

Short term priorities in the education sector are: getting exams working, school rehabilitation

Mid-term priorities in the education sector are: effective operation of the Back to School programme, and revision of curriculum

k) Agriculture & Livestock:

The lower South is traditionally an agricultural heartland, producing significant vegetable crops for a longer season than elsewhere in the country, though reliant on irrigation. Basrah tomatoes are said to be the best in Iraq. However the agriculture sector has been weakened over the period of OFF, and local food production has been disrupted by the conflict. The full extent will be clear from the current WFP/FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission. The interruptions to the agricultural cycle are potentially undermining the livelihoods of significant numbers of farmers. Most farmers already pursue a diversified agriculture and livestock strategy. There is

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a continuing need to supplement the PDS food basket with animal protein and micronutrients, and to support the restarting of the agriculture sector.

Short term priorities in the agriculture sector are: rapid interventions to reduce impact of interrupted agricultural cycle, provision of inputs for agriculture and livestock

Mid-term priorities in the agriculture sector are: capacity building to ministry

I) Population:

Much controversy surrounds the issue of IDPs in the lower south, mainly due to problems of definition and categorisation. Since the anticipated caseloads of hundreds of thousands of new IDPs failed to materialise after the conflict, agencies mandated to protect IDPs shifted their attention to old caseloads, particularly, in the lower south, more than 100,000 Marsh Arabs who had been forcibly displaced by the old regime in the early 90s. However, in spite of being vulnerable after many years of oppression, it fast became clear that these and other groups of long-term, effectively re-settled IDPs could not and should not be targeted as a humanitarian caseload in need of finite short-term assistance. Unfortunately, this realisation emerged after agencies had already started registering, and after expectations of assistance had been raised. The registration exercise was then abruptly suspended, with about 17,000 Marsh Arabs already signed up for some sort of assistance, although what specific assistance this would be was never thought through or articulated. This travesty of mismanagement has now stabilised with an agreement, by all parties, that from now on, registration will only be done for groups of newly displaced people (approximately 100 in Basrah governorate and 300 in Thiqr since the conflict) who require short-term assistance, and for older caseloads who have a viable durable solution for resettlement at hand (approximately 5000 in Al Muthana). Those who have been "permanently" displaced for a long time, who have settled in new areas, and who have no prospects of returning or resettling elsewhere, should be assessed from a general vulnerability perspective alongside all other vulnerable communities in the lower south, and should be assisted through the wider reconstruction and development process. Short-term provision of relief based on superficial categorisation is no longer an option, and thus specific needs of IDPs in the lower south are not a large-scale priority, except to mitigate against the unfortunate expectations of those who were already registered. The other group who have been haphazardly categorised as IDPs are those people currently squatting in public buildings. This group in fact includes very large numbers of people who are not displaced, but who are avoiding rent payments, and so, with a few legitimate individual exceptions, the large majority are being dealt with through an evolving legal process of eviction.

The refugee profile that affects or could affect the lower south is more complex. There are, in the lower south, approximately 5000 Iranian refugees who have expressed a desire to return to Iran, and who are awaiting the facilitation of UNHCR and the acceptance of the Iranian authorities before doing so. In Iran, there are a total of 204,000 Iraqi refugees, many of whom want to return to Iraq, and whose return to Iraq is also pressurised by the Iranian authorities. Of these, an estimated

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42,000 are from the lower south. An additional 5000 Iraqi refugees reside in the Rafha closed refugee camp in Saudi Arabia, with they and the Saudi authorities both very keen on repatriation to the lower south. The main issue plaguing all decision makers is whether or not conditions in the lower south of Iraq are currently conducive to repatriation, both in terms of security, capacity of basic services, and readiness of authorities to handle the return. On all three fronts, it is DFID-Basrah's strong assertion that conditions are not appropriate for repatriation, and that from a refugee protection standpoint, repatriation should be discouraged. However, UNHCR has already begun pilot repatriation convoys of the refugees from Saudi. There are, perhaps, mitigating circumstances that warrant this,

Furthermore, the Rafha camp is a closed facility, so there are real protection concerns for keeping the refugees there. And the relatively small number of refugees there, and their distance from their place of origin, suggest that this group can be moved in a controlled and orderly manner, to their comparative advantage. However, UNHCR and CPA-Baghdad are also discussing a pilot repatriation of refugees from Iran. Given the eagerness of these refugees to return, the pressure from the Iranians for them to leave, their proximity to a highly porous border with few controls, and the fact that most could independently afford the journey without UNHCR's help, there is a real danger that even a successful small pilot repatriation could open the flood-gates as a precedent for massive spontaneous repatriation, when conditions are simply inadequate. Most will only care that they are provided with identity papers and can join the PDS for food rations, and if a pilot suggests that this is feasible, there's a risk that all may follow, immediately. Furthermore, only 25% of the refugees in Iran live in regular camps, and UNHCR has only vague information on places of origin for this group, and none for the rest. Even for them, and certainly for the remainder, there is no way of predicting exactly where they intend to return to, although it will likely be the main urban centres of Basrah and Amarah where they can find work and help, and not necessarily their places of origin from 12 years before. Time is therefore a critical requirement, to better ascertain where returnees might settle, to better prepare repatriation mechanisms and contingency plans, to better support services and infrastructure in areas of potential return, and to ensure that the protection rights and requirements of these refugees can be properly fulfilled. Acknowledging the political pressure that the CPA and UNHCR are under, from neighbouring countries and European countries hosting Iraqi asylum seekers, there is nevertheless an absolute necessity for this process not to be rushed through, for the sake of the returnees themselves, and for humanitarian and security considerations inside Iraq.

Short-term priorities for population groups include: continued suspension of registration for all but new or resettling IDP groups; appeasement of registered IDP groups to avoid security problems; identification of intended areas of return for Iraqi refugees in Iran; preparation of systems and infrastructure to handle orderly repatriation and resettlement of refugees from Iran, and contingency plans to handle mass spontaneous return; continuation of low-profile and low-numbered returns from Saudi; facilitation of repatriation of Iranian refugees to Iran, but only if the Iranian authorities do not make it contingent on a rushed, tit-for-tat repatriation of Iraqis from Iran.

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Mid-term priorities for population consist of: assessment of and targeting of reconstruction assistance to areas and communities affected by old caseload IDPs based on absolute vulnerability; active facilitation of repatriation from Iran (whether as a pilot or more substantially) only when conditions are conducive and mechanisms / contingency plans fully in place; active follow-up of all returnee refugee groups; continued promotion and support of infrastructure and services in areas affected by returnees.

m) Mines/Unexploded Ordnance:

The scale of the threat from unexploded ordnance in southern Iraq is immense. Significant quantities of ammunition were deployed by the Iraqi army from relatively controlled stores to forward positions, where they are now increasingly fragile, and present a major hazard to civilians. Looting of metal components of ordnance and the high summer temperatures are exacerbating the problem. Coalition UXO is reported to form only a limited proportion of the threat. The standing down of the Iraqi army has left the country with limited indigenous capacity to deal with this threat. Beyond the immediate UXO threat, the major strategic minefields on the border with Iran, and in particular the threat they pose to any refugee returns from Iran, are an issue which will require attention in due course. According to the MoH health information system, between 31 May and 11 July there were 97 injuries of children under 5, and 222 injuries of people over 5 from UXO incidents. These figures in themselves are not cause for major concern, but there is significant under-reporting – as reporting systems improve, we would expect an increase in number of cases.

Short term priorities in mine action are: emergency clearance of outloaded ammunition, completion of emergency survey, clarification of institutional arrangements.

Mid-term priorities in mine action are: development of national capacity for UXO survey and clearance, capacity building of Civil Defence organisation.

n) Public Information:

Media under the Saddam regime was state controlled and not trusted by the Iraqi population. Since the conflict, one or two 'independent' newspapers have been published in Basrah, but these are still of limited circulation: in theory newspapers are also circulated from Baghdad, but these only appear occasionally and do not address local issues (which are at this stage what matter most to people). There is the CPA Radio and TV Nahrain produced by the DoD contractor Iraqi Media Network (IMN), which is fairly amateurish and puts out a feed of Coalition press releases. SCIRI also have a radio station. The lack of an effective public information campaign continues to be highlighted by a variety of actors. The active rumour mill combined with increasing frustration over poor delivery of basic services threaten to undermine the progress that is being made. Unless expectations can be managed through a

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public information campaign that is perceived to be relatively independent, support for the Coalition presence will decline with attendant security implications for all internationals. This should improve with the significant DFID contribution to the BBC World Service Trust which is currently being finalised, for support to independent radio, TV and print media in the lower South. However it will be several weeks or months before the impact is felt.

Short term priorities in the public information sector are: communication of key messages to manage expectations and reduce frustrations

Mid-term priorities in the public information sector are: development of independent media

o) Coordination:

The complex mix of players in the lower South, as elsewhere in the country, continues to make coordination essential yet challenging. Structures are still in a state of flux. The UK, US and other military contingents, UN agencies, NGOs, USAID contractors, Iraqi directorates and the CPA all come from different perspectives, with widely differing experience of working with the other actors. The elements of an effective strategy are distributed among the players and coordination is not yet sufficient to harness the resources (primarily USAID contractors), and experience (UN) under the current authority (CPA). Current coordination fora include the Humanitarian Open Forum hosted by the UN, the Basrah Technical Secretariat chaired by CPA, and sectoral coordination meetings.

The UN and CPA have stayed at arm's length, leading to a dysfunctional approach with no real leadership. The CPA is increasing in capacity to provide leadership, but in the short term this may threaten existing coordination structure if parallel ones are set up (as has already happened in the health sector). In other sectors such as agriculture, the UN has passed the sectoral chair to CPA but there is no overall consistent approach to sectoral coordination. CPA often does not participate in sectoral coordination meetings, although directorates often do. The main forum for CPA interaction with the directorates is the weekly Basrah technical secretariat (BTS). This is not an effective forum as the CPA is only represented by the chair, and UN/NGOs are not usually present. The ideal would be sectoral coordination led by the relevant directorate, with CPA support, but there is little capacity in the directorates and insufficient leadership from CPA.

Another important issue is the role of the USAID contractors. While in theory falling under CPA authority, they report to USAID which does not have a Basrah presence and so monitoring is limited. They do participate in coordination meetings to some extent but are motivated by contractual targets and are frustrated by ineffective coordination. The HIC is an area where the contractors are beginning to become more involved, due to the information they can glean from it. Insufficient coordination and multiplicity of actors has contributed to a significant problem of over-assessment, which has led to increasing frustration from multiply-assessed Iraqis still awaiting any tangible assistance. The shadow of Baghdad looms over all

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coordination issues, with local solutions regularly undermined by unilateral decisions or lack of direction from the centre. The continued uncertainty over CPA structures in the regions has undermined CPA South's ability to assert its authority, over and above capacity issues. Coordination within the UN family has generally been good, assisted by early occupation of common premises. However there is a common problem of excessive focus being given to Basrah, to the exclusion of the other three provinces in the Lower South.

Short term priorities in the coordination sector are: increased coordination between CPA and UN; CPA capacity to lead increased; better use of common databases to avoid duplication; turning assessment into implementation; and pushing out beyond Basrah.

Mid-term priorities in the coordination sector are: increasing the capacity of Directorates to lead coordination in order to make the most effective use of resources.

p) Conclusion:

In general, the situation in the lower south of Iraq, in most sectors, has moved well beyond the classic humanitarian context. This is partly because the anticipated large-scale humanitarian crisis never occurred; partly because the numerous problems and vulnerabilities in the region stem from many years of structural neglect rather than from short-term destruction; and partly because significant progress has recently been made in providing quick-fixes to immediate problems, and in finally gearing up the more appropriate and meaningful reconstruction process. However, the picture still retains elements of humanitarian vulnerability, not least the rampant insecurity and the effective absence of a functioning government. Thus, humanitarian monitoring of the key issues outlined above remains relevant, and continuation of quick-fix, gap-stopping interventions should be promoted, at least until the reconstruction process gathers full momentum and absorbs these concerns.

Primary emphasis for the advancement of Iraq, however, should now be placed firmly on the reconstruction process, with humanitarian assistance taking a secondary role in monitoring and contingency planning around worst-case scenarios. In the lower south, there are two main humanitarian scenarios that could be envisaged at the worst extremes. First, a mutually reinforcing combination of a public health crisis (resulting from weaknesses in the water and sanitation systems) and a deterioration of insecurity that prevents existing capacities from responding to this crisis, and that could also re-enforce it with a familiar proliferation of looting and vandalism. Second, an uncontrolled and unprepared influx of returning refugees to urban areas where existing services and structures are already stretched to the limit.

3) OPERATIONAL REVIEW:

a) WFP:

Programme Overview:

WFP works with the Ministry of Trade (MoT) on the provision of food rations to over 60% of Iraq's population, through its EMOP 10259. It also manages UNJLC and UNHAS, which are covered in a separate section.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

Total dispatches for July nationwide have now reached almost quarter of a million tonnes of food. The July cycle of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is underway. The June distribution has demonstrated that the PDS system is operating efficiently and WFP is now focusing on improving monitoring at household and food agent level, using NGO implementing partners using SCF's household food security model. The ration was slightly incomplete for July but the August distribution will be back to the proper pre-war ration (not the reduced ration immediately before the war).

The findings will complement data obtained in a nationwide household food security survey being launched by WFP's VAM Unit days. The objectives of the survey are to generate new information that will allow WFP and its partners to obtain a better understanding of the two fundamental issues: the extent of dependency on the PDS and its implication on current household food security, and the effect a disruption of the PDS would have on future household food security. This is an important issue that requires clarification in advance of the end of the EMOP, and WFP's putative departure from Iraq towards the end of the year. Current scenarios include a continuation on current lines (i.e. extension of the EMOP), partial handover of functions to MoT, partial handover to CPA, and different speeds of handover in different geographical areas where capacity allows. WFP Basrah's assessment is that by the end of the year, MoT will only need WFP to be involved in imports, contracting of transporters and food security policy.

The other aspect of the programme that deserves closer investigation and which WFP will probably stay involved in, is the supplementary feeding programme, which is just starting up in Basrah. This targets vulnerable groups with is to supplement PDS food ration as well as to encourage families with malnourished children to come to the PHCs regularly for monitoring. Further investigation into coordination with the Targeted Nutrition Programme of the MoH/UNICEF would be valuable. WFP appear to be piloting supplementary feeding in central Basrah where logistics are simpler rather than identifying areas of greatest need.

WFP continues to increase the number of shipments to Umm Qasr port. This move to increase the use of the Iraqi port is aimed at reducing transportation costs. However there are some concerns about the high tariffs being charged by the USAID contractor such that the use of Jordanian ports had been considered. In addition, as other OFF shipments are due to arrive in increasing numbers at Umm Qasr, WFP will need to manage its shipments carefully to ensure a continued pipeline.

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There have been a number of security concerns specific to WFP's operations in the south. A number of contractor's trucks have been attacked and looted, some in or near the border town of Safwan, where WFP and other agencies have been concerned about the lack of Coalition presence. Other trucks have been robbed in less clear circumstances.

There had been a problem of Kuwaiti commercial contractors refusing to move WFP cargo due to security concerns, but this appears to have been resolved by transshipping to Iraqi trucks at Umm Qasr. Security continues to be difficult at the main MoT 'bread basket' warehouse in Basrah – despite protection by Coalition forces and retrained 'River guards', the size of the complex makes some looting inevitable.

WFP shares our concerns over the registration of Marsh Arabs and their treatment as a distinct vulnerable group. Their analysis is that they are no more vulnerable, nor more likely to be unregistered for the PDS, than other groups, except where this might be expected by remote location or significant migration. WFP is treating them as they would any other group and registering unregistered family members.

b) UNICEF (Health and Wat-San):

Programme Overview:

UNICEF's health programme in the lower south has to-date focused on resumption of the EPI programme, through the provision of cold-chain equipment and vaccines. Nutritional activities are confined to the provision of High Protein Biscuits and Therapeutic Milk. And in the water and sanitation sectors, UNICEF's programme focuses on coordination, water tankering, water treatment, and network repairs.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

In the health sector, UNICEF's progress has been scant and limited, as far as could be judged given the unavailability of any health or nutrition staff in the south to provide insight (they have only one international staff member who was on leave, and no national staff, proving a serious lack of capacity for implementation, let alone monitoring). As appears to be the case with many agencies in the south, UNICEF has also a tendency to cite existing capacities in the Iraqi system as their own achievements, regardless of UNICEF's role or input. For instance, the fact that 70 out of 76 PHCs in Basrah governorate are now providing EPI services is clearly only minimally thanks to UNICEF, since 44 kerosene fridges provided by UNICEF to support these PHCs remain undistributed in the Basrah warehouse, and there is a real question as to whether they were ever really required. On a more positive note, UNICEF have rehabilitated the main cold-store in the Basrah warehouse, providing centralised cold-chain storage for the lower south, and they have also imported distributed 3-months' supply of most vaccines to assist in the resumption of EPI activities at primary level. They are not, however, monitoring EPI activities, and so cannot comment on the level of vaccination ongoing, or the degree to which it is really an improvement over what existed before. For nutrition, UNICEF have done little more than conduct assessments of the existing TNP infrastructure, and provide one-off supplies of HPB and TM, but again with no monitoring of its use or impact.

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Plans to reactivate the TNP on a national basis are in the pipeline, with a first phase to reopen 300 CCCUs and train 1000 volunteers to run them. However, TNP reactivation activities are already underway through other NGOs, such as IMC and GOAL in the lower south, so the extent to which UNICEF can really lead this process, given its slowness to get started, remains questionable.

In the wat-san sector, UNICEF's progress appears to be quite significant, but in many areas they appear to be taking direct credit for what other agencies are implementing with UNICEF funds, and in other areas even for what other agencies are funding for themselves. The fact is that the majority of UNICEF's wat-san work has been spearheaded and driven by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), who seconded technical staff and resources into UNICEF-Basrah, and there is real doubt as to whether UNICEF would have achieved anything without this rapid injection of capacity. Furthermore, in spite of claiming a lead role for themselves in lower south coordination, it is GOAL and ACTED who are running the wat-san coordination in Thiqr and Muthana governorates. This includes compiling and running an activity database, which has hardly started in the other governorates where UNICEF has no NGO support. Seen from this perspective, it is hard to see the value added that UNICEF have brought to coordination in the lower south.

They have, however, delivered significant quantities of water through their tankering project, between 2.5 and 3.5 million litres per day for the lower south over the last month. However, this is only 50-70% of their defined target, and has been a seriously expensive operation, running tankers and water primarily out of Kuwait, at a cost of up to \$1 million per month, or up to \$1 per 150 litres. Appropriately, UNICEF's immediate objective is to reduce this operation's dependency on Kuwait, and thereby reduce its costs. They have begun to identify local Iraqi water tankers, and are in the process of increasing local filling capacity at key water outlets in Basrah, all of which will be phased in so that by October, the operation should be fully Iraqi, and will cost 60% less at \$1 for 240 litres. This exercise should be actively encouraged, alongside parallel initiatives to phase out water tankering altogether. This will involve UNICEF and other partners and players working to improve overall water supply and output in underserved areas, particularly through repair of the main pumping, treatment and distribution network, as well as the installation of 8 reverse osmosis plants in strategic areas, provided by the Kuwaiti government, and with a total daily capacity of 50,000 litres (10% of current tankering requirements). UNICEF's exit strategy from water tankering acknowledges that even under the best scenario, they will still need to be tankering at least 1.5 million litres per day in December, but they hope that at this scale and cost, the respective departments of water will be able to run the operation themselves.

UNICEF have also played an important role, alongside other agencies like ICRC, in securing chlorine supplies and other treatment chemicals for the lower south, although this has also been an expensive operation, with high rates of wastage (due to a lack of functioning dosing units at WTPs) and procurement of supplies from Amman and Kuwait at c\$2500 per MT. Current stocks in situ or in storage are in the region of 300 MT, enough for 3 months for the lower south, and valued at \$750,000. As with water tankering, UNICEF now need to work towards an exit strategy from provision of chemicals, which should entail the Department of Water budgeting to meet the requirements, and possible rehabilitation of the defunct chlorine production

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plant in Basrah to reduce the cost. As yet, however, this latter aspect has not been prioritised by any of the reconstruction players, and UNICEF should be encouraged to push this agenda.

In support of water-quality and treatment, UNICEF have provided 12 Delagua mobile water-testing units to the DoWs in each governorate, and have trained 13 technicians in their utilisation. In Basrah, they are actively supporting daily water quality testing at 48 points through the DoW, providing essential data to monitor progress in maintaining water quantity, quality, and pressure.

UNICEF have also been involved in the repair of leaks and breaks in the water distribution network in Basrah city, but to date this has been a secondary role to ICRC and the UK Military, who were coordinating the support, and running six repair teams against UNICEF's three. As of August, UNICEF will take on full support for all 9 teams, working through the DoW. However, with an ever increasing number of leaks appearing in the system as quantities and pressure mounts, it is hard to see how UNICEF will manage to stay on top of the situation with only 30% of the budget that the UK Military dedicated to the work. Careful monitoring of progress (cumulative repairs:leaks) is required, as well as additional contingency resources, and an exit strategy that builds upon the DoW's capacity to run these teams independently needs to be developed. In support of this, UNICEF are planning to bring in 2 mobile workshops per governorate, at a cost of \$180,000 each.

UNICEF's role in sanitation and hygiene promotion in the lower south has been insignificant to date.

Recommendations:

Recognising that UNICEF have, in the lower south, been slow and over-dependent on NGOs and other partners, they have nevertheless contributed to substantial achievements in the water sector, and should be supported to continue these until the year's end, working towards a gradual phase-out of their role, increases in local capacities, and a handover to the local water authorities. However, a pre-requisite to this will be adequate, appropriate and competent staff to coordinate and monitor the strategy. In health, a clearer readout on the performance of EPI activities is required, prior to any further investment on that front. For nutrition, reactivation of the TNP is an urgent priority, but this needs to be preceded by a commitment, from UNICEF, to render it rapidly applicable to acute malnutrition, so that it serves as a humanitarian monitoring tool and safety net in time for the phase out of the OFFP. How UNICEF coordinates nutritional activities between different partners already active, and where the DoH fits in, are both pertinent points.

c) UNICEF (Education and MRE)

Programme Overview:

UNICEF's education and MRE programmes consist mainly of the provision of materials and coordination in line with the national UNICEF programme.

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Progress to date and problems encountered:

UNICEF designed the national schools assessment which offers a national picture. However it is not clear how useful this is as it does not include locations. USAID contractors continue to identify and plan rehabilitation of schools, but to no overall strategy or common standard. Current efforts by the Basrah HIC to encourage a database similar to the health facilities are making progress but this process is not led by UNICEF. UNICEF attribute this to UNICEF Baghdad's desire to centralise a database and the lack of an Education officer in Basrah (they are still trying to identify one). Additionally UNICEF Basrah is due to receive 450 back to school kits in the next fortnight, which will be distributed once a national strategy is finalised. UNICEF has also worked on printing examination papers. UNICEF is also undertaking a national survey on the situation of children in Iraq, in cooperation with 5 INGOs.

UNICEF attributes slow progress to insecurity (which makes for cautious spending), the difficulty in identifying counterparts, and the need for coordination to avoid overlap. UNICEF also has a role in MRE and is working with the MACT and Civil Defence in distributing mine awareness leaflets. Neither education nor MRE as presented appear to be particularly well coordinated sectors, nor ones where UNICEF is particularly engaged in the South (usually referring to national rather than local achievements).

d) WHO:

Programme Overview:

WHO's programme in the lower south has to date focused on ad-hoc interventions to plug short-term gaps in essential health service delivery. These have been complemented by rapid assessments of health services across all four governorates, and recently a more comprehensive planning of their country operations for the remainder of the year, focusing on 3 prime tenets of "jumpstarting" health services, reactivating priority vertical health programmes, and leading coordination with the DoH.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

WHO's operations in the lower south have been inhibited by two critical factors. First, a slow deployment which initially suffered from a high turnover of emergency staff, leading to a lack of continuity and the absence of a solid foundation on which early and effective planning could be undertaken. Second, and antagonising the first, a serious degree of political flux within the Iraqi DoH, depriving WHO of their usual counterpart for health sector development. It is hoped, now, that with the recent election of Basrah's fourth director-general for health in as many months, and with a core WHO team who are committed now until the end of the year, these problems will subside.

WHO's principle ad-hoc emergency actions in the lower south, up until now, have included the pulling together of a multi-agency task force to tackle the cholera outbreak, which has since evolved into more of a general communicable disease

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task force. In support of this, they facilitated the reactivation of a disease surveillance system, training 30 surveillance officers and boosting the logistics and communications links between sentinel sites and Basrah. The disease monitoring system is now in place and functioning with good coverage across the region, but with concerns about punctuality and reliability. WHO are actively monitoring this, recently investigating over-reporting from a number of facilities (one hospital in Muthana reported 400 diarrhoea cases in one day, which WHO cross-checked and recalculated to be 18!), and are planning to conduct more extensive training to improve the system's reliability. Immediately after the conflict, when the Kimadia drug supply system was dysfunctional, WHO imported \$6 million worth of essential drugs for the entire country, much of which was distributed to facilities in the lower south. They have, more recently, brought in ad-hoc supplies of drugs for vertical programmes (for TB, Leishmaniasis etc) and laboratory reagents, where the Kimadia/OFFP system has not yet managed to secure the appropriate supplies. Unfortunately, WHO Basrah are unable to report on where different supplies have ended up and in what quantities, nor have they followed up on their utilisation. This has been a blind practice of provision only to central warehouses, and WHO have recently recognised that many essential supplies are still not reaching the more remote and vulnerable areas. They have responsibly investigated supply shortages as they have been reported, and are in the process of completing an analysis that identifies core problems (ie suspension of cost-recovery) and proposes immediate solutions.

Concurrent to these ad-hoc emergency response roles, WHO has played an instrumental role in pulling together a database to guide and coordinate the massive programme of health facility rehabilitation that is getting underway. Using its own preliminary assessments of 170 health facilities in the lower south, and adding in information from assessments by other agencies, they are pulling together a GIS-map for the lower south (with the help of the HIC) which will eventually consolidate information on facility-type, location, grid-reference, population served, assessment date, assessment agency, number of beds, number of consultation rooms, consultations per day, operating status, condition of structure, condition of equipment, condition of furniture, laboratory facilities, cold chain equipment, agency implementing rehabilitation, and agency funding rehabilitation. Additional important data, such as staffing levels and staff attendance, is under review for inclusion. Conditional upon the buy-in and participation of the numerous parties planning rehabilitation work, and pending the addition of authority to the exercise by eventually housing the database in the DoH, this initiative will be extremely important to the effective application of rehabilitation resources.

WHO's extensive health facility assessments also contributed to the development of their country strategy, particularly the health service jumpstart programme, which is now proposed as the basis for their activities for the remainder of the year. The planning of their country programme has been an interesting if somewhat arbitrary process. They started with their baseline knowledge of the country's health system, which was informed by their longstanding national presence, and inputted into this the findings of their first round of rapid assessments to factor in post-conflict realities. From this they came up with a national plan, effectively based on full support for the entire Iraqi health system in the absence of any resources or government. This came to \$520 million. WHO then removed from this plan all factors which were definitely

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coming from other sources on a national basis, primarily essential drugs and staff salaries. The remaining budget requirement was then subdivided per governorate, weighting each governorate's priority by a factor of their population size and the number of hospital beds. Then, each governorate was analysed on a local basis, to prioritise certain activities and roles that WHO sees itself playing. A second round of more incisive assessments into services at governorate level is planned in the coming month to factor in more detailed local realities, and from this will emerge an adjusted governorate workplan and budget, feeding into a revised national workplan. The problem with such a comprehensive and rational planning approach is that it clearly distracts WHO from getting on with priority concerns and interventions, with arguably futile and repetitive processes of re-assessment and re-planning.

Recommendations:

To date, WHO has taken on a number of critical issues in the lower south which have been important in the early post-conflict period, not least leading and facilitating coordination, epidemic response, and gap-stopping on essential supplies. However, most of these interventions have been staff- rather than input-heavy, and with the exception of their \$6 million import of medical supplies, it is hard to see how WHO have spent much of the \$25 million already pledged against their appeal. WHO should now be encouraged to declare their remaining funds, to prioritise and budget for specific emergency activities from within their holistic planning process that coincide with DFID priorities (improved surveillance, drug supply, coordination and communicable disease programmes), and appeal for additional funds on this basis.

e) UNHCR:

Programme Overview:

Having prepared for massive exoduses of refugees over Iraq's borders into neighbouring countries, UNHCR found themselves after the conflict with a far different emergency role to play, which now focuses on the more gradual repatriation and resettlement of up to 900,000 Iraqi refugees, settlers or asylum seekers back to Iraq, from neighbouring countries, the wider region and Europe. Of these, the tangible likely repatriation caseload is more like 500,000, mainly from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Europe. In addition, UNHCR's country programme might facilitate the repatriation of up to 110,000 Turkish, Palestinian, Iranian and Syrian refugees from Iran, back to their countries of origin. In the lower south, the operation will primarily occupy itself with the Iraqi refugees in Saudi and Iran, and the Iranian refugees in Iraq.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

Most of UNHCR's activity to date has been conducted on the political level, in tripartite negotiations between themselves, the CPA, and the governments of countries currently hosting Iraqi refugees, especially Saudi Arabia and Iran. On the ground, in Basrah, UNHCR have done very little, except establish their office. It is clear that they have little influence over political decisions made from on high, and, in the context the refugees in Iraq (as explored above), it is also clear that they have been given little scope to pursue their core protection mandate by assessing the practical

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implications of repatriation, or liaising with local authorities to ascertain the state of local readiness.

It is critical that, regardless of the high level negotiations and processes, UNHCR stays true to its protection mandate, and discourages repatriation when it does not see that conditions are appropriate for it. It has failed to do this. Where political processes and pressures dictate that the local protection concerns will be ignored, regardless of their advice, UNHCR also has a critical role in preparing contingencies for likely return scenarios. It has also so far failed to do this.

They are only now engaging with CPA and the local office of Nationalities to discuss issues of identification cards, screening of returnees, land- and property-rights. They have a very poor understanding of likely areas of refugee return, since the majority of the refugees in Iran do not live in camps, and UNHCR has little access to them. They are assuming that people will return to known areas of origin, in Missan and Muthana, based on interviews with local population and relatives there, but this is a dangerous assumption, knowing the urban draw that will carry many returnees to the big towns in search of employment or assistance. Modalities for repatriation, ranging from NFI packages, transport provision or grants, and transit facilities are only just being thought through. The main transit/reception centre at Tanouma requires repair and preparation for a maximum holding capacity of 500, and this is expected to take at least 4 weeks. So, in general, the state of readiness in the lower south to receive refugees, whether in an organised manner or spontaneously, is so far minimal, and combined with the wider adverse conditions that should discourage repatriation (security, services etc), the advancement of the operation at this stage is inappropriate.

UNHCR have, at least, ensured that returnees will be integrated into the PDS for food rations, but this is a procedure that WFP and the MoT have opened to all vulnerable groups, and has not been dependent on UNHCR intervention. And they have also started limited QIP projects to boost services in areas of expected refugee return, mainly on rehabilitation of water supply and health facilities. However the efficacy of doing this before properly understanding where refugees intend to return to is questionable, and there is, furthermore, a massive duplication risk with the many other rehabilitation players pursuing similar projects, as already seen in Medyaina where a UNHCR-funded NGO has replicated work on a pumping station that was already fixed by ICRC and that will later be more fully rehabilitated by Bechtel.

Recommendations:

In the lower south, UNHCR should be encouraged to work from core principles of refugee protection, and should, first and foremost, hold back the political advancement of mass repatriation. Concurrently, they should take a more active line on preparing for eventual repatriation, which should start with gaining more accurate data about the refugees themselves, and should finish with a carefully designed and fully prepared repatriation process and package. Certainly they should be supported in this, particularly with a strengthened protection team, logistics input to plan the physical aspects of repatriation, and the planned establishment of relevant field offices in Amarah and Samawah, close to areas of potential return. However, with the inevitable underspend that UNHCR must have from their unfulfilled emergency

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preparedness plans, with the pre-financed preparedness stocks of NFIs and other capacities that they have in the region, and given the very low level of activity so far, it would be surprising if there is an immediate need for more resources. Only when a concrete and acceptable repatriation preparedness plan has been drafted should additional funds be allocated against its specific components. For one of the main expected components, QIPs, UNHCR would do better to lobby for established QIPs agencies to target existing resources to known areas of return, rather than seek its own duplicatory budget and double-up so inefficiently on implementation.

f) UNDP:

Programme Overview:

UNDP's programme consists of two major elements: DFID funds the emergency assistance for the power sector which aims to provide secure and stable electricity supply through generators and emergency repairs to facilitate the operations of basic services such as hospitals. The Iraq Reconstruction and Employment Programme (IREP) is an initiative aimed at financing small projects which create temporary employment (emergency high labour intensive public works projects) for vulnerable groups. These projects also aim at increasing the community participation in all stages of the projects (design plan and implementation). There is also an element of community development projects through micro-grants.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

The emergency power project was slow to get off the ground in the south. UNDP decided on a strategy of providing very large generators for major facilities. Unfortunately the 1000 kW generators that were required were not available in the regional market as supply for Iraq had emptied all stocks. The re-orientation towards smaller generators has meant a six week delay before generators have arrived. 20 generators arrived last week and there should be 60 by the end of September. In the interim, UNDP has been focusing on emergency repairs to looted power infrastructure, as well as scoping possible sites for generators. However as raised above, there appears to be insufficient coordination over where generators are needed, with large numbers of generators now arriving in the lower South. There is a clear need for large numbers of generators, including to supplement the domestic supply ring – significant extra capacity is unlikely to be available from power stations until the distribution network is rebuilt by Bechtel. So far the focus has been on Basrah – we should encourage UNDP to extend their coverage out to other provinces where there are equal needs.

UNDP reports very good progress in building the capacity of the power directorates – but they are still not in a position to take a leading role.

UNDP is actively discussing with HIC how to effect an efficient migration of the HIC from OCHA to UNDP. See the HIC section for further details.

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g) FAO:

Programme Overview:

FAO's programme in southern Iraq is funded mainly by DFID (OFF funds the coordinator position). It has three outputs: Summer crop/vegetable production, poultry production and winter cereal production. In addition, there is a limited component of capacity building and training to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

Progress appears to have been slow on the programme so far. Although this does not yet have serious implications, the timing for initial seed inputs is imminent. The technical consultants seem to be competent, but we are concerned that they are not being overseen effectively to ensure deadlines are met. There have been some delays in reworking the project, which was designed in advance of re-entry and assumed that NGOs would be needed as implementing partners. In reality, the Ministry of Agriculture has considerable capacity and NGOs are not likely to be needed. However the re-orientation of the proposal, and the welcome change in sourcing from imported seeds and chicks to some local procurement has led to some delays. In addition the recruitment of national counterparts is not progressing as planned, reportedly due to the difficulties of identifying appropriate candidates. We will comment separately on the detail of the revised proposal, but an initial review suggests that it will be able to increase impact as a result of lower cost of inputs than budgeted.

Nevertheless the project outputs can still be achieved if pursued energetically, and the situation on the ground confirms that they should have a useful impact (FAO's rough estimate is that the outputs of the project could contribute 10% of the national harvest). However FAO's planning beyond this project appears limited, and they do not have a clear idea of what financial and contract inputs will come from OFF – we would support leaving FAO to Phase II of the DFID funding to the Revised Flash Appeal.

Recommendations:

Other issues for future monitoring should include the beneficiary selection process and the extent of ministry capacity building as neither of these look particularly robust.

h) UNOHCHR:

Programme Overview:

OHCHR's role in the Iraq operation is extremely low key but of great potential significance. Built around the integration of a Human Rights capacity within the general UN operation, the main objectives have been to (a) promote a human rights approach within ongoing humanitarian planning and operations; (b) meeting protection needs of vulnerable groups; (c) monitoring and evaluating protection issues; (d) building national capacities to promote and protect human rights.

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Progress to date and problems encountered:

In practice, there has been a major gap between the ambitious and sweeping objectives of OHCHR's programme, and the practical capacity that it has had to pursue them. The full national contingent of HR Officers has only been in place since mid-July, and with the exception of Baghdad, this has only constituted one officer per region. In the lower south, the HR officer has been in place since the beginning of July, but has struggled enormously to make any headway. First, the integration of the OHCHR officer into the UNOHCI office was an unnecessarily awkward and political process, and initially she received no support from the wider UN offices, in spite of the fact that she had no independent budget for transport, communications, logistics, national staff, even stationary. This initial failure at the very outset of so-called integration was later resolved, politically, but the HR Officer still finds herself under-resourced and incapacitated to undertake half the tasks expected of her, and has a desperate need for national staff, an interpreter, and a vehicle. In addition, there is now a real about the direction that the OHCHR programme should go. There is still UN pressure for it to be an integrated influence within their humanitarian and reconstruction programme, but this role is severely compromised by the peripheral nature of the UN role in the wider reconstruction process, when compared with the primacy of the CPA, who are now developing their own legal and human rights advisory team. The other option is for OHCHR to focus more on developing HR evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, to keep a check on HR issues from the outside, and building national HR capacities through civil society and independent media. These two directions are conflictual, one requiring an internal engagement with the reconstruction process for the sake the UN programme, the other requiring an external engagement with civil society for the sake of Iraqis. Either way, the OHCHR in Iraq requires much stronger strategic guidance, policy support, resource allocation and operational capacity to develop its programme if it is to have any mid-term impact.

Recommendations:

OHCHR need to commit more realistically to a more limited objective, with a defined strategy and plan of action, supported by adequate resources and capacity. It is recommended that this would best be developed in the direction of building external national HR capacities, since programmatic HR support is best handled by CPA internally now. A series of assessments and workshops, involving Iraqi leaders and interest groups at local level (a national workshop already took place on June 30) would be the logical start for this, as well as engagement with national and international HR organisations. To do this in the lower south, OHCHR will certainly need to amend and expand their current operational budget, or call more demandingly on shared UN resources.

i) HIC (Humanitarian Information Centre):

Programme Overview:

The Humanitarian Information Centre satellite office in Basrah has responsibility for the lower South, reporting into Baghdad. It is a common service of the UN, sitting under UNOHCI, providing support to humanitarian coordination in Iraq through a

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range of information products and services. DFID has been a major supporter of OCHA's development of a rapidly deployable HIC, and specifically of the Iraq deployment.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

The HIC deployed a team member to Basrah in the first wave of UN arrivals in early May. The original HIC officer deployed without communications or sufficient equipment to provide services. Nevertheless her early arrival enabled her to get the HIC established as a key coordination support service before other means of coordination evolved. Further DFID secondments assisted the Basrah HIC in procuring much needed equipment.

Feedback from the HIC's clients – UN agencies, NGOs, the military and the CPA – has been extremely positive, considerably more so than previous HICs which have been slow to deliver. Key achievements have been:

- the abundant provision of both generic maps and specific sectoral maps such as the electricity network (recently adapted for UNDP to assist military in providing patrols to vulnerable points);
- provision of technical support to sectoral databases (notably helping design the health facilities database which is now maintained in-house by WHO);
- making initial inroads into harnessing the resources of the USAID contractors.

Progress has been slow in extending the coverage of the HIC to the other 3 governorates in the area, in part reflecting the tendency for operational agencies to focus on Basrah, but also related to the HIC's lack of mobility and capacity to travel to other governorates. Progress has also been slow in mobilising the 'Who's Doing What Where' database, but this should show results in the coming weeks as it has been re-prioritised.

The main area where the HIC has not delivered is in the Rapid Assessment Process (RAP). This envisaged a standardised baseline multi-sectoral assessment of key vulnerability indicators that would map out the whole country and be a planning tool for more in-depth surveys. Despite concerted efforts by HIC staff, and buy-in at Larnaca level to the process, the project did not get off the ground simply because agencies on the ground focused on completing their own more detailed surveys and did not see the value of the more general survey. The process is now being relaunched with specific RAP coordinators in the satellite offices. They will identify existing datasets that can be 'mined' for RAP data; and pay NGOs and other teams, possibly sourced from universities, to fill in surveys for their areas of work. These will aim to be low profile and focus on filling in gaps in rural information. The national survey is due to be completed by 1 September (already 60% complete in the north). Question marks remain over the value of the survey given that specialised surveys are ongoing, but HIC remain convinced that the results will be useful because they will provide a national snapshot. They are also currently re-assessing the security implications of carrying out new assessments in the already over-assessed South and will probably focus more on data mining from other surveys than survey work.

The current issue is how the HIC will transition to the next phase. This has not been an easy or particularly successful process with previous HICs, leading to considerable duplication of effort. We understand that UNDP and OCHA have

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agreed the HIC will transition to UNDP at the end of the year, but the process of migration will begin in August with the setting up of Resource Learning Centres in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning. We do not have sight of Baghdad-level developments, but the cooperation in Basrah looks promising – this should be followed up in Baghdad and headquarters. Institutionally UNDP and OCHA have a lot to figure out over the detail, and this will merit a close watching brief. The UNDP seconded to the HIC in Larnaca was in theory a good idea which should be encouraged in future, as should secondees from other agencies, but it is not clear in this case what the value added was.

Recommendations:

There are a number of lessons learned which we will feed back into the next phase of the wider CHAD HIC development project: a team of two is the minimum that should be deployed, and more 'light' deployment modules which can be hand-carried should be held ready, rather than the focus on a 'heavy module' which in the event took a long time to deploy to Baghdad. Future monitoring of the Iraq HIC should take a close look at the impact of the revised RAP, coverage of further flung provinces, the improvement of the WDWV database, and the transition to UNDP.

In terms of further support through the Revised Flash Appeal, it is not clear seen from Basrah whether further contributions are needed. Our feeling is that our significant initial investment should be followed up by other donors to broaden out the support of a successful service, if a shortfall exists. However the modalities of the transition will need to be clear to know whether funding should be to OCHA or UNDP if at all.

i) UNMAS/Mine Action Coordination Team:

Programme Overview:

The Mine Action Coordination Team (MACT) is a UNOPS project implemented on behalf of UNMAS. The Area MACT for the South has three strands to its coordination work – mine/UXO risk education, mine/UXO survey and mine/UXO clearance.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

The Basrah AMACT was set up in early May in its own well equipped compound (courtesy of SRSA, who have received much praise for this). It is coordinating and funding the work of a number of contractors and NGOs – including Minetech, Danish Church Aid, MAG. Some progress has been made on clearance of UXO. As of 15 July, teams in the lower South had collected 38,000 pieces of ordnance and destroyed 22,000. Priorities have been power and wat/san facilities, schools and food distribution sites. However this is the tip of the iceberg. It is clear that the capacity for clearance will have to be increased even further and we do not feel that UNMAS has a grip on how best to use its resources. It appears constrained by two issues – the slow progress on the national Emergency Survey, which would allow national prioritisation; and the lack of clarity over institutional arrangements between CPA and the UN. It is not clear how much money has actually been spent: New York appear to be holding back on deploying resources until it has been resolved whether

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the UN will be focusing on capacity building or clearance activities within the CPA structure. This needs to be clarified urgently.

The institutional arrangements for mine action are mired in Baghdad-NY level politics. UNOPS NY is apparently insisting on keeping ownership of some programmes in Iraq, while CPA is working on a longer term plan for setting up a National Mine Action Authority. The CPA will not countenance the UN retaining authority, but is not focusing on short-term coordination issues. This seems to have left a vacuum, with the UN in the South now under the impression that it will be left out of the national development plan for mine action. The result on the ground is slow progress against a clear need. In addition, the Iraqi Civil Defence organisation (responsible for emergency UXO clearance, fire brigade etc) appears to need further support. Danish Church Aid are supporting in Basrah and MACT have asked for a proposal for them to extend coverage to other lower South provinces.

The survey activity in the south has not been appropriately resourced, with only 4 survey teams against the 14 in the north. Progress is slow, roughly 3 villages per day compared to the planned 8. Additional settlements are also discovered regularly which are not on current maps (these are fed back to the HIC gazetteer). MACT is revising plans to boost capacity, and coordinating with the HIC RAP at our suggestion.

A current issue under discussion is 'Project Rhino'. Originating in an offer by former Iraqi Army EOD experts to work under Coalition forces to clear UXO, this had been considered for MOD QIP funding. However the MACT has now undertaken to bring these Iraqis into the MACT umbrella and assist in piloting the setup of an indigenous civilian UXO survey and clearance capacity. This should bring short term benefit in boosting capacity, as well as longer term sustainability (and follows the successful Afghanistan model). However this initiative should be an important focus for monitoring as the plans are embryonic. It is conceivable that many of these former Iraqi soldiers will apply to the new Iraqi army, which would undermine an attempt to set up a civilian organisation.

UNHCR have requested MACT assistance in opening up corridors for returnees from neighbouring countries. MACT has agreed to consider when locations are stipulated by UNHCR.

Mine risk education is making some progress, led by UNICEF and MAG under the MACT. MAG continues to build on relations with health, religious, civil defence and education networks but changeover in staff limited our ability to monitor. MAG had been requested to submit a proposal for increased MRE as part of the military Project Rhino. This may now not be possible to fund under QIPs, and needs to be discussed within the MACT to fit into the regional strategy. There is a possibility that additional funds may be requested from donors if the increased capacity cannot be funded by UNMAS. However considering the significant apparent unspent funds, we should encourage UNMAS to fund this.

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k) UNSECOORD:

Programme Overview:

The UNSECOORD programme in Iraq provides a common service to the UN agencies, ensuring a coordinated approach to operational security management under the guidance of a single professionally competent unit.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

On a national level, there is no doubt that the security information analysed and disseminated by the Baghdad UNSECOORD office is invaluable to every agency's operation, regardless of UN affiliation. On a more regional level, in the lower south, the value added of the UNSECOORD office is less obvious, not least because most UN security information provided comes from the Baghdad/national security report, and not from a local equivalent. UNSECOORD in Basrah do not provide public bulletins, but instead feed the national one, and this means that a lot of smaller but still relevant information gets lost along the way. It is also judged that transparent information sharing and cooperation between UNSECOORD and the Military in Basrah is only partial, and likewise between UNSECOORD and NGOs, questioning the completeness and reliability of UNSECOORD's information. Re-dissemination of urgent security information is confined, unacceptably, to the UN radio network, on UN-only frequency. There is concern for the capacity of the UNSECOORD office in Basrah, at current staffing and resource levels, to meet the diverse requirements of all the UN agencies and the wider humanitarian community. To date, UNSECOORD Basrah have been staffed with only 1 expatriate officer, 3 national staff, and 1 vehicle, against their budget which envisaged 2 expats, 4 nationals and 2 vehicles. It is perhaps this shortfall in capacity that has prompted each individual UN agency in Basrah to appoint and staff their own expatriate Field Security Officer. This undoubtedly throws into question the whole purpose of having a common service.

Recommendations:

Either the UNSECOORD umbrella in Basrah should be more fully staffed and better oriented to provide a shared service, that is reliable, responsive and complete, to all the UN agencies and the wider humanitarian community, doing away with the need for agency-specific security capacities. Or else, the UNSECOORD office should be disbanded, and individual agencies should proceed alone, but in coordination. But the current set-up, against the value added, is neither effective or cost-efficient.

l) UNOHCI:

UNOHCI is generally regarded as being an effective presence. It negotiated the current common premises, and facilitates a variety of coordination roles. Issues include a lack of operational budget – reportedly due to OFF restrictions. This has meant that the DFID secondee, Stuart Kinsey, has had to make the most basic purchases from his delegated financial resources. In looking to the future, and specifically future funding, it is still unclear what structure will succeed UNOHCI, whether UNDP or some extension of the SRSG's office.

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m) UNJLC:

The Basrah UNJLC office is well staffed, with 7-8 in the team covering fuel, customs, logistics, Umm Qasr, and civil-military coordination. The high profile role played by the newly formed UNJLC in Afghanistan is absent in Iraq. The main logistics issues are related specifically to WFP, which takes care of most of them in-house. However there is more that UNJLC could be doing: security has limited numbers in Baghdad, where JLC could feed into national level policy issues such as customs and fuel.

n) UNHAS:

Seen from the limited perspective of Basrah, UNHAS has done a good job, with the DFID secondees reporting excellent cooperation with UK military at the airport. The only issues raised by 'customers' is the policy of flights only being available to UN implementing partners. It would be worthwhile for UNHAS also to explore cost recovery as a means to improve efficiency – under the current system, many travellers cancel without informing UNHAS, meaning planes fly below capacity. There are some current problems due to the restrictions on flights in Baghdad and Mosul.

o) UN-ICT

The radio room and internet café in Basrah were set up by WFP FITTEST, who are responsible as an inter-agency resource to provide these services. These are reportedly funded out of OFF funds rather than the OCHA ICT project. According to UNOHCI, the OCHA grant has been used for the VHIC (internal predecessor to the HIC), hosting the HIC website, and 'virtual private networks'. None of the OCHA grant has directly reached the Basrah office.

One institutional issue is the need to encourage the inter-agency process to look at common communications/connectivity. At the moment donors fund each agency to set up and maintain separate communications networks, which then are often incompatible. While compatibility on all levels is probably unrealistic, common internet connectivity ought to be achievable, and would derive significant cost benefits from the increased bargaining power with service providers that larger contracts would provide.

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p) ICRC:

Programme Overview:

ICRC have been present in Iraq for many years. During the conflict, they were the only agency still operating on the ground, and in Basrah they played a key role in keeping the urban water supply system running when the frontline cut across the network. Prior, during and after the conflict, ICRC have been involved in numerous quick-fix projects, primarily in the water and health sectors, and have also promoted mine awareness. In the context of the recent conflict, the first Gulf War, and the Ba'athist regime, ICRC have also pursued their traditional protection mandate for PoWs, civilian detainees, and missing people.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

As the only agency able to operate across the frontlines during the conflict, ICRC established a key and lifesaving role for itself in securing the Basrah water supply, by keeping the main water pumping plant operational. Since then, they have remained engaged in the city's water supply, involved in ad-hoc repairs to various parts of the network, especially with pipeline repair teams, and provision of treatment chemicals. As more and more agencies (UNICEF, Military, CPA, DoW) have become involved in similar actions, ICRC has moved its focus outside of Basrah, prioritising upstream aspects of the water supply system, particularly the boosting stations along the sweet water canal, and the provision of mobile transformer units to power them. They have also moved into other towns in the lower south with a similar rapid repair approach, but stress their frustration at not being able to move beyond their quick-fix orientation due to a lack of urgency and transparency in the macro-rehabilitation plans of the US Contractors in the water sector (Bechtel, RTI). They are similarly eager to expand their pre-war rural water development projects, but again are reluctant to do so until they have a better understanding of where the USAID resources will go. The same goes for their activities in the sanitation sector. Between 1996 and 2002, ICRC were developing the urban sanitation network, installing and repairing sewage lifting and pumping stations. Now they are involved in limited ad-hoc repairs to the same system, which they cannot tackle more sustainably since they know that the US Contractors should come in the near future to repair the entire network. In the health sector, ICRC distributed surgical and trauma kits for war-wounded to many hospitals and clinics prior to the conflict, and since have provided ad-hoc surgical supplies to the main hospitals, as well as medical oxygen alongside the UK military. Accepting the moratorium on IDP registration, ICRC continue to register and assist only newly displaced IDPs in Nasiriyah, in limited numbers. For mine awareness, ICRC have trained 600 Iraqi Red Crescent volunteers for community dissemination of mine risk messages. And in their protection capacity, ICRC have been monitoring and actively following the remaining PoWs and criminal detainees, and their treatment by the coalition authorities, visiting prisons and detention centres, exchanging Red Cross Messages, and investigating cases of missing people resulting from the recent conflict. 70% of ICRC's 32-strong international staff are dedicated to these important protection roles. ICRC would also like to engage, on a protection front, in cases of missing people from Saddam's era, in civil protection for occupied populations, and in training of CPA and new police recruits in the codes and principles of the Geneva convention. However, they are currently constrained in their capacity, and, perhaps

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unnecessarily, also feel wary about engaging too proactively with CPA at this stage, for fear of compromising their neutrality.

Recommendations:

ICRC have a solid and persistent experience base for their work in Iraq, and are well placed to continue ad-hoc relief interventions in the water, sanitation and health sectors, so long as they are needed. However, they are eager to break through into more meaningful reconstruction and development work, with a longer-term orientation. This will provide them with a link to the communities, and a platform on which to base their more critical protection work. With the political environment evolving so dramatically, there is a definite need for them to pursue their protection mandate on multiple fronts, including active engagement with CPA on their obligations as an occupying power, training of CPA to fulfil these obligations, and wider pursuit of the many civil protection and human rights issues that haunt Iraq.

g) IFRC:

Programme Overview:

The IFRC do not have a direct presence in Basrah, so their interests, particularly in the work of the Iraqi Red Crescent (IRCS), are handled by the ICRC, and overseen from IFRC in Baghdad. Having emerged from a temporary preoccupation with high profile relief activities, the IFRC have now reviewed their plans and objectives, and are pursuing the realignment and capacity building of the IRCS, post-Saddam, over and above all other activities.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, with a massive budget secured in anticipation of a largescale humanitarian crisis, and under considerable pressure from participating national societies to show tangible returns against donor pledges, the IFRC commenced a programme of relief interventions through the IRCS. This unnerved the ICRC, not least because it duplicated similar initiatives conducted by ICRC, and sought to implement through the existing IRCS, which was felt to be undemocratic, overtly affected by the politics of the Saddam regime, and contrary to Red Cross principles of neutrality. With strong internal advocacy the ICRC has since persuaded the IFRC to focus, as a priority, on the restructuring and democratisation of the IRCS, leaving relief activities to the ICRC, in the hope that in the medium term the IRCS will become the national capacity through which the Red Cross can reach Iraqi communities, building the software of their programmes, and delivering according to Red Cross principles. Originally IFRC planned to deploy 28 relief delegates to Iraq, but this important and strategic realignment has resulted in a far more modest and careful deployment of 7 delegates specialised in organisational development. So far, the legal statutes of the IRCS have been revised, to be approved by a Joint Commission of the Red cross, and to be ratified by an Interim General Assembly in Iraq. Following this, new elections for representatives of the General Assembly will be conducted through revitalised Branch Offices, and the new General Assembly will elect the Board of the IRCS. Informing this process has been a widespread recruitment of new Red Cross volunteers across the country, selected by community leaders, and combined with training in Community Based First Aid.

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This crucial process of expanding and democratising the volunteer base of the IRCS has just got underway. Following this, a review of the IRCS's operational capacity will be undertaken, and by the end of August, branch-based disaster preparedness training will be undertaken, concurrent branch office rehabilitation and provision of equipment and vehicles, to compensate for materials that were looted or squandered prior to, during or immediately after the conflict.

Recommendations:

The efforts that the IFRC has taken to realign their Iraqi programme, against the pressures to show immediate returns in a relief context, should be applauded. There is no immediate shortage of relief implementers in Iraq, even within the Red Cross family, but there is a notable absence of local capacity in Iraqi civil society. The reorganisation and revitalisation of the IRCS, from the grass roots upwards, is undoubtedly a priority, in spite of its short-term invisibility. Recognising that DFID has seriously over-funded the IFRC for its operations in Iraq, we should not allow that to pressurise the IFRC away from the politically delicate and low-cost task of building real capacity in the IRCS, as a prerequisite to all other activities. As such, it will be necessary to accept a significant underspend on the funds provided.

r) IMC:

Programme Overview:

IMC have three components to their DFID-funded operation that impact on the lower south. The first is the installation of a temporary laboratory facility in Basrah city, the second is the rehabilitation of water supply systems in the Marsh Arab communities in Missan governorate, and the third is the reactivation of the Targeted Nutritional Programme in Missan and Wassit governorates.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

IMC received funding approval from DFID in the second week of July, so all of their proposed activities are in early stages, and their teams are just getting set up. However, with only a three month timeframe allocated, swift action is now needed.

The lab project in Basrah has suffered from a lack of regular coordination with the multiple players involved in similar activities. Awaiting approval for their grant, IMC neglectfully disappeared from Basrah for 2 weeks, and in their absence, a number of other agencies became involved in the laboratory facility, believing that IMC were no longer committed. This has altered somewhat the situation on the ground, and considerable effort was needed to reopen coordination and adjust plans accordingly. DCA proceeded unilaterally with the rehabilitation and fittings in the four principle rooms at the Al Razi temporary site. As a result, IMC will no longer need to rehabilitate the premises, apart from the small blood screening facility at the back of the centre, and this will incur an underspend on their rehabilitation budget line. The Central Public Health Laboratory also managed to retrieve a considerable amount of looted items, and pending a check on their working order, these will be installed in the temporary site. The UK Military had also placed an order for lab equipment and supplies worth \$20,000, from Kuwait, and the Kimadia warehouse was discovered to have considerable stocks of supplies and reagents in Basrah. IMC, with technical

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support and endorsement from WHO, have agreed to coordinate all these different inputs, and will, themselves, only order the remaining balance of items and supplies that the lab facility will urgently need. Thus, the significant budget allocated to IMC for lab supplies and equipment will also be considerably underspent. The important thing, however, is that the temporary lab facility is now underway, and that all parties are now coordinating. It remains a vital facility, given the fact that the rehabilitation of the original CPHL, by IOM, is anticipated to take 6-12 months. IMC project that the temporary lab should be up and running within 6 weeks, allowing time for tendering, ordering, and delivery of equipment. Discussion was held as to the possible uses for the projected underspend on this budget. A proposal to purchase additional equipment to resource the bigger CPHL when it is ready was dismissed, given the current security risks for any expensive capital items that sit in storage for too long. Instead, IMC will assess laboratory facilities in Missan and Wassit governorates, to see if they could assist them. Alternatively, they could envisage expanding their water programme, or their nutritional activities, depending on how they evolve. This remains an open issue about which IMC will return to DFID with a more solid proposal when they have assessed the options in more detail.

The water rehabilitation projects in Al-Iz and Al-Raifa have not yet commenced in earnest, although preliminary low-cost preparatory work was done, for instance engineering site surveys and building of pump foundations, while they were awaiting approval on their grant application. The need for this work to be completed urgently remains acute, with IMC claiming that diarrhoeal diseases have increased 3000% from January to May in Amarah hospital, and 50% of these cases come from the project's target areas. With underspend elsewhere on their budget, IMC will investigate the possibility of providing beneficiaries with new jerrycans for clean water storage, or of expanding the water distribution networks to more remote outlying areas. IMC insist that they are still on track for completing this work within the three month timeframe.

For the nutritional activities, IMC's nutrition teams, headed up by an expat nutritionist, are completing rapid assessments of TNP structures across Missan and Wassit. From these assessments, a workplan for training, resupply and reactivation of the CCCUs will be drawn up. However, there is a risk that the work could be derailed by the need to discuss a revision of nutritional protocols (see above) at national level. Furthermore, work at the CCCUs will depend for their efficacy on concurrent work at PHCs and NRUs planned by UNICEF. If this fails to materialise, IMC might propose to take on all the TNP facilities in their areas.

Recommendations:

IMC's programme has suffered from an initial lapse in coordination, and potentially faces further alterations depending on how other partners' related activities develop. DFID is recommended to keep a flexible approach to the activities that IMC undertakes, so long as they work towards the prescribed objectives of the programme, utilise resources effectively, and do not seriously delay the delivery of outputs.

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s) GOAL:

Programme Overview:

GOAL have had a DFID-funded programme in Thiqr and Al Muthana governorates since April 2003, aiming to meet immediate short-term needs in the health, nutrition and water sectors. Specifically, objectives have included provision of essential drugs and medical supplies to PHCs and hospitals in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, conducting a nutritional assessment to determine the nutritional status of children in conflict affected areas, and implementation of repair work on water supply systems to ensure continued provision of safe water.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

As the programme was originally planned prior to the conflict, and the anticipated humanitarian crisis never evolved, GOAL's activities have differed marginally from those originally prescribed, but have nevertheless contributed to improved conditions and services in all the sectors.

In health, GOAL has delivered 28 basic health kits to PHCs in Muthana, and 50 kits PHCs and hospitals in Thiqr. These were originally envisaged as a stop-gap measure prior to the resumption of the Kimadia supply system. However, due to delays in delivery and distribution, some of these items only arrived recently, and GOAL are continuing to run parallel distributions for the remaining kits. This has, ultimately, been fortuitous, because the Kimadia system has recently broken down for some items in both governorates (see above). However, GOAL acknowledge that hereafter, they should be supporting the national system, and not bypassing it, and so will distribute any additional supplies through the central warehouse. Concurrent to drug support, GOAL has also implemented a range of rehabilitation works on PHC facilities, ranging from very minor replacement of doors and windows, to more major structural repair work and furnishing. 15 minor rehabilitation projects have been completed (ranging in value from \$100 to \$5000), and 13 more major projects are underway (costing from \$2000 to \$15000).

For nutrition, the proposed nutritional survey was delayed, since the humanitarian situation was not so critical, and because UNICEF are now proposing to undertake a nationwide survey, in which GOAL might participate. This should be encouraged. Two months after the resumption of the PDS food distribution, and three months before its cessation, now is a critical time to get a nutritional baseline established, assuming that UNICEF's methodologies will be appropriate and their findings reliable. Instead, GOAL have undertaken a localised resumption of the TNP in Nasiriyah, as a test case for wider TNP reactivation. Initially, a public rush for what was perceived as a free handout of biscuits resulted in a serious security incident, and the suspension of this project, but it has since been resumed, with the importance of prior community sensitisation learnt as a critical lesson.

In the water sector, GOAL undertook limited water tankering in urban areas, and have since implemented spot repairs to water supply systems, pumps and distribution networks to facilitate their exit from tankering. In total, 15 water repair projects are either underway or have been completed in Al Muthana, and 21 in Thiqr.

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Recommendations:

GOAL's objective in Southern Iraq has always been to have a short-term presence, to complete rapid quick-fixes, and then to leave. They have largely achieved this, but in the absence of a massive crisis, some aspects of their programme have required a more gradual and developmental approach, particularly the nutritional and water projects. Thus, their timeframes have been extended, and they have requested to utilise the contingency budget on the DFID grant to permit this. This should be approved by London, so that they can draw up and implement a smooth exit strategy whilst still meeting their planned sectoral objectives.

t) ACTED:

Programme Overview:

ACTED have a recently approved budget from DFID to repair and rehabilitate 50 water production compact units (CUs) in rural areas of Muthana governorate and possibly in Al Najaf.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

With funding only just approved, ACTED are still preparing themselves for implementation. The expatriate water engineer charged with overseeing the project from Samawah will arrive in the first week of August, which is unnecessarily slow, given the short 3-month timeframe of the project. Identification of the work sites has, however, progressed under an Iraqi team of water technicians, and ACTED have a clearer idea of the tasks at hand, the costs per site, and the priorities. They have also established a good working relationship with the Department of Water for Muthana. Recognising their technical capacity, ACTED plan to involve them in the prioritisation of sites and in monitoring of works, but noticing a lack of management capacity, and considerable political upheaval within the DoW, they will pursue actual implementation through local contractors. In the mid-term, they plan to train the DoW for operating and maintenance of the systems. Physical works are expected to start at the beginning of August, and ACTED are confident that they will meet their targets in the given timeframe.

Recommendations:

ACTED's main concern, following closer assessment of the CUs, is that they will also need to implement minor repairs on the connected distribution pipes and tapstands. However, they will not know the extent to which this is required until the CUs are repaired and water is pumped into the system. So there may later be a requirement to reduce slightly the overall number of CUs repaired, to free sufficient budget for these related but unforeseeable needs.

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u) PINF:

Programme Overview:

PINF have recently received DFID funding to implement a small PHC rehabilitation project, targeting 5 clinics in Missan governorate.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

PINF now have their full team in place, with an expatriate supervisor, 5 national PINF engineers to monitor one site each, and 2 local contractors who have been awarded the contracts for the work. All site assessments and tendering procedures were completed before the funding had been approved. Work will start at the beginning of August, and is due to be completed within 2 months. The only anticipated change to the plan is due to the fact that one of the originally identified clinics (the Qalah Saleh PHC) is now being rehabilitated by another NGO, CESVI, reflecting poor coordination in Missan, so PINF have instead selected Al Iscaan PHC for rehabilitation, with the full approval of the DoH, who consider all five of PINF's clinics to be within the top ten rehabilitation priorities in Missan.

Recommendations:

PINF have been advised to gather pre-rehabilitation data from the clinics, looking at hours worked, staff attendance, and consultations performed, to serve as a baseline against which improvements following rehabilitation can be measured.

v) Warchild:

Programme Overview:

Warchild's programme funded mainly by DFID aims to provide emergency bread distributions through setting up a bakery.

Progress to date and problems encountered:

Warchild set up its bakery in Nasariyah after consultation with WFP. The bakery has been functioning for 6 weeks and is now distributing 14,000 pieces of bread per day; the daily capacity of the bakery is 120,000.

The main constraint is limited distribution capacity – this has been a concern of WFP which has to date meant that Warchild have sourced their wheat flour from the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, not WFP as originally expected. Warchild are expecting at least some WFP supplies in the near future but the relationship appears strained. It does not appear that Warchild have a thorough handle on distribution.

The other issue is the planned handover to local authorities. The bakery was intended as an emergency feeding intervention, and although Warchild are upbeat about progress towards handover to local authorities, our impression was that a lot more detail needs to be worked out. Current distributions are free, but an element of cost recovery is due to be included to assist longer term sustainability.