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9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the OLS Review are in accord with the more general recommendations made in the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Borton, et al., 1996); in particular, the need to uphold international law, to strengthen donor policy coherence, and to extend the modalities of conditionality.

Some fundamental criticisms of OLS have been made in the Review. It should be stated at the outset, however, that the Review Team believes that OLS should continue. It is in this spirit that the following recommendations are made.

9.1 Successes of OLS

In delivering a large-scale and increasingly diversified package of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan under difficult conditions, OLS must be considered a success. Of particular importance, however, has been its ability to use international pressure to maintain access. At the same time, the development of the Ground Rules approach is a major innovation. This has the potential of establishing a rule-based framework to temper the manner in which internal wars are fought.

9.2 Relief or Development?

It was often claimed during the course of the Review that the acute stages of the emergency were over, and more long-term rehabilitation and development assistance was now required. In particular, it was stated that OLS should shift its resources in this direction. More generally, it is now widely believed that relief assistance should play a developmental role. The model for the relief-to-development continuum is derived from natural disasters. Relief spending should support preventative measures, build local capacity to respond, and so on.

There is a limited transferability of this approach, however, to a political emergency. Such an approach underplays issues of neutrality when development partners in an internal war are also directly or indirectly allied to the warring parties. At the same time, promoting food security in a political emergency can have as much to do with providing protection as building capacity.

Sudan is representative of a chronic political emergency, having been at war with itself for most of the last forty years. Existing formulations of the relief-to-development continuum fail to acknowledge this. Moreover, given the informal embargo on official development assistance to Sudan, it is unlikely that this crisis will quickly improve. In this situation, even if humanitarian aid includes elements of rehabilitation and capacity-building, it cannot substitute for a full-fledged development programme.

As long as the current war continues, development and humanitarian assistance should be kept separate. At the same time, OLS should re-assert its identity as a humanitarian operation.

Since the continuum has to be operationalised in relation to an actual development process, it raises the question as to what this is in Sudan. No significant information could be found on the nature of the underlying social and economic trends within Sudan in UN agencies that support continuum thinking.

Research should be carried out on the actually existing development process in Sudan. This should include an examination of the land issue in Southern Sudan, the origin and condition of the agricultural labour force, the nature of the parastatal organisations involved, and the sustainability of their activities.

It should also be noted that a similar problem exists in the Southern Sector. Despite greater access, agencies have not used this to engage in any significant social or economic research. Many operational categories appear to be derived from Western social policy.

Research should be carried out on the social and economic structures of South Sudan. In particular, social trends within family or wider social units must be established so that projects can respond effectively to the social consequences of the war. OLS should recognise that a more efficient use of relief inputs will be made if the overall coping ability of local communities is strengthened. Greater attention should be focused on methods of distribution, including markets and commercial networks. Seasonal variations in commodity availability, prices, and long term fluctuations are also important.

Despite the rhetoric of moving from relief to development, the situation of war-affected populations in Sudan has changed little during the course of OLS. It remains a chronic political emergency, where people's options for reducing their vulnerability are limited. In this situation, humanitarian crises have been, and will continue to be, a common feature. The need for humanitarian assistance remains.

9.3 The Future of OLS

Regarding the future of humanitarian assistance to Sudan, the Review considered several main options. That is, (a) the transference of all OLS co-ordination activities to GOS areas, (b) the replacement of OLS with a donor and INGO consortium, (c) the formal splitting of the Northern and Southern Sectors, and (d) the reform of OLS as a unified humanitarian programme.

9.3.1 The Transference of OLS Co-ordination to GOS Areas

The government has called for the closure of the Southern Sector and the transference of all OLS co-ordination activities to GOS areas. It is claimed that this would improve cost effectiveness. The Review has estimated that moving as many OLS commodities by the least expensive routes possible, particularly routes originating in the North, would hypothetically save about a quarter of total costs. This figure is speculative, however since - among other things - it does not include the need for secondary transport from the rail and river drop-off points involved.

At the same time, the Review does not think that the movement of relief supplies is a purely technical matter. The main cost inefficiency of OLS is not the mode of transport, but denial of access. When the suggested restructuring of OLS would place nearly 90% of relief assistance to the South under the potential control of one of the warring parties, the quality of access becomes important. Given the very different operating environments of the Northern and Southern Sectors, it is the opinion of the Review that the programmes currently supported from Nairobi and Lokichokio could not be replicated under the regulatory regime that currently operates from Khartoum.

GOS demands that the Southern Sector should be closed and its activities transferred to government areas are not supported.

Some activities could be transferred, but this would depend on reaching a clear and more comprehensive OLS access agreement. This is discussed below.

9.3.2 Replacement of OLS with A Donor/INGO Consortium

The current crisis within OLS has led some donors and INGOs to think in terms of the closure or collapse of OLS, and its replacement by a donor/INGO consortium. On the grounds that a solidarity movement would emerge, the SPLM/A is also sympathetic to this idea. The Review is sceptical, however.

If OLS were to fold, it is unlikely that a technically illegal cross-border operation would attract as much funding as OLS does, despite its increasingly poor fund-raising performance. Most agencies would probably concentrate in Equatoria, exacerbating the uneven development of South Sudan. Moreover, an important avenue for addressing Sudan issues at an international level would have been closed off. While the pursuit of some donor political interests may be better served, the Review is not convinced that the war-affected populations of Sudan would benefit.

There is a related issue here; that is, the growing importance of direct donor funding to INGOs both within and outside the OLS umbrella. Some donors have seen this as

an insurance policy. If OLS is to be reformed in the interests of gaining greater access, however, the need to strengthen OLS's bargaining power with the warring parties is more important than ever. Without a clear and coherent donor strategy on Sudan and OLS, the efforts of the Review will count for little.

As soon as possible a high level UN, donor and INGO meeting on Sudan should be convened to agree a common policy toward OLS.

Of particular importance here is the issue of donor sub-contracting through INGOs. While the UN is the official co-ordinating body for OLS, donor interest in "their" INGOs can create a clash of interests.

9.3.3 The Formal Splitting of Northern and Southern Sectors

Making the current de facto division of Sudan de jure is a policy supported by the SPLM/A. Both Sectors of OLS would report separately to New York.

The Review regards this as unrealistic, since it would amount to a formal limitation of GOS sovereignty. At the same time, it would entrench one of the main weaknesses of the present arrangement. That is, the displaced and war-affected in the North would be excluded from OLS.

9.3.4 The Reform of OLS as a Unified Humanitarian Programme

If OLS is to achieve its potential, develop its innovative aspects, and become a possible model for other complex emergencies, this can only come about by a reform and extension of the existing structure as a more unified programme. That is, tackling its existing political and programmatic weaknesses and, as far as possible, attempting to harmonise the approach between Sectors. In particular, this will require an extension of OLS support to all displaced and war-affected groups in Sudan. While dependent on international support, this is the option chosen by the Review.

9.4 The OLS Agreement

Reforming OLS as a unified humanitarian programme requires the creation of a level playing field between all warring parties. This does not mean levelling the amount of resources to create a balance between sides irrespective of needs and conditions. It does mean a levelling between sides in the sense of operating a single and impartial framework of rules and obligations. Compliance with these rules and obligations, moreover, should produce a series of transparent, appropriate, and impartial responses. It is only in this manner that a negotiated or informal safe area programme can work.

The Ground Rule approach, as currently existing in the South, should be developed as a framework of a signed OLS agreement between the UN and all warring parties.

While a tripartite agreement would be preferable, a series of signed bilateral agreements between the UN and the warring parties would be sufficient. The document should be carefully crafted, contain the key aims of OLS, define its humanitarian principles, the expectations regarding the behaviour of warring parties to civilians, and the scope of international responsibilities. In particular,

...the agreement should be clearly based on independent international access to all war-affected populations regardless of their location or who controls the territory. It should also acknowledge that within an internal war, people cannot necessarily be supported by technical interventions alone. Protection issues are also involved.

The agreement must further establish that the definition of a war-affected population is the prerogative of UN assessment. The nature of the contractual relation involved must also be clear.

The agreement should specify that for all OLS matters, a contractual relation exists between the UN and the co-operating organisation. Furthermore, access to OLS resources is dependent on the implementation of OLS principles.

The agreement must also cover the issue of so-called capacity building. This usually means administrative support or training to improve the implementation of OLS programmes or assisted activities. At the moment, there is an imbalance in this type of support. The humanitarian wings of the movements and some other agencies receive such assistance through the OLS Ground Rule framework in the South. Such support is less in evidence in the North.

On signing a more comprehensive OLS agreement, the government's humanitarian institutions and related bodies would be eligible for appropriate administrative support and training within the OLS framework.

At the same time, however, there is an issue regarding the sustainability of such assistance, particularly in the South. The SPLM/A, for example, provides little or no funding for the SRRA. Rather, the international community is expected to meet the running costs of SRRA.

Administrative or training support given to the humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related institutions should be phased out unless those parties, from their own resources, make adequate provision for the running costs of these bodies.

Regarding the South, this measure also addresses the issue of OLS recognition, and the wish to avoid factionalism. OLS has not developed adequate criteria on which to assess the eligibility of new factions to become part of OLS. Criteria have usually been based on control of territory and political cohesiveness. In order to discourage opportunistic factionalism, the sign of a serious movement should be the capacity to provide the running costs of its humanitarian wing.

The Review supports the idea of an International Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the OLS agreement. The lack of an International Advisory Committee to which violations could be addressed has been a major weakness.

An International Advisory Committee comprised of major donors should be created to support the implementation of the OLS agreement.

It should be emphasised that the Review considers as inappropriate the representation of the warring parties on such a Committee. Donor participation, however, is regarded as vital. Outside of crisis issues, the committee would meet biannually to review progress. It would have an advisory role in relation to assessment, implementation, and conditionality issues. Information from assessments, moreover, should be examined from a much broader perspective than the technical responses available within the UN system. It could, for example, become part of the negotiating process.

Apart from the International Advisory Committee, a further measure to improve transparency is reform of the Annual Appeal. This is dealt with below. The Annual Appeal must serve as the basis of OLS programme prioritisation, and clearly indicate the full range of activities, including those of participating NGOs. It therefore becomes a more complex process than currently exists. If the UN is to maintain a neutral and effective co-ordinating role, then the Appeal must reflect the OLS mandate in full. Reporting to the warring parties should largely involve reviewing implementation.

9.4.1 Establishing the Environment for the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid

The thrust of OLS reform is not only to create a level playing field, but to define the environment in which humanitarian aid can be delivered. The Review believes that in the context of a long running internal war, this is the only measure that can moderate the activities of the warring parties to the benefit of civilians. Moreover, through the establishment of an International Advisory Committee, it strengthens the potential role of global opinion.

Some donors and agencies may be hesitant in supporting such a proposal. Making humanitarian aid more conditional goes against what has been accepted policy for more than a decade. Several factors should be borne in mind, however.

First, sufficient is known about the dynamics of internal war to suggest that, except under special circumstances, unconditional humanitarian aid rarely reaches the intended beneficiaries in satisfactory quantities. Moreover, the separation of humanitarian aid from conditionality has not only promoted aid abuse, it has arguably led to a policy dead-end in relation to international response to internal war.

Second, conditionality in the form of agreement to Ground Rules has been in operation in South Sudan for several years. This appears to have had a moderating effect on the activities of the movements. Moreover, it has brought together the issue of humanitarian aid and respect for human rights in an innovative fashion. Conventional relief programmes usually separate them.

Finally, conditionality in this sense is related to defined humanitarian principles and agreed roles and responsibilities, it is not connected with the foreign policy or political interests of donor governments. Moreover, the non-agreement of one or more parties would not necessarily imply that all humanitarian aid ceases. It would suggest that alternative modalities for aid delivery would be seriously considered.

Further research on the Ground Rule concept is required. Especially, how it can be used to broaden the modalities of conditionality in an acceptable and ethical manner and, at the same time, moderate the dynamics of internal war.

Regarding the monitoring of compliance, this is already undertaken in the Humanitarian Principles Unit in the Southern Sector. Recommendations below indicate how this could be done in the Northern Sector. In both cases, information would be collated and regularly forwarded to the International Advisory Committee.

9.4.2 The Overall Management of OLS

Creating a unified programme demands that the ambiguity related to the informal separation of OLS be addressed. At the same time, it is recognised that for many reasons, including political ones, it would be impossible to create a single management structure administering one OLS programme. The recommendations in this area represent a pragmatic compromise; on the one hand, attempting to improve political and managerial co-ordination within OLS, and at the same time - providing that the quality of access can be improved in the North - encouraging appropriate programme rationalisation and unification between Sectors.

While the detail is given below, the basis of the recommendations are to encourage a much stronger co-ordination role for DHA. Namely, the recruitment of a DHA appointed Humanitarian Co-ordinator who is also the UN Resident Co-ordinator based in Khartoum. Regarding the Southern Sector, UNICEF's lead agency role should be retained but given greater clarity. The OLS Co-ordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations

would be clearly seen as deputising in the South for the DHA Resident Co-ordinator on OLS matters. It is also suggested that this person might be a DHA appointee but seconded from UNICEF. As in the present arrangement, for OLS matters WFP would continue to deputise in the Northern and Southern Sectors in the absence of the Humanitarian Co-ordinator or the OLS Co-ordinator/UNICEF Chief of Operations, respectively.

9.4.3 The Special Envoy For Humanitarian Affairs

Despite the political weakness of OLS, the Special Envoy has diligently pursued OLS's humanitarian aims. The Special Envoy would have an important role to play in helping implement the reform of OLS.

The position of Special Envoy would remain important in the context of a reformed OLS. The Envoy's brief, however, should be changed to focus on the monitoring of opinion within neighbouring countries as well as liaison between the warring parties. In addition, the chairing of the International Advisory Committee by the Special Envoy should be considered.

The Review feels this wider brief is necessary to better reflect the regional significance of OLS, and to promote more informed donor opinion.

9.5 Management and Co-ordination

9.5.1 Overall OLS Management

The Review is of the opinion that a UNDP Resident Representative based in Khartoum, with both development and OLS responsibilities, represents a serious clash of interests. There is a structural contradiction in the expectation that one person can work with the government on development issues and, at the same time, intercede with the same body, this time as a warring party, on behalf of conflict-affected civilians. As the Review indicates, the war-affected have been the constituent losers in this arrangement.

A DHA Humanitarian Co-ordinator should be appointed. This person should also occupy the position of UN Resident Co-ordinator. Moreover, while based in Khartoum, the person would be expected to regularly visit Nairobi. The UNDP Resident Representative would play a deputy role in relation to development, while WFP would continue to operate as a deputy for OLS matters.

This adjustment is long overdue, and more accurately reflects the centre of gravity of UN activity in Sudan. At the same time, however, the Review is aware of DHA's lack

of capacity. This could be helped by the support of the International Advisory Committee established to oversee the implementation of the OLS agreement. This is why this committee should have donor representation. It could also complement attempts to support DHA's role globally. Improved co-ordination through DHA would require additional donor funding, however.

9.5.2 Northern Sector Co-ordination

Improved Northern Sector Co-ordination is based upon expanding and redefining the role of the United Nations Emergency Co-ordination Unit (UNHCU).

UNHCU should, contractually and managerially, be placed under DHA. Moreover, its overall co-ordination role in the Northern Sector should be clearly recognised.

At the same time, there needs to be a reversal of the trend for UNHCU's budget to decline. Perhaps through a Memorandum of Understanding, the other UN specialist agencies in Khartoum would need to recognise the authority of UNHCU in its co-ordination and monitoring role. As indicated, the following posts would need to be either created or upgraded.

(a) OLS Northern Sector Co-ordinator

This post would replace the current Chief of UNHCU post, which has responsibilities for the Southern Sector. The new Co-ordinator would focus on the Northern Sector, the implementation of OLS principles, and the management of an expanded unit, these being the prerequisites for a more consolidated approach.

(b) Field Advisors

Field Adviser is an existing post that would be upgraded and redefined, and the number of Field Advisors would be expanded. There is currently one Field Advisor with both UNDP and OLS responsibilities. The post would be increased to four persons. Moreover, they would have only OLS responsibilities. Field Advisors would monitor all contracting agencies under the OLS agreement in terms of compliance with its principles. They would also participate in assessments. This would greatly increase the visibility of OLS in the North.

(c) Senior Advisor on the Internally Displaced

This is a new post. The priority would be to develop a coherent strategy with regard to internally displaced persons, of which Sudan has the largest number in the world according to UNHCR. The post-holder would also liaise with other international bodies working on this issue, for example, UNHCR, ICRC, and improve monitoring.

(d) Information Co-ordinator

This is an existing post, the role of which needs redefining. The purpose of this post would be both to advise other UN agencies and NGOs on data collection methods and dissemination, and to consolidate the information produced. The person would need to be a qualified specialist in this field, and able to advise on standardisation, technical definitions, and so on. While sectoral information would continue to be produced by the specialist agencies, the role of Information Co-ordinator would also be to consolidate this information, for example, in relation to assessments and the Appeal. The Information Officer would also be the lead person in relation to the exchange of information with the Southern Sector.

(e) NGO/Humanitarian Principles Officer

This is an existing post, the role of which needs redefining and expanding. The post would monitor the contractual relations between the GOS, NGOs, and the UN. This officer would supply regular information to the suggested donor-based International Advisory Committee for OLS. At the same time, after the fashion of the Humanitarian Principles Unit in the Southern Sector, information would be disseminated on OLS principles through a series of workshops, newsletters, etc..

9.5.3 Southern Sector Co-ordination

In the Southern Sector, UNICEF plays a lead agency role. Overall, this role has been performed well. As already mentioned, UNICEF's development of Ground Rules is a major innovation for working in ongoing conflict. The Review would like to see this approach extended to the OLS agreement generally. At the same time, however, as the OLS programme has become more extensive and complex, there has been a growing tension in the lead agency approach. That is, the conflict inherent in the need to co-ordinate and plan for all co-operating agencies and, at the same time, be conscious of its own country programme interests. There is a pressure that favours a separation of the post of UNICEF Chief of Operations in Nairobi from that of the OLS Southern Sector Co-ordinator functions.

9.5.4 UNICEF's Lead Agency Role

While appreciative of UNICEF's activities in sectoral co-ordination and, especially, its security and evacuation system, some NGOs have been critical of UNICEF's ability to discharge its overall co-ordination responsibilities. This is both with regard to keeping its own programme interests at an appropriate distance and, especially in relation to WFP, of representing OLS interests to other strategic agencies. At one stage, the Review did consider establishing a separate DHA-headed co-ordination unit in

Nairobi. Given that UNICEF's role did not seem irretrievably compromised, however, it was felt to be more practical to encourage the reform of the lead agency role.

OLS Southern Sector is currently in the process of examining its organisational structure with a view to improving effectiveness. The Review supports this development. In particular, attention must be directed to distinguishing and resourcing OLS co-ordination. This situation is complicated in the case of South Sudan by having support activities divided between Nairobi and Lokichokkio. Regarding the former,

...the Review supports the creation of a Deputy Chief of Operations to concentrate on the day to day management of UNICEF matters.

This post would allow the present OLS Co-ordinator to focus on the wider lead agency issues, for example, liaison with the opposition movements, donors, participating agencies, fund raising, reporting, and so on. Moreover, reflecting the brief for the DHA Humanitarian Co-ordinator to visit Nairobi, a deputy would enable the OLS Co-ordinator to make regular visits to Khartoum to ensure that Southern Sector interests are properly represented. As in the current situation, WFP would continue to act as deputy regarding OLS matters.

While the OLS Co-ordinator acts as the deputy of the DHA Humanitarian Co-ordinator in the Southern Sector, in order to strengthen managerial coherence and the primacy of OLS matters,

...although seconded from UNICEF, making the OLS Co-ordinator a DHA appointment should be considered.

Given the highly politicised nature of OLS, and the fear in some quarters of pressure from Khartoum, a number of structural checks and balances should be reviewed. For example,

While the deputising role is clearly established, making the DHA Humanitarian Co-ordinator and the OLS Co-ordinator of equal rank within the UN system should be considered.

Regarding the standardisation and collation of information in the Southern Sector,

The existing post of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer within UNICEF/OLS should be changed to reflect the role of the revamped Information Co-ordinator in Khartoum. That is, a suitably qualified person to advise OLS agencies on standard methodological procedures and, through liaison with UNHCU, the production of joint reports.

Regarding Lokichokkio, co-ordination here has been the subject of much INGO complaint, in particular, the inability of UNICEF to reconcile the different interests of the competing agencies.

The Review supports the measures taken to recruit a Lokichokkio-based OLS Field Co-ordinator.

This person will be in overall control of OLS activities in Lokichokkio; for the first time, this includes camp management and WFP logistics. As far as possible, this person should be freed from day to day responsibility for UNICEF's country programme. Moreover, the post need not be filled by a UN staff member, but could be seconded from an INGO. While it is hoped that this will encourage better co-ordination, the Review still feels that there is a lack of representation of INGOs within OLS structures.

9.5.5 Ground Rules and Letters of Understanding

UNICEF's development of the Ground Rules in relation to the opposition movements represents a major innovation in working in ongoing conflict. More research on this approach has already been suggested. The Humanitarian Principles Unit should be encouraged in its work of monitoring compliance with the Ground Rules. At present, this appears to be done on an ad hoc basis.

Reflecting the recommendation for more Field Advisers in the Northern Sector, four Field Advisers should also be attached to the Humanitarian Principle Unit. These people would monitor compliance with the OLS contractual regime.

In relation to the Letters of Understanding (LOUs),

...UNICEF/OLS should consider introducing clauses that cover the professional competence of the NGOs within OLS. Introducing such standards should be seen as part of a longer term project involving DHA support and wider consultation with counterparts and participating agencies.

The issue of donor welfare sub-contracting within the OLS umbrella has already been mentioned. Modifying the LOUs to provide guidance regarding NGOs that bring non-OLS resources, but operate under the OLS umbrella, should be considered.

9.5.6 Management Advisory Committee

Difficulties over cargo prioritisation have led INGOs to establish their own Forum. While co-ordination bodies exist, this suggests the absence of a means whereby participating agencies can fully appraise OLS management of their concerns.

Management Advisory Committees should be established in Nairobi and Lokichokkio. The former would concentrate on broad policy issues, while the latter would focus on implementation. The Committees would be open to INGO, donor, and WFP representation.

The remit of these Committees would be to advise OLS on all aspects of the operation. It should not become a talking shop, but a forum in which OLS is expected to address the issues that are raised. The humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related agencies should not be members of this committee. There is a clash of interests, and this should be recognised. At the same time, however, it is strongly recommended that,

...OLS should seek to regularise its negotiating and consulting mechanisms with the humanitarian wings of the warring parties and related agencies.

9.6 Lokichokkio Base Camp and Logistics

Given the range of activities supported, and the conflicting interests involved, the Review feels that broadly speaking the Lokichokkio camp is well run. Concerns are of a more general and strategic nature.

The camp has grown continuously since 1992. At the same time, the area in which it is located has become insecure. For this reason alone, it is felt prudent to suggest that Lokichokkio should grow no further and, if possible, be reduced in size. While primarily a logistics base, there has been a drift toward agencies establishing programme personnel in the camp. It will be difficult to stop this trend. As far as possible, however, programme decision making should be retained in Nairobi, and the logistics function in Lokichokkio. While this might require investment in telecommunications, it could prevent further personnel drift and function duplication.

It might be possible to check or reduce the growth of Lokichokkio by transferring some activities into South Sudan. More basic training, for example, could take place inside the Southern Sector.

Another approach to managing the size of Lokichokkio is the move toward cost recovery. The Review Team is aware that UNICEF has already undertaken investigations into this possibility regarding accommodation and subsistence for participating agencies.

The Review supports the introduction of cost recovery procedures in Lokichokio. This principle should not only cover accommodation, it should also be extended to logistics.

In general, the Review felt that the supply and logistics units of UNICEF and, especially, WFP were working well. The difficulty, however is that they are self-contained and use different information management systems.

Concerning logistics in Lokichokio, there has been dissatisfaction among INGOs concerning cargo prioritisation procedures at Lokichokio. This has partly fed the drift toward the establishment of more INGO personnel in the camp. The success of several INGOs in attracting donor funding to rent their own aircraft has led to call that the whole of OLS logistics be transferred to a private company. Some donors are keen on this idea. While recognising that there is a problem, the Review is against such a move. Given that OLS is operating in an ongoing war, UN control of logistics would seem important in helping establish the neutrality of the operation. In order to overcome the cargo prioritisation problem, however,

...attempts should be made to better balance the demands for transport with available resources. INGOs should either pay for transport from their own grants, or a points-voucher system should be developed. In other words, transport should not be a "free" commodity; a rationing mechanism is required.

Flight clearance procedures should also be reformed in the interests of efficiency and transparency.

The requirements of detailed cargo breakdowns in clearance requests should be dropped. Reports carrying lists of actual cargo should be shared in appropriate detail. Plans to have the cargo manifest process generate such reports should be implemented.

9.7 Programme Issues

There is a lack of coherence and depth to much of OLS programming. Lack of coordination, particularly between UNICEF and WFP in both the Northern and Southern Sectors, is a recurrent theme. Moreover, while more advanced in the South, assessment and monitoring approaches need improvement both in terms of what is assessed and how. Recommendations and relief strategies need to be clearly justified on the basis of assessed information. A particular weakness is the failure to adequately monitor programme delivery and implementation, as well as impact. As a consequence, little is known about the effectiveness of OLS programmes. In terms of food aid, there have been no comparisons of assessed needs with actual deliveries. In fact, this was attempted for the first time by the Review Team.

The lack of depth is illustrated by a spontaneous change in the overall nature of the programme. This change is based on assumptions that the emergency has changed from an acute crisis associated with high levels of malnutrition and excess mortality, to one where the problem is primarily access to food. There is a general perception of a gradual improvement in the situation of war-affected populations, and the achievement of greater self-sufficiency. Correspondingly, there has been an increasing emphasis on supporting livelihoods and improving self-reliance. This has been accompanied by a decrease in the provision of emergency food aid, and greater targeting. However, information available to the Review Team, gave no indication that such a change in status has taken place.

Regarding overall information management,

...greater care needs to be exercised in the calculation of population and beneficiary figures. In particular, more restraint is required in agency claims for the number of people assisted.

Without higher quality information, improved co-ordination is not possible. Moreover, accurate information goes to the heart of transparency. This requires training, and the setting of clear objectives in information management. Standardisation of application software within and between agencies, and the phasing in of relational databases are recommended.

Monitoring should at least cover delivery information. In the Northern Sector especially, UNICEF is still at a stage where it must concentrate on documenting the spread of its activities and inputs. WFP should consolidate gains on delivery reporting.

9.7.1 Appropriate Programming

With the exception of modalities for working in ongoing conflict, as long as the war continues the opportunities for programme expansion and deepening remain limited. OLS should continue,

...to support peoples limited strategies for achieving food security and respond to localised crises. At the same time, the limitations of community-based programmes in a war-torn and resource poor environment should be recognised.

The ability to respond to crises would involve the establishment of contingency stocks, the ability to rapidly detect and respond to epidemics, and redressing the balance between food security and health interventions.

9.7.2 Assessments and the Appeal

In the interests of impartiality, all OLS assessments should be led by the UN. A greater attempt should be made to forge a more integrated approach to assessments, especially by UNICEF and WFP. Recommendations regarding the standardisation of information management, increasing the number of UNHCU and Humanitarian Principles Unit Field Advisers, and the formation of Food Aid and Food Security Units in WFP Khartoum and Nairobi (see below) should facilitate this.

Assessments should be broadened beyond what can be measured and responded to in a technical manner. The social and political dimension of food security should also be examined. Assessments should also include a review of the effectiveness of past interventions. In particular, deliveries should be matched with assessed needs. When there are variations, the reasons why should be clearly stated.

OLS assessments and monitoring, moreover, should be seen as a continuous process. Annual assessments should include a review of existing information. Particularly in the North, annual assessments appear as a process of collecting the same information over and over again. There is little evidence of the integration of existing information, or the use of participatory approaches to the gathering of information.

The main purpose of the annual assessments is to form the basis of the Appeal. However, it is difficult to see how the information from the assessments is used other than for estimating food aid needs by WFP. NGOs, moreover, are not involved in the planning or follow-up, and their activities are not reflected in the Appeal.

The Appeal should be clearly based on information gathered in the annual assessment exercise, whether from field assessments or from the analysis of information from on-going monitoring systems. Assessment reports should provide clear recommendations which are justified on the basis of the information gathered.

The annual assessment, apart from forming the basis for the Appeal, must provide the foundation for a coherent OLS strategy which includes the activities of all OLS agencies.

On a wider issue, the question of resourcing long term chronic emergencies needs to be examined. While the Review is making recommendations for the reform of the Appeal process, it is also aware that short term financing is ultimately inappropriate.

It is recognised that assessments in the Northern and Southern Sectors, owing to their different conditions, will continue to be prepared separately. There is a need, however, to combine information. Regarding the estimation of food aid needs, assessments need to give clear justification for food aid requirements. Moreover, rather than being

specified by sector, in the interests of greater transparency the needs of government and non-government areas should be clearly distinguished.

The estimation of OLS food aid needs should not be part of the annual WFP/FAO mission. The methodology employed is not appropriate for OLS needs. Any non-OLS drought related problems should be funded and responded to separately.

The possibility of developing a joint WFP/DHA mission to assess OLS food aid needs should be explored. The WFP component could supply the technical expertise, while the DHA component would ensure appropriateness under war conditions. At the moment, the best methodology in Sudan is that used by the Food Economy Approach in the South. In the final analysis, however, food aid needs must be based on independent assessment under the terms of the OLS agreement.

9.7.3 Food Security in the Northern Sector

Regarding food security, greater policy coherence needs to be established. At the moment different aspects of what should be a more unified approach are scattered between WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, and FAO.

A single Food Aid and Food Security Unit should be established within WFP.

This may require the secondment of UNICEF and other agency personnel, and echoes similar recommendations made for the South. In making this recommendation, the Review is aware that WFP may not have the necessary expertise to deal with the non-food aspect of food security. This is why secondment may be necessary.

Regarding the health field,

UNICEF should consolidate the co-ordination of health inputs in the North and subsume the contributions of WHO. At the same time, however, the sustainability of non-food interventions in a chronic emergency should seriously be considered.

9.7.4 Food Security in the Southern Sector

As in the North, food security matters are divided between UNICEF and WFP.

A single Food Aid and Food Security Unit should be established within WFP.

Given the greater complexity of the OLS programme in the Southern Sector, the secondment of UNICEF and INGO personnel to boost WFP non-food capacity is

probably particularly important. This would help foster a more integrated approach to food security. It is envisaged that joint reports for the Northern and Southern Sectors would be produced with the assistance of the UNHCU Information Officer and the UNICEF/OLS Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in Khartoum and Nairobi, respectively.

9.7.5 Capacity Building

Regarding capacity building, the main recommendation has been made in relation to the OLS agreement. Namely, that the warring parties must demonstrate a willingness and ability to adequately support the running costs of their humanitarian wings before additional OLS resources should be committed. In relation to the Southern Sector,

On the understanding that office rents in Nairobi, etc., are being met from movement funds, OLS capacity building should concentrate on field level activities. Improving the human resource base, especially in relation to education, through quality training of teachers and various technical personnel is important.

9.7.6 General Programme Recommendations

The Review is concerned about the uneven development of OLS and agency inputs in South Sudan. While insecurity and restrictions have played a part, Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, for example, are relatively poorly served.

Conditions permitting, attempts should be made to address the issue of uneven aid input into South Sudan. If possible, additional OLS resources should be directed to the deprived regions.

In this respect, the Review acknowledges the development of mobile teams as another useful innovation in the face of growing insecurity. The orientation of this approach to providing skills, rather than fixed structures on the ground, seems a sensible adaptation.

9.8 Cost Effectiveness

Donors have frequently expressed concern about the cost effectiveness of OLS. The dependence, especially in the Southern Sector, on air transport has been an important issue. GOS has pushed for maximum use of surface routes originating from North Sudan.

More use should be made of rail and river access from North Sudan.

At the same time, the Review would urge that a balance of surface routes is sought.

Under the term of OLS, the attempt to establish cross-line arrangements for surface transport should be restarted. At the same time, the opening of humanitarian cross-border routes from neighbouring countries - for example, Ethiopia - should be investigated if this is the easiest way to reach war-affected populations.

Regarding air transport, costs could be saved by operating some OLS flights out of Malakal or other GOS locations. This would first require a comprehensive settlement, however, such as that suggested in the new OLS agreement. Without free access to radios, for example, this arrangement would not work.

Other cost-savings are may be possible by changing the way the Annual Appeal operates.

The form of the Appeal should be changed to encourage financial transparency. Comparisons with past years should not be limited to requirements and donor contributions.

The Appeal should show exactly how much the agency's operations cost. Agencies should be expected to produce complete annual income and expenditure statements for their OLS activities. The Appeal document should present the statement of the previous year in juxtaposition with projections of the year closing and the requirements for the next. Major types of support such as grants obtained and used during the year, the value of stocks used from carry-forwards, internal reserves called upon, and so on, should be shown in reasonable breakdowns.

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A Note With Regard to References in the Review

Referencing of so-called "grey literature" has not been properly standardized by international agencies. In this regard, the Review Team faced a considerable challenge in referencing notes, minutes, reports, communications, and other non-published documents consulted during the Review process, and especially doing so without duplication of references in different forms. Given the increasing importance of grey literature for research on humanitarian interventions - indeed, they are often the only documents available - there is a need for international agencies to develop a standardized and widely-used system of referencing.

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