

Appendix I - Terms of Reference

Evaluation of CIDA's Emergency Response to Hurricane Mitch Disaster

Background

Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America between October 26 and November 2 leaving in its wake tremendous destruction and human suffering. Four Central American countries were severely affected: Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The latest official statistics put the death toll in these countries at 9,745 with over 1.7 million people directly affected and 93,360 dwellings either totally destroyed or badly damaged. An estimated 70-80% of the territory of the four countries has suffered from flooding, mud slides or severe wind damage.

The Hurricane tested Canada's capability to respond to large scale, international natural disasters. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Mitch an inter-branch task force was established to coordinate CIDA's (MHA/MFA/BML) response; relevant divisions from DND and DFAIT were also invited to participate. Tangible outcomes of these coordination activities included the rapid deployment of DND's Disaster Assistant Response Team (DART) to Honduras and the commencement of a DND-sponsored humanitarian airlift. As well, CIDA allocated six million dollars to emergency relief projects encompassing a wide-range of activities ranging from health to water and sanitation interventions.

From the outset, the response of the Canadian NGO community to the humanitarian airlift was swift and generous. Within days of the disaster, CIDA/MHA was handling a large volume of calls from organizations and individuals seeking to have their relief goods placed on board DND-sponsored flights bound for Central America. Recognizing that it was lacking human resources and structures to respond effectively to the logistical demands associated with the airlift, MHA requested that the Canadian Red Cross assume responsibility for coordination. This collaborative approach represented a novel experience for MHA as it was the first time an external (non-governmental) agency was used formally to coordinate Canadian relief activities. In the 28 days that the humanitarian airlift was operational, 22 flights were made carrying emergency relief supplies in excess of one million pounds. Priority items airlifted included medicine and medical supplies, water and purification equipment and chemicals and high protein, ready-to-eat food. During this same period, DND's DART was operational in the field providing a host of emergency services critical to the smooth operation of relief activities on the ground in Northern Honduras.

With CIDA's response in Central America moving from emergency to reconstruction and rehabilitation, an evaluation at this juncture of IHA's role and participation during the early phase of crisis is particularly timely. The evaluation will provide a valuable opportunity to tap into the rich and varied experience of the many actors associated with relief efforts. The evaluation is also particularly relevant in light of the frequency of large scale humanitarian emergencies in the 1990s (Rwanda 1994, Congo 1996, and Mitch 1998). If past trends are any indication of what the future holds, CIDA will continue to be called upon to regularly respond in a timely manner to the needs of victims of large-scale natural and complex disasters. It is, therefore, critical to use this evaluation exercise to distill lessons to inform and structure future responses.

Purpose

- To document the experiences, results and impact of CIDA's emergency response to Hurricane Mitch;
- To examine the timelines of the Canadian government response and to provide recommendations to strengthen preparedness;
- To identify lessons learned and provide recommendations to further articulate and refine guidelines for IHA's response to humanitarian disasters; and,
- To assess the Canadian Red Cross's performance in coordinating the airlift.

The primary client of the evaluation is CIDA/IHA, which will use the recommendations and lessons to better prepare for future humanitarian responses especially in the Caribbean and Central America. It is also expected that findings will be useful to other divisions within CIDA, such as MFA and BML, which participated directly in the Canadian response and to other government departments (DFAIT, DND) which are undertaking their own evaluation activities currently being prepared by international agencies such as PAHO. A summary of the findings may also be posted on the web to contribute to learning within the broader humanitarian relief community.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will examine four issues: timeliness, relevance and appropriateness of Canadian Government-supported relief activities, IHA's role in coordinating Canada's humanitarian response, including logistical support to the humanitarian airlift; the effectiveness, timeliness and appropriateness of the airlift in meeting the emergency relief needs of affected populations; and, the communications approach used by CIDA and the Canadian Red Cross to keep the Canadian Public informed. It is expected that data will be collected from a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental participants both in Canada and in Central America.

The following highlights the key issues upon which the evaluation should focus. The scope of the evaluation, however, should not be limited simply to the issues noted below and the Consultant (s) should raise and address any other relevant issues which may emerge during the conduct of this evaluation.

Timeliness, Relevance and Appropriateness of Canadian Government-Supported Relief Activities:

- Was the Canadian Government's response to the disaster timely? How does it compare to that of other donor countries, organizations?
- How can the Canadian Government (CIDA/IHA) CIDA strengthen its ability to respond to large-scale humanitarian emergencies - i.e. how can it be more prepared? Have lessons learned from previous emergency responses (Rwanda/Congo) been integrated into government practice? What can we learn from existing practices of other organizations (e.g. stockpiling of emergency relief supplies)? What indicators should be monitored to serve as early warning of impending humanitarian emergencies?
- Does CIDA/MHA need to play a more active role in identifying humanitarian needs on the ground (i.e. involvement in reconnaissance mission at the outset of the crisis)?
- How do official/unofficial Canadian efforts fit within the context of the much larger international response (both with respect to the airlift as well as efforts of the ground by DART and Canadian partner organizations)?
- How were project selection criteria set? Were projects funded by CIDA consistent with the humanitarian needs and priorities in the four countries most affected (Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala) or would a different mix of projects been more appropriate? Were the projects

consistent with the efforts of local and international organizations and other donors addressing the same needs or problems?

- What methods did partner organizations use to identify beneficiaries, their needs deliver relief supplies - e.g. were community-oriented, gender-sensitive criteria adopted and used? (Were the teams sent to assist composed of both men and women; were special needs of women and children overlooked?)
- What role, if any, did regional disaster preparedness initiatives play in influencing the response of civil society in the immediate aftermath of the disaster? How can these programs be improved?
- Was the DART exit strategy developed and implemented in a timely fashion? Was the strategy appropriate - i.e. were services designed and delivered in a manner that effectively responds to conditions (including risks), needs or problems identified? Are stakeholders (local and international NGOs, DND, CIDA) satisfied with the results and the methods chosen to achieve them? Do the organizations (s) chosen to fill the vacuum left in the wake of DART's departure have the capacity to achieve the intended results? From the experience acquired during Hurricane Mitch, can an exit strategy be generalized for future operations?

Coordination/Logistics

- How effective was CIDA/MHA in coordinating the emergency phase? What was the role and importance of the Desk vis-à-vis coordination? What were the main obstacles/constraints to effective coordination? Were clear lines of responsibility delineated between the various actors working on the Canadian response?
- To what degree did CIDA and military authorities (at headquarters and in the field) coordinate their activities and share information? Was there civilian military coordination?
- What was the role of the Airlift Coordination Team (ACT)? Was the role clearly defined? How was the coordination role viewed by Canadian partner organizations? That value did the Red Cross coordinator add that could not be achieved by a CIDA-led effort?
- Does CIDA/MHA indeed have an operational role to play in airlifts or should it remain outside of the process?
- What were some of the logistical problems associated with organizing the airlift both in Canada and Central America (e.g. communication between Ottawa and La Ceiba, consignees on the ground without capacity to move items?) How can these obstacles be avoided or overcome in future operations?
- Did the i2K software, developed by CARE for matching relief needs and supplies, prove useful? How can it be improved? Should it be included in future efforts?
- How were relief operations coordinated on the ground? Did any one organization play a leadership role?

Effectiveness and Appropriateness of Airlift

- What results have been achieved at the output, outcome and impact levels? Who were the users of the Airlift? Who were the beneficiaries? How did it facilitate or complement CIDA humanitarian relief projects?
- Was the duration of the airlift appropriate to meet the needs of the affected population (should it have been extended or shortened)?

- How were the airlift priorities set? Did needs on the ground evolve over the course of the emergency and were airlift priorities modified to reflect these changing needs? In the final analysis, were goods included on the airlift relevant to the needs of victims.
- Were alternate, more efficient and timely methods for delivering goods available (e.g. charter flights?); as a point of comparison, how did NGOs and local community groups in Canada send items if they did not use this airlift? Is it possible to estimate the proportion of goods sent via alternative channels?
- What lessons did the Canadian Red Cross/CIDA/DND learn from their experience in coordinating and operating the airlift?

Communications

An evaluation report of Hurricane Mitch addressing the objectives and scope of work identified above and comments, lessons, and/or recommendations on the following:

- Guidelines and process used by MHA to steer its emergency response to Hurricane Mitch;
- Coordination of the emergency phase within CIDA and between government departments both at headquarters and in the field;
- Preparedness and timeliness of CIDA's response;
- Effectiveness of the airlift in meeting the needs of victims and facilitating the work of partner organizations;
- Usefulness of regional disaster preparedness programs in Central America;
- Performance of the Red Cross in its role as airlift coordinator;
- Merit of replicating the use of an external coordinating body (the Red Cross ACT Team) for future expanded emergencies;
- Effectiveness of CIDA's communication activities.

Level of Effort

The estimated level of effort for this consultancy is 50-65 days, of which approximately 10-15 days will be devoted to data collection and analysis in the field in Central America.

Expertise Required

- Fluency in Spanish;
- Experience with and knowledge of emergency humanitarian response methods and activities;
- A strong background and understanding of logistics;
- Experience in Monitoring and Evaluation, preferably in the area of humanitarian relief;