Humanitarian Dashboard

Owner

Overall responsibility for the dashboard lies with the OCHA Head of Office.

Focal Points

Field

Information Management Officer with support from a Humanitarian Affairs Officer and/or Reports Officer (with expectation that the entire office will support production and maintenance of the dashboard).

Headquarters

Technical support (guidance, standards): Coordinated Assessment Support Section (CASS) in the Programme Support Branch.

Substantive focal point (content, accuracy, political sensitivity): Coordination Response Division (CRD).

CAP dashboards: Common Humanitarian Action Planning Section (CHAP) in the Programme Support Branch.

Visual support (template and design): Visual Information Unit (VIU) in the Communications Services Branch.

Purpose

The humanitarian dashboard is one of the four priority OCHA information products and is an IASC agreed tool that presents a succinct and primarily visual overview of progress towards meeting needs in a humanitarian response. It allows stakeholders to quickly understand the strategic priorities of a response, the key figures characterizing the crisis, and the most important humanitarian needs and related response per sector.

The strategic appeal document (CAP or CAP-like humanitarian work plan) is the main point of reference for the humanitarian dashboard (i.e. progress will be measured against targets related to established needs).

Trigger

The humanitarian dashboard is prepared for any crisis requiring international humanitarian support. In most cases, the publication of a CAP or flash appeal will trigger the development of a humanitarian dashboard, however a field office can also develop one when there is no formal appeal.

In acute crises, an initial dashboard should be produced to correspond with the publication of the Flash Appeal (usually after its launch) or a revision to a CAP.

Frequency

The humanitarian dashboard should be issued regularly, ideally every month with the understanding that not all figures will change with each update. It should always be issued along with the CAP and mid-year review documents.

Audience

Donors, host country authorities, the Humanitarian Country Team, humanitarian partners in-country and at headquarters.

Content

See the annotated template for detailed guidance. Most of the dashboard's content is standardised, although judgment of the field office is required to determine which information to highlight. Page1 features a situation overview, key figures and a funding update. Page 2 and onward lists strategic objectives and sectoral monitoring information (people in need, targeted and reached). Templates are available in Adobe Illustrator and Excel.

Clearance

The OCHA Head of Office clears the final humanitarian dashboard for publication as an OCHA information product. If desired, the field office may request support or feedback from relevant headquarters units in finalizing a humanitarian dashboard.

In corporate emergencies, the CRD Director may require that all OCHA information products, including the humanitarian dashboard, be reviewed and cleared in New York.

Relationship to other OCHA products

The focus on operational and monitoring data makes the humanitarian dashboard complementary to OCHA's other core information products, including Situation Reports, Humanitarian Bulletins, Humanitarian Snapshots and Consolidated Appeals. Guidance is available for each of these products on OCHAnet (see e.g.: http://unocha.org/sudan/maps-graphics/infographic). The key difference between the dashboard and the snapshot is that the snapshot is a map enriched with infographics designed to tell a story and illustrate visually a humanitarian situation for advocacy, or more frequently a specific subset thereof, whereas the dashboard aims to provide an overview of needs and response data that enables the monitoring of progress in the humanitarian response over time across and within sectors.

Distribution

Ideally, when produced outside of the CAP/MYR cycle, the dashboard should be produced in tandem with a Humanitarian Bulletin, and the products should be distributed together. The dashboard can also be distributed together with the snapshot. Distribution should include posting on ReliefWeb and (if available) HumanitarianResponse.info. The office may wish to use MailChimp to manage local e-mail distribution lists as well. (For more information, see the MailChimp field guidance).

Process

Maintaining high-quality dashboards requires continued engagement with clusters and a process to facilitate data consolidation, agreement on key figures and monitoring. The following practical steps provide further guidance in this regard.

Data management: For data collection and storage use an Excel sheet (pls see links). (note: the Common Request Format is planned to be available to requesting country office in the course of the year to support the management of dashboard data).

Standards and definitions: Promote consistency among cluster members in the collection, sharing and reporting of data. For consistent monitoring and trend analysis it is important to agree on terminology (affected, reached, covered – see below), a clear definition of beneficiaries and how to deal with double counting and aggregation of figures.

Monitoring data: An inter-agency monitoring framework is currently being developed and will provide further guidance. In the meantime it is recommended liaising with clusters on how they are measuring and reporting on achieving their cluster objectives. If little consistent data is available a cluster might want to simply signal if they are on / off track in achieving their objectives (e.g by using mini piecharts:).

Timing: It is important to start with updating the dashboard ahead of the CAP and MYR exercises. Clusters should be encouraged to first get their figures straight before jumping into analysis and process reporting. Dashboard updates published outside the CAP should be timed along with humanitarian bulletins and snapshots to promote consistency.

Figures & Definitions

Peole in Need across all sectors: In most cases it is not possible to simply add up figures to establish the overall number of people in need. To move away from the practice of providing unrealistic figures, in all cases, establishing the number of people in need for a given emergency requires that partners come together, analyze the situation jointly and agree on the overall caseload based on a clear methodology. OCHA's role is to facilitate this process in support of the HCT / ICCM (this includes also maintaining a CODs registry, liaising with in-country statistical capacities such as government departments, universities etc) and make sure that the evidence-base for these figures is accessible and transparent.

Sectoral figures: Clusters are the custodians of figures pertaining to their sectors. OCHA's role is to ensure clusters provide their figures in time for dashboard updates and highlight any inconsistencies. Clusters should be encouraged to explain how they came up with their figures. If they are based on best estimates, it is important to be transparent about it and explain the method supporting the estimation.

Caseloads: The Humanitarian Profile (sub-dataset of the Common Operational Dataset - CODs) provides a broad structure for categorising caseloads. Below categorisation provides more detailed guidance:

- **Affected people** include all those whose lives have been affected in some way by the crisis. Not all affected people are in need of humanitarian assistance. This figure is often the first available after a sudden onset emergency but says little about the number of people in need for humanitarian aid.

- **People in need** include those affected people who require humanitarian assistance in some form. People in need represent a sub-group of affected people and may differ from sector to sector. Establishing this figure across sectors often requires a method and collaborative analytical process (see cross-sectoral figures for more detail).
- **People targeted** include all people the cluster system is trying to assist. This will likely be a sub-group of people in need, as there are many actors providing assistance that do not participate in the cluster system (affected communities, national authorities, Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, and NGOs).
- **People reached** include those who have received some form of assistance from a cluster member. This figure says nothing about how long and how well this assistance covers the needs of the beneficiary. A more meaningful picture provides the estimate of people covered (pls. see below).
- **People covered** indicates the number of people whose needs, defined by a humanitarian standard such as SPHERE, have been met. E.g. there is a significant difference between the two statements: 1000 people received water (people reached), or 1000 people received enough water to cover their needs (15 litres per day) for the next two weeks.

Maximizing usefulness of the dashboard

The dashboard is not just an information product. If maintained in a timely manner it can be used as a tool to inform coordination meetings, highlight inconsistencies and trigger discussions with partners.

- **Highlight changes and trends**: Highlight and visualize changes in figures and indicators as appropriate. This will allow partners to compare figures over time and identify trends.
- **Inform coordination**: The dashboard is not an end in itself. It should be used to inform coordination meetings and joint analysis. Use draft versions to consult with and solicit feedback from partners, to inform discussions around caseloads, highlight inconsistencies etc.
- **Prepare for coordination meetings**: Consider projecting draft dashboards, or elements of it, at coordination meetings. Make sure somebody is present who can explain how certain figures were established and has a good overview of the information sources. This will help inform and trigger discussions.
- **Increase cluster ownership over the dashboard**: Make sure clusters are engaged in the maintenance of the dashboard. Compile and share a draft dashboard with clusters leads and have them participate in its finalisation. Cluster ownership is crucial and will help strengthen quantitative reporting and consistency in figures.