



STATE AND UTILITY OF CONTINGENCY PLANS IN THE WASH SECTOR IN WEST AFRICA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

The Almighty GOD, from who I obtain all types of graces and blessings. To you my Lord, I give all the glory and praise

My late lovely mother, Mrs Kimbeni Claudine NDONGALA/MAMPUYA who never stops loving and guiding me from Heaven. I'll never forget you Mum.

My Dad, Mr N'Zinga Patrice MAMPUYA who always encourages me and supports me. Without him, I wouldn't have been at this stage

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACF : Action Contre la Faim

CONASUR: Conseil national de secours d'urgence et de réhabilitation

CSPC : Commission Supérieure de Protection Civile

DGRE : Direction Générale des Ressources en Eau

DPC: Direction de la Protection Civile

HCT: Humanitarian Country Team

HR : Human Resources

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

IDP : Internally Displaced People

IFRC: International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

SRP: Strategic Response Plan

UN: United Nations

UNDP : United Nations Development Program

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WFP: World Food Program

WHO: World Health Organization

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ABSTRACT

This work is a bibliographic study conducted as part of the Humanitarian WASH training program. It explores and highlights the current situation in terms of preparedness of West African countries to emergency situations. It is focused on contingency planning process as preparedness tool for response.

The document gives an overview of the West African humanitarian context, the different actors in the WASH sector and how they manage themselves for preparedness and contingency planning. This work covers contingency planning at national level (WASH clusters' levels, and agencies' specific levels). It is therefore a qualitative data collection.

Bibliographic data have been gathered from the existing literature/documentation (agencies reports, reviews, minutes, plans, etc.). Semi-directed interviews have also been part of the data collection methods. The data mostly concern Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry.

West African sub-region's humanitarian context is characterized by a fragile socio-politic climate, Ebola epidemic, and jihadist threats. The situation varies from one country to another but there are more and more transboundary issues.

Contingency planning processes are undertaken at national levels since 2008s in almost all the countries. Countries possess Multi-risk contingency plans. Almost all the WASH clusters also have set some contingency plans. In most countries those clusters' plans are included in the national mutli-risk contingency plans. Contingency plans have shown their benefits in terms of preparedness to disasters in several situations in the West African sub-region. However, difficulties are faced both within planning processes and implementation. Those difficulties are mostly financial constraints, delay in procedures, poor communication. The cooperation between governmental agencies needs to be improved in terms of joint contingency planning processes for transboundary issues.

Keywords: Contingency plans, Preparedness, West Africa, Humanitarian, WASH

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Humanitarians are constantly challenged by different types of crises including wars, droughts, epidemics, natural disasters that rapidly evolve and change in terms of humanitarian consequences. Consequently, the lives of affected people somehow depend on how well humanitarian actors are prepared. After several crises in 1990s, humanitarian organisations have taken significant steps to improve, and professionalise their emergency preparedness. Contingency planning has emerged as a key tool to ensure that agencies are as ready as they can be to respond to natural disasters, conflicts and other crises around the world. Humanitarian agencies have made significant progress in mainstreaming contingency planning into their management and operations. Important progress has also been made in the techniques used by contingency planners. However, achieving and sustaining truly dynamic contingency planning processes remains a major challenge for humanitarians taking in account the constraints of time, personnel and financial means.

Africa is for sure one of the continents where humanitarians are the most acting. Humanitarian projects in Africa are various and are provided in several contexts: wars, civil conflicts, natural disasters (drought, floods, etc.), epidemics, etc.

Since 2012, West Africa has become one of the most important humanitarian fields of the continent with Ebola epidemics outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. As in most of the humanitarian fields in the world, several contingency plans have been set: some by governments, others by humanitarian partners (UN agencies, NGOs, etc...) or group of agencies. WASH projects are included among those which are the most carried out in West Africa.

With the new and rapid evolving humanitarian context in West African sub-region which is characterized by new transboundary issues, humanitarians (specifically those involved in the WASH sector) should ask themselves questions about sustaining dynamic contingency plans:

- At which point are West African countries in terms of contingency planning processes?
- How much are they useful for West African governments and humanitarian actors?
- What are the lessons from past experiences and existing contingency planning processes in terms of difficulties, gaps and benefits?

- What are the needs in terms of improvements, perspectives?

This document is a bibliographic analytical thesis. It aims mainly to analyse from various documents (reports, statements, articles, etc.) the past and current situation in terms of contingency planning in West African countries.

More specifically it aims:

- To map out and highlight the level at which countries are in contingency planning,
- To inventory the benefits that have been gained from contingency plans implementation in the WASH sector
- To inventory the gaps and difficulties
- To map out the needs in terms improvements

The document is divided in six (06) chapters which can be grouped into three main parts. The first part gives a general overview of contingency planning process. The second part gives an overview of the methodology used for this work. The third part gives an overview and an analysis of the West African situation related to contingency planning.

CHAPTER 2: GENERALITIES

2.1. Terms definitions

Disaster:

According to IFRC, disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins [1].

Prevention:

Disaster prevention is a term that implies actions and measures taken before a disaster to reduce its effects at national or local level. So, prevention includes actions which are often considered as part of the preparation to a disaster phase. However, in order to plan for disaster management, the distinction is often made between prevention and preparedness.

Prevention refers to long-term risk reduction measures for minimizing the effects of a disaster by reducing either the intensity or risk vulnerabilities that otherwise would be revealed during a disaster [1].

Disaster preparedness:

It's the fact for a society to be ready and able to:

- Provide and take action before an imminent threat strikes,
- Respond to a disaster and deal with its effects by organizing and providing assistance in an effective and timely manner.

Prepare for disasters means to be able to prevent, mitigate, respond to, and improve resilience when they occur. Preparedness may include both potential victims and external support agencies at any level, from local to international extent. Disaster preparedness is a key resilience strategy [1].

It includes for example before the disaster, the formulation of viable contingency plans, the development of early warning systems, the constant updating of existing risks, resources and capacities available and staff training. After the occurrence of the disaster, preparedness

involves an assessment of damage and needs in order to respond realistically and practically [1].

Risk

It is the probability / likelihood of a disaster to occur. Risk analysis seeks to identify it [2].

Capacity:

Capacity is defined as the means that individuals, households and communities have in order to cope with a threat or resist to the impact of a hazard [2].

2.2. General overview on contingency planning process

2.2.1. Definition

Defining contingency planning is neither simple nor easy: in practice, the term is used to describe a wide variety of activities, in a wide variety of contexts. Definitions are various and differ from one author to another.

According to Richard Choularton, contingency planning for humanitarians is a process, in anticipation of potential crises, of developing strategies, arrangements and procedures to address the humanitarian needs of those adversely affected by crises [3].

According to Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and World Food Programme (WFP), contingency planning is the process of establishing programme objectives, approaches and procedures to respond to situations or events that are likely to occur, including identifying those events and developing likely scenarios and appropriate plans to prepare for and respond to them in an effective manner [4].

For UNHCR and UN Disaster Management Training Programme, it is a forward planning process, in a state of uncertainty, in which scenarios and objectives are agreed, managerial and technical actions defined, and potential response systems put in place in order to prevent, or better respond to an emergency or critical situation.

From all above we can say that contingency planning is a process which aims to prepare countries, or any kind of organization to respond in the best way to an emergency and its potential humanitarian impact. The output document of that process is the contingency plan.

The contingency planning process can be set by:

- NGOs (Example: ACF, Save the Children, OXFAM, etc...)
- UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WFP)
- Local governments
- Specific clusters (WASH, Food Security, Global protection etc...)
- Groups of agencies (Inter agency plan)

According to Richard Choularton, “knowing what contingency planning is not, is as important as knowing what it is”. Contingency planning tends to be confused with other similar terms, such as emergency preparedness and disaster management. The most important distinction is between contingency planning and emergency preparedness. Emergency preparedness consists of all activities taken in anticipation of a crisis to implement effective emergency response. This includes contingency planning, but is not limited to it: it also covers stockpiling, the creation and management of stand-by capacities and training staff and partners in emergency response [3].

The contingency planning process is one of the three elements that constitute the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) cycle [5].

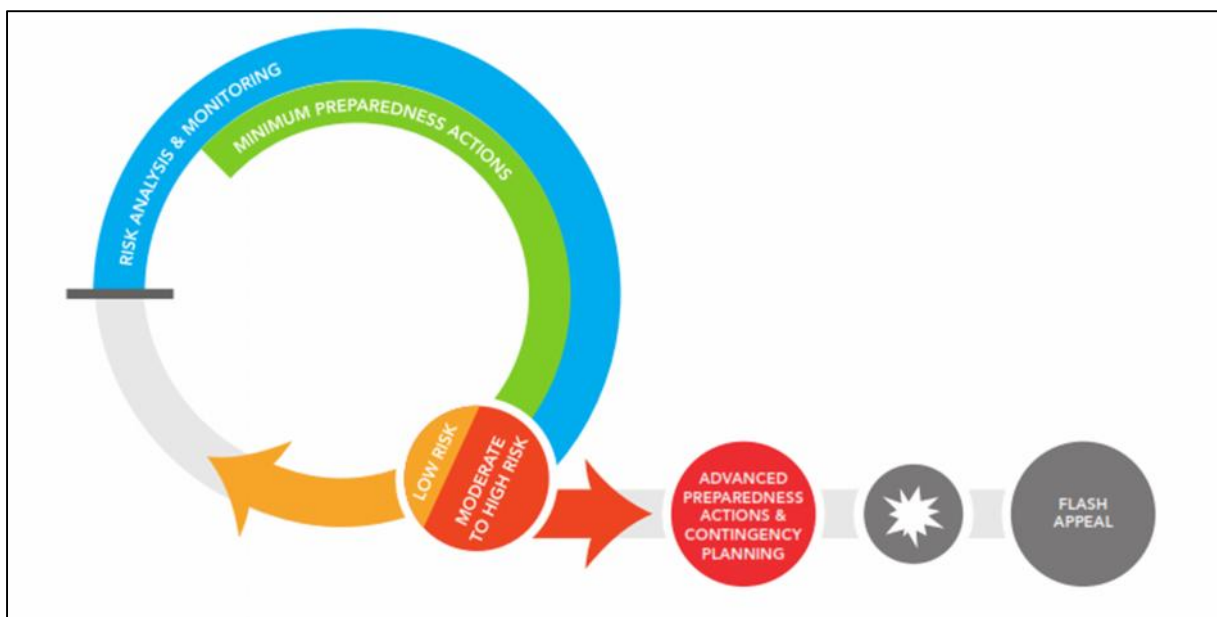


Figure 1: Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Cycle (IASC)

The main objective of contingency planning is to establish a fast and permanent response capacity to deal with various situations that may disrupt a country or region by setting up a series of preparatory measures (early warning system, continuous assessment of risks and

vulnerabilities, capacity building and strengthening, creation and maintenance of logistics capabilities, etc.)

More specifically, the contingency planning process aims to: (i) Foster a common understanding of all partners involved on the anticipated scope of the emergency, the possible humanitarian needs and the nature and scope of the planned operational response; (ii) Clearly explain the sector/cluster response strategy to the imminent needs of the affected population within the first weeks of an emergency; (iii) Reflect specific challenges/gaps in the potential response; (iv) To communicate anticipated funding requirements; (v) Support the timely drafting of a Flash Appeal in the event of an emergency.[5] [6]

Contingency planning includes: (i) Analysing potential emergencies; (ii) Analysing the potential humanitarian impact and consequences of identified emergencies; (iii) Establishing clear objectives, strategies, policies and procedures and articulating critical actions that must be taken to respond to an emergency, and; (iv) Ensuring that agreements are recorded and necessary actions are taken in order to enhance preparedness. [6]

Developing a contingency plan involves making decisions in advance about the management of human and financial resources, coordination and communications procedures, and being aware of a range of technical and logistical responses. Such planning is a management tool, involving all actors, who can help to ensure timely and effective provision of humanitarian aid to those most in need when a disaster occurs. Time spent in contingency planning equals time saved when a disaster occurs. Effective contingency planning should lead to timely and effective disaster-relief operations [6].

Contingency planning is most often undertaken when there is a specific threat or hazard; exactly how that threat will actually impact is unknown. Developing scenarios is a good way of thinking through the possible impacts. On the basis of sensible scenarios it is possible to develop a plan that sets out the scale of the response, the resources and the practical management tasks that will be needed.

The output of the contingency planning process is the contingency plan. The plan aims to facilitate improved readiness; it is not itself the final purpose of the planning process. A contingency plan is the synthesis of the discussions, analysis and most importantly, decisions made during the planning process. It is also a means of communicating these ideas to people

who may not have been involved in the planning process. Written contingency plans also document, and in some cases formalise, commitments made during the planning process.

Most plans are prepared for individual countries; however, plans can also be made jointly for a number of countries or for regions where there are cross border issues to consider. This is often the case with large-scale natural hazards, such as hurricanes or cyclones. In such instances, consultation between emergency-response planners from all affected countries is critical when developing regional scenarios, which will then inform and shape country-based contingency planning.

2.2.2. Contingency plan process

a. How to set a contingency plan

Developing a plan requires teamwork. The greater the input, the better the product, although there will always be a trade-off in terms of time and complexity.

Contingency planning is often best carried out in a workshop environment. The main benefit of this approach is that stakeholders can be brought together so assumptions and commitments are made jointly. Planning is most effective when it is a participatory process involving all the actors who will be required to work together in the event of an emergency. A contingency plan should ideally be a dynamic document, i.e., continually updated. Planners should encourage screening, analysis and discussion from those who must approve and/or implement its components [6].

To make the most of a contingency planning workshop it is necessary to do some data collection in advance. Having enough time, space and material is essential. Using an external facilitator is often useful and it is important to ensure the right participants attend (e.g., internal and external experts and decision-makers).

At their simplest level, contingency plans answer some basic questions about a potential situation. According the IFRC's guide, the contingency planning process can basically be broken down into three simple questions:

- What is going to happen?
- What are we going to do about it?
- What can we do ahead of time to get prepared?

To those questions, IASC guide for contingency planning adds the following questions:

- How would agencies/organizations work together?
- What resources would be required?
- What would be the impact on the affected people?
- What actions would be required to meet humanitarian needs?

Contingency planning has three components: an estimate of what is going to happen, a plan based on this estimate of what the response should be; and some actions identified to be best prepared. In the absence of an actual disaster, contingency plans are based on scenarios.

These are focused on analysing the risks to the population and likely impacts of potential disasters. Producing realistic scenarios is important for effective contingency planning.

Determining the risk of disaster to a population and its potential impact starts with an analysis of the likely hazards faced by a country or region. Once this has been done, an assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities at local, national or regional levels can be undertaken. Based on the analysis of hazards and the vulnerability and capacities of the population, disaster-response planners can determine risk and a list of likely needs. Realistic scenarios can then be developed for planning purposes.

b. Key Principles

According to Richard Choularton [3]:

Contingency planning should be practical. In other words, it should be based on realistic parameters and should not be a bureaucratic exercise undertaken for its own sake. This starts with a scenario that is detailed enough to allow equally detailed planning and preparedness – but not overly detailed. It also requires enough flexibility to adapt plans in the likely event that real life differs from the assumptions made in the scenario.

Contingency planning should be simple and easy to do. Contingency planning should not be a complex task undertaken only by specialists; rather, all staff – and indeed community members – should be able to participate.

Contingency plans should be realistic enough that they can be implemented when needed. Plans which are not grounded in reality run the risk of failure and may create a false sense of security.

Contingency plans should allow for efficient, effective and equitable use of resources to appropriately meet humanitarian needs.

Contingency planning should be process-driven. Although written plans are important, without a good process contingency planning can be ineffective, resulting in plans being left on the shelf or in the filing cabinet.

Contingency planning should be participatory, in order to maximise the benefits of the planning process.

Contingency planning exercises should be followed up. Preparedness actions that are identified as a result of contingency planning should, where possible, be taken up, and further planning should be done if necessary.

Contingency planning processes should be regularly tested through exercises, such as table-top exercises. This helps improve planning and increases staff members' familiarity with the plan.

Contingency planning processes should include regular updates.

c. Contingency planning process' steps

We can actually consider almost four (04) steps in contingency planning process. Many guides have been edited to help organizations in contingency planning processes.

There has been a strong move in recent years toward inter-agency contingency plans. Those plans involve the different actors (agencies, organizations, etc.) that are likely to help as humanitarian actors if a disaster occurs.

The following steps description is taken from IASC contingency planning guide. Even though that guide is specifically focused on inter-agency planning process, the steps are the same as if the planning process is conducted at the level of a single agency [4].

Step 1: Preparation [5]

Organizing and effectively managing inter-agency contingency planning from the outset is essential. Best practice demonstrates that the following issues are of critical importance:

➤ **Commitment**

The success of contingency planning depends on a strong commitment of senior decision makers. Appropriate leadership by Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and Heads of Agencies/Organizations will ensure that organizations are committed to the contingency

planning process and that the necessary resources, both human and financial, are provided and follow-up actions are taken.

➤ **Establish a Steering Group of Senior Decision Makers**

Establishing a steering group of senior decision-makers can help to ensure a balance between participation and effective management, particularly in situations with a large number of humanitarian actors. This group will be responsible for providing overall strategic direction and guidance to the contingency planning process and ensuring that adequate resources are available to keep the process active. The steering group will approve the inter-agency contingency plan and monitor implementation of the preparedness actions identified. Existing coordination mechanisms such as Disaster Management Teams or Humanitarian Country Teams will typically perform these functions.

➤ **Establish a Technical-level, Contingency Planning Working Group**

On behalf of the steering group, this working group will manage the practical planning process. It will ensure that agency/organization and sector/cluster response plans are in line with the overall planning framework. It will consolidate the results of different elements of the planning process and ensure that cross-sector/cluster issues are addressed. Practical experience suggests that a smaller group (8-10 participants) is more likely to be effective than a larger group. However, appropriate representation is essential and should include representatives of agencies/organizations, sector/cluster groups and the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator's Office. The establishment of these on-going, technical level working groups on preparedness and contingency planning is increasingly common in Country Teams around the world

➤ **Structure the Process**

Map out the inter-agency contingency planning process, articulate key timelines, meetings and outputs so that progress can be monitored by all participants.

➤ **Ensure Adequate Facilitation**

The primary responsibility for contingency planning rests with agencies/organization comprising the Humanitarian Country Team. Should assistance in facilitating the contingency planning process be required, facilitators with contingency planning experience can be drawn from humanitarian agencies/organizations at the regional and global level. Experience has found that facilitation teams composed of staff from more than one agency/organization are

more effective as they bring a range of perspectives, experience and knowledge of different systems.

The most constructive planning processes are those which actively engage agencies/organizations, encourage real problem-solving and result in useful plans that are 'owned' by participants. The least useful planning is that undertaken by external consultants or individual staff members in isolated exercises with limited involvement of staff from agencies/organizations responsible for implementation. Facilitators should be used to help the planners manage the contingency planning process and provide technical support but should not do the planning or write the plan.

➤ **Take Stock**

Review evaluations from previous emergency responses, existing vulnerability assessments, community-based disaster management practices, the current status of preparedness measures and systems, and government and agency/organization contingency plans. This will facilitate the incorporation of lessons learned in the planning process and will help to ensure that it builds on previous experience. It will also help in avoiding confusions duplications in the field. Having an overview of the existing systems (existing agency contingency plans) is essential for coordination and approaches choice. In an interagency contingency planning process, it is important that each organization share its experiences. That step is necessary and useful for the context analysis and understanding by each actor. This analysis will underline problems that have occurred during past interventions and help for actions planning.

Step 2: Analysis [5]

Analysis is the second step of the contingency planning process. It is based on the various information that have been gathered during the first step.

This step in the planning process focuses on the analysis of likely hazards and their potential risks, as well as analysis of the existing vulnerabilities and capacities of the population so as to be able to make informed assumptions about the likely humanitarian impact of a particular hazard. All Humanitarian Country Teams are expected to maintain active early warning systems to help determine when humanitarian response may be required

➤ **Risks' analysis and threats nature analysis**

Identifying hazards and determining their likelihood and impact is the first step in the analytical process. Even in planning for a specific emergency, it is important to begin with a

broad analysis of all the hazards potentially affecting a country or region (e.g. earthquake, flood, or conflict) to ensure that the full range of risks are considered

It is not possible to plan for every eventuality and planners need to ensure that the available resources are focused on the most critical hazard(s). A common way to prioritize is through risk analysis. Risk analysis considers two dimensions: a) the probability or likelihood of a hazard occurring, and b) the potential humanitarian impact of the hazard on different segments of the population, property and livelihoods. The process of conducting a risk analysis is based on a review of both the technical features of hazards such as their likely location, intensity, probability as well as an analysis of the physical, social, economic and environmental dimensions of the vulnerabilities and capacities of a population.

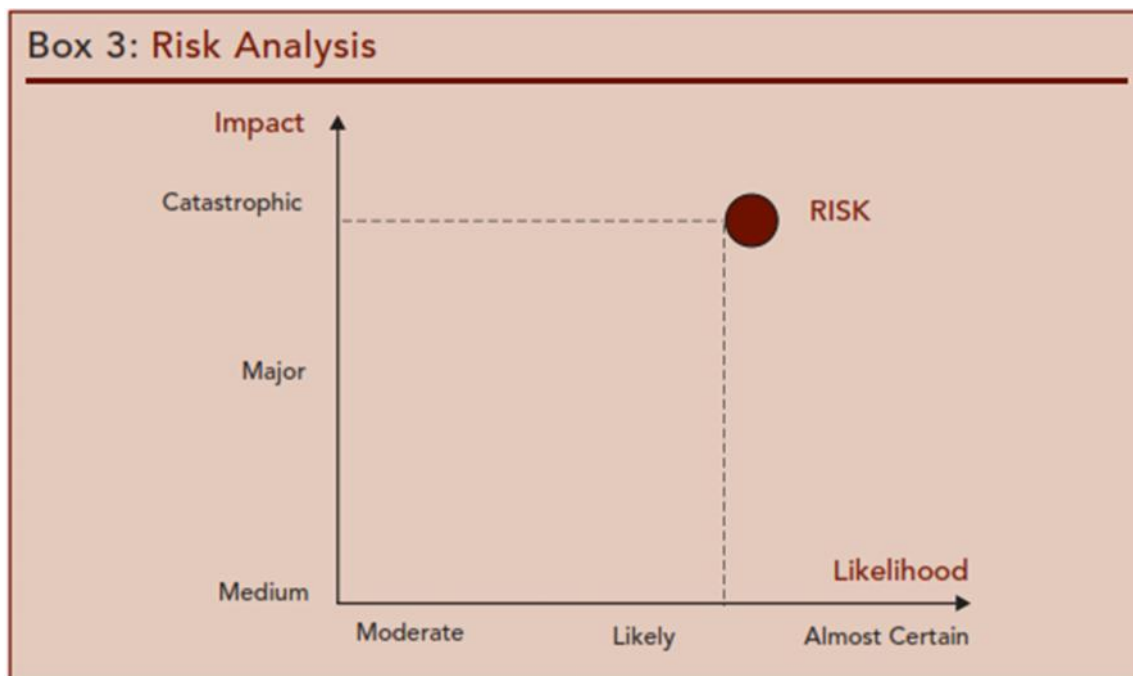


Figure 2: Risk analysis (IASC)

➤ **Developing scenarios**

Develop Scenarios as tools to help explore the implications of a hazard or threat – the different ways it might unfold and its impact on the population. While there are several approaches to scenario development, scenarios are simply tools to explore, describe and analyse the extent of a possible emergency. In this process it is important to consider a range of situations; it is not enough only to look at the most likely outcome.

Scenarios require regular refining and should be updated to reflect new developments and insights, such as assessment information and security analysis

➤ **Planning assumptions definition**

Define Planning Assumptions which highlight specific aspects of a possible emergency that are critical in planning a response. This includes specific projections of humanitarian needs (i.e. number of people requiring shelter, food, etc.), characteristics of the population (i.e. gender, age, socio-economic status), potential violations of national, humanitarian or human rights law, particular vulnerabilities (i.e. prevalence of HIV/AIDS, specific protection concerns, food security status) and capacities of affected communities and government institutions to respond to the situation. The identification of potential operational constraints (logistics, security, communication) should also be included. It is particularly important that projected planning figures (beneficiary numbers) are agreed. As it is difficult to determine the exact figures in advance, a range of numbers should be included in planning assumptions.

➤ **Identification of early warning indicators and triggers**

Triggers identify circumstances or events that are likely to indicate changes in the situation. For example, reduced or erratic rainfall could be triggers for drought; low-level inter-communal violence may be a trigger for conflict; sustained storms may be a trigger for flooding; etc. Identifying potential triggers as part of early warning is helpful in determining when to activate response systems

Beside those previous aspects it is also important to define roles and responsibilities of each actor and collect information related to response capabilities and interventions' areas of each actor (HR, Logistics, Inventory, Assessment, etc.)

Step 3: Interventions (response) planning [5]

After analysis and identification of the different scenarios, the following step is planning. Planning process starts by defining the objectives and the strategy of responses. Establishing common objectives and strategies helps to ensure that all sectors/clusters and agencies/organizations are working towards the same overall goal. Objectives of the humanitarian response are considered as high level statement(s) of what humanitarian actors will seek to achieve. Agreed strategies must articulate the way(s) the defined objective(s) will be achieved by describing the broad modalities of the response (i.e. support to government, direct implementation, focus on building capacity of local communities/structures, etc.)

Establishing clear mechanisms for accountability and coordination is critical to effective humanitarian response. A number of key decisions taken at the beginning of the planning process will shape the basic coordination and management arrangements:

- Decide on who will participate in each key activities and which organizations will lead them
- Agree on cross-sector (cross-activity) coordination mechanisms
- Decide which common service areas are likely to be needed
- Agree on Arrangements for Coordinating Resource Mobilization

In response planning it is also essential to establish appropriate coordination or liaison mechanisms with government and other actors. One of the accountabilities of the sector/cluster leads at country level is to establish and/or maintain appropriate linkages with government counterparts in the specific sector. Mechanisms to liaise with civil society, the media and national and foreign militaries should also be articulated.

Once the over-arching objectives, strategies, management and coordination arrangements have been established, interagency response plans should be developed. These plans will describe how agencies/organizations will respond to needs within the sector. Developing response plans is based on the common agreed objectives and strategies, roles and responsibilities.

Step 4: Preparedness (Measures) Implementation [5]

Contingency Planning should not be a theoretical exercise; its main objective is to ensure that agencies/organizations develop a level of preparedness that is sufficient to respond to an anticipated emergency. Prioritizing and implementing preparedness actions and monitoring agreed early warning indicators for developments that would trigger a response convert intentions into action

Measures implementation aims to directly increase readiness through activities (Development of early warning systems, Installation of resources in areas likely to be affected, allocation of specific budgets to government associated with central responsibility preparedness for response, etc.)

Preparedness actions identified during the planning process should be reviewed, prioritized and responsibilities and timelines should be assigned. In order to ensure that a heightened level of preparedness is achieved, a minimum set of priority preparedness actions should be

identified and agreed by all agencies/organizations. At each review of the contingency plan, progress made in implementing priority preparedness actions should be assessed in the context of any change in the situation. Humanitarian Country Teams may also want to develop Standard Operating Procedures detailing the key actions that each agency/organization and sector/cluster will take at the onset of an emergency. An important part of the contingency planning process is the establishment of systems for monitoring early warning indicators based on the triggers identified during the scenario building process. Each scenario should have a set of agreed indicators which would allow for a more efficient monitoring and follow-up.

The contingency planning process does not end with the production of a plan. The process must be continued and plans reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Ongoing involvement in the follow up to the contingency planning process should be integrated into the work plans of participating organizations and individuals. It is particularly important that the plan be thoroughly reviewed when there is a change in the situation, signalled by the early warning system, or a change in the institutional environment such as a significant change in membership or leadership of the Humanitarian Country Team. Simple simulation exercises are valuable in familiarizing those who will be involved in humanitarian response with the coordination and response mechanism envisaged in the plan. They also help to test planning assumptions and response systems. Simulations may be used as a part of the regular schedule for review and updating of the contingency plan.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The chosen methodology was mainly focused on data collection. Two approaches have been used in order to achieve the objective of this work.

The first approach consisted in a bibliographic review (desk research).

The second approach consisted in conducting interviews. We conducted both direct and indirect interviews (via internet exchanges).

3.1. Literature research

For this work, the literature research has been divided into four steps. First of all we tried to understand all the contours of the topic, by searching for concepts and terms' definition in encyclopaedias and dictionaries. That step aimed to better understand the subject and define a problematic around which the document should be written.

After terms and concepts' definitions, we tried to define and map out all the types of documents that could be useful in terms of content (data and information). So the investigation was focused on documents related to the following:

- Humanitarian aid context in West Africa
- Humanitarian's WASH sector in West Africa,
- Preparedness and contingency planning in West African countries

The research was mainly targeted on contingency plans, reports, and archives. We also searched for scientific articles, handbooks, guides, minutes, etc... Investigations were mainly conducted on internet. However, we also used agencies' physical documentation. Most of the consulted documents were digital.

3.2. Interviews

The second data collection approach was interviews' conduction. We conducted semi-structured (semi-directed) interviews. In practice, a small questionnaire was used to guide the discussions. The main objective of this method was to collect update information from WASH sector and contingency planning actors. The interviews also aim to collect testimonies related to contingency planning processes (difficulties in practice, benefits gained, case study,

and perspectives). The interviews concerned mostly WASH department responsible in NGOs, and UNICEF WASH specialists.

CHAPTER 4: CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN WEST AFRICA

4.1. West African Humanitarian Context

The majority of West African countries are developing countries. Several years ago, the region was characterized by a general and shared stability. The main problems in the Sahel region were drought and starvation. The West African sub-region's context has considerably evolved in the past ten years. The impacts of climate change are more and more critical and the consequences are likely to worsen populations' lives. Beside the impacts of climate change, West African countries are facing new situations that have changed the humanitarian context.

Some of the West African countries are already facing different humanitarian crises, so that the security and stability of the sub-region are threatened.

Mali is facing a political and military crisis in the Northern part of the country since 2012. Nigeria also is facing a humanitarian crisis due to terrorism in the North. Those two internal crises have caused high numbers of IDPs.

Countries like Burkina Faso and Niger, as direct neighbours of those countries, are also facing the humanitarian crises by receiving refugees and gathering several refugee camps. With the recent political crisis in Burkina Faso, the country's security system has been weakened.

Apart those crises which are more likely conflicts situations, Ebola epidemics remain a big issue for the West African sub-region. It has caused more than 10 000 deaths. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the most concerned countries but there have been cases in Nigeria, Mali and Senegal. All remaining West African countries remain on alert.

Beside those crises, the overall West African sub-region is on alert due to recent jihadist movements and Libyan crisis which tends to complicate the situation.

4.2. Contingency planning in West Africa

4.2.1. In country level

The majority of the West African countries have national agencies in charge of emergency situations (CONASUR in Burkina Faso, DCPC in Senegal, etc.). Those agencies are

responsible for organizing the government humanitarian actions and responses in emergencies.

The national agencies have set national multi-risks preparedness plans (national contingency plans). Each plan is specific to its country's context. They are also different in priorities and approaches. Known as multi-risks plans, they address several types of emergency situations, including various sectors. The plans set the roles and responsibilities at the national level in disaster responses management and coordination [1] [7] [8] [9] .

WASH is one of the priorities in almost all of the multi-risks contingency plans. In Burkina Faso for example, The WASH working group has set its own contingency plan which has been taken in account in the national contingency planning process. While the National Contingency plan is reviewed each two years, the working group's one is updated each year.

In other West African countries like, Mali and Niger, WASH clusters have also edited contingency plans for the WASH humanitarian sector. Those planning process involve all the actors (UN agencies, national and international NGOs, etc.) and UNICEF is taking the lead in case of emergencies.

In Guinea, after the socio-political crisis, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) also elaborated a multi-risk contingency plan in 2012. All the clusters were involved in that process. With Ebola epidemic outbreak in 2014, OCHA requested that each cluster set its specific contingency plan which is more detailed than the multi-risk contingency plan. This included overall planning activities, intervention objectives and actions, indicators to be used, and targets to be reached for each cluster [9].

Some NGOs had already set their own WASH contingency plans in the countries where they have their representations. In Burkina Faso, ACF had a WASH contingency stock for its mission but stops updating it since 2013. The NGO decided so in order to organize its actions in accordance with the WASH cluster contingency plan (in which they took part).

Beside the national contingency plans, some other contingency plans have been elaborated to address specific risks. It is the case for Ebola epidemic. With the quick expansion of the disease, almost all of the countries set contingency plans to anticipate the crisis. Under Public Health authorities' responsibilities, those contingency plans include the WASH sector.

4.2.2. Sub-regional level

At the sub-regional level, there is no official and operational cooperation between the different national agencies in charge of emergency situations. Some neighbouring countries have agreements in terms of humanitarian assistance (Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast for example) but there is no operational cooperation in terms of contingency planning.

However, for transboundary issues like cholera disease, some joint initiatives in terms of contingency and strategic response planning have been carried out. The WASH cholera group in Dakar has set a joint contingency plan for cholera epidemics' outbreaks. A similar project is currently developed for the Ebola epidemic. Health ministries of some of the West-African countries agreed in developing a joint contingency plan. Knowing that WASH is a key sector in responses to such epidemics, the WASH clusters actors are involved in the process.

For the international NGOs and UN agencies present in the sub-region they have their own information share system among their various missions in West African countries. Therefore they are able to better manage contingency planning for transboundary issues within their respective organization.

4.3. Constraints in Contingency planning in West Africa

4.3.1. In-country level

The main constraints faced by the national contingency planning process in almost all the countries are linked to financings, human resources, and training. The plans are elaborated but are not always effective in the field because they are not financed by governments. Up to that problem, the governmental institutions in charge of specific aspects don't play their roles creating delay in humanitarian actions implementation and confusions among the actors. For example in Burkina Faso, at the working group level, the leading organization is UNICEF but for the national contingency plan, a governmental institution (DGAERE) is responsible for WASH. Since few years, the country faces floods during the rainy season. But each year, DGRE doesn't act at time to trigger the WASH anticipating measures included in the contingency plan. This situation has pushed UNICEF to take the lead. In contrary, in Guinea, the WASH cluster which has also set an interagency contingency plan is working in a good way. All the cluster members (NGOs, UN agencies, etc...) are involved and the cluster is dynamic. Each agency has a specific intervention area and that helps to avoid duplications in

actions. This parameter has played an important role in Ebola crisis stabilization in the country.

Knowing that the NGOs have their own financing system based on projects funded by donors, the financing aspect is not a constraint for them in contingency planning. The consequence in that situation is that the actions in the fields are not well coordinated. Problems have occurred even in fundraising and in intervention areas. Nevertheless, UN and International Organizations are more and more supporting contingency planning at national level in West African countries by providing funds and expertise.

Experiences in Burkina Faso confirmed that there is a need to include agreements on the mechanisms for developing joint appeals, as well as strategies for mobilizing support from donors in-country and externally in contingency plans. In September 2015, floods occurred in several areas in Burkina Faso. The peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou were also concerned. As it is forecasted in the WASH cluster contingency plan, ACF and OXFAM were supposed to intervene in those areas. Since they didn't communicate and meet for joint coordination before launching appeals, the two NGOs were about to make duplication in the field. That is to say that even with the contingency plan, actors faces some difficulties in measures implementation in the field. [10]

4.3.2. Sub-regional level

As it has already been said above, the sub-regional context has quickly evolved and changed since few years. There are more and more transboundary issues including WASH aspects. The need for coordination between countries is greater than few years ago.

One of the major problems encountered in West Africa, but also in almost all African countries is undoubtedly the slow decision-making processes. It can be explained by the recent and current socio-political climate in the sub-region characterized by several at-risk elections in many West African countries in the same period.

The Ebola epidemic has put on the surface the lack of preparation. A sub-regional contingency plan initiative was launched but quickly found itself confronted with organizational constraints. It is difficult to implement a sub-regional initiative because of complications in national procedures and financial constraints.

The Ebola crisis have also highlighted the fact that it is a must to push the reflexion forward and start thinking about joint and multi-country contingency plans.

In those situations, it is important that UN agencies take the lead to boost contingency planning processes in countries. In Guinea for example the multi-risks contingency planning process was under the direct responsibility of UN. In 2012, the UN representation has been able to bring together all the different actors (including national agencies) around discussion table to elaborate an interagency contingency plan.

4.4. Utility of contingency plans

4.4.1. General benefits

Contingency plans are necessary at national and regional levels (and sometimes at a global level), to ensure effective coordination and response to large-scale disasters.

According to Richard Choularton [3]:

During an emergency, time pressure is one of the most acute problems. Contingency planning allows time to deal with anticipated problems before the onset of a crisis.

Contingency planning provides an opportunity to identify constraints and focus on operational issues prior to the on-set of a crisis. For example, it provides opportunities to map the vulnerabilities of a potential target population, potential areas of rights violations, assess logistical infrastructure such as port or warehousing capacity, and assess coordination and institutional capacity.

An active contingency planning process enables individuals, teams, organizations to establish working relationships that can make a critical difference during a crisis. By working together in a contingency planning process, people develop a common understanding of common challenges, of each other's capacities and organizational requirements. This helps facilitate effective collaboration in a crisis.

Contingency planning processes can help to reinforce coordination mechanisms by keeping them active and by clarifying roles and responsibilities before a crisis. As the humanitarian reform in 2005 set coordination as a great challenge for humanitarian actors in the fields, inter-agency contingency plans could be considered as coordination improving reference documents.

Contingency planning allows organizations to put in place measures that enhance preparedness, ahead of a potential crisis.

4.4.2. Testimonies in West Africa

Burkina Faso: Floods in 2009 (From Ousimane OUEDRAOGO, CONASUR)

In Burkina Faso, the first contingency plan was set in the country in 2009. During the same year, before the finalization of the planning process, Burkina Faso faced floods in September. Since there was no preparedness at any level, the crisis was difficult to manage. There was a particular fear to have a cholera epidemic outbreak which would have been difficult to manage. The country was not well prepared for that kind of disasters. That event showed the necessity of contingency plan for the country.

Burkina Faso: Malian refugees' influx (From Ousimane OUEDRAOGO, CONASUR)

In Burkina Faso again, the contingency plan has shown its benefits when the conflict strikes in the Northern part of Mali. The contingency plan set by the National Agency responsible for emergency situations (CONASUR) permitted a quick and efficient management of the massive refugees' influx. The contingency plan allowed the Government of the country to quickly find financial means for the response of national agencies. Beside national aid, WASH actors were quickly able to intervene in the refugee camps. Coordination within the WASH actors was efficient because the strategy was already set and the responsibilities were known and shared. National agencies, UN agencies and NGOs worked in a good coordination manner at the early stage of the crisis.

Guinea-Bissau: At-risk presidential elections in 2005 (From Frederick Spielberg, UNICEF)

Presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau in 2005 were contested along ethnic lines. Seven years earlier, a military coup had sparked civil unrest causing widespread civilian deaths, destruction of infrastructure and massive displacement. Many believed that the 2005 poll would produce similar violence. In the first quarter of 2005, the UN Country Team carried out a contingency planning process which identified a worst case scenario of civil war and the displacement of over 600,000 people, three-quarters of whom would be likely to require humanitarian assistance. Each agency was then tasked with replicating the process within its own organisation to identify operational strategies for dealing with the impending emergency.

UNICEF made field visits to the most likely operational staging base, across the border in Ziguinchor, Senegal, and to the in-country relocation site for staff and dependants. Logistical and supply requirements for the target population were itemised, priced and sourced in each of the basic sectors and mainly in the WASH sector.

Based on the resulting budget, the country office stockpiled supplies and scaled up logistical capacity. To everyone's relief, the elections passed off without incident. Nevertheless, the collective contingency planning initiative they sparked effectively jumpstarted preparedness efforts for UNICEF and other agencies. The resources spent on preparedness were effectively folded into other programmatic activities. The stockpiled supplies were used in regular programmes, and the scaled up logistics capacity brought greater efficiency to on-going operations.

Guinea-Conakry: Improved coordination in WASH actions within the context of Ebola epidemic

In Guinea, The WASH cluster is very dynamic and has set an interagency contingency plan. The contingency plan helps the cluster's organizations member in their projects implementation in the field. The coordination is more effective and the actions are implemented in a complementary manner so that it has contributed to slow down the expansion of the disease in the country.

Burkina Faso: Improved humanitarian coverage (from Mr KONATE, WASH coordinator, ACF Burkina Faso)

The WASH cluster contingency plan has permitted to elaborate the cartography of humanitarian coverage mainly for at-risk areas. These areas were defined according to the presence and activities of NGOs already in the field. Each NGOs was able to inventory the potential needs in terms preparedness in its intervention area. It was thus possible to determine the gaps and organizational measures have been established to deal with any eventuality in non-covered areas.

All those testimonies show that contingency planning processes have their utility in West African countries

4.5. Example 1: Contingency plan in Burkina Faso

4.5.1. Organizational aspects

In Burkina Faso, the national agency responsible for emergency situations is called CONASUR. The National contingency planning was an inclusive and participatory process. The different actors of each sector were involved in the planning process. National agencies (governmental), national and international NGOs, UN agencies, technical and financial partners participated in the process. The first contingency plan was set in 2009. The actors agreed on a one-year period for evaluation and updating meetings. Due to various constraints, the review system was finally organized each two years.

For the specific part concerning WASH issues, the WASH working group's contingency plan has just been integrated in the National Contingency plan.

In the national contingency planning process, a department of the Ministry of Water called DGRE is in charge of the WASH aspects in emergencies. The organizational aspects concerning WASH preparedness measures are somehow facing difficulties. Every year, there are floods during the rainy season but WASH response anticipating measures are not automatically triggered at time. UNICEF is thus playing the role of as the working group leading agency.

The WASH cluster contingency plan has allowed dividing the country in several intervention areas in function of the NGOs which are already present in the country. This is important to avoid duplications in aid supply. All the territory is covered except the Southern and the Western parts of the country. Those areas are under the direct responsibility of UNICEF in case of an emergency outbreak.

The National Council for Emergency Situations (CONASUR) has implemented some departments in each region of the country. Seven regions have already set their own contingency plans. Those regional contingency plans are not very different from the national one whereas they are more specific to the regions' context. The Government expect all the thirteen (13) regions of the country to have their regional contingency plans. It is stated in the national contingency plan that the regions should be able to take in charge relief actions for up to 500 people in case of emergency. When the victims are more than 500 people, the relief actions are to be taken in charge by the national agency (CONASUR).

The problem with those regional contingency plans is that they have been set by consultants. That option has been chosen due to a lack of financing. The financial problem makes that regional contingency plans are difficult to implement in practice. So the main decisions and actions are still triggered from the capital.

4.5.2. WASH sector in the National Contingency Plan [1]

The overall objective for the WASH sector is: *to reduce the risk of diseases related to unsafe water consumption, poor hygiene practices and lack of adequate sanitation within populations affected by the crisis.*

The WASH sector specific objectives are [1]:

- Ensure access to safe water for affected populations: availability of drinking water for 300 000 victims
- Ensure the availability of water storage and fetching equipments for (60 000) displaced persons (20% of the population affected by the crisis)
- Ensure the availability of sanitation and hygiene infrastructures (latrines, showers and washing areas with sumps) for 60000 displaced people.
- Promote hygiene and sanitation among affected populations and host communities

Strategies and actions to be taken in the WASH contingency plan [1]:

1. The sectoral preparedness focuses on the humanitarian consequences under the WASH sector cross-cutting risks (drought, population movement, and flood). The strategy must allow affected populations to access an alternative and potable drinking water resource. It must also allow them an access to facilities in sufficient quantity. The implementation of the strategy requires: (1) the establishment of an early-warning and alert system. That system must comprise several levels (CONASUR); (2) the implementation of organizational decisions graded by level alert system (CONASUR) (3) the establishment of alternative supply of drinking water devices involving guiding people to other resources unaffected and mobilization of transport, storage, treatment and distribution equipments and facilities.
2. Coordination of actions between stakeholders at all levels;
3. Participation of target populations in the implementation of activities, including awareness and hygiene education;

4. Promoting the spirit of sharing within host populations in relation to the use of water sources and sanitation facilities

Concerning methodology, it includes:

The establishment of a minimum capacity for responding to crises: (i) The definition of indicators and warning tools (standard potability of water, rate of access to water because of modern water point for 500 inhabitants with a maximum distance of 500 meters radius); (ii) the definition of the monitoring system warning indicators; (iii) the definition of whistleblowing Protocol; (iv) the definition of information protocol to populations; (v) the definition of graduated protocol which means mobilizing equipment and staff; (vi) the definition of the actors involved in the alert trigger warp and the decisions chain; (vii) the organization of temporary redeployment of humanitarian workers to the affected areas (viii) the inventory of available capacity (including with civil security and the army); (ix) the pre-positioning of stocks near sensitive areas; (x) identification of performance indicators; (xi) mode of intervention in the field; (xii) Consultation meeting to review the alert indicators and trigger the alarm according to the defined protocol; (xiii) first joint observer mission and evaluation within 48 hours that followed the onset of the emergency plan; (xiv) activating the emergency plan of intervention; (xv) monitoring and evaluation [1]

Performance indicators for the Monitoring and Evaluation are: (i) the minimum daily volume of drinking water of at least 20litres / day / person for domestic use (laundry, consumption, tableware, toilet) is served; (ii) Percentage of functional and used water points serving the affected population; (iii) Percentage of the affected population with access to safe water sources at less than a distance of 1000 m; (iv) Percentage of displaced populations with their immediate needs satisfied in terms of water storage and use equipments; (v) Percentage of IDPs and members of host families accessing and using sanitation facilities (latrines, showers, sumps); (vi) Percentage of affected populations educated about basic hygienic measures and practicing those measures (use of latrines, sanitation, hand washing with soap after toilet and before meals); (vii) Percentage of waterborne diseases cases that have been reported and the necessary measures taken about that; (viii) Number of people with a latrine / toilet separated by gender (men / women) following the ration of 1 latrine for 50 persons; (ix) 2 people per village or area are formed as good hygiene practice popularisers. [1]

Systems and tools of the plan are: (i) the various sectoral documents in the affected areas; (ii) The forms for collecting information from the population, community organizations,

municipalities and services (health, agriculture and hydraulics); (iii) The monitoring sheets of the various actors in the field; (iv) monitoring missions and evaluation reports. [1]

4.6. Example 2: Contingency plan in Senegal [8]

4.6.1. Organizational aspects

The national contingency plan was set in 2008. It was the first of its kind and was initiated by the "Project for the National Prevention Program, Major Risk Reduction and Natural Disaster Management in the context of poverty reduction in Senegal" funded through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with technical assistance of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), the Senegalese Red Cross and Oxfam / Great Britain. [8]

The High Commission of Civil Protection (CSPC) is the advisory body in the field of civil defense, in particular that concerning risk prevention and disaster management. It is represented at the administrative level by the regional commissions and auxiliary civil protection. The contingency and response planning processes are coordinated at the national level by the Civil Protection Directorate (DPC) which plays the role of secretary of the CSPC.

The DPC works closely with United Nations Agencies in charge of Humanitarian actions (OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, etc.), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Senegalese Red Cross.[8]

As in Burkina Faso, the WASH cluster's interagency contingency plan is included in the national multi-risks contingency plan

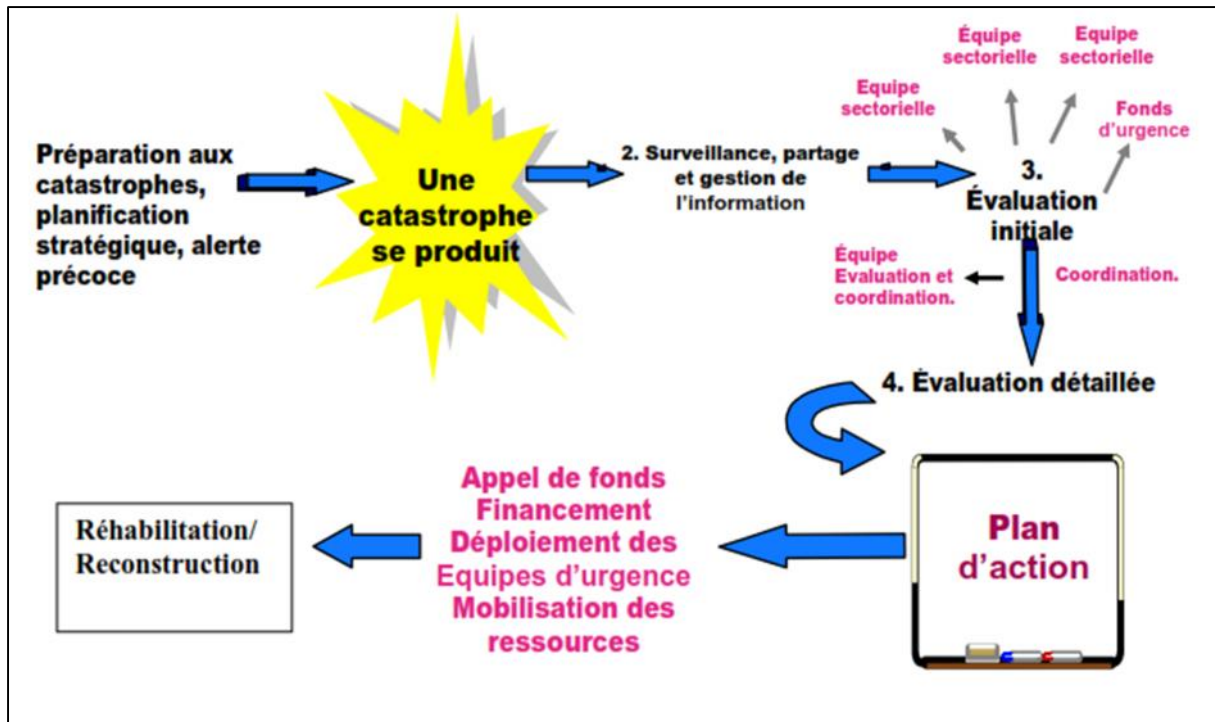


Figure 3: Intervention mechanism in case of emergency [1]

4.6.2. WASH sector

The WASH sectoral contingency plan's main objective is to ensure drinking water supply, hygiene and adequate sanitation to the affected populations. Access of victims to water and sanitation will also reduce the risk of occurrence and spread of vector-borne diseases in the affected areas, which constitutes an imperative upon the occurrence of a disaster. [8]

Its specific objectives are, among others: (i) ensure the disinfection of contaminated areas, (ii) ensure the provision of drinking water in accordance with current standards, (iii) ensure the sewage and storm water; (iv) ensure public awareness.[8]

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Contingency planning is a participatory process which involves many actors. It is a continuous process which can be set at various levels: specific agency, country, cluster, sub-region, etc. [5] [6]

Contingency planning processes exist in almost all of the West African countries. Most of them have been set around and after 2005. In each country, there is a national agency in charge of risks and emergencies. They are the governmental agencies responsible for contingency planning process at the national level and they organize and deliver government humanitarian aid. Most of the in-country WASH clusters have contingency plans which are taken in account in the national multi-risks contingency plans.[7] [1] [8]

Nevertheless, most of the humanitarian agencies (UN agencies, NGOs) had also set their own specific contingency plans before the interagency contingency plans initiatives. Most of the interagency contingency plans are closely inspired by the NGOs' existing contingency plans.

At the sub-regional level, there are no official cooperation activities between national agencies. However, some joint initiatives exist in terms of emergency preparedness and contingency planning. It is the case with the WASH-cholera group based in Dakar which has elaborated a WASH contingency plan for cholera epidemics outbreak in the sub-region. With the Epidemic of Ebola, some discussions have started between governments and partners in order to elaborate joint actions initiatives including WASH sector sub-regional contingency plan. [10]

The main constraint in contingency planning in West Africa is financial. The plans have been set but governments have difficulties to finance the implementation of measures in the fields. But there is more and more financial support coming from partners (mostly UN agencies, and international organizations). Another difficulty is the slowness of procedures at governmental level for joint initiatives.

Despite the difficulties, contingency plans have shown their benefits in many contexts: management of WASH aspects in Ebola epidemic in Guinea, management of Malian refugees' influx in Burkina Faso, strengthened preparedness in Guinea-Bissau.

With the new sub-regional context characterized by many transboundary issues such as Ebola epidemic, jihadist group's threats and unstable socio-political climate in many countries, joint sub-regional initiatives are more and more required.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PERPECTIVES

One can say contingency planning processes are very useful for West African countries. Nevertheless there is a need to improve the operational organization. There is also a need to simplify some of the administrative procedures to permit quick and adequate responses to emergencies. The roles and responsibilities must be well known by each actor. It is also important that all the different actors play their role.

Even with the contingency plans which aim to improve countries and humanitarians' preparedness, some countries still face problems during the plans' implementation. There is a need to trigger the process and procedures on time, before the emergency's strike, not to be surprised.

There is also a need to improve communication between humanitarian actors within the contingency planning process. It is important to avoid duplications in the field, mainly in areas where several actors are present.

There are more and more transboundary issues in the West Africa, so joint sub-regional initiatives are more and more required. For those issues, West African governments must set sub-regional contingency plans involving the different countries. Such kind of initiatives has been done in the past. It is the case for cholera epidemic.

Concerning the present literature thesis, some difficulties have been met during the work. The main constraint was the constraint of time. We suggest that for the next years, student should be given more time to work on their topics. The second constraint is also linked with the first one and is related to data collection. For such kinds of topics which are very broad, data are not always immediately available even on internet. Interviews with humanitarians bring more accurate and update information. It is difficult to conduct interviews within a short time. It may also be useful for student to have an official document signed by the school to facilitate their access to governmental agencies, NGOs and UN agencies.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for interviews

1. YOUR ORGANIZATION

- a. Does your Organization possess a Contingency Plan related to WASH sector ?
- b. Is the Document available ?
- c. When has your organization set this Plan ?
- d. Which factors have led to the contingency plan elaboration?
- e. Is the plan frequently reviewed? Which frequency?
- f. How and why is the contingency plan important for your organization ?
- g. What events or new factors do you see as important to be incorporated into your Contingency Plan

2. NATIONAL OR REGIONAL CONTEXT

- a. Is there a contingency plan in the country or inter-agency plan ? in the West African region? WASH cluster ?
- b. Is the document available (electronic copy) ?
- c. Have you been involved in the plan elaboration ? Which are the other actors involved in the planning process ?
- d. According to you what is the utility of the contingency plan at the national or regional level,?
- e. Since its elaboration, do you think that the contingency Plan still fits with the national or regional context ? What improvements do you see important to integrate?
- f. Are there differences/contrast (approaches or priorities) between this plan and that of your organization ?
- g. However, if there is no national or sub-regional contingency plan, do you think it is necessary to develop one?

3. OPEN ADDINGS, SUGGESTIONS