

Réunion régionale des Cash Working Groups de l'Afrique de l'Ouest & du Centre

Minutes

Place: Online and face-to-face

Date: January 17th, 2024 (9-11H GMT)

Participants: 53 including 22 women

Organizations: OCHA, CALP Network, WFP, ICRC, USAID, UNICEF, NORCAP, ACTED, Red-Cross, CRS, Overseas Advising Group (OAG), Start Network, Acted, Première-Urgence, IMMAP, Doctors without Borders, IFRC, Action against Hunger, World Bank, FAO, NRC, CAFOD and ECHO.

Context

On January 17, the first meeting of the regional Cash Working Group (CWG) for West and Central Africa was held. The meeting is part of the support provided by the regional CWG to the region's national CWGs, with financial support from the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA/USAID). The meeting was co-organized with the OCHA regional office.

The agenda is centered around a roundtable discussion on recent activities of the various CWGs and a presentation followed by question-and-answer segments, all with simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

1- National Cash Working Groups roundtable

Available on recording (from 3mn-to 48mn)

- **Cameroon CWG**
 - New Humanitarian Lead for Cash: **Alix Derne**.
 - Consensus retreat held on lead roles and roadmap for implementation of new coordination model in November 2023.
 - Setting up the election procedure for the position of Programmatic Co-Chair and presentation of the results scheduled for later this week.
- **Mali CWG**
 - Validation of the MEB and transfer values in December in the presence of humanitarian actors, clusters, and members of the humanitarian country team.
 - The report will be published after validation by the government, which plans to adopt the transfer values for its social safety net programs.
 - Implementation of the transition plan for the new coordination model began in April 2023 and was completed in November 2023. The report is available at the following link in French: <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/rapport-de-la-mise-en-oeuvre-du-plan-de-transition>.
 - Validation of the 2024-2025 strategy and work plan for this year.
- **Niger CWG**
 - Development of work plan for 2024.
 - Completion of fourth quarter Dashboard.
 - Finalization of an advocacy note on the difficulties of Cash and Voucher assistance (CVA) in collaboration with the humanitarian country team.
 - Preparation of a guidance note for CWGs on how to adapt during the cash ban to prevent a deterioration in the situation of cash beneficiaries.
- **Chad CWG**

- Launch of a survey to identify the capacity-building needs of actors in the eastern part of the country - Data collection scheduled at the end of January.
- Election process for the position of Programmatic Co-Chair for 2024.
- Update of the national CWG's ToR in line with the new coordination model.
- Update on the number of refugees in the east of the country as of January 10, 2024: 496,334 refugees representing 143,317 households.
- World Bank-funded refugee support project - WFP and UNHCR cash activities.
- In terms of coordination, four objectives are planned: **(1)** Specific and generic capacity building **(2)** Advocacy and resource mobilization **(3)** Strengthening coordination with the sector group, clusters, and social safety nets **(4)** Activation of a cash sub-group in the south of the country for a 15% increase in assistance targeting over a million beneficiaries.
- Official update of FSP players in the database: Express Union (Microfinance) and two telephone companies: Airtel and Move Africa.
- **Nigeria CWG**
 - Progress ongoing on mapping financial service providers - Data collection phase in prospect.
 - Completion of the HPC cycle involving the study and validation of multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) projects - Analysis of financial projections regarding the funding of CVA programs.
 - Work plan workshop scheduled for early February to discuss key priorities for all players in this programming cycle.
- **DRC CWG**
 - Finalization of working documents related to the new coordination model (ToRs and workplan) and collaboration with the Cameroon CWG and the regional CWG.
 - Identification of CWGs contributing to the MPCA planning exercise in the HRP.
 - Establishment of a taskforce on CVA risks related to protection and gender-based violence (GBV) - Workshop planned in North Kivu on cash and protection.
 - Orientation workshop on the roles, responsibilities, challenges, and links of sub-national CWGs within the national CWG.
- **Togo CWG**
 - Cash ban in the Northern part of the country - Capitalizing on lessons learned and advocating the use of cash.
 - The CWG is in discussion with CALP for the organization of the Core CVA Skills training for programme staff.
- **RCA CWG**
 - Core CVA skills training for programme staff is scheduled from January 22 to 26 and organized by OXFAM and DCA.
 - Development of CWG TORs.
 - Update of the MEB in collaboration with REACH and PAM.

If you would like to receive more information on one of the national CWGs, you can contact the leads and coleads of the countries concerned directly at the following link:
<https://www.calpnetwork.org/community/cash-working-groups/>

- 2- The link between social protection and CVA: developments and challenges: a brief summary of CALP's report on the State of the World Cash 2023. CALP Network Available on recording (from 41mn to 1H28mn)**

In the State of the World Cash (SOWC) report published in November 2023 by the CALP Network, the link between social protection and cash transfers is dealt with in chapter 6. However, the same theme runs transversally through all the other chapters.

Through this report, the main findings of this survey highlight the opportunities, challenges and strategic debates relating to Social Protection (SP).

- **Opportunities** for linking SP and CVA in different contexts, even in conflict zones.
- **Obstacles:** lack of coordination, limited technical capacities of humanitarian and social protection workers, funding not adapted to contexts (scale / duration) / decrease in humanitarian funding.
- **Strategic debates: (1)** How can humanitarian and development principles be balanced to strengthen SP? **(2)** What decisions need to be taken to strengthen this link, especially in times of conflict / or when governments are not fulfilling their role as duty bearers (notably coordination)? **(3)** How can humanitarian and development actors work better together to support the strengthening of the social protection system?
- These questions were followed by discussions and contributions from participants through an exercise on Miro board (the compilation of the answers in French and English is available on the page).
- **Recommendations:** In addition to the solutions proposed in chapter 6 of the report, the other chapters recommend including the centrality of people, the opportunities and risks posed by digital technologies, climate and environmental issues, and local response issues to strengthen social protection.
- The summary and the complete section on this theme are respectively available at these following links:
 - <https://www.calpnetwork.org/web-read/the-state-of-the-worlds-cash-2023-chapter-6-linkages-with-social-protection/>
 - <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Chapter-6-SOWC-2023-Linkages-with-Social-Protection%E2%80%AF.pdf>
- For any inquiries related to Social Protection, you can consult the knowledge-sharing platform on social protection: <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/common-principles-linking-humanitarian-assistance-and-social-protection.>

3- Perception priority topics survey for the regional CWG for 2024 – a presentation of responses and collective brainstorming on the priorities. OCHA/CALP Network

Available on recording (from 1h28mn to 1H52mn)

The perception survey was launched in November 2023 to evaluate the work of the regional CWG and to define priority themes for 2024.

- 104 respondents, 73% men and 26% women.
- All types of organizations are represented, with most responses coming from international NGOs and local players, which will contribute to localization project efforts. Further work is envisioned to better involve financial providers and government members in the regional CWG.
- Geographically, all countries in the region are represented, except for Ghana and Benin. However, responses were received from coastal countries such as Ivory Coast and Togo.
- 73 of the respondents had taken part in at least one regional CWG meeting (with an average attendance of around three meetings out of six), compared with 31 who had never attended. It is important to remind that the aim of this survey was to be inclusive and to collect all feedback relating to issues in the West and Central African region.

- Good appreciation of the meetings, with an average score of 3.90/5.
- A good evaluation of the roundtable of the various national CWGs, albeit with some feedback on the duration and sharing of experiences.
- A good assessment of the topics covered, with a particular preference for more sharing of both positive and negative experiences, challenges and adapted solutions.
- Top five priority themes: (1) Cash transfers and social protection (2) Cash transfers and locally led response Cash transfers, (3) Climate change and environment (4) Community approaches and cash transfers (5) Cash transfers in hard-to-reach contexts - Cash transfers and human mobility.
- Almost 25% of respondents felt that they had not had enough time to express their views during CWG meetings. The reg. CWG reiterated its commitment to listening to all participants.
- The survey results show that humanitarian actors would like to see greater involvement from local players, civil society organizations, and state authorities. The presence of financial service providers and support departments (logistics, finance, etc.) is also requested.
- A positive assessment of interpretation services was noted.
- The regional CWG is not operational, but rather a framework for exchanging experiences, implementing projects, and creating synergies in the region.
- Exchanges on results/reflections to improve meetings.
- **Recommendations:** Share activities succinctly from the various national CWGs at the round table, more sharing of experiences that are relevant to several countries in the region, good time management to enable discussion on a particular theme, representation of local players in certain presentations.

4- AOB

Available on recording (from 1H55mn - end)

- **Training of the trainers** is planned this year and posted on all CALP channels. It is to be noted that places are limited and distributed among all countries in the region.
- **Leads and Co-leads meeting**, originally scheduled for February 21-23, has been postponed for security reasons and the pre-electoral context in Senegal. The CALP Regional Office will communicate the new dates by e-mail.