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**Strengthening Opportunities and Access to Resilience (SOAR)**  
**First Quarterly Report**  
*July 15 – September 30, 2014*  
**Funded by USAID/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)**



Focus Group Discussion with displaced women from Damboa LGA in Borno State. Gombe town, September, 2014

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## **I. Executive Summary**

During this quarter, the majority of activities have been dedicated to project start-up. In addition, Mercy Corps has conducted baseline focus group discussions and key informant interviews, began beneficiary registration, selected consultants to conduct the baseline household survey, and become a member of the Gombe Humanitarian Coordination mechanism, chaired by SEMA. Furthermore, during the quarter, the project area was visited by Mercy Corps' Regional Security Advisor who conducted a security assessment (please refer to Annex 2 to this Report). An OFDA representative visited Gombe in September, as well.

While the security situation has remained relatively stable in the project implementation area, there has been quite a bit of fluctuation in the IDP population of Gombe as families continue to relocate to various host communities. This necessitates a need to track and monitor IDP populations more accurately in order to better implement program activities which Mercy Corps will undertake in the next quarter.

## **II. Program Overview**

Escalated violence in northeastern Nigeria caused by Boko Haram and the counter-insurgency continues to displace significant numbers of people, contributing to disrupted livelihoods, reduced household incomes, and an increased risk of food insecurity. Following a Federal Government declaration of a State of Emergency (SoE) in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, all of which border Gombe State, Gombe has become one of the states receiving most of the displaced<sup>1</sup>To address the situation of displaced and vulnerable resident households and strengthen their resilience and livelihoods, the Strengthening Opportunities and Access to Resilience (SOAR) program will be supporting basic non-food items needs through cash-based distributions, strengthening livelihoods of vulnerable families through one-time cash transfers, increasing knowledge of livestock owners, and establishing village level savings and loans groups. It is estimated that the project will benefit 93,780 individuals, out of which 56,268 are internally displaced.

## **III. Security Context and Situation Overview**

The overall situation in the project area was relatively calm, with no serious security incidents reported that could affect the implementation of activities. An increased number of displaced people have been linked to the security situation in the neighboring states of emergency but no major influx has been noted during the reporting period. The only official IDP camp in Gombe has experienced a decrease in the number of individuals living there. However, this can be attributed to people deciding to move out of the camp and stay with host families, rather than returning home. Mercy Corps is in the process of establishing simple displaced tracking mechanisms to capture the movements and trends of IDPs more accurately. Our field observations indicate that families prefer to stay with host communities instead of in camps, where they feel more vulnerable and exposed to security risks.

The amount of rain in the area has been satisfactory and the harvesting period started on time in September. There have not been any report of disease outbreaks among livestock and seasonal vaccinations are planned to start October or November.

In terms of local markets commodities, a temporary shortage of millet in Gombe's markets was recorded in August and this was attributed to problems with transport, due to the lack of fuel in the market. Otherwise price fluctuations in food and non-food commodities have not been noted during

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<sup>1</sup> Precise number of displaced within Gombe State is not known. The UN Assessment Report from May indicates close to 8,000 individuals, SEMA has the registry of 14,000 individuals mostly from Gombe LGA.

the reporting period, although this could partly be attributed to the lack of an established monitoring system to capture price fluctuations on the part of the program.

**IV. Project Performance**

Program start up began the second week of September; the delay was attributed to the visa problems of the start-up Program Manager, as well as the long notice period (30 days) for newly recruited staff. The delayed start-up has not impacted the general project timeline and Mercy Corps anticipates that most of the activities will begin next quarter.

**Project launch**

The project and its activities were introduced to the local authorities in each target Local Government Area (LGA) and addressing formal and traditional community leaders, Social Welfare, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), local CBOs, UN agencies (WHO) Red Cross and other community members. In Abuja, Mercy Corps began exchanging information and sharing experiences with other OFDA partners, Save the Children and ACF.

Mercy Corps has also joined the humanitarian coordination forum, chaired by SEMA. The forum gathers various actors from the community, NGOs and representatives of various governmental sectors and focuses on the IDP camps. Little attention is given to host communities. The Humanitarian Forum has been briefed about project objectives and activities and is being regularly informed on the progress of SOAR. In addition, Mercy Corps has initiated the project MoU signing process with SEMA – at the time of the submission of the report, the document is awaiting their signature.

In addition, the following vehicles were purchased and leased in this first quarter:

Vehicle Type/ Description	Form of engagement	Quantity	Source Country	Country of Manufacture
Ford Ranger, 2.5, 4x4	Procurement	2	Nigeria	USA
Toyota Corolla	Lease	1	Nigeria	

**Beneficiary registration**

Community mapping and beneficiary registration meetings have been organized. Meetings were attended by representatives of community-based organisations and SEMA/Social Welfare focal points. Meeting agendas were aimed at 1) introducing Mercy Corps and SOAR, 2) mapping out the community with emphasis on the concentration of displaced and vulnerable population, and 3) agreeing on the beneficiary targeting criteria. In addition, the meeting agreed on the number of volunteers to be involved in the process (and volunteer selection criteria) as well as the registration timeline.



Before the beneficiary registration process began, Mercy Corps conducted training sessions with selected volunteers, explaining the details of the project, beneficiary targeting criteria (including the split between displaced and vulnerable resident households), registration process and formats, as well as Mercy Corps role in overseeing and validation of the

registration. During the registration, additional information about the family was being collected, including family size, (with gender and age disaggregated), family status (displaced, resident, female-and/or child- headed), type of accommodation, if displaced – home of record and date of arrival, number of vulnerable family members (orphans, pregnant and lactating women), type of assistance received and livelihoods base. *(Photos: volunteers training in Bajoga/Funakaye LGA – from the left: Mercy Corps staff explains the registration formats to the volunteers; Volunteers practicing formats filling)*

In all meetings and community involvement, Mercy Corps has been emphasizing gender balance, as well as ethnic and religious representation, that reflects the targeted community social makeup. The same methodology was introduced in all three project targeted LGAs; registration and validation of the lists is planned to be completed by mid-October. The following table shows these targets.

LGA	# of Targeted Wards	# of volunteers involved	Estimated # of households to be registered*
Funakaye	7	20	800
Yamaltu Deba	6	15	900
Gombe	5	26	2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>3,700</b>

**Table 1 Beneficiary registration process information**

\* This figures are preliminary allocations and will be finalized after the lists are returned and validated

The registration process will serve the following activities: non-food items support (both hygiene and new arrival kits) and livelihoods restoration through one-time cash transfers.

The final list of beneficiaries for each activity will be generated from the registration lists, after applying the range of specific vulnerability criteria (for instance: for livelihood support, Mercy Corps will target those who report losing all their livelihoods or female-, child- headed households; new arrival kits will be provided to those who have been displaced the most recently and therefore have not been assisted yet (there has not been any distribution done by SEMA for the past 2-3 months); the majority of those registered will benefit from hygiene items.

### **Project Performance by Sector**

As the actual implementation of activities has not started during the reporting period, the progress of the indicators under all three project sectors is reported at 0. In the proceeding quarterly reports, progress figures will be disaggregated by indicator and gender.

#### **SECTOR 1 Economic Recovery & Market Systems**

##### ***Livelihoods restoration***

As explained above, beneficiary registration for the livelihoods transfers have started. In addition, Mercy Corps has assessed the available options for the cash disbursements, as – for security reasons of the staff – it is not advisable to conduct a physical cash distribution. As mobile or electronic cash

transfer mechanisms do not exist in Gombe yet<sup>2</sup>, Mercy Corps is looking at the disbursement of cash through local banks or money transfer offices that have their branches at the community level.

Transfer amounts have been projected at the equivalent of US\$50 but the final decision about the amount will be made based on the results of baseline survey, where the beneficiaries will be asked what livelihoods strategies they used to have and what alternatives they would see for themselves in the current situation, as well as what monetary value would help them in their livelihoods restoration. If the decision is to increase the transfer amount per family, Mercy Corps may need to reduce the target number, in order to give support that would have a more substantial impact for beneficiaries.

### ***Microfinance***

The focus groups discussions and key informant interviews indicated no community-level informal financial institutions. The savings culture is not that strong, as the access to the institutions and their products seem to be limited. Participants of six focus groups expressed their willingness to partake in VSLAs, if opportunities were made available. One concern however, was a lack of any capital to invest, particularly among the displaced households, which, in most cases, lost their livelihoods due to displacement and consequently are struggling to support the basic needs of their families.

Project staff is scheduled to attend the VSLA training at the end of October; the community sensitization and mobilization will follow just afterwards. The responsiveness of the communities to the suggested savings and loans scheme will dictate the number of the groups Mercy Corps will be able to form.

## **SECTOR 2 Agriculture and Food Security**

### ***Livestock***

Based on focus group discussions and key informant interviews, Mercy Corps is proposing to adjust the planned approach and – with the assistance of a consultant – design and implement two types of trainings: 1) a refresher for existing para-vets/CAHWs (Community-based Animal Health Workers), who are part of the governmental sector, 2) training for new CAHWs, that the project will select and link to private practitioners. Additionally, the consultant will be tasked with conducting the knowledge gap assessment among livestock owners and designing the knowledge development session curriculums. The sessions will be then delivered by the para-vets, with the assistance of Mercy Corps. The involvement of para-vets in this activity will allow strengthened linkages between them and livestock owners, promote animal health, and improve veterinarian services.

The Scope of Work for the consultant has been drafted and selection is planned for October.

## **SECTOR 3 Logistics, Support, Relief Commodities**

### ***Non-food items***

Beneficiary registration process and progress has been described in the section above.

In parallel, Mercy Corps has begun vendor mobilization for the voucher transactions (both hygiene and new arrival). The first activity information meetings, followed by collection of vendor expressions of interest and a physical capacity assessment are planned for mid-October. After this, the final selection of vendors will be conducted and contracts entered. Mercy Corps is trying to mobilize businesses run by both women and men. To date, after first round of the vendor mobilization, 3 interested vendors (out of 14) were women.

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<sup>2</sup> MTN and Diamond Bank are about to pilot the mobile money platform in Gombe and its LGAs; not all beneficiaries report having access to the mobile phone and the time of the service availability is yet to be confirmed.

Vouchers have been designed and selection of the printing company is scheduled for October. Vouchers will be redeemable for a range of non-food items, up for the decision of the benefiting household. There will be two types of the vouchers in circulation: for hygiene consumable items (including water container and mosquito nets) and for new arrival items for recently displaced families. The contents of the sample basket remains the same as proposed at the design stage; however, based on the community members requests, children's clothing will be allowed as well. The value of the vouchers should not vary much from the proposed value but a final decision is pending the price survey. Within the selection of allowable goods, beneficiaries will be free to select vendors, commodities and their quantities.

In all voucher processes, Mercy Corps follows its experience from other country programs but adjusting to the local and project context. Voucher distributions and redemption will be carried out by Mercy Corps. Vouchers will be printed away from the implementation area and fitted with a set of security features.

## V. Monitoring and Evaluation

### Baseline survey

For the purpose of collecting the baseline data, Mercy Corps is using the following methodologies:

1. Household survey (to be implemented by an external consultant) will be used to gather primarily quantitative information on beneficiaries' livelihoods, coping strategies, living conditions and the availability of basic non-food items, and access to saving institutions and knowledge. Questionnaires will inform the access to resources and decision making over the access that households currently have. The planned number of surveys is currently 800.
2. Participatory focus group discussions with community members or saving groups and para-veterinarians (implemented by Mercy Corps) will be used to gather in-depth qualitative data on gender roles in the community as well as access to the saving mechanisms and veterinarian services in the target communities (at a minimum 2 groups/LGAs: 1 for women and 1 for men)
3. Semi-structured key informant interviews (implemented by Mercy Corps): interviews conducted with local authorities about the community based saving groups network, access to financial tools, as well as veterinary services within the three project targeted LGAs (planned – at minimum 2-3 LGAs, depending on the informants availability at the community level).

The household survey has been delayed for the last two weeks of October due to a lack of accuracy in registration information of displaced families, as the sample for the treatment group will be drawn from the actual beneficiary list. The focus group discussions and key informant interviews have been conducted and the summary will be included in the Baseline Report. The report should be ready by mid-November and immediately submitted to OFDA.

For the purposes of monitoring project processes and results, Mercy Corps will be using a three-fold monitoring system, including:

- **Beneficiary lists verification:** at a minimum, 10% of the final lists are randomly verified prior to the distribution of individual assistance (like NFIs or cash transfers for livelihoods).
- **Activities monitoring:** regular monitoring during activity implementation is planned to ensure implementation goes according to the established principles, beneficiaries are given adequate service from vendors, and vouchers are redeemed for allowable items etc.
- **Post-distribution/households monitoring:** At a minimum, 10% of the final beneficiaries will be interviewed to collect feedback on the appropriateness of the assistance, usage of the vouchers or assistance. Post-distribution monitoring will be done on the random sample, targeting all geographical locations.

Monitoring is also highly dependent on security and access.

Mercy Corps has opened a dedicated phone line to allow beneficiaries and other community members easier communication with the team. The line is administrated by M&E Officer. To date, no complaints have been received and the line is mostly used to answer requests for additional information. The frequent presence of Mercy Corps staff in the field gives an additional communication channel for community members.

## **VI. Challenges**

A few operational challenges have been encountered during the initial start-up period:

- Little or no experience nor history of the direct aid distributions in the communities and in general in Nigeria, makes the project introduction slower as IDPs are not accustomed to registering with host communities so tracking and identifying them is more difficult.
- Families are often fearful to share personal information, like mobile phone or ID numbers;
- Absence of an efficient mechanism to follow those displaced: the arrivals or departures of families, makes the targeting and needs tracking more difficult
- Fatigue in relation to many assessments and surveys as well as security concerns of beneficiaries make them sometimes hesitant to answer monitoring questions.

**VII. Plans for next quarter**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Main activities</b>
<b>Sector 1:</b> Economic Recovery and Market Systems	<p><i>Livelihoods restoration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer rate and disbursement modality defined</li> <li>• Beneficiary registration completed</li> <li>• Beneficiary sensitization and preparing for the transfers pay-outs</li> <li>• Transfers disbursement starts</li> </ul> <p><i>Microfinance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities sensitization and mobilization process started</li> <li>• First savings and loans groups formed</li> </ul>
<b>Sector 2:</b> Agriculture and Food Security	<p><i>Livestock</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant for para-vets training identified</li> <li>• Knowledge gap assessment conducted</li> <li>• Trainees selected</li> <li>• Training sessions conducted</li> </ul>
<b>Sector 3:</b> Logistics, support and relief items	<p><i>Relief Items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiary registration completed and final beneficiary list generated</li> <li>• Voucher vendors selected and agreements entered</li> <li>• Beneficiaries sensitized about voucher process and informed about their rights</li> <li>• Vouchers distributions started</li> </ul>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline household questionnaire conducted and report completed</li> <li>• Distribution monitoring systems in place</li> <li>• Post-distribution monitoring plans designed</li> <li>• Process monitoring tools developed</li> </ul>

**Annexes**

- Annex I: Displaced families profile
- Annex II: Security Assessment Report and recommendations – September’2014

## ANNEX 1 Profiles of Displaced families in Gombe



### Profile # 1

Four families (two female-headed), from Damboa<sup>1</sup> in Borno State, have been staying in the Pantami neighborhood in Gombe town for the past 4 months.

A total of 20 people stay in the unfinished building, donated by the owner for the displaced, free of charge. Before the families lived from farming, petty trade (buying-selling of vegetables, clothing, ice-blocks). Now their income generating activities are very limited. Men, if they are lucky, work as daily laborers in construction or cleaning, women struggle to start small trading businesses but lack start-up capital

(financial or in-kind) . Back in Damboa, all families lived on three meals a day, now they sometimes go without any food for a day. When calculating to feed one person a day they need 148NG (US\$ 0.92). When asked about their past livelihood activities, women referenced their activities: back home where they often had a refrigerator that supported ice-blocks and cold drinks, or they had a sewing machine. Now to resume what they had before, they would need 110,000 Nigerian Naira (US\$ 690), an amount that they hardly can dream about. However, the women say that they would welcome the chance to become involved in a group, where they could take ownership of their own livelihood activities.



### Profile #2

This Family of 21 (two wives, 19 children) from Damboa, Borno have been staying in Pantami, Gombe for the past 10 months. The family previously lived from livestock herding; however, while fleeing insecurities, they were forced to leave behind an entire herd of 30 sheep and goats. They are currently trying to become involved in meat trading which can be difficult as there is a good market before the holidays, but otherwise, meat is rather expensive in Gombe. The women of the family had a sewing and grinding machine before but both were left at home. To resume their past activities they would need close to 50,000 Naira (US\$ 312). When asked about their greatest needs, the women jointly replied: food. Before the family was surviving on three meals a day, now food is not consistent, and they eat 1-2 times a day on average. There are days without food. The household lacks basic items, like mattresses, floor mats and children sleep on the floor. Another struggle according to the women is schooling: to send one child to school requires 2,000 Naira (US\$ 12.5), that covers uniform, textbooks and school fee. Two older kids need fees for the exams to be able to go to another level. Like the other family they chose Gombe as it is secure location. And for the moment, they have no plans to return.

<sup>1</sup> Damboa in Borno was considered as commercial and economical hub for the state but also attracting traders from other states. Most of activities seized because of the insurgency and the Damboa town finally falling to Boko Haram in July.

**Family # 3** (no photo documentation available): This family of six consists of a mother and 5 children from Bama in Borno, and are staying in the Bulari neighborhood in Gombe Town. The father of the family left across the country border to Cameroon, since then the border has been sealed and a return has become more difficult. The family has stayed apart for the past 7 months. The female head of household used to be involved in petty trade – selling grains and oil but now to return to her previous activities she would need around 40,000 Naira start-up capital (either in cash or in kind), that would allow her to buy products. She calculates it would take her around 14 days to recover this capital. Her family lives on food from neighbors – apparently sufficient to support twomeals/day, and they struggle with health services. Until very recently, IDPs registered by SEMA were eligible to receive free health care. But, according to a SEMA representative, as the demand increased, the hospitals started rejecting the services for the displaced. The woman suffers from condition in her arm but cannot afford tests and medication.



## General Security & Safety Assessment

Country Office	NIGERIA		
Location/ Field Office	GOMBE STATE	GOMBE	
Current security phase	LEVEL <b>HIGH</b>		
Date	08 SEPTEMBER 2014		
Primary contact for Country Security Management (SFP)	Primary contact for Field Office Security Management (SFP)		
Name	Osadebe Ogwudile	Name	Kaja Wislinska
Email	<a href="mailto:ogwudile@ng.mercycorps.org">ogwudile@ng.mercycorps.org</a>	Email	<a href="mailto:kwislinska@field.mercycorps.org">kwislinska@field.mercycorps.org</a>

**Objective: Assess the GOMBE office physical security and safety arrangements, review and consolidate the revised Security arrangements in the field.**

### 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Mercy Corps office is located in the Federal Low Cost area of Gombe town. This area is an extension of the Government Reserved Areas (GRA) and was initially intended for civil servants. This area was later made ~~later~~-accessible to all individuals and plots sold at a low cost by the government. This quarter is now mainly residential with a mixed population made of civil servants, businessman or even NGO staff. The Low Cost area is currently regarded as a safe zone because it is relatively high income area and all religious groups are represented. In addition, there are no identified potential soft targets in the vicinity and it is away from the military and police posts. The office is near a T junction that connects either to the ring road or to the GRA which shall offer easy escape route. However, the east road leads to a cul de sac and several houses are still under construction.

- *There is quick access to at least two departure routes, in the event an evacuation is necessary.*
- *The office is not close to market areas, military compounds or potential soft targets for Boko Haram such as churches, mosques, media houses, police stations, transportation hubs, financial institutions, large hotels, state government offices, communications centers, and recreations centres.*
- *The area does not present direct risks from natural hazards - especially fires or floods*
- *The office has adequate secure parking but only for three vehicles inside the compound*
- *The compound has it owns boreholes and elevated water tank*
- *The facility is generally safe and conforms to minimum safety standards if the deficiencies identified in this reported are corrected.*

## 2. BUILDING AND SITE ASSESSMENT



*MC OFFICE in the Low Cost area of Gombe town*

The office was assessed from the compound, building structure, and assaults on building or electrical and fire safety aspects. Few gaps were identified or reported by the field team.

### **Part I. Compound or Yard**

1. The compound has a secure external perimeter (3 meters high) which is kept free from overhanging branches.
2. Parking area for vehicles inside the compound is secured but limited to three vehicles only. Visitors' vehicle can be parked outside the compound but should be systematically screened by the security guard.
3. Office is located in a secure area not near market area or host nation military compound.
4. There is a good view of approach to the building; there is limited place in the compound for intruders to conceal themselves.
5. Exterior security lighting is installed but should be connected to a backup inverter at night.
6. External electrical box is new protected by tamper-proof cover.

## **Part II. Building Structure**

7. All exterior doors and windows, outdoor openings are secured and can be locked from inside.
8. Windows are fitted with grates as appropriate with the exception of one window downstairs and another one in the stairs. Grates or bars should be installed on those.
9. Building has three possible exists (through a front and two back doors).
10. The sliding metal gate is solid but the exterior gate should have a method of seeing visitors without opening the gate.

## **Part III. Assaults on Buildings or Sites**

11. All visitors should be logged and follow proper access control procedures.
12. The security company: Profile (SC PSA) should be consulted and possibly appointed as their guards are said to be well trained by the company according to SC.
13. Background checks should be conducted on guards before recruitment. All guards should have received a full induction, involving briefing, and training where necessary. Guards should speak the working language of the field team
14. Guards should be adequately equipped:
  - a. Torch/flashlight/Whistle/
  - b. Radio and/or Mobile phone
  - c. Stick (if justified by the threat)
  - d. Visitors' book.
15. If feasible an interior safe room should be established in the building for use in case of crime, an attack or emergency. Safe room should have a strong solid metal door, not bars or grillwork

## **Part IV. Procedures: Key Control**

16. Keys should be kept in a secure location with restricted access. All main entry doors locks have been changed before moving in.
17. No duplicates keys should be made without approval.
18. Office safes, when used, should be securely affixed to the floor or the wall and inspected at the end of each day.

## **Part V. Procedures: Building Lock-Up**

19. Someone should be responsible for securing all windows, doors, exits, and entrances at the end of each day.

## **Part VI. Procedure: Electrical and Fire Safety**

20. Building electrical system is new and does not present safety hazards.
21. Flammable liquids such as fuel should be properly stored, away from the main building and from other flammables such as wood or paper.
22. Fire extinguishers should be readily accessible and annually inspected to ensure they are in working order. At least, one fire extinguisher should be positioned outside the building but protected from the sun and easily accessible for the guard in case of a fire.
23. On the first floor, there should be a fire escape or other alternative method of exit particularly because all windows are fitted with grates.

### **3. VEHICLE OPERATION ASSESSMENT**

#### **Part I. Policies**

The vehicle operations were assessed from a policies, daily inspection, trip planning, accident response or safe operation point of views. The below points will require a corrective action.

24. A clear policy concerning who can be a passenger in a MC vehicle and the extent of insurance coverage for non-MC passengers should be developed and briefed to all staff members.
25. MC in Nigeria adopts a low visibility policy, vehicles shall not display decals. SC if co-located with MC should conform to our policy.
26. Seat belt/shoulder harness should always be worn front and rear

#### **Part II. Daily Inspection**

27. Vehicles should be inspected daily. Someone should be designated for correction of discrepancies.
28. All vehicles should be equipped with appropriate safety items. These include:
  - seat belts both front and rear
  - first aid kit
  - fire extinguisher
  - tools and spare parts
  - emergency signals
  - recovery equipment (tow rope, shovel, sand/mud ladders) appropriate to local conditions
  - extra water and fuel prior to any out of area trip (if appropriate)
29. Vehicle logbooks should be maintained for each vehicle and include copies of all necessary documents. These include:
  - maintenance schedule
  - daily vehicle inspection checklist
  - accident report forms
  - communications instructions (local frequencies, call signs, etc.)
  - maps of routes and area
  - approved fuel and service stations
  - owner's manual
30. Essential vehicle registration, inspection, insurance documentation should be in each vehicle.

#### **Part III. Trip Planning**

31. A vehicle trip planning and monitoring system should be in place to help track vehicle movement.
32. MC should equip all vehicles with tracking device; the system should include a controlled cut off engine and a panic button with automatic e-mail & sms alerts.
33. Procedures should be established for actions to be taken if travellers do not arrive as scheduled.
34. An updated country map or regional roadmap should be displayed in the office.
35. Regular contact, with relevant authorities or key community informants, should be maintained to provide safest journey possible.
36. Because of the latent risk of kidnaping, International staff should restrict their movement to Gombe metropolis. Movement in rural areas must be cleared by the CD and must be for essential reasons.

#### **Part IV. Accident Response**

37. Vehicle accident procedures and reporting policies should be in place and briefed to all staff.

#### **Part V. Safe Operation**

38. Vehicles should be regularly serviced. Someone should be designated as responsible for maintenance and servicing.
39. Vehicle fuel tanks should be maintained above half full if possible.

40. Staff members operating a vehicle should be able to perform basic maintenance, such as changing a tire and checking engine, brake, battery and radiator fluids.
41. Vehicle doors are kept locked while driving and a minimum number of windows open (minimum).
42. Drivers should observe local driving laws and regulations and drive at speeds appropriate for conditions.
43. Spare vehicle keys should be kept under strict control in each MC Office.

## **4. COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT**

The communication infrastructure was assessed from the communication equipment and communication procedure. No deficiencies were reported.

### **Part I. Communication Equipment**

44. Gombe-Office and field sites should have redundant communications capability to main contact with the Country Office. Staff will have access to a minimum of two mobile networks (out of three) in Gombe state.
45. Communication limitations, such as "dead spots" should be identified, and communicated to all staff. This is particularly important for the use of vehicle tracking device in the field.
46. Appropriate communication equipment, such as sat phones (preferably Thuraya), should be issued to the field team travelling out of local area. Minimum standard is one per vehicle.

### **Part II. Communications Procedures**

47. Staff members should be trained and be knowledgeable on the use of communication equipment in the office and vehicles. Staff you know how to record and to SMS a GPS coordinate via a sat-phone to indicate their position.
48. Written communication procedures and guidelines should be posted and briefed to all staff. Essential information should include: emergency contact numbers. Field staff will carry the MC constant companion at all time.
49. HF radio is currently not adequate in Northern Nigeria as it weakened MC low visibility approach.

### **Part III. Incident Reporting**

50. Incident reporting formats and procedures for within country should be established. All incident impacting the GOMBE state should be assessed and as applicable new mitigation measures identified and enforced
51. Incident reports affecting MC staff should be documented and analysed in a timely manner.

## **6. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

The information management system should be reviewed from the general information & internal procedure, information sharing, emergency contact procedure and incident reporting aspects.

### **Part I. General Information & Internal Communication Procedures**

52. Procedures should be in place for secure storage and disposal of confidential files and sensitive materials (such as financial and personnel records).
53. Computer files should be routinely backed-up and the back-up medium should be stored outside the state.

### **Part II. Information Sharing**

54. Procedures for the sharing of security information with other NGOs, UN agencies, or SEMA and the media should be developed and briefed to all staff members.

## **7. CONTINGENCY PLAN**

The contingency plan should be re-assessed from medical emergencies and contingency plan aspects. Contingency plan was revised in May 2010.

### **Part I. Medical Emergencies**

55. A Record of Emergency Data (RED) should be on file for each staff member as well as international staff family members.
56. An emergency medical response plan should be in place and all staff members be capable of implementing it and referral hospital identified for each office
57. ISOS Medical evacuation procedure for international staff should be verified with ISOS, a capacity statement for the AoR could be requested. Accordingly, the Medical Plan should be briefed to staff
58. First aid Kit should be in place in all vehicle and all buildings

**Part II. Contingency**

59. The emergency evacuation plan should be up to date (by road, by air)
60. The evacuation plan should be coordinated with partners such as SC and the WHO-UNICEF evacuation plans.

## **8. CASH HANDLING AND TRANSFER**

61. Secure methods for receipt, transfer and storage of cash should be established and appropriate staff be trained.
62. PM must identify alternative method of direct cash transfer for project beneficiaries in the form of mobile transfers or vouchers.
63. Staff should understand that in the event of an attack they should never risk their lives to protect cash.
64. When possible, bank cheque or bank wire should always be the method of payment preferred to cash handling.,
65. MC finance Officer should adhere to country cash management policy and minimise cash in the safe.