“One of the most important aims of the Cluster Approach, is to improve strategic field-level coordination and prioritization in specific sectors/areas of response”

The prioritization of humanitarian aid for the response to the Gaza crises is key. The recent arrival of mosquito nets into Gaza at a time when urgent medical supplies were needed has been questioned at the highest level, and moreover reflects negatively on the work of the humanitarian community as a whole. ‘Prioritisation’ is embedded in both the Terms of Reference of a Cluster Lead, as well as the IASC Guidance Note that outlines the new architecture for humanitarian response.

As such the Cluster Lead is responsible for setting the priorities of their particular sectoral response. Then, within the Humanitarian Country Team, overall priorities should be established and represented through the Humanitarian Coordinator.

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**IASC Guidance**

1. **Terms of Reference of the Humanitarian Coordinator**

   The TORs of the HC include “ensuring agreement on the basic division of responsibilities among agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates and capacities, with the aim of ensuring that timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance is rapidly and effectively delivered to the victims of the complex emergency;”

2. **The IASC Guidance Note**

   States that “….at the country level the aim is to strengthen humanitarian response by demanding high standards of predictability, accountability and partnership in all sectors or areas of activity. It is about achieving more strategic responses and better prioritization of available resources by clarifying the division of labour among organizations…..”

3. **Terms of Reference of Cluster Leads**

   - “Represent the interests of the sectoral group in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator and other stakeholders on prioritization, resource mobilization and advocacy”
   - As agreed by the IASC Principals, sector leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their resource mobilization efforts in this regard.

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Setting of overall priorities by the Humanitarian Country Team / Humanitarian Coordinator would:

- **a)** Ensure a **strategic response** (i.e. HCT/HC has the ‘big picture’) based on a holistic approach to the crisis
- **b)** Ensure that ‘**first come first served**’ modus operandi of delivery of assistance is replaced with a system that allows for the **appropriate delivery of aid**.
- **c)** Ensure all Cluster Leads are encouraged to support the Logistics Cluster and supporting organizations to implement the delivery of transport services to meet the greatest needs of the affected population in a **timely manner**.

Logistics Cluster, Gaza 15th January