MODULE 1.2 – Activity 2 – Identifying Children’s Vulnerability to Family Separation

Case Study 1

Four days ago, Country X in the Pacific Region experienced a large offshore earthquake, which triggered a tsunami killing 1000 people (to date, with countless people reported missing) and displacing 200,000 in two major coastal towns, approximately 5 hours’ drive from the capital. Usually, the Government of the earthquake prone country would not request UN support but given the scale of the crisis, has asked for assistance.

Case Study 2

Refugees are flooding into a medium-sized regional town in country X land, driven by fighting in the neighbouring country Y land between a group of rebels and the national forces. The town, which usually has about 100,000 inhabitants, is a market and administrative centre for a large area with a thriving mineral industry. However, its population has swelled to nearly a quarter of a million because of the refugees and the arrival of humanitarian relief organisations.

The condition of refugees arriving across the border is poor. Many have been wounded during their flight and are arriving with serious injuries. To make matters worse, many of the refugees had been displaced from their homes for more than 2 years because of fighting and had received little help as access to the area was so poor. Their long and arduous journey has been too much for many who were already in a weakened state and in many cases, suffering from chronic malnutrition. Emergency medical treatment is being provided in field hospitals at the transit sites but again, the staff are overwhelmed and there is insufficient capacity.

The capacity to process all the new arrivals is severely stretched and people are crowding on to transport at the transit sites. As a result it has been impossible to register all arrivals and some that have been registered have moved on – no one really knows where.

There are reports of children having been abducted by rebel groups in Y land.

Case Study 3

Large areas in the south of country X have been affected by protracted armed conflict between armed opposition groups and government forces, creating sporadic population movements. Until now the population movements have been largely within country X with smaller numbers of people crossing over into neighbouring country Y. Recent population movements have involved some thousands of mainly women and children (men have tended to stay at home where possible to look after their property/animals or have joined armed forces or armed groups) and whilst initially the displaced were staying with extended family in neighbouring communities, in recent months a number of camps have begun to emerge, the largest of which are now being supported by the international community. Initial assessments of the approximately 50,000 IDPs in camps indicate that many boys and girls are separated from their families, some of whom are likely to have been recruited into armed forces and armed groups, some having been abducted during armed raids including of the IDP camps.

The refugees entered country Y through two main crossing points and remained in a transit camp for a few days. They are then transported onwards to one refugee camp currently housing around 13,000 persons.