![IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee]

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Consultations to Inform the Work of the IASC Subsidiary Bodies

28 March 2024

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was established in June 1992 in response to General Assembly Resolution 46/182 to serve as the primary inter-agency body to coordinate humanitarian action under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Successive evaluations and reviews have underscored the value of the IASC as an essential and unique coordination mechanism – the only General Assembly mandated humanitarian coordination body bringing together UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, the World Bank and NGOs.

1. Is the IASC being reformed?

No. The IASC is not being reformed. The IASC regularly reflects on its priorities and ways of working to ensure that it can respond effectively and efficiently to evolving needs and challenges. This warrants the revision and/or reflection on the work of the various of IASC subsidiary bodies[1] to ensure that they are fit to deliver on the IASC Strategic Priorities (SP)[2].

2. Why are the IASC subsidiary bodies being reviewed?

The IASC subsidiary bodies are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and set-up to deliver on the IASC's mandate and priorities. Every few years, all IASC subsidiary bodies undergo a close examination to determine if they are geared to deliver on IASC priorities or if they need to adjust their priorities and/or way of working to deliver in support of the IASC.

3. What is the status of the IASC subsidiary bodies' review?

The **Deputies Group** regularly reflect on their work and their priorities. In May 2023, a survey was launched to determine the areas that require attention and concerted effort[3] Co-leads were appointed among the Deputies Group to drive forward the required progress in these areas. The Deputies Group also carves time bi-annually to assess their priorities and working methods. Similarly, the **Emergency Directors Group (EDG)** convened earlier this year and reflected on their role and how they can strengthen their support to field operations and the IASC. They are in the process of applying a new approach (including through closer tracking of agreed actions in support of operations, appointing

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[1] These refer to all of the structures in place to support the IASC, namely the Deputies Group, Emergency Directors Group, and the OPAG (including the Task Forces and Entities Associated with the IASC).

[2] Current Strategic Priorities are: SP1: Operational Response; SP2: Accountability and Inclusion; SP3: Collective Advocacy; SP4: Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace; SP5: Humanitarian Financing. IASC Strategic Priorities, 2022-2023 | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)

[3] These include follow-up to the IDP review, humanitarian financing, climate, and erosion of trust (with cash and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) brought to the attention of the Deputies Group if the PSEA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) face challenges in delivering on the agreed vision).

co-leads amongst their membership to ensure continued focus and attention on critical crisis, reviewing the use of the Scale-Up protocols, and determining how best to strengthen the use of early warnings to inform early actions). The **Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG)** have also regularly reflected on their priorities and their working methods (as a body but also in light of their role overseeing the work of 10 structures – 5 Task Forces[4] and 5 Entities Associated with the IASC[5]). As the time-bound **Task Forces (TF)[6]** have mostly completed their agreed deliverables, they will come to a close at the end of June 2024[7]. This will allow the OPAG to reflect on how to build on the accomplishments of the Task Forces and to continue to address and progress on the priorities that were partially covered by the Task Forces. The OPAG will also reflect on the time-bound **Entities Associated with the IASC** to determine their value to the field and consider, where relevant, their reporting lines.

4. Does the closure of the Task Forces imply that the IASC will no longer prioritize the issues covered by the Task Forces, namely, protection, Accountability to Affected People (AAP), Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments (BAI) and Counter-Terrorism (COTER), Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN), and localization?

No, the IASC will continue to address the areas of work that were partially addressed by the Task Forces, as they are part of the IASC's Strategic Priorities. It is important to note that these areas are a priority for the IASC as a whole and are being addressed by the various IASC structures (as an example, while the OPAG/Task Forces focus largely on addressing these issues normatively, the EDG addresses a number of these issues operationally, and the Deputies Group addresses them from a strategic and systemic lens).

5. What is the future of the Associated Entities?

The Entities Associated with the IASC – namely, the Mental Health and Psycho-Social Services Reference Group (MHPSS RG), Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group (GRG RG), Global Cluster Coordinators Group (GCCG), Humanitarian Program Cycle Steering Group (HPC SG), and the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (IAHE SG) - will continue their work through 2024. During this period, consultations, including with the OPAG, the Entities and other IASC members and structures, will be carried out to determine the future of these Entities. These will be informed by a number of factors including (depending on the body) including their role in supporting

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[4] The Task Forces comprise the following: TF1 on Protection, TF2 on AAP, TF3 on Preserving Humanitarian Space (BAI and COTER), TF4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration and Linkages to Peace, and TF5 on Localization.

[5] The Entities Associated with the IASC are comprised of the following (a) Mental Health and Psycho-Social Services Reference Group (MHPSS RG), (b) Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group (GRG RG), (c) Global Cluster Coordinators Group (GCCG), (d) Humanitarian Program Cycle Steering Group (HPC SG), and (d) the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (IAHE SG).

[6] Task Forces were established as time-bound structures – reporting to the OPAG – to deliver on specific tasks under the framework of the IASC Strategic Priorities 2022-2023. The Task Forces were intended to complete their work by December 2023; however, they were extended by the ERC for an additional six-months to June 2024 to complete their deliverables.

[7] IASC Task Forces and Associated Entities will submit their final reports by 20 May 2024 to OPAG, through the IASC secretariat. Reports will be available on the IASC website.

humanitarian operations, in translating IASC-endorsed policy to practice for operational impact, and their collaboration with other IASC structures and relevant platforms and processes outside the IASC.

6. How will decisions on the IASC's subsidiary bodies be made?

In addition to the reflections being carried out by the various group, on behalf of the ERC, the IASC secretariat is carrying out consultations with IASC members to gather views on the priorities of the IASC and the structures and working modalities required to deliver on these priorities. Consultations will include discussions with field leadership to ensure stronger linkages and relevance to operations. They will also include consultations with IASC and non-IASC members, including local NGO representatives. The ERC, as Chair of the IASC, in consultation with the IASC Principals, will make the final decision on the structures needed to support the mandate of the IASC.

7. Is the IASC planning to revise its biennium strategic priorities?

As it stands, the following overarching endorsed **IASC Strategic Priorities for 2022-2024**[8] remain relevant: (a) Operational Response; (b) Accountability and Inclusion; (c) Collective Advocacy; (d) HDPN; and (e) Humanitarian Financing. Under these five strategic priorities, the IASC agreed to zoom in and **tackle the following areas**: (1) Centrality of Protection (CoP), (2) Accountability to Affected People (AAP), (3) Preserving Humanitarian Space (BAI and COTER), (4) Gender, (5) Climate, as well as the following enabling priorities: (5) Localisation, (6) Responding to the Needs of Internally Displaced People (IDPs), (7) Humanitarian-Development Collaboration and its Linkages to Peace, (8) Humanitarian Financing.

8. When will a final decision on the IASC subsidiary bodies be made?

The ERC, as Chair of the IASC, will make a final decision on the subsidiary bodies needed to support the mandate of the IASC, by end-2024.

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[8] IASC Strategic Priorities, 2022-2023 | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org)