

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WORKING GROUP
IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness
Progress Report on Action Points from 77th IASC Working Group

INTRODUCTION

In July 2010, the 77th IASC Working Group (WG) held a session on strengthening emergency preparedness prepared by the IASC Sub Working Group on Preparedness. During the session, the WG confirmed that the IASC had a role in supporting country teams to develop national capacities on emergency preparedness as well as strengthening inter agency emergency preparedness of IASC members. The WG agreed on 4 recommendations and action points and requested the IASC SWG to report on their progress at the end of 2011 which is object of this report.

PROGRESS ON ACTION POINTS FROM THE 77TH IASC WORKING GROUP

1. Requested Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators in countries of concern, with the full engagement of HCTs and UNCTs, to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach of IASC partners in developing national and local capacities for emergency preparedness.

Action by: Joint IASC-UNDG communication to be developed by OCHA and UNDP in consultation with the IASC WG and the ISDR Secretariat by end September 2010. Representatives of all IASC organisations at country level to use the joint IASC-UNDG communication to advocate with and support of HCs and relevant RCs.

The IASC-UNDG communication to UNRC/HCs on their responsibilities to ensure a coherent and coordinated inter-agency approach in developing national and local capacity for emergency preparedness was extensively reviewed within OCHA and includes comments from UNDP/UNDG, the ISDR and IASC secretariat, UNICEF and WFP as co-chairs of the IASC SWG as well as other members of the SWG.

The letter co-signed by the ERC as chair of the IASC and the UNDP Administrator as chair of the UNDG was sent to all RC/HCs on July 7th 2011. While it has been used by the SWG and the several agencies as an entry point to engage with RC/HC on capacity development on emergency preparedness, more effort is required to strengthen the accountability of RC/HCs and country teams for developing national and local capacities on emergency preparedness.

2. Requested IASC organizations to work together to support all stages of the development and implementation of national contingency plans in 5 countries initially (provisionally 2 in countries with HCs and 3 in countries with RCs) by the end of 2011, in support of national and/or local authorities, as appropriate, ensuring linkages with relevant inter-agency, cluster and agency-specific preparedness activities.

Action by: IASC SWG on Preparedness to advise on the most pertinent and feasible countries; OCHA and UNDP, respectively, to take the lead in supporting the HC's or RC's office, in cooperation with IASC partners; SWG on Preparedness to distil and report back on results and lessons learnt by end 2011.

While the initial focus of the recommendation was national contingency planning, after initial contacts with interested countries, the SWG opted to expand the focus of country support to broader capacity development of national/local actors on emergency preparedness. In order to strengthen coherence between emergency preparedness (including national contingency planning) and disaster

risk reduction, the SWG decided to collaborate with DRR agency focal points led by UNDP who were simultaneously discussing collaboration to support high risk countries for increased coherence and coordination on DRR. Collaboration was also established with the task team on funding for preparedness of the IASC Sub Working group on Financing to establish the connection in selected countries between improved programming on emergency preparedness with increased funding options.

At the beginning of 2011, the work of the SWG became connected with the IASC Principals discussion on improving efficiency of the humanitarian system under the theme of national capacity development for emergency preparedness lead by UNDP and WB GFDRR.

The SWG opted to select countries where it had knowledge that there was an emerging effort of the country team and government to develop national capacities on emergency preparedness. To date the SWG has established contacts with four country teams (Ghana, Uganda, Haiti and Nepal) on their efforts to develop national/local capacities on emergency preparedness.

In these countries the SWG aims to support country teams at achieving the following results:

1. Develop and/or test national contingency plans
2. Develop coherent and coordinated multi-year plans of action to build national and local capacities in emergency preparedness
3. Identify how these plan of action could be funded over the coming years

Progress to date is as follows:

1. **Ghana:** Under the lead of the IASC agency regional preparedness network for West and Central Africa, a capacity assessment of national and sub-national actors was undertaken at the end of 2010 which resulted in the development of an UNDAF strategic outcome on DRR including emergency preparedness. In April 2011 support was provided to test the national contingency plan (updated in 2010) which revealed a number of gaps in both inter agency and government emergency preparedness. Based on the result of the capacity assessment and simulation, CADRI (Capacity Development for Risk Reduction Initiative, a joint project of ISDR, OCHA and UNDP) provided support to government and the country team to develop a five year plan of action for capacity development in DRR with a full pillar on Preparedness for Response. The SWG also managed to identify support from Norwegian Refugee Council for the deployment of National Disaster Reduction Advisor in the RC's office who will provide support to the country team and government on the implementation of the plan of action.
2. **Nepal:** Prior to the engagement with the SWG, Nepal had already developed a consortium for DRR to support the Government's national strategy on DRR which consisted in 5 flagship programmes including one on emergency preparedness and response. The SWG engaged with the RC to provide support to this very promising initiative and learn from it for its other pilot countries. It was agreed with the RC to provide support for the development and testing of a national contingency plan for a major earthquake in the Kathmandu Valley. Unfortunately given the continuing political instability, the RC and country team have requested us to temporarily suspend the collaboration with SWG.
3. **Uganda:** While the RC and the country team have recently re-confirmed their interest to collaborate with the SWG, no progress has been achieved to date.
4. **Haiti:** In July 2011, the SWG provided support to the Haiti country team in their efforts to test the government (Direction de la Protection Civile) contingency plan for the cyclone season. During the simulation the country team expressed interest to collaborate with the SWG on the transition out of the cluster system to develop national and sub-national capacities for emergency preparedness but this has yet to be confirmed by the RC.
5. In early November 2011, the Philippines RC and country team have expressed interest to collaborate with the SWG on strengthening emergency preparedness.

Though progress is limited (with the exception of Ghana), a number of good practices are emerging from both successes and constraints encountered in this initiative included:

1. Need to have concurrent commitment of government and the country team with leadership from the RC/HC. He/she needs to be supported by an active in-country technical team (at least 2 to 3 agencies) with whom the SWG and regional IASC preparedness networks can meaningfully engage. A dedicated staff member in the form of an NDRA working in the RC office is critical to move work forward at country level.
2. Need to have the full engagement of the regional IASC preparedness networks given that for many IASC agencies the accountability to support country programmes rests at regional level. SWG and these networks need to engage together to identify jointly the enabling environment to support high risk countries with multi-year preparedness programmes
3. CADRI has played a key role in moving the collaboration to support the capacity development process in Ghana. Having sustained and expert technical support has been invaluable for the RC, country team and government. Discussions to strengthen broader inter agency collaboration with and support to CADRI are essential as part of the enabling environment for capacity development at country level on CRR including preparedness for response.
4. Addressing the preparedness funding challenge needs to be undertaken in parallel to efforts to increase coherence and coordination of multi-year preparedness programming (and vice versa). Coherence and coordination is a difficult and time consuming effort which should be matched with new funding opportunities to ensure actual implementation and strengthened capacity.
5. Timing of support is also critical. For UN agencies such support is especially timely during the formulation of a new UNDAF or its mid-term evaluation. However given the UNDAF is a process between the government and the UN country team, the RC/HC need to make special effort to reach out and engage with other international stakeholders at country level (NGOs, Red Cross/Crescent Movement, bilateral donors and international financing institutions) playing a key role in developing national/local preparedness capacities.

Given the time required to meaningfully engage with country teams and regional networks on national capacity development, it was agreed to extend this pilot initiative for another year to the end of 2012 to give more time for the SWG to achieve results both in selected countries and in the enabling environment in HQ and regional offices.

Finally while the SWG initiative on national capacity development for preparedness is mostly focused at countries facing high natural disaster risk, it is also important for the SWG to strengthen preparedness in countries facing complex emergencies. However given the complexity of developing national and local capacities in countries affected by conflict, the SWG will focus mostly on strengthening in-country inter agency preparedness (though it is understood and acknowledged that a number of IASC agencies are already engaged in capacity development of local actors in conflict countries)

3. Clusters to give priority to emergency preparedness for response with special focus on supporting national and local emergency management systems and sectoral structures building on their existing guidance, training and practice.

Action by: Global and country cluster leads. (Clusters preparedness capacity also to be covered within the CE2 management response plan).

With regards to this recommendation, the IASC SWG on the Cluster Approach (formally Task Team on the Cluster Approach) worked on the 'IASC Guidance Note on Working with National Authorities' to ensure better support of national authorities in preparedness and response capacity.

The Note provides guidance on how the international humanitarian community should support, work with, and negotiate with national authorities. It should provide guidance to RC/HCs, HCT and the

wider humanitarian community in establishing relevant coordination structures and processes. This Guidance has been drafted by the IASC Task Team on the Cluster Approach, following extensive consultations. It has also been endorsed by the IASC Working Group and issued by the ERC to all RC/HCs on July 25.

In 2012 closer collaboration between the SWGs of Preparedness and the Cluster Approach will be required to improve coherence and coordination between overall inter agency preparedness work undertaken by agencies and those undertaken by clusters. For example they will need to collaborate under the International Dialogue for Disaster Response initiative which is increasingly looking at preparedness.

4. Requested inter-agency networks at regional level to enhance their knowledge on emergency preparedness by collection and dissemination of lessons learned and good practices.

Action by: IASC organizations, as members of inter-agency regional networks, with support from OCHA at regional level, and advice from the SWG on Preparedness at global level, with a report on good practices to be compiled by the SWG as a contribution to the next HFA Global Platform in May 2011.

The publication “Preparedness: Saves Money, Time and Lives”, highlighting good practices and lessons learned in inter-agency preparedness with contributions from SWG member agencies and regional inter-agency networks, was launched at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (8-13 May 2011) during a dedicated preparedness side-event organized by SWG.

5. Requested the Sub Working Group on Preparedness to report back on progress made against these action points by end 2011 for a further discussion in the first WG meeting of 2012.

Action by: IASC SWG on Preparedness.

The present report is the interim report on the action points.