INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
AD HOC IASC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON STRENGTHENING THE
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR (HC) SYSTEM

Establishing a Pool of Humanitarian Coordinators

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I   Background

This note aims to summarize the progress achieved so far in establishing a Pool of Humanitarian Coordinators and to analyze the profile of the nominations received as background for the discussion on the way forward.

The IASC Principals in December 2005 endorsed the recommendation of the 63rd IASC Working Group to establish a pool of 20 Humanitarian Coordinators. A crucial component of the decision was the inclusion of IASC non-UN partners in the Pool of candidates. An *Ad Hoc* Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) Group was set up1 at the 63rd IASC Working Group to facilitate the establishment of this Pool. Further to a consultative process conducted within the *Ad Hoc* HC Group, nominations were sought through a standard agreed text, attaching the Terms of Reference for Humanitarian Coordinators; the Job Description for Resident Coordinators and the Competencies for the evaluation of Resident Coordinators. The deadline for submission of nominations to the IASC Secretariat was 20 January 2006. OCHA, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group Office, also contacted staff on the active roster for Resident Coordinators with strong humanitarian background and Humanitarian Coordinators, whose assignments were nearing completion, to seek their availability for consideration in the Pool.

II   Criteria for Submissions

The agreed text to seek nominations listed the following experiences as an important part of the applicants' background, in order to be successfully placed as an RC/HC:

➢   Several years' managerial field experience at a <u>senior</u> level

➢   Representational experience, (i.e. having represented their organization in negotiations, advocacy etc)

➢   Humanitarian knowledge and experience

➢   Development knowledge and experience

➢   Knowledge of the UN or other multilateral systems

These are the criteria currently used to select RC/HCs. The Working Group may wish to identify additional elements, especially with regard to further elaborating the concept of

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1   The Ad Hoc HC Group comprised SCHR, OHCHR, ICVA, WHO, UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, OCHA and was facilitated by the IASC Secretariat in New York.

"Humanitarian Knowledge and Experience". By way of example, the following may also be considered:

➢ Experience and knowledge in dealing with natural disasters

➢ Experience and knowledge in dealing with complex emergencies

➢ Knowledge of International Humanitarian Law

➢ Knowledge and exposure to inter-agency/consultative processes

➢ Experience in leading multi-disciplinary teams at senior level.

➢ Experience in coordinating teams

In addition to the experiences mentioned above in bold, it should be recalled that RC/HCs are assessed on the basis of the following competencies and core values:

2.1   Competencies

➢ Leadership – Implementing the Vision, Strategic perspective, Influence to Action

➢ Managing Complexities – Organizing and Coordinating, Flexible decision making, Analytical Judgment

➢ Managing Relationships – Building and Maintaining Relationships, Team Commitment, Communication, Managing Conflict and Stress

2.2   Core Values

➢ Integrity and Commitment, Fairness and Equality, Cultural Adaptability and Sensitivity, Commitment to learning

Competencies and Core Values are assessed through the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre and through individual interviews conducted according to specific techniques.

III   Nominations received

Summing up the new nominations submitted by the UN agencies, those received through the NGO Consortia, the individuals in the Active Roster for RC and currently serving HCs who had indicated a willingness to be considered for the pool – there is a total of 28 candidates, of whom only three are women; the average age of the candidates is 49.7, with ages ranging from 36 to 59.[2]

An initial analysis of the nominations received against the experiences listed in the letter seeking nominations, indicates the following [3]:

➢ **Several years' managerial field experience at a <u>senior</u> level** (i.e. as Head of Office, Country Director, Head of large Sub-office in the field, Regional Representative etc**.)**

Average: 5.8years, ranging from no experience at all to 14 years.

➢ **Representational experience,** (i.e. having represented their organization in negotiations, advocacy both at headquarters/capitals and in the field**)**

Average: 7.3 years, ranging from 1 year to 25 years.

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2   Only 21 candidates actually indicated their age in the CV.

3   The averages were calculated on the basis of 23 names, since the serving HCs who expressed interest in being considered had not yet submitted a detailed CV at the time of writing.

> ➤ **Humanitarian knowledge and experience**

All candidates submitted had good, and often very good or excellent, understanding of humanitarian issues and/or international humanitarian law, and/or specific issues such as water/sanitation, emergency response, food security etc.

> ➤ **Development knowledge and experience**

7 candidates also possessed academic qualifications and/or experience on working on development issues.

> ➤ **Knowledge of the UN or other multilateral systems**

In addition to the UN candidates, one candidate submitted by non-UN partners had prior experience working with the United Nations.

IV   Analysis

A preliminary review of the nominations, showed significant discrepancies in the candidatures submitted for the Pool. Some of the candidates did not appear to have the sufficient experience at <u>senior</u> level to successfully go through the selection process for RC/HCs and, most importantly, to credibly lead a complex and multidisciplinary team of senior managers, such as the IASC Country Team.

Some of the candidatures submitted also seemed to indicate a lack of clarity on the actual breadth and depth of experiences and knowledge necessary to be selected and successfully perform as an RC/HC.

Some candidatures, however, showed a strong potential for growth and attainment, with appropriate training and coaching, the necessary knowledge and experience. In this connection, OCHA is committed to continue to work with all IASC partners, and especially the non-UN partners, and would welcome specific suggestions on how to best develop training or other appropriate programmes to this effect.

V   Recommendation

Taking into account the above preliminary analysis, OCHA proposes that the nominations received for the Pool be reviewed by a small group[4] at senior level in the near future, with a view to

(a) Identify those candidates that can be submitted for the RC Assessment[5];

(b) Identify candidates for short-term and long-term deployment based on preferences expressed by the candidates, experiences with start-up operations or sudden on-set of natural disasters etc.;

(c) Identify candidates with strong potential who are not yet ready to undergo the RC Assessment, but for whom OCHA commits to develop appropriate training and coaching programmes and possibly undergo the assessment within one to two years.

Prepared by: OCHA – February 2006

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4   Consultations with all IASC partners indicated that there are no major objections to this proposal. A possible list of agencies to be included in the smaller group, may include the following: UNDP, OCHA, IFRC, ICVA, and one of the following UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF.

5   OCHA has indicated previously that it is ready to pay for the RC assessment of two non-UN partners.