IASC HC Group

Work Plan

Adopted: 12 September 2007

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

While the need to strengthen the Humanitarian Coordinator system has long been recognised, the issue gained momentum only in 2005 with the publication of three landmark reports.

> There is a clear need to strengthen field coordination structures, notably by better preparing and equipping United Nations country teams, strengthening the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator and ensuring that sufficient and flexible resources are immediately available to support these field structures.
>
> Secretary-General's report "In Larger Freedom", March 2005.

> We support stronger system-wide coherence by […] implementing current reforms aimed at a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence with a strengthened role for the senior resident official, whether special representative, resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator, including appropriate authority, resources and accountability, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework; […] inviting the Secretary-General to launch work to further strengthen the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities.
>
> 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

> 3.3.1 The IASC should review the roles of the ERC and Humanitarian Coordinators and make recommendations to strengthen them in order to better reflect the broader basis of the humanitarian community they serve in their coordination functions.
> 3.3.2 The IASC should review the selection, training and management system for the Humanitarian Coordinators as well as develop a career path for this cadre, including the establishment of a preselected roster of candidates, coming from the different networks part of the IASC.
> 3.3.3 The IASC should establish criteria (such as independence from any agency, neutral position vis-a-vis host government, strong humanitarian experience, a mix of operational and diplomatic skills) which the Resident Coordinator would need to meet to be selected as a Humanitarian Coordinator. In cases in which the Resident Coordinators do not meet these criteria, the system should consider a stand-alone HC. A stand-alone HC to be appointed also in case of failed states, uncommitted governments with no degree of accountability and obligations to their citizens and countries at the height of emergencies/disasters without any development opportunities. […]
> 3.4.1 OCHA should assess the coordination capacities of the HC offices in the field, in preparedness, planning, needs assessment and resource mobilization and draw up a time-bound plan of action for equipping them with the necessary tools and mechanisms.
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> Humanitarian Response Review, 2005.

Following the IASC Working Group retreat of September 2005, an *ad hoc* group (the "HC Group") was set up and a long-term strategy (the "Action Plan") was developed,

and endorsed by IASC Principals in April 2006. In summer 2007 OCHA set up a dedicated unit in Geneva to facilitate inter-agency progress on the issue.

II.   WORK PLAN

This Work Plan operationalises the Action Plan approved by IASC Principals in April 2006. Its overall objective is to strengthen the humanitarian coordination function, whether it is performed by RCs or HCs. Its initial time frame is three years (until December 2010). The Plan will be implemented collectively by IASC agencies with OCHA facilitation.

1.   Policy Development

The objective of this component is to reach consensus among humanitarian stakeholders on key issues relating to humanitarian coordination.

To this end, policy papers will be drafted based on consultations with all stakeholders (RCs, HCs, IASC agencies, UNDGO, etc.) These papers will be submitted to relevant IASC bodies for their approval, and a mechanism will be developed to monitor their implementation. Issues to be addressed will include:

-   Establishment and disestablishment of HC positions
-   Selection and designation of HCs; the HC Pool
-   Coordination support structures at field level (with particular regard to the interface between HCs and OCHA offices)
-   HCs' role in those aspects of the cluster approach that are not covered by the existing guidance note (e.g. advocacy and inter-cluster guidance and leadership)
-   HCs' role in new humanitarian funding mechanisms
-   HC/ERC Compact
-   Pre-deployment strategy for stand-alone HCs

For issues requiring more in-depth examination, short studies may be commissioned. Topics to be covered may include:

-   The interface between HCs and agencies at headquarters and field level
-   HC accountability (including for RCs in disaster-prone countries)
-   Coordination funding mechanisms for HCs
-   Effectiveness of Humanitarian Country Teams (including in RC-led countries)

The HC Terms of Reference will be revised.

Not all humanitarian emergencies lead to the appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator. It is therefore incumbent upon the humanitarian community to ensure that RCs are able and equipped to coordinate the response to an emergency, as well as response preparedness efforts. To this end, OCHA – on behalf of the IASC – will continue to engage in and contribute to processes relating to RC selection, induction, training and appraisal, and to broader RC system issues.

2.   RC/HC Pool Development *[to be developed further]*

The objectives of this component are to expand the pool of potential RC/HCs, and particularly to increase the share of individuals with humanitarian experience, women, individuals from developing countries, and individuals from outside the UN; and to involve non-UN IASC agencies fully in the choice of HCs.

To this end, an RC/HC Pool would be established, which would serve as the IASC pre-approval chamber for candidates for RC/HC and stand-alone HC positions.

The RC/HC Pool would consist of selected individuals drawn from the following pools:

- current HCs
- current RCs
- current HC Pool members
- promising individuals from within the humanitarian community

These individuals would be selected by an inter-agency panel according to stringent, objective, transparent and agreed criteria.

All the selected individuals would be sponsored for the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre, so as to be eligible for RC positions.

For those individuals who require them, individualised professional development programs would be developed, to be carried out both prior to and following their placement in the RC/HC Pool. These would include:

- ➢ Skills-based and substantive training, as required
- ➢ Shadowing of an experienced HC, OCHA Head of Office, UN Agency Country Director and/or NGO Country Director, depending on prior experience
- ➢ Coaching and mentoring, as required.

3. Leadership Development *[to be developed further by the IASC HC Training Group]*

The objective of this component is to enhance the leadership and coordination skills of serving RCs and HCs, as well as of RC/HC Pool candidates and members.

Activities will be developed and carried out in consultation with RCs and HCs, and in close collaboration with all relevant partners (IASC agencies, UNDGO, etc.) They will build as much as possible on existing agency programmes.

Induction
- ❑ A standard induction package will be developed for HCs and for RCs being deployed to disaster-prone countries.
- ❑ The humanitarian segment of the RC induction programme will be redesigned.
- ❑ An induction programme will be developed for RC/HC Pool members.

Professional Development
- ❑ The format of the <u>Annual HC Retreat</u> will be revamped to allow for more peer-to-peer exchanges of experiences and best practices, and one-to-one meetings with senior leadership. Participation will be limited to HCs and senior agency leaders.
- ❑ Smaller, shorter <u>Thematic Workshops</u> will be organised on topical issues (e.g. international humanitarian law, integrated missions, IDPs, transition, civil-military relations) for groups of concerned HCs.
- ❑ <u>Workshops on Coordinating Humanitarian Emergencies</u> will be organised at the regional level for RCs to familiarise them with their role and the tools available to them in case of disaster.

Mentoring/Coaching
- ❑ A <u>Mentoring Programme</u> will be developed for new RCs and HCs.
- ❑ <u>Coaching</u> will be provided to less experienced RCs and HCs.

Team Building
- ❑ <u>HC/OCHA Head of Office Retreats</u> will be organised with the participation of HCs and OCHA Heads of Offices from countries with similar typologies (e.g. integrated missions).
- ❑ <u>HC/Humanitarian Country Team Retreats</u> will be organised to boost teamwork.

Performance Evaluation
- ❑ The performance appraisal system for HCs will be further developed, and operationalised.

4. Support to RCs and HCs

The objective of this component is to ensure that RCs and HCs receive the support they require from OCHA and IASC agencies.

OCHA will ensure that:

- HCs have regular contact with the ERC
- A Compact is developed between the ERC and each HC
- HCs develop workplans
- RCs and HCs are provided with support in fulfilling their role in the cluster approach
- RCs and HCs are provided with guidance on and support in fulfilling their role vis-à-vis new funding mechanisms
- RCs and HCs are involved in the development of new policy and guidance documents (including IASC ones)
- RCs and HCs are supported in carrying out their advocacy tasks
- The Terms of Reference of OCHA Heads of Office are aligned with those of HCs
- OCHA Heads of Office are properly briefed on their relationship with HCs
- OCHA Field Offices' workplans are aligned with those of HCs'.

[Each agency to outline the measures that it will take.]

5.   Knowledge Management

The objective of this component is to ensure that information and knowledge seamlessly circulate among RCs and HCs.

This includes:

- information about emergency services and tools within OCHA and IASC agencies that are available to RCs and HCs
- policy and guidance documents (emanating from the IASC, OCHA, and IASC agencies)
- best practices and lessons learnt.

The following media are envisaged:

- ❖ Web platform
- ❖ RC and HC Handbook
- ❖ Communities of practice.