INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC)
TASK FORCE ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Summary Note and Participants List

03 September 2009
Room S1 (Palais des Nations), Geneva

1. The Chair, Erik Kastlander, OCHA's Field Information Services (FIS) Unit, Geneva, opened the meeting by thanking participants for their attendance and support for Inter Agency/Cluster Information Management (IM).

2. The Chair outlined the agenda for the meeting, which were principally focused on the priorities for the four sub-groups (review of the Operational Guidance Note, Governance, Training and Datasets) during the remainder of the mandate of the IASC TF on IM. The meeting reviewed the Summary Note of 16 July and endorsed it with minor changes from UNDP.

Review of the TOR of the IASC TF on IM

3. The Chair reviewed the overall implementation of the TOR of the IASC Task Force on Information Management and introduced the idea of putting together a status report of the Task Force for the IASC WG. The status report, to be built by the sub-groups, would basically add to the 25-June meeting summary note with a clear timeline for completion of activities. The sub-groups are to send their material to OCHA FIS, who will collate the input and create the report. The IASC WG will, in the near future, request an update from the subsidiary bodies on their 4-5 key activities in 2010. For this request, he IASC TF on IM will identify and build on the input from the IASC TF on IM sub-groups. OCHA FIS will provide structure for the sub-group input by 16 September 2009. The sub-groups are to send their input to OCHA FIS (kastlander@un.org) by COB 09 October 2009.

   Action Points:

   a. OCHA FIS will provide structure for the sub-group input by 16 September 2009

   b. The sub-groups are to send their input to OCHA FIS (kastlander@un.org) by COB 09 October 2009.

Review of the IASC sub-groups

4. The Chair noted the following for the **sub-group on the Review of the Operational Guidance Note on IM**:

   a. Consultant identified – Dr. Bartel van de Walle (contributor to the sub-group on Training and Professor at Tilburg University, The Netherlands. He will also benefit from assistance of PhD students at the university).

    b. OCHA will now recruit the consultant. The following entities have pledged financial support for the review: OCHA: US$20,000, UNHCR US$10,000, WAHS US$10,000. Total: US$40,000. With US$40,000 we will probably have to reduce the field missions from 6 to 3-4, with a suggested focus on Africa and the Middle East. The sub-group will ask the consultant to come up with a plan on how to spend the US$40,000 based upon the scoping document for the review. Expected recruitment within one month. The consultant is then to commence work in 4th quarter of 2009 and complete it in 1st quarter in 2010.

    c. The sub-group will support the consultant with documentation and contacts with key informant interviews. If possible, the review will cooperate with the 2nd Cluster Evaluation. Expected outcome of the review is a report which the IASC TF on IM will review and determine how to update the Operational Guidance Note on IM.

5. Due to the summer holiday, the **sub-group on Common Operational DataSets** (COD) have not been meeting since the 16 July 2009 IASC TF on IM meeting. Kim Robertson of UNHCR noted the following:

    a. The TOR of the sub-working group is finalized with expected results clearly outlined.

    b. The sub-group would like to come up with "Best Practices" of how the COD are used and shared. The main question for the sub-group is how to turn "Best Practices" into training, system, etc in order for the COD to be more than a document.

    c. The sub-group intends to put the COD into a format that can, together with other outcomes of the Task Force, be up for endorsement by the IASC WG.

6. Patrick Gordon of the **sub-group on Governance** reported the following:

    a. The Terms of Reference of the sub-group will be limited to short and midterm activities, whilst recognising a more permanent governance solution will be required in the long-term. In addition the group will make recommendations and advise global clusters leads on issues related to the governance of OneResponse. Main focus of the sub-group is as follows:

        i. Identifying minimum feature sets required for the website;
        ii. Development of guidance material on pilot implementation;
        iii. Establishment of system for change management and issue tracking of the website;
        iv. Develop guidance material for activating and archiving of content;
        v. Development of editorial policy; and
        vi. Managing control vocabulary.

    b. On the pilots, the Global Cluster Leads on 16 July 2009 deferred back to OCHA the decision on where to conduct the pilots. The decision fell on Zimbabwe and Sudan. The Zimbabwe pilot is scheduled for mid-October 2009

and Sudan planned for November 2009. Once dates are confirmed, they will be shared with the IASC TF on IM. Cluster IM focal points are strongly encouraged to support the pilot on the ground or remotely. The pilot plan to be shared with the sub-group next week. At the conclusion of the pilots, a review will commence which will determine future actions.

c. UNHCR voiced its opposition to piloting OneResponse in Sudan due to the large number of refugees that fall outside of cluster operations and the fact that Sudan was not among the initial countries considered. UNHCR, moreover, argued that they had not been given an adequate opportunity to provide technical input; especially on applications needed for non-IDPs and thus, claimed that the site is not optimized to deal with these situations.

d. UNHCR initiated a detailed discussion on show stoppers for successful pilots of OneResponse. The Chair asked the sub-group to conduct a meeting within one week to discuss and clarify way forward for the successful implementation of the OneResponse pilots

Action Points:

c. OCHA to organize a sub-group meeting within one week to discuss and clarify way forward for the successful implementation of the OneResponse pilots.

7. The Chair provided an update on the progress of the **sub-group on Training** and the future plans for the group. The TF was reminded of the rationale for the sub-group, which included: limited number of IMOs with soft and hard skills, exposed to Cluster coordination; lack of common vocabulary and understanding of key concepts; and an absence of common training curriculum for IM.
   a. In addressing these issues, the sub-group is planning three mutually supporting training approaches in a coherent training programme:

      i. IM modular distance learning training together with UNITAR;
      ii. Professional mentoring system; and
      iii. Professional accreditation system

   b. The program is structured into four phases, including: self-study component with core modules, choice of elective modules, final examination, and participation in a community of practice

   c. The expected outcomes of creation of the training program include:
      i. Raised awareness of IM for stakeholders within the humanitarian system;
      ii. Professionalized of IM a professional vocation within humanitarian affairs (linked to key outcome of symposium 2007);
      iii. Enhanced response (greater predictability, common understanding of concepts, methodologies, and the use of tools);
      iv. Certified human resources – IMOs to be able to deploy with (more or less) any cluster anywhere at any time; and
      v. Common IM training module for cluster/sector IM.

    d. There are a number of expected benefits of training program. These include a common training leading to common understanding of how IM supports response. The approach will also support smaller actors without access to specific IM training. In addition, the approach also lends itself to economies of scale

    e. The proposed target audience for the training includes:
        i. National and International Staff involved in either the strategic or operational side of collecting, analyzing and using data;
        ii. National and International Staff involved in the technical side of managing data and databases; and
        iii. Persons currently not working within the humanitarian system that possess relevant expertise vis-à-vis humanitarian information management are also invited to apply

    f. The sub-group is proposing that a first draft of the IM Distance learning program be produced by December 2009 and then finalized before the end of 1st quarter of 2010.

Next Meeting

8. The TF agreed to have the next meeting on 15 October 2009 in Geneva.

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