

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

Summary Note and Participants List

15 October 2009
Room S1 (Palais des Nations), Geneva

1. The Chair, Brendan McDonald, OCHA's Field Information Services (FIS) Unit opened the meeting by thanking participants for their attendance and support for the TF.

Progress update on the pilot implementation of OneResponse

2. The Chair explained that the pilot implementation in Zimbabwe had been deferred due to the Government's possible sensitivity to additional humanitarian initiatives in the country, whilst the Government is trying to focus on recovery and development initiatives. If OneResponse is to be piloted in Zimbabwe it will most likely be presented as a platform for supporting recovery.
3. The Chair noted that other countries currently considered for the OneResponse pilot are Pakistan and Somalia. A possible pilot in Pakistan is, however, currently on hold, since UNDSS is not issuing any security clearance (aside from essential travel) due to the security situation in the country.
4. The Chair also explained that discussions with Microsoft were ongoing regarding the site's outstanding technical requirements.

Presentation by OCHA of the draft IASC TF on IM Status Report

5. The Chair presented the five expected outcomes of the IASC TF on IM for 2010, which were unanimously agreed to by the TF:
 - a. Update of the Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads & OCHA in Information Management;
 - b. Roll-out of the OneResponse web platform to support and manage the exchange of operational information in emergencies;
 - c. Cluster/Sector IM distance learning course for national, international and external personnel involved in strategic, operational, technical, or managerial side of collecting, analyzing and using data;
 - d. Guidance on "Common Operational Datasets (COD)" for use in humanitarian emergencies;
 - e. Framework for monitoring effectiveness of the Operational Guidance Note on IM.
6. The Chair reminded participants that IASC TF on IM will shortly produce a 2-3 page progress report for 2009 and a work plan for 2010, both to be submitted in November, for approval by the IASC Working Group. The Chair also pointed out that since the mandate of the IASC TF on IM ends in June 2010, the IASC TF on IM will have to assess whether it needs to continue its work by asking for an extension beyond June or in another form.

Action Points:

- a. OCHA, on behalf of the IASC TF on IM, to produce a 2-3 page progress report for 2009 and a work plan for 2010, both to be submitted in November, for approval by the IASC Working Group.

Update from the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF)

7. Alice Armani Sequi of OCHA's Assessment and Classification of Emergencies Project (ACE) provided an update on the NATF and its work plan. One of its four key strategic priorities is to "improve needs assessment data and information management" with the following outputs:
 - a. Creation of a website for Needs Assessment information
 - b. Development of data management training on methodologies relevant to needs assessment
 - c. Ensuring needs assessment guidance is included in the IASC Operational Guidance on Information Management
 - d. Produce templates for inter-organization data sharing agreements
8. Ms. Sequi concluded by asking participants their desired method for ensuring that systematic "linkages are made between information management and needs assessment." The Chair gave some historical background to this issue, and emphasized the strong linkages required at the operational level between IM and needs assessment requirements.
9. Early Recovery cluster noted that as it is often the same focal points involved in the IASC IM TF sub-groups, and that they are already quite busy, she proposed to include a needs assessment perspective in the work of existing IM TF sub-groups. UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and WHO agreed with that perspective.
10. The consensus view of the TF was not to form a new sub-group to work on the linkages between IM and needs assessment. The Chair noted that in the absence of sub-group it is the responsibility of the clusters/sectors TF participants to feed relevant information on IM to their respective needs assessment focal points. Given the importance of sharing information between the NATF and the existing sub-group on datasets, it was also agreed that the TF sub-group on datasets would keep informed of the work NATF.
11. The TF also noted that OCHA, as chair of both TF, had a pivotal role in ensuring coherence between the work of IASC Needs Assessment Task Force and the IASC IM TF.

Action Points:

12. Clusters/sectors participants to the IASC IM TF sub-groups to ensure that relevant information is shared between IM and needs assessment focal points.
13. OCHA and the IASC TF on IM sub-group on datasets to provide overall coordination between the IM TF outputs and the needs assessment strategic objectives.

Briefing on the Crisis Information Management Strategy of the UN Secretariat

14. Mr. Sanjana Hattotuwa of the ICT4Peace Foundation briefed participants on the draft Crisis Information Management (CiM) strategy of the UN Secretariat, developed by the Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG), which includes UN OICT, UN DPKO, UN OCHA, WFP, UNDP, DSS, UNICEF, UN DESA, UNHCR and the ICT4Peace Foundation. He presented the four interrelated key programmes of the proposed 3 year CIM strategy:
 - a. Information architecture
 - b. Technology development
 - c. Capacity building
 - d. Stakeholder management
15. Mr. Hattotuwa explained that the idea of the project was to understand how humanitarian actors manage information and collaborate in the field, for e.g. in a context like Haiti, to find out potential problems and provide solutions addressing the issues that will have been identified.
16. Ms. Amy Weesner of the CITO also explained that they had been involved in other initiatives, such as the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS), in an advisory capacity, and that they were also looking at how to leverage and bridge the different initiatives at hand.
17. Patrick Gordon of OCHA FIS stressed that there were positive overlaps between the CiM strategy and OneResponse, and it was agreed that clear areas of collaboration should be identified. The Chair tasked Mr. Gordon in identifying tangible areas of possible collaboration between the IASC TF on IM and the CiM Strategy and to report back in the next meeting of the IASC TF on IM.

Action Points:

18. CITO to inform the IASC TF on IM on an up-coming mission to Haiti.
19. OCHA [Patrick Gordon] and ICT4Peace [Sanjana Hattotuwa] to define future steps for tangible cooperation between CiM and OneResponse, and present them at the next TF meeting.

AOB

20. The TF agreed to have the next meeting on 03 December 2009.

Brendan McDonald
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OCHA
19 October 2009

List of Participants:

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