IASC Working Group Operationalizingthe IASC Principals Transformative Agenda

The 80th IASC Working Group (WG) met in New York 16-18 November 2011 and determined a series of actions to support the IASC Principals transformative agenda. The WG used as a basis of discussion the Principals Task Team recommendations so far and thePrincipals IASC Reforms Statement of Purpose (June 2011)that identified five key areas to focus actions:
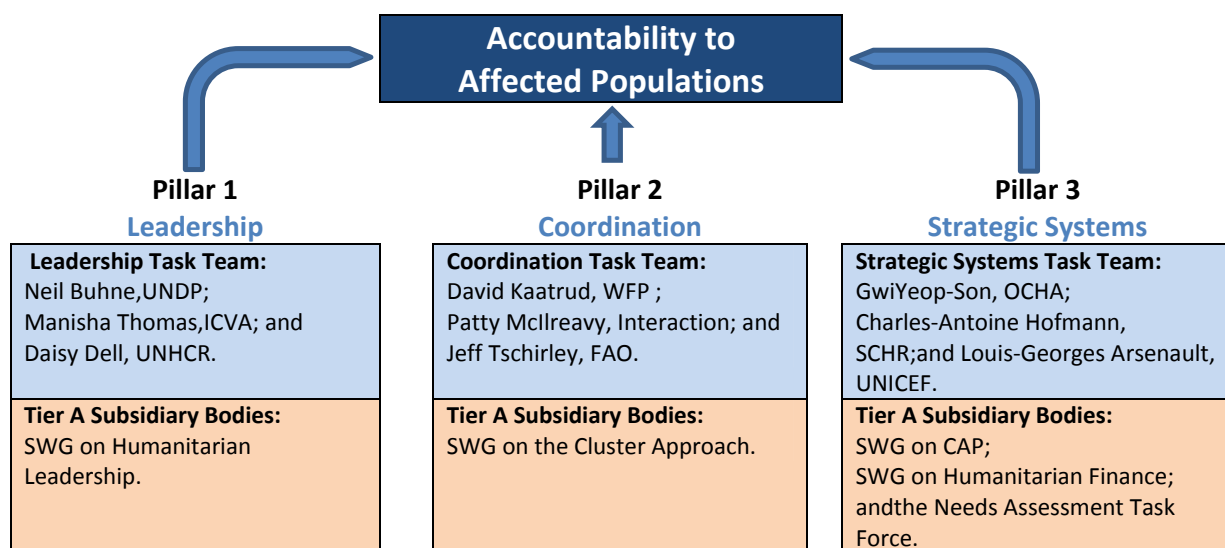
1. Leadership;
2. Coordination:
3. Accountability;
4. Building Global Capacity for Preparedness; and
5. Advocacy and Communications.

The WG discussion was given added urgency by the statements of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Executive Director of UNICEF, who set out the Principals priorities and challenged the WG to take a stronger role in implementing the transformative agenda. The WG noted that action must be taken to address the weaknesses in the humanitarian response systems revealed by the Haiti and Pakistan emergencies in 2010, which had persisted into the major emergency responses of 2011.

The WG recognized the need for rapid implementation of specific priority actions through a concentrated effort to mid-2012 to make humanitarian response more effective.With country-level implementation the focus, and taking *Accountability to Affected People*as its guiding principle, the WG decided to accelerate progress in field and headquarters implementation of the reforms by operational agencies.This proposal will need to be further modified based on the outcomes of the PTT and the Principals' meetings in December 2011.

The WG noted that priority actions have already been well defined by the Principals Task Team, in three areas of work that it could accelerate support to: *Leadership; Coordination; and Strategic Systems*. The WG proposes to focus on five of the eleven IASC Subsidiary Bodies (Sub-Working Groups (SWGs) on Humanitarian Leadership, the Cluster Approach, CAP and Humanitarian Financing; and the Needs Assessment Task Force)which are considered critical to the work to be undertaken in the three "pillars'. They are now defined as *Tier ASubsidiary Bodies*. While much of the work can be taken up by subsidiary bodies the WG noted that Strategic Systems also encompasses strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation, for which support will be required from advisors within IASC organizations.

Individuals identified by agencies on behalf of the WGhave agreed to lead and oversee the work of the three pillars through the chairs (co-chairs) of the Tier A subsidiary bodies until mid-2012. They willset aside their "agency hat" and take a direct role in leading particular reforms on behalf of all IASC organizations, under the three priority "pillars". The existing chairs (co-chairs) of the SWG will carry out substantive work under the guidance and direction of Task Team members. They will report on a regular basis on the progress achieved and obstacles encountered. Subsidiary body work plans will be aligned with the transformative agenda to avoid a reinterpretation of the decisions made by the PTT. The coordination of these three pillars at the IASC WG level will ensure coherence of the overall transformative agenda.

Accountability to Affected Populations

Pillar 1 Leadership	Pillar 2 Coordination	Pillar 3 Strategic Systems
Leadership Task Team: Neil Buhne,UNDP; Manisha Thomas,ICVA; and Daisy Dell, UNHCR.	**Coordination Task Team:** David Kaatrud, WFP ; Patty McIlreavy, Interaction; and Jeff Tschirley, FAO.	**Strategic Systems Task Team:** GwiYeop-Son, OCHA; Charles-Antoine Hofmann, SCHR;and Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF.
Tier A Subsidiary Bodies: SWG on Humanitarian Leadership.	**Tier A Subsidiary Bodies:** SWG on the Cluster Approach.	**Tier A Subsidiary Bodies:** SWG on CAP; SWG on Humanitarian Finance; andthe Needs Assessment Task Force.

The WG recognized two other areas identified by the Principals as part of the transformative agenda – Preparedness, and Advocacy and Communications, required further guidance from the IASC Principals.In terms of preparedness, the SWG has reflected the Principals discussions of April 2011 in its 2012 Work Plan and is in a good position to also be included as a pillar. Advocacy and Communication is not so much an area of action in its own right, but rather about identifying common messages that could be taken forward.

The work of the remaining six subsidiary bodies (SWG on Preparedness, SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action, the TF on Humanitarian Space and Civil-Military Relations, the TF on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the RG on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Settings, and the RG on Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support), which were identified as *Tier B Subsidiary Bodies*, will continue to be monitored by the IASC Secretariat, and close linkages will be made to the work on the Transformative Agenda being undertaken by the Tier A subsidiary bodies and cross-cutting actions of the Tier B subsidiary bodies (eg. cross-cutting issues from the SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action).

A Plan of Action for each of the three pillars will be draw its goals from Principals IASC Reforms Statement of Purpose, presented to the Principals by the ERC in June 2011, (extract quoted in the dot points in the table below):

IASC PRINCIPALS TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS: 2011-2012

Pillar 1: Leadership

- Every new major emergency response is reviewed to ensure it has the required leadership.
- Where gaps in senior, experienced humanitarian leadership are identified, these will be addressed quickly.
- The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) is equipped to lead a country-level humanitarian response, with the full and active support of the Humanitarian Country Team.
- The pools of available, experienced and competent HCs, cluster coordinators and other emergency managers and advisers are expanded, and IASC organisations have flexible human resource arrangements that allow for their rapid deployment.

Pillar 2: Coordination

- Pre-trained cluster coordinators are deployed to ensure that clusters are operational immediately after a new emergency.
- Clusters stay focused on their core task of ensuring the best possible results from cluster members' collective resources. The clusters analyze and fill gaps, and employ the most effective strategies to achieve results.
- Clusters hand over coordination activities to national counterparts as soon as possible.
- Populations affected by emergencies influence international humanitarian actors' planning (especially front-line operational partners) and can influence the implementation of programmes of assistance and protection. Feedback and complaints from affected populations are heard and acted upon.

Pillar 3: Strategic Systems

- All humanitarian response managers in international humanitarian organizations understand and are held accountable for their part in creating the most effective collective response to an emergency.
- Humanitarian needs are quickly assessed to provide a combined, agreed and accurate analysis. Information is collected regularly, and reports are issued on the outputs and outcomes of international humanitarian action. Updates are made available to national authorities and donors.
- Pooled-funding instruments are backed by well-articulated sector or cluster strategies that maximize the benefits from the resources available to humanitarian organizations.
- IASC organizations develop and implement ways to hold each other mutually accountable for their effective performance in preparedness, planning and coordinated action, consistent with humanitarian and partnership principles.

Specific Key Actions and Indicators will be drawn from –(1) the final deliberations of the Principals Task Team (1 December 2011) where an implementation plan of agreed actions endorsed at the PTT meeting (10 October 2011) and (2) the actions determined by the IASC Principals meeting (13 December 2011).

Milestones:

- **13 December 2011:** IASC Principals finalize actions following the completion of the Directors and Principals Task Team processes.
- **January 2012:** Further work is planned by the Working Group following definition and prioritization regarding Preparedness, and Advocacy and Communications by the IASC Principals.
- **Mid-January 2012:** The Chair of the WG will convene a meeting of the 'Tier A' subsidiary bodies (i.e. those most engaged in the transformative agenda implementation) and the leaders of the pillars to ensure clarity on planned results and process.
- **Late January 2012:** The Task Team leaders will present a plan of action for each pillar to the ad hoc IASC WG meeting.
- **March 2012:** Each pillar will provide an update to the 81st IASC WG in on their progress.
- **April 2012:** The Chair of the WG will report to the Principals on how successful the WG has been in operationalizing the action points of the transformative agenda and their implementation.
- **July 2012: IASC 82nd WG Meeting** will take stock of the progress of the accelerated implementation phase and adjust as necessary.

Inter-Agency Working Group, 25 November 2011.