

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING

Overview of the IASC in 2005¹

12 December 2005
Hosted by OCHA
Palais des Nations, Geneva

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The year 2005 has been extremely eventful for the IASC, since in addition to the objectives set up by the 2005 IASC Work Plan, major new emergencies required increased attention by all humanitarian actors, particularly in response to the Tsunami and to the South Asia earthquake. In addition, many new initiatives were launched, within the framework of the humanitarian reform process, which required IASC's engagement and support. The second part of the year was particularly intense in advancing the discussion and implementation of the cluster approach within the overall debate on "Better Humanitarian Response", to promote a sectoral responsibility and accountability in nine clusters (1. Camp Coordination/Management, 2. Early Recovery, 3. Emergency Shelter, 4. Emergency Telecommunications, 5. Health, 6. Logistics, 7. Nutrition, 8. Protection and 9. Water and Sanitation.) In total, nine Working Group meetings and three Principals meetings were held, including a total of six Ad Hoc IASC Meetings (compared to the planned number of four WG meetings and two Principals meetings). Some of the key achievements, initiatives and issues addressed by the IASC 2005 include the following:

I Thematic issues

- **Humanitarian reform initiatives:** The IASC actively supported the Humanitarian Response Review process. In response to the HRR recommendations on sectoral gaps and other initiatives, in July 2005 the IASC initiated the process of setting up a system of cluster approach, with nine clusters established and expected to be operational starting from 2006. The IASC also encouraged agency participation in the consultative process on global benchmarking exercise led by DfID, and also committed to strengthen linkage between DfID-led process and other process such as Sphere. Through OCHA and the ERC, the IASC engaged in the resolution negotiations of the ECOSOC and of the General Assembly and the IASC discussed and provided inputs to the donor led initiatives of the upgraded CERF and flexible funding mechanisms such as pooled funding.

¹ The full report of the IASC in 2005 will be prepared by the IASC Secretariat by end of December 2005.

- Kobe Conference / Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA): The IASC recognized the importance of the HFA and committed to integrating this guidance into the agencies' policies and programmes.
- Humanitarian Coordinator System The IASC is engaged in the ongoing exercise of strengthening the HC system.
- Integrated Missions: The IASC reaffirmed the importance of safeguarding humanitarian space in integrated missions and noted that DPKO agreed to redefine the mission design process and requested inclusiveness in the consultative process.
- Early Warning and Early Action: The IASC agreed to use the quarterly EW-EA report to help determine country specific discussions and strategic action by the IASC WG. Upon request from the IASC WG the Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning developed the Standard Minimum Preparedness Actions for each alert category in the EW-EA report.
- IDPs and protection: The IASC recognized that there is still a major gap in protection crisis and agreed in principle to establish a sectoral approach to strengthen accountability and predictability in response to IDP crises. IDD has developed a Protection Standby Capacity together with the IASC partners and the Norwegian Refugee Council. The initiatives will be linked to the implementation of the Protection Cluster, among others.
- Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): The IASC supported the Needs Assessment Framework (which was field tested and revised during the year) and endorsed countries and regions for Consolidated Appeals 2006. Upon request from the IASC the CAP Sub-Working Group developed Strategic Monitoring Guidelines.

II Country and region related issues discussed in the IASC WG and Principals meeting

The country and region related discussions addressed a broad range of humanitarian issues such as early warning and contingency planning, transitional coordination arrangements, the use of military assets and civil-military coordination, communication and information management as well protection concerns and human rights violations. Among others, priority was given to the affected countries by the Tsunami, as well as by the South Asia Earthquake, Sudan/Darfur, and Cote d'Ivoire.

III Subsidiary Bodies

- Throughout 2005, the IASC supported 11 Subsidiary Bodies covering a range of policy and technical issues: (1) CAP (2) Emergency Telecommunications, (3) Preparedness and Contingency Planning, (4) Gender, (5) Human Rights, (6) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (established in 2005 with the main task to develop Inter-Agency guidelines on the mental health and psychosocial support

during humanitarian crisis), (7) Training, (8) HIV/AIDS, (9) Good Humanitarian Donorship, (10) Security, and (11) Natural Disasters.

- The IASC WG closed down the IASC Task Force on Natural Disasters, and Task Force on Security, on Training and on HIV/AIDS. One of the main achievements by the Task Force on Natural Disasters was the finalization of the In-Country Self Assessment Tool for Natural Disaster Response Preparedness, distributed to the Resident Coordinators and to the Humanitarian Coordinators.

IV Products endorsed by the IASC WG or Principals:

- IASC Statement of Commitment to Address Gender Based Violence (Principals December 2004 – issued in January 2005)
- Civil-Military Coordination Concept Paper (60th IASC WG)
- Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings (61st IASC WG)
- Guidance Note on Human Rights for Humanitarian Coordinators (61st IASC WG)
- Review of the disaster response capacity of IASC agencies and organizations in selected disaster prone countries - Synthesis Report (61st IASC WG)
- IASC In-Country Self Assessment Tool for Natural Disaster Response Preparedness (61st IASC WG)
- Guidelines for the Use of the Self-Assessment Tool (61st IASC WG)

Annex 1

IASC Meetings in 2005		
21 February	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC WG on Tsunami	Audio/Video Conference
21-22 March	60 th IASC WG	Rome, WFP HQs
7 April	IASC Principals	Geneva, Palais des Nations
22-23 June	61 st IASC WG	Geneva, IOM HQs
12 July	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC WG on Humanitarian Reform	New York, UN Secretariat
11 August	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC WG on Inter-Cluster WG	Audio/Video Conference
6-7 September	62 nd IASC WG Retreat “Better Humanitarian response”	Glen Cove, NY, Harrison Conference Centre (hosted by UNDP)
12 September	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC Principals	New York, UNFPA HQs
14 October	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC WG on Inter-Cluster WG	Audio/Video Conference
25 October	<i>Ad Hoc</i> IASC WG on Inter-Cluster WG	Audio Conference
21-22 November	63 rd IASC WG	Geneva, ECOGIA (Hosted by ICVA)
12 December	IASC Principals	Geneva, Palais des Nations

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