

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING**

7 April 2005

9:30 – 13:00 hrs

Room I, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Final Summary Record and Action Points

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Opening Remarks by the Emergency Relief Coordinator

The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr. Jan Egeland, welcomed participants to the meeting and stressed the importance of identifying suitable dates for future IASC Principals meetings that would ensure the full participation by Heads of Agencies.

Special welcome was extended to Mr. Erskine Bowles, Deputy Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, Ms. Wendy Chamberlin, Acting High Commissioner for Refugees, and Ms. Kathleen Cravero, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

In his introductory remarks, the ERC noted that the four months since the last meeting had been critical for the humanitarian community. In that regard the ERC acknowledged the tremendous efforts made by the humanitarian community in response to the Tsunami emergency. The response demonstrated the real strength of the humanitarian system in our ability to mobilise resources, deploy personnel, share common services, and engage non-traditional humanitarian actors. Above all, it demonstrated the strength and importance of full collaboration among humanitarian actors. The ERC also stressed the importance of transparency and accountability and the need to be as effective in the recovery and reconstruction stages as during the relief stage.

Responding to the Tsunami Disaster: Lessons from the Humanitarian Response and Speeding Up Recovery Efforts

The ERC briefed on the Mid-Term Review for the Tsunami, launched on 6th April 2005. In his briefing, the ERC expressed concern about the gaps in the reporting and figures provided in the Mid-Term Review (MTR). He noted that the MTR was a “living” document and called on participants to provide the required information to ensure the highest level of transparency and accountability.

Mr. Erskine Bowles, Deputy Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, congratulated participants for the phenomenal work in the emergency phase. Mr. Bowles confirmed that former President Clinton will commit at least one third of his time over the next two years to his work as Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery. Mr. Bowles stressed the need for greater accountability and transparency, the need to ensure equity in our response, the need to address issues of land and housing, and the importance of coordination for ensuring an effective response. Mr. Bowles noted that the most critical and challenging phase in the response to the Tsunami would be the transition phase. Mr. Clinton will be focusing his efforts on the following four messages: 1) Build back better, 2) Transparency and accountability, 3) Risk reduction, not only in terms of early warning systems but also disaster preparedness and

mitigation, and 4) Best practices. Mr. Clinton will be travelling to the affected countries for one week in May 2005. His mission will be supporting the whole humanitarian community not only the UN.

With respect to the Humanitarian Common Services (HCS), Ms. Yvette Stevens, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator, noted that during the response to the Tsunami the performance of the HCS had been mixed and that important lessons needed to be drawn from the experience. The Tsunami experience showed that both the Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) and the Inter-Agency Emergency Telecommunications (IAET) needed to be strengthened. She also stressed the importance of setting up Humanitarian Information Centres (HIC) since the early phases of emergencies. Ms. Stevens called on the Principals to reaffirm the HCS approach and recommended a review of each service, in order to include the lessons learned in the ongoing Humanitarian Response Review.

Mr. Jim Morris, Executive Director of WFP, briefed on the performance of the UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) and the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) in the Tsunami response and stressed the importance of providing good operational communications among all parties using common logistical services. Mr. Morris noted the strong support provided by the private sector (staff, planes and logistics). Lessons learned from the Tsunami response include the need for additional stand-by partners for humanitarian air services, and the need to strengthen capacity to manage ground handling capacity for humanitarian air cargo delivered to Banda Aceh.

The ERC commented on the issues relating to visibility and accountability in the humanitarian response to the Tsunami. The unprecedented response to the Tsunami brought unprecedented demands for transparency and accountability. The ERC stressed that this was not an optional reporting exercise and that our credibility as humanitarians was at stake. As stated in his opening remarks, the ERC noted that, apart from FAO, OCHA had not received the data required for the Mid Term Review and was therefore not able to convey proper analysis to the donors and the public. The ERC welcomed the cooperation received in terms of the transparency initiative with PricewaterhouseCoopers and noted that five of the Principals had signed on to the initiative.

The ERC raised the issue of transitional coordination arrangements and noted that these were weak at the HQ level. The ERC recommended the establishment of a Task Force in order to strengthen coordination arrangements at the HQ level, that would be co-chaired by Margareta Wahlstrom from OCHA and from UNDG, with the participation from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other partners such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent. He also confirmed that OCHA would remain for the 12-month period, or longer, if necessary.

Mr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG) on the Human Rights of IDPs, raised the need to base our response on respect for human rights. The RSG called for greater attention to human rights in the early phases of response, noting that the Flash Appeal only included a limited number of human rights projects. Areas of concern include the risk of unequal treatment between populations affected by the Tsunami and those affected by conflict. The RSG also stressed the need for more consultations with IDPs themselves, enabling their greater participation. He also welcomed the agreement reached at the 60th meeting of the IASC Working Group for OHCHR and OCHA to develop operational guidelines on the human rights of IDPs in situations of natural disasters.

Challenges faced in the response included the lack of surge capacity and the difficulty in finding the right people with the required cultural sensitivities quickly enough. Another challenge was in the area of communication and reporting to the public.

One participant noted that the response from donors, and in particular private donors, had been unprecedented and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement reported that out of the two billion USD raised, nearly 95% had come from private contributions.

NGOs are trying to address challenges posed by the requirements for transparency and accountability, both at the financial and operational levels. On the financial side, NGOs committed to make sure that they demonstrate full transparency and openness in terms of what they have received and their plans for allocation of the funds.

The ICVA Executive Committee will be considering a proposal to support the creation of an NGO association, which would also coordinate on quality and accountability standards. With respect to operational accountability, priority attention must be given to the participation of local beneficiaries.

Participants noted that the inclusion of experienced humanitarian workers as leaders of United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) had contributed to its success during the response to the Tsunami. Participants expressed concern regarding the functioning of the Civil-Military Coordination in the response to the Tsunami, in particular in relation to chains of command with the military. With respect to the Inter-Agency Emergency Telecommunications (IAET), participants raised concern about the delays caused by the priority given to using the latest technology rather than the quick deployment of available equipment. Participants acknowledged the vital role played by the military but noted the challenges of communicating with them, as well as the importance of having a strong UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC), which could take over quickly from the military.

Participants welcomed Mr. Clinton's commitment to the need to "build back better". In order to prevent disparities in our response, participants recommended focusing on Tsunami-affected countries rather than Tsunami-affected communities. Concern was raised regarding property rights, in particular with respect to women and children and participants noted the importance of national capacity in the response to the Tsunami.

Participants cautioned against diluting individual organisations' accountability responsibilities and recommended that recovery activities should be included in the first phase of the appeals. The need for more predictable and timely funding of early recovery activities was also stressed, together with the suggestion to include early recovery activities in the CAP.

With respect to the recommendation for a Task Force at HQ level on transitional arrangements, participants highlighted the importance of transitional coordination arrangements to take place at the field level. The ERC noted that the role of the Task Force would be the provision of support to the field offices.

The IASC Principals:

- Agreed that the overall emergency response went well. The lessons learned will be incorporated into the ongoing Humanitarian Response Review.
- Recognised the vital role of the Humanitarian Common Services and agreed on the need to further develop, strengthen and systematically review the HCS.
- Agreed on the importance of ensuring transparency and accountability and committed to providing financial information, recognising that the credibility of humanitarian actors depends upon it.
- Recognised that transitional coordination arrangements need to be field-based and agreed on the need for an inter-agency Task Force to strengthen coordination arrangements at HQ level among UN and other humanitarian partners involved in the transition from relief to recovery.

- Recognised the importance of public perceptions as well as the need to manage expectations and agreed on the need for communications strategies to convey a realistic picture of what can be achieved, both on the short and on the medium term.
- Agreed on the need to improve and strengthen telecommunications systems in emergencies, considering their critical role for both the work and the security of humanitarian actors.
- Recognised the essential role played by the military in the early stages of the response to the Tsunami and agreed on the need to strengthen civil-military coordination and to ensure smooth transition from military to civilian control.
- Recognised the potential of the private sector for funding preparedness and agreed the need to strengthen partnership with this sector.
- Recognized the importance of more predictable and timely funding for the early recovery activities, to be included in the first phase of the appeals.
- Agreed that it will be important to include Human Rights projects as well as broader human rights dimension in the response, from the outset of any relief effort.
- Agreed that there is a need to invest more capacity at the national level, in terms of engaging local populations and local NGOs.

Addressing the Protection Crisis in Humanitarian Situations

Mr. Dennis McNamara, Director of the Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division (IDD), introduced this item. He briefed on the results of IDD reviews carried out in seven major Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) countries, which had found that lack of resources and insecurity were key factors in the gaps faced by IDPs, in particular in: a) protection, b) shelter, c) camp management and d) return, reintegration and recovery. He introduced the proposal to establish a stand-by protection capacity (PROCAP) as a support for protection-mandated agencies, with the goal of having a number of pre-selected, pre-trained senior protection officers available through a specialized project, with stand-by partners such as the Norwegian Refugee Council. Their main task would be to support the Humanitarian Coordinators or protection-mandated agencies. He noted that the stand-by protection capacity (PROCAP) was intended as an emergency stopgap measure and would not replace the role of protection agencies on the ground.

Mr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, called for a broad definition of protection. In this regard, he recommended looking at four broad categories of protection: 1) rights related to physical security and integrity (such as right to life, freedom from torture); 2) rights related to basic necessities of life (such as food, drinking water, shelter); 3) rights related to other economic, social and cultural protection needs (such as right to work, access to education); and 4) rights related to other civil and political needs (such as right to religious freedom and freedom of speech). This broad categorisation would establish a framework for protection activities ranging from responsive actions, remedial actions, and actions related to environment building. In developing frameworks for protection activities, the primary responsibility of governments must also be taken into account and should include: actions aimed at preventing violations; actions to stop existing or ongoing violations; actions to prevent the recurrence of violations; and actions to ensure remedies. The RSG noted the importance of ensuring full ownership of the proposal to establish a stand-by protection capacity and called for a clear protection framework to ensure predictable institutional response. He recommended looking at the experiences of other stand-by capacities and rosters.

Ms. Wendy Chamberlin of UNHCR stated that protection begins with presence and noted that the interface between humanitarians and military needs to be improved. She noted that security remains the main obstacle to protection as well as funding, since donors did not

provide adequate financial support to IDPs and to protection needs in Darfur. She reiterated UNHCR's commitment to the collaborative approach and noted that this engagement will require UNHCR to go out and raise additional funds for IDPs operations, with the support of the ERC. She also indicated that UNHCR could contribute to the stand-by facility with capacity building and training.

Most of the participants welcomed the proposal for a protection stand-by capacity although several members noted that the IDD proposal had been received too late for sufficient review and required additional consultation. Some agencies stressed the need to support increased field-based capacity within the existing framework of the protection mandated agencies and NGOs, rather than creating additional coordination mechanisms. The need for inter-agency participation in the process as well as for greater consultations with protection-mandated agencies was reiterated. The responsibility of the respective governments, and the need to put pressure on them without placing the full blame on the humanitarian community was also underlined.

Furthermore it was stated that the protection crisis is related to funding, staffing, and insecurity not only to the lack of protection officers. Participants also cautioned against the potential lack of coordination amongst protection officers in the field as well as the need to view 'protection' and 'human rights' as complementary.

Participants noted the protection discussion should not be limited to protection-mandated agencies and welcomed the involvement of non UN agencies, such as ICRC and NGOs in protection efforts and noted the role played by non-protection mandated agencies through their significant presence on the ground. The need for more documentation on the extent of violations, in particular sexual violence against women, was also noted.

The need for the stand-by protection capacity (PROCAP) to cover also important recovery and transition areas, such as the Rule of Law, Justice and Security Sector reform was also stressed.

The ERC reiterated the need to better implement the standards, which had been agreed over the last ten years within the IASC framework. The protection crisis in Darfur was a very traumatic experience for the humanitarian community. It demonstrates the limitations of what unarmed humanitarian workers can do and the need for deployment of security forces on the ground. The ERC cautioned against humanitarians becoming an alibi for lack of action on the political and security side. He reiterated the need for predictable funding and for predictable capacity and stressed the importance of a stand-by capacity with pre-trained and professional senior officers, which is still missing at present. The ERC confirmed that agreement by the IASC for the IDD proposal for a protection stand-by capacity was not sought. He would, in future, work with protection-mandated agencies to develop such an additional capacity.

The IASC Principals:

- Recognized that there is still a major protection crisis in many areas.
- Noted that predictable funds for protection are critical and that donors are not sufficiently committed to provide such funding.
- Acknowledged that there has been some progress in several crisis areas, with protection agencies approaching the issue in a more systematic manner and with more UN-ICRC/IFRC-NGOs cooperation.
- Encouraged the UN Country Teams and the Humanitarian Coordinators to play a leadership role in making the most effective use of resources in the area of protection

- Welcomed the intention of the OHCHR and the UNHCR to increase their protection capacity for IDPs at the field level and encouraged agencies to further systematically review and improve their capacity with respect to protection.
- Encouraged further dialogue between protection-mandated agencies and the wider humanitarian community, with peacekeeping missions and the African Union forces.
- Recognized the importance and challenges of developing a protection stand-by capacity that focuses on strengthening field-based protection capacity, and noted the IDD initiative. The ERC urged IDD to cooperate with the agencies in the further development of this initiative.

Reform of the Humanitarian Response System

The Emergency Relief Coordinator introduced the report from the Secretary General “In Larger Freedom”, stressing the September deadline for initial decisions on the adoption of recommendations. He highlighted the main points of the SG’s report, such as the key challenges facing the humanitarian response systems:

- improved and sustained access,
- predictable capacity,
- strengthened role, leadership and quality of Humanitarian Coordinators,
- financial reform with availability of predictable funding, with improved mechanisms at country level (pooled funds) and at the global level (CERF to be upgraded and expanded).

In the above context, the ERC indicated other important initiatives contributing to the reform, such as the Humanitarian Response Review, the results of which will be shared with the IASC WG in June 2005 and then finalized by July 2005, as well as the British and French initiatives introducing changes in funding and in humanitarian personnel capacity

The discussion on the Reform of the Humanitarian System was continued during the Principals only lunch.

The IASC members agreed that it is a positive sign that changes begin to happen and stressed that it will be important to understand how to translate the new concept of “Larger freedom” into action.

The participants noted that the Secretary General’s report is addressing the humanitarian issues within the broader issues of the reform of the General Assembly and of ECOSOC. This has generated questions on the political side of the report overwhelming the humanitarian component. They also indicated that clarity is further needed on the new “Peace Building Commission” and on how it will be operational vis-à-vis the humanitarian agenda, including on representation from agencies, in addition to DPKO and DPA.

The ERC stressed that the contribution of the IASC would be also important to influence the new initiatives related to the reform, to make sure they correspond to the discussions and principles promoted by the IASC members.

The ERC also consulted the IASC members on the best way to cooperate with the International Criminal Court without jeopardizing the safeguard of our missions and the security of our staff. It was noted that the UN and the non-UN humanitarian agencies have different procedures in this regard and that the UN might benefit from some degree of information without engaging in a too close cooperation with the International Criminal Court, in order to protect the work and the security of humanitarian agencies. The OHCHR

expressed their availability to share material developed in regard of cooperating with the International Criminal Court, which may be used as a reference for other UN agencies.

The ERC also provided some clarifications on the new role of UN-DSS, that will be better resourced and will be more focused on risk management rather than on risk-aversion.

The IASC Members also stressed the importance of not diverting committed funds for humanitarian work towards new initiatives or emergencies, since the perception is that some donors apply a “zero-sum-game”. It was appreciated that many donors indicated they would contribute additional funds towards the Tsunami emergency.

Regarding the Humanitarian Coordinators, the importance of training and the inclusion of NGO candidates were highlighted. It was also stressed that the role of non-UN humanitarian agencies should be better known by the Resident Coordinators in order to facilitate the implementation of the IASC principles at the country level.

The IASC Principals (lunch session):

- The IASC Members agreed on the importance of the reform as a strategic initiative that will strengthen the UN. They also agreed to be proactive and to support the development of an IASC position for the ERC who will be part of the Secretary General’s new Policy Committee.
- The IASC Members also agreed to provide input that will enable the ERC to reach out to different constituencies, including Member States, donors and the media, that will reflect the diversity of the IASC stakeholders.
- It was also recommended to discuss the Humanitarian Coordinator System (role, quality, recruitment and training) at the next IASC Principals Meeting.
- The ERC stressed the critical importance of the attendance of Heads of Agencies at the Principals meetings. The ERC will contact shortly all IASC Principals in order to agree on a venue and date that will ensure full participation of IASC Principals at this important forum.