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## **Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator (2003)**

### **I Appointment**

1. In a given country, upon the occurrence of a complex emergency or when an already existing humanitarian situation worsens in degree and/or complexity, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, on behalf of the Secretary-General and after consultation with the IASC, will designate a Humanitarian Coordinator for that country.
2. Depending on the context, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in consultation with the IASC, may:
  - assign the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator to the Resident Coordinator for that country, who therefore becomes Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator<sup>1</sup>. This is the normal practise.
  - appoint a separate Humanitarian Coordinator;
  - designate a lead agency for the provision of humanitarian assistance, with the in-country agency head also serving as Humanitarian Coordinator, as outlined in the “IASC Recommendations Related to the Review of the Capacity of the United Nations System for Humanitarian Assistance” endorsed by the IASC on 29 July 1998.<sup>2</sup>
  - appoint a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, when an emergency occurs that involves more countries at the same time. In such instances Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators of countries in the region should work as a team under the guidance of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator.
3. The Humanitarian Coordinator is expected to possess specific knowledge and experience of the humanitarian environment and to have demonstrated leadership in complex emergencies.
4. The Humanitarian Coordinator serves as the representative of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (and therefore of OCHA) in the country/region concerned.

### **II Reporting**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator will report directly to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator who is also the in-country head of a designated lead agency for humanitarian assistance will also report directly to his/her agency headquarters.
3. If a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) is appointed for the country in question, the Humanitarian Coordinator will function under the overall authority of the

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to General Assembly Resolutions 47/199 and 48/209.

<sup>2</sup> Factors influencing the designation of a lead agency are that i) the various sectors of assistance being delivered are closely related to the mandate of the agency; ii) the assigned agency has the capacity to undertake strategic coordination needs and to establish and maintain both sectoral and common operational support mechanisms, while at the same time executing the operations specific to its mandate; and iii) the agency has a presence on the ground and/or is able to mobilize rapidly.

SRSG, with the responsibility for coordination of UN humanitarian assistance for the complex emergency in question, in accordance with the Note of Guidance on the Relationship between Humanitarian Coordinator and SRSG.

4. In the event the Humanitarian Coordinator is separate from the Resident Coordinator and there is no SRSG present, the Humanitarian Coordinator works within the overall country coordination framework of the Resident Coordinator system.

### **III Management functions**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the humanitarian activities of the Country Team. He/she will provide liaison between the Country Team and the Emergency Relief Coordinator.
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for the management of the OCHA office, which is put in place to support the Humanitarian Coordinator in his/her functions.

### **IV Operational coordination functions**

#### **4.1 Coordination mechanisms**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining comprehensive coordination mechanisms based on facilitation and consensus building. These mechanisms should be inclusive of all the actors involved at the country level in the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection, including in particular all locally represented members and standing invitees of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)<sup>3</sup>.
2. Through these coordination mechanisms, the Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for ensuring agreement on the basic division of responsibilities among agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates and capacities, with the aim of:
  - ensuring that timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance is rapidly and effectively delivered to the victims of the complex emergency;
  - ensuring that any gaps or overlaps in protection, that could arise as a result of the respective mandates of the agencies, can be resolved in practice.
3. Within this framework, the Humanitarian Coordinator is specifically responsible for:
  - convening and serving as the chair of regular inter-agency meetings involving all relevant humanitarian actors and providing the necessary secretariat support.
  - ensuring that leadership for coordination within specific sector and/or geographic areas is agreed upon and that the relevant coordination mechanisms are established and managed efficiently.

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<sup>3</sup> The IASC is composed of seven full members (FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) and ten Standing Invitees (ICRC, IFRC, IOM, RSG-IDPs, OHCHR, UNFPA, World Bank and three NGO consortia: Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), Interaction, and International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA))

- ensuring consultation with national authorities on matters regarding the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance.
- ensuring overall coordination between the UN and other humanitarian aid agencies and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations when such forces are present, including promoting resolution of matters of joint concern to the humanitarian aid agencies.
- facilitating communications and consultation between the UN and other humanitarian aid agencies on the one hand and the relevant components of bilateral military forces when such forces are present.
- acting as a focal point for discussion within the relief community regarding policy issues of inter-agency concern (e.g., wage levels for local staff, payments for services and difficulties with customs procedures and policies, government clearances for travel and passes, etc.) and as an interlocutor with the relevant parties (e.g., the host government) for resolution of such matters.
- developing and maintaining a central registry of locally represented humanitarian agencies and their respective activities and expertise.

#### ***4.2 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)***

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for responding to the assistance and protection needs of IDPs and identifying the most appropriate collaborative arrangements amongst operational agencies for implementing the plan, ensuring that all needs are met. The strategic plan should be integrated in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and the Consolidated Appeal (CA).
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator's responsibility vis-a-vis IDPs stems directly from the ERC's role as focal point for IDPs. In discharging his/her duties in this regard, the Humanitarian Coordinator will be guided by the IASC Protection Policy Paper and the Supplementary Guidance to HC/RC on their responsibilities in relation to IDPs.

#### ***4.3 Common services***

1. In those cases, in which the Humanitarian Coordinator is not the Designated Official, the Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for obtaining guidance from the Designated Official regarding the implementation of security procedures in support of humanitarian assistance activities, ensuring that this is effectively communicated to the concerned agencies in the field, and facilitating their coordinated implementation.
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the provision of key support services for the larger relief community, such as telecommunications, transportation (e.g., via vehicle or light aircraft operation), etc.
3. In the cases in which the IASC decides on the deployment of a UN Joint Logistic Centre (JLC) to complement and coordinate the logistic capabilities of cooperating humanitarian agencies, the Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the operations of the UN JLC through supervision of its Chief.

#### **4.4 Information**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator, supported by OCHA, is responsible for putting in place systems, including as appropriate Humanitarian Information Centres, for collecting and disseminating timely, accurate, detailed, reliable and up-to-date information on the humanitarian situation and on the relief efforts.

## **V Strategic coordination functions**

### **5.1 Negotiation and Advocacy**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator has responsibility for advocating with the relevant parties for the application of humanitarian principles on behalf of the victims and of the humanitarian community. This will include:
  - promoting, assisting and, if necessary, leading negotiations to obtain free, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance to those in need, in a manner consistent with the operational requirements of the various partners.
  - promoting respect for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (HRHL) as well as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
  - seeking acceptance by all parties to the civil conflict in question on the principles of neutrality and impartiality that underline humanitarian action, as well as on other fundamental issues such as the access to those in need, the security of humanitarian personnel, and the need to be accountable to donors and beneficiaries for the aid provided.
  - carrying out advocacy initiatives with the local and international media, the international community, the civil society and the public at large.

### **5.2 Strategic planning**

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for overseeing all the in-country aspects of the inter-agency strategic planning process. This includes:
  - ensuring that multi-sectoral needs assessments are quickly initiated and priority humanitarian needs are identified, adequately supported, and effectively carried out.
  - triggering and leading the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) in collaboration with the IASC Country Team and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as detailed in the IASC Consolidated Appeal Process Guidelines.
  - ensuring that a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) is prepared as part of the Consolidated Appeal Process and ensuring that the humanitarian strategy presented in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan is compatible with other strategic planning initiatives such as the UN Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction initiatives.
  - ensuring that strategic monitoring is carried out as detailed in the IASC Consolidated Appeal Process Guidelines.
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the provision of resources against the Consolidated Appeal, for bringing donor attention to important outstanding gaps and for facilitating inter-agency resource mobilisation efforts both in-country as well as at the headquarters level with the capitals.

### ***5.3 Contingency planning***

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that a comprehensive contingency plan is developed and regularly updated by the UN Country Team in consultation with all the humanitarian partners in the country.

### ***5.4 Humanitarian accountability***

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for promoting and monitoring the implementation of the relevant policies and guidelines adopted by the IASC. These include the following existing policies as well as future new ones as they are developed, adopted and issued by the IASC:
  - CAP Guidelines (1994) and IASC Plan of Action for Strengthening the CAP (2002)
  - IASC Appeal and Strategy Documents (2003)
  - Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (1994)
  - Guiding and Operating Principles for the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Support of Humanitarian Operations (1995) and Guidelines on the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Complex Emergencies (2003)
  - Exit Strategy from Relief to Development (1995)
  - Respect for Humanitarian Mandates in Conflict Situations (1995)
  - Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings (1996) and Revised Guidelines for HIV/AIDS in Emergency Settings (2003)
  - Exit Strategy for Humanitarian Actors in the Context of Complex Emergencies (1997)
  - Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance (1999)
  - Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1999)
  - Policy Paper for Protection for IDPs (1999)
  - Guidelines for Field Staff Promoting Reintegration (Golden Rules) (2000)
  - Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance (2001)
  - Recommendations on UN/Non-UN Field Security Collaboration (2001)
  - Plan of Action on Protection from Sexual Exploitation in Humanitarian Crises (2002)
  - Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting Rights Through Humanitarian Action (2002)
  - Frequently Asked Questions on International Humanitarian, Human Rights and Refugee Law in the Context of Armed Conflicts (2002)
2. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for promoting gender mainstreaming and women's rights at the policy, planning and implementation levels as part of their strategic coordination and humanitarian accountability functions.
3. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for supporting effective evaluations of the overall relief efforts, especially the coordination aspects.

***5.5 Rehabilitation/reconstruction***

1. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for cooperating with entities responsible for planning and implementation of rehabilitation and development activities to ensure that rehabilitation actions begin as soon as they become feasible (which will often be simultaneous with relief efforts), and that relief actions are planned and undertaken with the perspective of their longer-term continuation and impacts.