

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WEEKLY MEETING

Summary Note

14 November 2007
Geneva

I Briefing on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

After giving participants a brief insight into the subject matter that the Pandemic Influenza Contingency team (OCHA/UNSIC) deals with, Mr. Iain Bald (Information Management Officer) and Mr. Liviu Vedrasco (National Capacity Building Adviser) briefed on the recent high-level meeting on humanitarian preparedness for pandemic, the “Declaration on Humanitarian Cooperation in Pandemic Preparedness and Response” that was signed during the meeting, and the ensuing process.

On 29 October 2007, IFRC, OCHA (Rashid Khalikov) and the UN System Influenza Coordinator (Dr. David Nabarro) co-hosted this high-level meeting on pandemic preparedness and response at IFRC, which was attended by 41 member states and 25 humanitarian organizations. At the meeting, nine UN agencies, eight NGOs and four international organizations signed the “Declaration on Humanitarian Cooperation in Pandemic Preparedness and Response” in which they committed to (a) urge the New Delhi International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza to emphasize the importance of preparing for the humanitarian consequences of a pandemic; (b) respond to the consequences on vulnerable people of a pandemic or other global health threat by strengthening existing emergency systems; (c) work together to meet humanitarian needs during a pandemic; (d) conduct a joint inter-agency simulation exercise to test preparedness; (e) identify priority countries for support; (f) finalise complementary pandemic preparedness and response plans; and (g) set up a technical group to monitor progress on these commitments.

With the aim of raising awareness of the humanitarian aspects of pandemic influenza, the Declaration will be presented to the New Delhi International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, which will be hosted by the government of India from 4 to 6 December 2007. In this context, it was also emphasised that governments and the humanitarian community need to work towards ensuring worldwide preparedness for pandemic influenza rather than exclusively focussing on controlling avian flu. In addition to working towards more simple guidelines, which are needed in order to overcome the proliferation of normative guidance, it is envisaged that over a period of three years, the IFRC, US NGOs, and UN partners will work with national authorities and actors in 25 priority countries to develop inter-agency humanitarian country plans that which will set out roles and responsibilities of different actors, representing the whole society, in the event of a pandemic, specify who will do what where, identify gaps and duplication, and identify funding requirements.

In light of decreased media attention to the threat of a pandemic and in order to keep the issues of pandemic influenza on the radar screen of the IASC, it was suggested that the PIC team send a note summarising the recent high-level meeting to the IASC Secretariat, to be circulated to the IASC Working Group.

II Update on the Outcomes of the 69th IASC WG Meeting

Ms. Marilena Viviani briefed participants on the outcomes of the 69th IASC Working Group Meeting convened in Rome from 5 to 7 November 2007.

III AOB

Ms. Louise Johannsen (IASC Secretariat) briefed on the IASC Weekly Poll and kindly reminded participants to provide their feedback on the IASC Weekly Meetings. The poll can be accessed and completed under the following link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=TjEWguHUI90U8orXf7KFsw_3d_3d

Participants

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