



## IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Date established:** *December 2006*

**End of mandate:** *ongoing*

#### **Background**

In December 2006, the IASC Principals converted the IASC Gender Task Force into a Sub Working Group and agreed to support the strategy for integration of gender as a crosscutting issue into the Cluster Approach and into other elements of the humanitarian reform. Since then, the IASC Sub Working Group has successfully developed a series of practical gender mainstreaming tools to support Cluster members in ensuring that their humanitarian action is gender responsive.

At the fifth annual face to face meeting of the Sub Working Group in October 2010, the members of the group agreed to review and update the Terms of Reference for the SWG in order to adapt it to reflect the IASC Gender Policy (2008), the changing humanitarian architecture, and to build on the successes of the SWG to date.

This document presents an amended Terms of Reference for the SWG and outlines an updated list of strategic priority areas for action. The main changes relate to the effort to structure a more results oriented working modality within the SWG and to pare down the work plan to ensure a strategic coordinated impact based on the added value of SWG members. This document should be read in conjunction with the foundational document for the SWG entitled the 2007 Work Plan, and the 2008 IASC Gender Policy.

#### **Strategic Goal**

The IASC SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action works to support the IASC and its members in the realization of the IASC Gender Policy (2008), which outlines its commitment to achieving gender equality, ensuring the human rights of women, girls, boys and men are equally promoted and protected in humanitarian action, and ensuring that women, girls, boys and men have equitable and safe access to services provided. The key principles of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as well as a human rights based approach to programming will underpin this work.

#### **Strategic Actions**

Working in close coordination with other IASC subsidiary bodies, Cluster Working Groups, Humanitarian Country Teams and relevant entities, the IASC Gender and Humanitarian Action Sub Working Group will:

- 3.1 Refine and disseminate common interagency gender standards and norms for humanitarian action.
- 3.2 Support, build capacity, develop practical tools and build partnerships for consistent integration of gender considerations into:
  - Contingency planning, preparedness and early warning.
  - Humanitarian needs assessments.
  - Humanitarian information systems.
  - CAP, CHAP, Flash Appeals and CERF submissions.
- 3.3 Improve monitoring and assessment of gender mainstreaming as part of routine humanitarian reporting, including in inter agency evaluations, based on gender handbook indicators and routine collection, analysis and reporting of sex and age disaggregated data.
- 3.4 Strengthen gender expertise, including women and men, at field level through the establishment of gender roster pools for rapid deployment of gender expertise in emergency response and early recovery.
- 3.5 Strengthen capacity building of humanitarian actors to enhance their effectiveness to understand and respond to gender issues by identifying processes, opportunities and training events into which gender issues can be integrated.
- 3.6 Support all actions that strengthen programmes to prevent and respond to gender based violence (GBV) and ensure that gender mainstreaming and GBV interventions are seen as two essential components of achieving gender equality.
- 3.7 Enhance partnerships, including the establishment of Gender Networks, in emergencies and support them as appropriate to provide guidance to the Humanitarian Country Teams and urge sector/cluster agencies to identify/deploy gender advisers/focal points within their respective organizations to work collectively to ensure gender mainstreaming, GBV programming, among others and to better coordinate gender responsive actions in crises.
- 3.8 Document best practices and lessons learned on the most effective ways to mainstream gender and share these lessons with field based actors and in the interagency community.
- 3.9 Strengthen accountability on gender mainstreaming and share experiences.
- 3.10 Keep up to date a dedicated IASC gender website and ensure wide dissemination of the SWG's products and guidance tools.

To guide this work the SWG will

- Develop an annual plan to support implementation of this policy statement, and
- Develop an accountability framework for monitoring the implementation.

### **Participation**

All IASC entities are welcome to participate in the IASC SWG on Gender Equality and Humanitarian Action. As of October, 2010 member organizations include: CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, DCAF, DFS, DPKO, FAO, Gender and Mine Action, ICRC, IFRC, International Medical Corps, INEE, InterAction, IDMC, IRC, IOM, MSF, NRC, OCHA, OHCHR, Oxfam, Relief International, UNAIDS, UNDAW, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP, WHO, Winrock International, Women's Refugee Commission, and World Vision.

### **Annual Work Plan**

The IASC SWG activities will be based on a results based annual work plan to be drafted by the co

chairs in consultation with the IASC SWG members. Members of the SWG will be expected to report on progress towards the work plan in writing as well as during the quarterly teleconference calls.

**Meetings**

The IASC SWG Members will meet remotely through quarterly teleconferences to review progress on the annual work plan, as well as once or twice a year for face to face meeting to review progress and develop the work plan for the following year. Video conferencing will be used as much as possible. Specific items on the work plan may generate smaller working groups which may decide to meet more frequently as needed.

**Communication**

The SWG members will communicate via e mail discussion list, with additional information being provided through the IASC SWG Web Portal.

**Responsibility of Co Chairs**

The work of the IASC SWG will be facilitated by co chairs who will have the overall responsibility for coordinating the activities of the working group and reporting and liaising with the IASC Working Group and Secretariat. Specific activities include:

- In coordination with members, develop annual work plans that promote improved gender equality policies and programming within IASC member organizations
- Set meeting agendas based on priority issues, circulate minutes from meetings, and ensure follow through on action points and advocacy items
- Convene and chair quarterly teleconferences of the SWG and the annual face to face meeting
- Report to the IASC Working Group and Secretariat on progress made towards the annual work plan
- Represent the SWG at high level meetings, as requested, to raise the profile of the SWG

**Nomination and Selection of Co Chairs**

The co chair position belongs to the organization, not the person, and it is rotational among agencies/organizations who are participating members of the IASC Gender Sub Working Group. Any agency that is a member of an IASC member organization or the member of the IASC NGO Consortia can nominate a staff member. The co chairs will collect nominations for a new co chair(s) beginning at least two months prior to the expiration of a co chair's term. The SWG membership will vote at the annual face to face meeting on the selection of the new co chair(s), or through electronic voting before the end of one term of the exiting co chairs.

**Term of Co Chairs**

The length of time for an organization to be the co chair is from one term of two consecutive years to maximum of two terms consecutively. An organization must wait one term before they can serve again as co chair. The terms of the co chairs will be staggered by one year to ensure continuity in leadership.

**Rotating Co Chairing Arrangement**

Co chairing arrangement should be between two entities, one representing the NGO community and/or IFRC and the other the UN agencies and IOM. Some arrangements are allowed to have more

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than two organizations sharing the load of one entity of co chairmanship. This will be allowed for the reasons of continued support and engagement in the work of the IASC Gender SWG. This will facilitate sharing responsibilities for implementation of the IASC gender SWG annual work plans and building accountability among participating member agencies. Thus, two NGOs can be nominated as one part of the co chairmanship arrangement; the same applies for UN agencies as to allow more participation, flexibility in sharing responsibility and building accountability for results within the IASC Gender SWG in Humanitarian Action.

**Names of Co Chairs**

The Co Chairs of IASC Gender SWG in Humanitarian Action represent UN and NGO partnerships as a way to increase accountability and to reflect the Principles of Partnership.

As of October 2010 the Co Chairs of the IASC SWG are: An NGO representative of InterAction, International Medical Corps, OCHA and UNICEF.

Prior co chairing arrangements were

From 2008 to 2010 – UNFPA and an NGO representative of InterAction

From 2007 to 2008 – WHO and UNFPA (as a SWG)

From 2005 to 2006 – OCHA and WHO (as a Taskforce)

From 2003 to 2006 – UNICEF and WFP (as a Taskforce)