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**IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness**  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Date established:** 2004

**End of mandate:** *ongoing*

**GOAL**

The Sub-Working Group (SWG) on Preparedness promotes collaboration in emergency preparedness among humanitarian actors, in aid of effective and timely humanitarian response.

**OBJECTIVES**

The SWG has a normative rather than an operational role directed towards the following objectives:

- Development of inter-agency guidance on preparedness
- Identification and sharing of best practices in preparedness activities
- Promulgation of early warning/early action information and advisories
- Promotion of inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness measures
- Strengthening inter-agency initiatives in emergency preparedness

**ON-GOING TASKS**

Inter-Agency Early Warning Systems.

- *The IASC Early Warning / Early Action Report* synthesizes the assessments and forecasts of many humanitarian actors into a concise format that predicts the need for changed levels of preparedness (and/or response) to humanitarian risk and humanitarian action in some 60-90 countries around the globe. Produced three times a year, the report is the product of consensus and reflects the diversity of mandates of participating IASC members.
- *HEWSweb I and HEWS Socio-Political Conflict Analysis* pilot constitute important innovations developed by the SWG that serve as instruments to enhance early-warning efforts of participating humanitarian agencies. Exchange of information and approaches on early warning systems continues among SWG members.

Inter Agency Preparedness Tools.

- *The Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines* provide a set of procedures for humanitarian country teams on collective planning for emergencies. First developed in 2001 and extensively revised in 2007, the Guidelines are accompanied by an on-line toolbox, a Power-Point presentation and a package of modules for training humanitarian country teams.
- The SWG continues to enhance the Guidelines, but also develops other preparedness tools such as training modules and simulation exercises.

**GOVERNANCE**

Officially created in 2004 as a subsidiary body of the IASC and its Working Group, the SWG prepares annual work plans, mid-term reports and end-of-year summary reports to the IASC Secretariat. The SWG is presided over by a joint chair which in principle will rotate among members.<sup>1</sup> Decisions are reached by consensus. Focal points are identified for activities to be undertaken within the annual work plan. There are three scheduled meetings per year, but additional consultations may be organised as the need arises. The SWG collaborates to build synergies with other relevant subsidiary bodies of the IASC, including the Task Force on Climate Change, the Clusters and the Needs Assessment Task Force, *inter alia*.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Open to all IASC members and standing invitees as well as the ISDR secretariat, and by invitation to non-IASC organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> During 2009 UNICEF and WFP co-chair the SWG. A change is planned in mid-2010.