

List of Outstanding Issues Relevant to Planning & Guidance Package

AHI & Humanitarian Action Pre-Pandemic, Pandemic, and Post-Pandemic Periods

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Introduction

A mushrooming of initiatives in recent months has resulted in a rich stream of insights that are pertinent and helpful to humanitarian actors. However, it appears that several issues need further reflection and/or available insights are not readily accessible. This tentative List is geared to identifying which issues are of concern and/or in need of additional insights. It is up to the 22-24 February meeting to determine (a) which issues need elaboration so as to facilitate action by humanitarian agencies and (b) how such work could be organized.

(1) Contingency Planning/Preparedness: Core Standards/Minimum Measures

It is understood that by early-March an outline Guidance Package to facilitate contingency planning by humanitarian actors will be available in addition to other tools including those of UNSIC and others that are sector or population specific. *In this context, and taking account of what may already be available, should a set of core standards or minimum measures be developed?*

(2) Ethics: A short paper, based on a University of Toronto report (that examined the SARS experience) has been prepared. However, it needs additional work. This subject area would also benefit from a round-table review by humanitarian and others on the way in which ethical considerations should inform planning, preparedness programmes, and actual support in the face of a pandemic. *What is the level of interest in this subject area? What is an optimal and time-efficient way of addressing this issue?*

(3) Community-level Action: Many NGOs and others have a wealth of experience in terms of building the resilience of communities to deal with AHI. At some point it would be useful if a short discussion paper outlining issues and insights pertinent to advance action that can be taken to equip communities to deal with AHI both in the current pre-pandemic period and during a pandemic when it is possible that external help will be significantly limited. Such a paper could, for example, include insights on the different ways in which communities cope with threats and external shocks, insights gained from the HIV/AIDS experience, and preparedness issues that are additional to a routine multi-hazard risk agenda, that needs to be addressed within the context of AHI planning. *Note: IFRC has kindly agreed to prepare a short outline of issues relevant to this subject area.*

(4) Urban-based Humanitarian Action: Since the bulk of humanitarian action is undertaken in rural settings, questions have arisen as to whether humanitarian actors are equipped to operate in urban environments should they be called upon to do so.

Queries have also been raised as to whether in settings where national militaries assume a central role in maintaining essential/other services is it likely that humanitarians can bring added value – whether in terms of advice or actual support – in such settings. *Thus, it would be useful to know if this is a wide concern and, if so, what can be done to mobilize insights and advice on this matter?*

(5) Standards of Care, Health and Beyond: This is a topic that has arisen in discussions on humanitarian action in relation to AHI and, in particular, in relation to a worse case scenario. It is unclear if humanitarian, including in particular, health actors are already tackling this issue particularly in the context of home or community-based care. There also appears to be number of issues beyond those that are specific to the health sector that are of concern. For example, questions have arisen about appropriate measures in relation to funeral and burial rites in situations where close contact between people is taboo. *Thus, is this a topic that needs further reflection by humanitarian actors and, if so, what is the best way of addressing this?*

(6) Poverty, Livelihoods, Vulnerability and Household Coping Mechanisms
There is a growing body of literature on the likely macro implications of a pandemic for a globalized economy. It would also appear that a protracted pre-pandemic period (whether of Phases 3, 4 or 5) would also have significant implications for vulnerable households. However, there appears to be few insights as to how a protracted pre-pandemic period or severe pandemic would play out at the national level and, in particular, how these would impact on the poor and their coping mechanisms. It would appear useful to have a short paper that looks, for example, at the AHI implications for backyard poultry producers, the role of remittances, insights gained on the impact of HIV/AIDs on families and communities. In other words, an overview of likely impacts on households that are already vulnerable either from a nutritional or economic perspective. *Is this a valid assumption? If yes, who is best able to pull such a paper together for dissemination within the wider humanitarian?*

(7) Advocacy; humanitarian agenda
There appears to be consensus on the value of an Advocacy Agenda geared to advancing humanitarian concerns within the context of AHI. An agreed agenda would, in principle, also allow for exchanged of views, experiences, and best practices. Issues that have been mentioned to-date include, for example, support for livelihoods, compensation for culling, investment in preparedness/national and local, ethical consideration etc *Thus, is there consensus on this? If yes, is there a volunteer entity to lead the way on this?*

(8) Communicating Risk within the Humanitarian Context: Different entities are concerned with the “what” and the “how” of communicating risk to different constituencies. It is unclear whether there is a need for relief actors to define humanitarian specific messages/programmes as well as the hardware in the event of a pandemic. *Thus, is there a need for a humanitarian specific agenda on this topic? If yes, what is the best way of pulling this together taking into account work that has been undertaken already?*

(9) Business Continuity Plans: Recent times have seen a host of initiatives, whether collectively or by individual agencies, to address the issue of operational continuity in the event of a severe pandemic. It would appear useful for available

tools and insights to be pulled together so as to facilitate the action of other humanitarian actors including, in particular, national counterparts. Pertinent issues include planning principles for prioritization and re-ordering in a pandemic-threatened and affected world. *Thus, given the wide range of material that already exists on different sites, is there a need for a short paper/guidance note to be pulled together on this and/or is there need for a round-table consultation on such a paper?*

(10) Fundraising + AHI: Given the many questions that obtain about the timing, scale and severity of a pandemic, and the way in which national and other authorities will react, it is unclear how a pandemic may impact on resource mobilization for humanitarian action. One of the key messages from external resource colleagues at a mid-January meeting in Boston on AHI is that voluntary giving will decline precipitously and/or cease entirely in the face of a severe pandemic. This poses multiple questions for operational continuity both in terms of programme delivery and organizational survival as well as staff welfare and salaries. *Thus, is this an issue of concern? Does it need some analysis and reflection?*

(11) Humanitarian Actors + Prevention/Containment of avian flu in poultry: While it is clear that the IASC has determined the need to focus on the relationship between contingency planning and preparedness from a humanitarian perspective, various interlocutors have underlined the importance of humanitarian actors being alert to, and/or engaged in, efforts to contain the threat at the avian flu level. Essentially, there appears to be two schools of thought on this, namely (a) this is a development rather than humanitarian issue and (b) humanitarian agencies need to be engaged – if only at the advocacy level – given the implications of culling, without compensation, for poverty and household nutritional levels and the potential knock-on effects of this for humanitarian action. From the perspective of the latter, humanitarian actors have a role to play both in terms (a) of advocacy for greater investment in prevention measures including compensation for culling and (b) to factor in the potential ramifications for livelihoods and vulnerability levels in the wake of mass culling and destruction of poultry stocks. *In general it would appear that this topic deserves dedicated attention including a meeting to review and advise on action and experiences to date that can be shared with others. Thus the February meeting needs, at a minimum, to determine a way forward on this topic.*