

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
50th MEETING**

18-19 September 2002

Conference Room 9, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Follow-up to the 2002 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

Circulated: 4 September 2002

The Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the Economic and Social Council was held from 15-17 July in New York. This year's theme focused on (a) reaching the vulnerable; and (b) the transition from relief to development. These themes were addressed in the Secretary-General's report.

For the first time since 1999, Member States successfully reached an agreement in the form of a resolution. The resolution, which was adopted by consensus, is substantive and action oriented (see attached). Despite a number of contentious issues, which related to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the "culture of protection", the negotiations were positive and were undertaken in an amicable atmosphere, a fact that was appreciated by both donors and members of the G-77.

In the area of IDPs, Member States noted with appreciation the establishment of the IDP Unit (Para 28). With respect to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, some G77 members raised their long-standing concern that the Guiding Principles were not fully debated by Member States when drafted and therefore, were not ready to endorse their application or state that assistance to IDPs should be based on the Guiding Principles. As a result, the resolution simply calls for strengthening the legal frameworks for assistance and protection to IDPs (Para 29).

As regards the "culture of protection", the G77 was reluctant to promote a culture of protection without a clearer understanding of what the concept entails. The discussion was further complicated by the G77's request to refer to the "protection of civilians under foreign occupation" (Para 24), a reference to the occupied Palestinian territories. The resolution reflects a compromise whereby the reference to civilians under foreign occupation is mentioned together with a reaffirmation of Member States' obligation to protect civilians and an invitation to them to promote a culture of protection (Para 23). A recognition that special attention should be given to victims of terrorism was also inserted in a preambular paragraph.

Some other notable elements in the resolution that may have implications for the IASC include the paragraphs related to the transition from relief to development and the need to align tools such as the CAP, CCA and UNDAF to facilitate transitional programming (Paras 12, 13).

The issue of humanitarian financing was of particular concern to members of the G77, who sponsored the paragraphs that encouraged donors to increase overall

humanitarian funding (Para 18) and to strengthen their coordination in order to address imbalances in CAP funding (Para 19).

Financial tracking is another important area, where the donors especially sought improvement. In this regard, the ERC was requested to make proposals on a comprehensive financial tracking system for the collection and dissemination of data on all humanitarian needs and contributions both within and outside the CAP (Para 20) – an effort that would require the cooperation and input from the UN system, donors as well as recipient countries.

Members of the G 77 also emphasized the need for improved collaboration within the United Nations to strengthen capacities at the local, national and regional level in order to allow vulnerable countries and regions to adequately respond to complex emergencies and natural disasters (Paras 2, 3).

Proposed Action/Decision by the IASC-WG :

IASC members are invited to examine the implications of the resolution for their work, with a view to strengthening efforts to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is undertaken. More specifically, the IASC-WG may wish to:

1) Protection of civilians:

Further promote the “culture of protection” including through the use of the Aide Memoire in peace operations and through participating actively in the planned regional workshops (Para 26) aimed at sharing information with Member States to improve practice on protection of civilians issues.

2) IDPs:

Address the concerns made by some G77 delegations regarding the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, by supporting efforts to organize informal consultations with interested delegations in order to discuss some of their outstanding concerns in this regard.

3) Transition:

Commit to ensuring that the United Nations’ humanitarian and development tools are effectively harmonized, as appropriate, with a view to ensuring that they adequately address the transition from relief to development.

4) Disaster management capacities:

Consider ways of enhancing their efforts to contribute to strengthening the disaster management capacities of affected countries and regions.