

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP  
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**Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions: Final Report of the IASC Task Force on  
Humanitarian Consequences of Sanctions**

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## **1. Introduction**

During its 40<sup>th</sup> meeting in February 2000 in Rome, the IASC-WG decided to revive the IASC Technical Group on Sanctions, subsequently renamed the IASC Task Force on Humanitarian Consequences of Sanctions. Initially the group was established in 1997 to provide objective information and analysis on the humanitarian impact of sanctions regimes.

During its 45<sup>th</sup> meeting in May 2001 in Geneva, the IASC-WG endorsed the revised Terms of Reference for the Task Force on Sanctions. According to the new TOR (see attachment), the Task Force, as a technical group, sought to reduce the humanitarian impact of sanctions by assessing and monitoring the humanitarian implications of sanctions regimes, elaborating assessment methodologies and developing advocacy strategies.

The group drew on expertise within OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, WHO, OHCHR, INTERACTION, SCHR and several NGOs. It met regularly in New York and communicated by e-mail.

## **2. Activities of the Task Force**

Since its revival in 2000, the Task Force on Sanctions ('TFS') focused mainly on the two following aspects of sanctions:

- Sanctions assessment methodology:

With the more frequent adoption of sanctions by the UN came an increased concern for their consequences with regard to the humanitarian situation in the targeted country. For that reason OCHA together with the TFS initiated a project to develop a consistent approach, which is understood and accepted by the relevant sanctions authorities, those subjected to sanctions regimes, as well as by the humanitarian community.

Therefore, the TFS worked on the development of a standardized and widely accepted methodology for assessing the humanitarian impact of sanctions. The two primary outputs of this work were the handbook on "*Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions*" and the "*Field Guidelines for Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions*".

The *Sanctions Assessment Handbook* will serve as a reference manual for those involved in sanctions assessments, and is intended also to better inform policymakers of how such assessments should be undertaken and what it implies. The *Field Guidelines* will assist and guide practitioners in the field in undertaking or contributing to humanitarian assessments under sanctions.

The two documents were discussed within the TFS at all levels of the drafting process, and the group was involved and consulted at every stage of the work. The inputs and contributions of the TFS ensured a broad and inter-agency perspective and were crucial to shape the two documents to become important tools for future assessments of sanctions regimes. It is also hoped that they will become a reference documents for sanctions authorities, encouraging them to consider the assessment and regular monitoring of sanctions regimes.

The two documents are now finalized and are ready to be presented to the IASC-WG in June 2004 for discussion and final endorsement.

- Assessment of different UN sanctions regimes:

On several occasions the humanitarian community or the relevant sanction authorities (i.e., the UN Security Council), requested assessments of the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of sanctions on a particular country or region, and each time OCHA was mandated to carry out such assessments (e.g., Assessments of the impact of UN sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Liberia).

Although the final responsibility for this reporting remained with the OCHA, the IASC Sanction Task Force was actively involved in the elaboration and drafting of these sanctions assessments. The methodology as well as the findings, data and draft reports were shared and discussed within the TFS before the reports were finalized and submitted.

The TFS actively contributed to the drafting of the following sanctions assessment reports:

- 'Economic Sanctions, Health and Welfare in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: 1999-2000' (New York and Belgrade: OCHA and UNICEF, 2001);
- Two reports of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian implications of the measures imposed by Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000) on the territory of Afghanistan under Taliban control, (S/2001/241 and S/2001/695);
- Two reports of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian implications of the measures imposed by Security Council resolutions 1343 (2001) and 1478 (2003) on Liberia, (S/2001/939 and S/2003/793).

The active involvement of the TFS in the drafting of these assessments was crucial to ensure for their credibility and the inclusion of the expertise of the wider humanitarian community on sanctions and their potential humanitarian implications.

### **3. Follow up mechanism**

With the completion and endorsement of the *Sanctions Assessment Handbook* and the *Field Guidelines*, the Sanction Task Force has completed its activities and will be closed down.

However, it will be important that a follow-up mechanism is established to ensure an interagency coordination for future sanction assessments and the monitoring of potential humanitarian consequences of sanctions.

In this regard OCHA remain the focal point for the subject of humanitarian implications of sanctions and will maintain the contact with the members of the Task Force. It will build up a network among the agencies that will serve as a platform for discussions and exchange of information, data and experiences related to sanctions. This forum will also allow the continuation of the interagency debate on sanctions and their potential humanitarian consequences.

#### **Proposed Actions/Decisions by the IASC-WG:**

- \* Endorsement of the final version of the Handbook and Field Guidelines.
- \* Endorsement of the final report of the Sanction Task Force and acceptance to close down the group.
- \* Agreement on a follow-up mechanism to ensure an interagency coordination for future sanction assessments and the monitoring of potential humanitarian consequences of sanctions.

Prepared by: Chair of the IASC Task Force on Humanitarian Consequences of Sanctions (OCHA), 31 May 2004

## **IASC Reference Group on Humanitarian Consequences of Sanctions**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Reference Group on Humanitarian Consequences of Sanctions (RGHCS) exists to provide objective information and analysis on a technical level on the humanitarian implications of sanctions regimes. It draws on expertise within OCHA, UN agencies, and other humanitarian organizations, including NGOs, to assess and monitor the humanitarian impact of sanctions through elaboration and tracking of relevant technical indicators. In particular the RGHCS looks at how adverse humanitarian consequences of sanctions regimes could be minimized.

The RGHCS will:

- Provide guidance and support to UN Country Teams for the monitoring and assessment of humanitarian consequences of sanctions regimes, including the evaluation of humanitarian exemption mechanisms;
- Further elaborate methodologies for the assessment and monitoring of sanctions;
- Coordinate and develop capacities to mobilize quickly experts on key aspects of the humanitarian impact of sanctions (such as public health, food security and nutrition, population displacement, economic condition, etc) in order to undertake field assessments to targeted countries before and during sanctions regimes;
- Make recommendations and draft advocacy strategies aimed at reducing the humanitarian impact of sanctions regimes;
- Serve as a forum for discussions and exchange of information and experiences related to sanctions;
- Report on the above actions to the IASC WG and seek the approval of all members prior to any RGHCS public statement.

10 April 2001