

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE  
PRINCIPALS MEETING**

**11 December 2003  
10.00 – 13.00 hrs  
Palais des Nations, Geneva  
Room XI**

**Ensuring Accountability for the Implementation of the IASC Policy on IDPs**

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Briefing Note on Recent Discussions in the Senior Network on Internal Displacement

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At its meeting of 26 November 2003, the Senior Network on Internal Displacement discussed the issue of HC/RC leadership and accountability for the implementation of IASC policy on IDPs, as outlined in the IASC's Protection Policy Paper (1999), the Supplementary Guidance to HCs/RCs on their Responsibilities in Relation to IDPs (2000), and the revised draft terms of reference for HCs (2003). The need to ensure HC/RC accountability was one of four areas identified by the Unit and the Network, on the basis of the results of the recent Protection Survey and the Response Matrix, as essential to the effective functioning of the collaborative approach (the other three are confidence, procedural transparency and predictability, and protection).

In its discussions, the Network identified several aspects of HC accountability as being particularly important:

- **Guidance:** There is a strong need to ensure that HCs are provided with guidance on *how* to fulfil their responsibilities contained in the IASC policy paper and supplementary guidance. Particularly important is assisting HCs with the development of practical steps and strategies to respond to the needs of IDPs such as encouraging joint country team analysis and common needs assessment. Equally important is ensuring HCs establish clear and defined responsibilities among agencies. A pre-requisite for this is the need to raise awareness among HCs/RCs of their responsibilities in regard to the IDPs, as contained in the relevant IASC documents.
- **Reporting:** There is a need to review the current aims and format of the monthly reporting by HCs to the ERC to reflect not only protection problems but also interventions and démarches with authorities taken to address concerns. Consideration should also be given to extending an information link between the ERC and RCs in states affected by conflict-induced displacement.
- **Procedural Transparency:** Closely linked to the accountability issue is the need to ensure transparent and clear decision-making on roles and responsibilities within country teams, especially regarding protection activities. A clear procedure should be developed for the assignment of roles and responsibilities at the field level by the HC, in consultation with the country team. Once agreed upon at the country level, assignments should be reviewed by the IASC-WG and endorsed by the ERC. In addition to providing a system of checks and

balances, a more defined procedure will allow HCs to enlist the support of headquarters to ensure that gaps are properly addressed.

- **Country Team/Agency Accountability:** In order to complement HC accountability, a meaningful accountability framework must also be developed for country teams. Current IASC policy on IDPs, for example, encourages the use of field-based MOUs to outline roles and responsibilities which could form the basis for such frameworks.
  
- **Protection Support and Advisory Team**  
A proposal for ensuring accountability is the establishment of an HC protection support and advisory team. The team would consist of a well respected and former HC, a current HC, a member of the IDP Unit and of OCHA's RCB. The team would travel to a few selected countries per year to discuss, in particular, the sitting HC's experience in coordination, protection and advocacy as it relates to IDPs. The objective would be to assess where the problem areas/gaps lie and to discuss steps which the sitting HC can take to remedy these. The rationale behind the proposal, which received support at the Senior Network, is that HCs learn first hand from each other. The team would report to the ERC on their conclusions.

**The Unit would be prepared to report on the progress of these different initiatives to the IASC Principals at their first meeting in 2004.**

In addition to the issues referred to above, a number of other issues were flagged by the Network as requiring attention. These are, however, **considered to go beyond the scope of the Unit and Network and to be more suited for consideration in the IASC or the IASC-WG:**

- **Selection:** there is a need to consider the selection process and criteria for HCs/RCs to ensure the appointment of individuals with appropriate humanitarian experience and skills.
  
- **Cooperation with UNDG:** There is a need to work more closely with the UN Development Group in exploring and adopting measures to ensure RC accountability. The Network noted that the results of the Protection Survey and Matrix reveal that accountability issues are particularly acute in countries where the "responsible and accountable official" is an RC rather than an HC or HC/RC. As such, the IASC or, on its behalf, the Unit and Senior Network should strengthen their links with UNDG in order to take steps to ensure RC accountability. Proposed steps include: the inclusion of a session on IDPs in the UNDG RC induction course; revision by the Chief Executives Board of the "Guidelines on the Functioning of the RC System" and the RC "job description" to reflect the responsibilities of RCs in relation to IDPs; extension of the HC-ERC reporting system to include RCs (as above); ensuring the inclusion of IDP concerns in CCAs and UNDAFs; and more frequent use of the IASC training material for IDPs in the Disaster Management Training Programme.