

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING**

7 April 2005

9:30 – 13:00 hrs

Room I, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Update on the Humanitarian Response Review

Circulated: 1 April 2005

I. Introduction

You will recall I briefed this august body at its meeting on 9 December 2004 on the plan to launch the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR). To recap, the objective of the Review is to assess the humanitarian response capacities of the UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Inter-Governmental bodies and NGOs, determine and map the gaps in the response system and make recommendations for addressing these gaps to ensure a better coordinated, more effective and speedy collective response to emergencies/disasters. Since then, I am pleased to report to you that the team of four independent consultants; Costanza Adinolfi, David Bassiouni, Roy Williams and Halvor Fossum Lauritzsen have started their assignment. I am taking this opportunity to update you on the Team's work and progress made so far.

II. Update

The Team of consultants started their work on 2nd February with an extensive briefing by OCHA led by AERC and Director, OCHA Geneva Yvette Stevens who oversees the Review under my guidance. The Team met with the IASC Reference Group on HRR and benefited from its perspectives on the scope, content and direction of the Review. OCHA Geneva established a small secretariat to support the work of the Team backed up by a Task Manager and an inter-departmental HRR Task Team.

Inception Report

The Team prepared and submitted an Inception Report on HRR at the end of February. The report lays out the Team's understanding and vision of the concept, coverage and sense of direction of the assignment entrusted to them. The Inception Report is viewed as a roadmap for the consultants to facilitate their task of reviewing the system-wide capacities of the international humanitarian community, determining and mapping the critical gaps and recommending realistic and practical ways and means for addressing these gaps.

The Inception Report articulates the objectives and scope of the Review and proposes a methodology organizationally and process-wise for conducting the process. It lays out the areas and issues to be reviewed including such new initiatives like the UK proposal for strengthening the humanitarian capacity and the French proposal for a Humanitarian Force.

The Report has been circulated widely and discussed in a number of important fora. The Team met and discussed the report with OCHA, the IASC Reference Group, HLWG, the IASC Consortia of NGOs, the HCs and on 22nd March with the IASC-WG at its meeting in Rome. The Team benefited substantively from these exchanges and has now revised the Inception Report incorporating most of the comments and observations made. The general feedback we have been receiving so far has been positive and complimentary. The agencies and organizations are comfortable and supportive of the transparent, inclusive, candid and business-like manner in which the Review is being conducted.

Consultations

The Team has started a series of consultations with stakeholder agencies/organizations and groups of important players in the humanitarian field. It has met with senior staff in IFRC, ICRC, WFP, WHO, FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, ICVA, Interaction and SCHR. It will continue meeting and interviewing all the designated staff of all the principal players in the humanitarian field. It had a productive exchange of views with the Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) at their Geneva Retreat on 17th March tasking them with the completion of an especially customized questionnaire on HRR. The Team participated in the DFID meeting on Flexible Funding Models held in London on 10th –11th March and will be meeting with the French authorities early this month on the Humanitarian Force proposal. An outcome of its meeting with the Geneva based Donors at the HLWG is the expected formation of a Donor Contact Group to follow up the HRR process. The Team is designing a special questionnaire for eliciting the views and perspectives of Donors.

To ensure NGOs are fully involved in the process, the Team is now engaged in discussion with the representatives of the IASC Consortia of NGOs to plan two consultative workshops – one in Washington D.C. for the North America NGOs and another in Geneva for the European NGOs. A third consultation is being considered to be held in Nairobi bringing together a cross section of the representatives of principal humanitarian stakeholders from both headquarters and the field. The outcome of these consultations will feed into the final HRR report.

Desk Review and Analysis

The Team has sent out a very comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the Review to all the major stakeholders for completion by mid-April. The Team has now began the desk review and analysis of the massive documentation received from all the agencies/organizations. The analysis of the questionnaire and the desk review will feed into the final HRR report.

III. Timetable and Next Steps

The Review is on track and the Team hopes to meet the deadline of the completion of a final report by end of June in time to feed into the Secretary-General's Report to ECOSOC.

Once the Team completes its task, it will be the responsibility of OCHA and IASC to transform the recommendations into an actionable Plan of Action following the timetable below:

- Final Report Dissemination by mid/end July
- Management Response Matrix of Recommendations by mid-August
- Development of the Recommendations into a Plan of Action by the IASC Reference Group mid-August - end-August.
- Follow-up on Management Response by end of August

I do not want to raise the hopes of the IASC Principals at this early stage of the Review but my expectation is that the HRR Team should emerge with realistic and practical recommendations which when implemented could allow us to move forward decisively and effectively in responding to emergencies and disasters.

I hope to keep you updated regularly on the progress of the Humanitarian Response Review and count on your continued support to make this important initiative a success.

Prepared by: OCHA, April 2005