INTER–AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
57th MEETING

16-17 June 2004
Room XII
Palais des Nations, Geneva

Follow-up to the High-Level Humanitarian Forum: Background Note

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1.   Further to the discussion at the High-Level Humanitarian Forum on the changing security environment, follow-up actions are required in three broad categories: **policy development on civil-military relations**, **achieving satisfactory clarity on the relationship of humanitarians to integrated peace operations**, and **identifying and implementing collaborative operational steps to improve humanitarians' security in the field**.

2.   The first two matters are being addressed in inter-agency fora. The third area for action – improving security through collaborative action – will be addressed through the **Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Collaborative Approaches to Security** (the Task Force). The Task Force is co-chaired by OCHA and SCHR and is composed of the full IASC membership. Whereas it has met three times in its full form, the co-chairs will propose the establishment of four sub-groups in order to more efficiently address the issues identified for action at the Forum. These issues are:

i.   **"Initiating the Dialogue"** – One of the clear conclusions of the Forum was that humanitarians must establish regular and sustained contact with 'unconventional' interlocutors who have influence in the zones of conflict and instability in which we work. The Task Force sub-group will determine how this can be practically achieved and will tap into other relevant initiatives, including "Dialogue with Islam" project being initiated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

ii.   **Codes of Conduct** – The Forum clearly identified the link between conduct and security. The Task Force sub-group on conduct and security will assemble relevant existing codes of conduct for humanitarian personnel (with a focus on staff behavior), identify elements of those codes pertinent to this discussion and determine the most effective way to "roll-out" what they have identified for system wide consideration.

iii.   **Recommendations for Action & Menu of Options** – The Forum also acknowledged the good and useful work carried out by the 'Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group - Staff Security Task Force' in 2001. That group produced recommendations and a menu of options for collaborative and operational actions at the field level, which have been taken up with mixed success. The Forum confirmed the utility of that Menu. A Task Force sub-group will propose a dissemination scheme for the Menu of options, as well as making proposals for monitoring its implementation.

iv.   **Pilot Countries for Collaborative Action** – A final Task Force sub-group will identify a small group of countries (three to four) where specific security-related collaborative actions can be piloted. This sub-group will determine criteria for selection of

those countries, propose a selection of countries for the exercise and finally suggest specific collaborative actions derived from the work of the other sub-groups that can effectively be piloted.

3. The Task Force will convene on 18 June 2004 to initiate this process and to designated sub-group participants. Thereafter, sub-group chairs will be responsible for the work of sub-groups, while maintaining regular contact with the co-chairs.   This process proved effective in the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Sexual Exploitation.

4. It is expected that the work of the sub-groups would be finished by October 2004.

Proposed Actions/Decisions by the IASC-WG:
*   Review and agree on the proposed areas of work for the Task Force.
*   Express commitments for the proposed follow up actions.

Prepared by OCHA, May 2004