

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

61st MEETING

22-23 June 2005

IOM (Geneva)

**Follow up to the Kobe Conference/Hyogo Framework for Action:
*IATF-IASC consultations-
Disaster Preparedness and Hyogo Framework Implementation***

Circulated: 13 June 2005

1. Background: The 61st IASC Working Group meeting held in March 2005 in Rome called for a number of actions to be taken to advance the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, particularly in relation to disaster preparedness. This included the organization of a workshop “of all relevant IASC and IATF/DR actors to review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action including the identification of indicators and to determine outstanding issues of Kobe follow-up¹.”

2. Options for the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework Implementation in relation to Disaster Preparedness

After a number of informal bilateral discussions with a cross-section of stakeholders on the most optimal means of addressing disaster preparedness from the perspective of the Hyogo Framework, a preliminary consultation of IASC and IATF/DR members was held on 26th May 2005. This consultation was able to take advantage of the presence of various colleagues in Geneva for the 11th Session of the Inter-Agency TF on Disaster Reduction. Participants were updated on the roles of the IASC and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) network (IATF/DR, ISDR Secretariat, and thematic and national platforms on disaster reduction) on risk reduction including, in particular, the often-repeated comment of member states that the thrust of Hyogo Framework implementation needs to occur at the national level.

The 26th May consultation, and related bilateral discussions, identified a number of issues and perspectives both in relation to the potential role of the IASC and that of others to strengthen disaster preparedness.

For many commentators, the issues of *process* (nature of collaboration between different entities and sets of stakeholders) and *focus* (items that should constitute a disaster preparedness agenda) are intertwined given, for example, the differences in composition of the IASC and the IATF on Disaster Reduction. In sum, the former is, primarily, composed of humanitarian entities and, for the most part, is focused on humanitarian capacity, practice, and policy while the latter has a wide range of stakeholders many of whom are directly concerned with strengthening risk reduction at the national level.

¹ Follow up on other action points from the Rome meeting are addressed in a separate paper concerned with the work plans of the subsidiary bodies of the ISDR Disaster Reduction Task Force (IATF/DR) and of the IASC, as well as Glossary.

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Many IASC members expressed concern about expanding the *scope* of existing IASC agendas given current work-programmes and pre-occupations. For the most part, there was consensus that the IASC was not well-positioned to move the Hyogo Framework agenda forward in a comprehensive manner. In other words, strengthening support for national and regional level entities was beyond its capabilities and remit.

At the same time, various participants stressed the importance of (a) addressing the humanitarian-development divide in relation to preparedness and (b) the value of greater cross-fertilization between the IASC and IATF/DR mechanisms. It was also noted that there is need for greater synergy and collaboration on issues such as vulnerability in relation to disasters and complex conflict-driven emergencies. As the Tsunami experience has also made clear, it is important that relief and development actors (a) work together in a more structured fashion than before and (b) invest more heavily in building the resilience of disaster-prone communities to natural hazards. Equally, it is important that there is greater attention to the trans-national nature of many hazards and related disasters.

Thus, while no definitive conclusions were reached, there was consensus on the need to continue to explore synergies and stronger interaction than before. In this connection, the potential expansion of the IATF on Disaster Reduction may help facilitate stronger synergies between different entities and constituencies.

The creation of a standing IASC subsidiary body on Disasters (concerned with natural hazards) is suggested as the best means for continued IASC engagement on Hyogo Framework-specific issues.

3. Identification of Hyogo Framework Indicators for Disaster Preparedness

There are different viewpoints as to the focus of an inter-agency agenda concerned with facilitating implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Many are of the view that (a) the focus should be on the formulation of generic guidance that is then adapted for specific contexts and locations and (b) that a variety of steps need to be taken to facilitate, monitor and measure implementation. Thus, for example, stakeholders would need to decide if an inter-agency agenda should

- (i) focus solely on benchmarks and indicators to measure the extent of HF compliance?
- (ii) whether indicators should be sector specific or go beyond this ?
- (iii) include the identification of disaster preparedness standards ?
- (iv) monitor level of resources allocated to disaster preparedness?
- (v) systematically evaluate the relationship between level of preparedness and disaster impacts?
- (vi) include other issues including those identified as part follow-up to the Five-Country Pilot Study on Disaster Preparedness? and
- (vii) whether the focus should be on the development of generic guidance and tools for use by humanitarian agencies and whether such support should also be developed to assist national and regional efforts?

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Proposed Action by the IASC-WG

- Review and endorse the establishment of a standing subsidiary body addressing disasters associated with natural hazards, with the implementation of the Hyogo Framework in relation to preparedness as a priority item.

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