INTER–AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
60th MEETING

21-22 March 2005
WFP Rome

IDPs:
Follow-up to recommendations of IDD missions to priority countries and discussion on options for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and decision-making on IDP responses, including through possible adjustments to the Senior Network

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Background

Following the External Evaluation of OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) requested that the new Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division (IDD) to focus on enhancing collaborative action in a limited number of countries where the collaborative approach was deemed to be insufficiently effective, or where major gaps in the international response to internal displacement had been identified. Eight countries were selected and since July 2004, IDD has completed missions to six of them (Burundi, Colombia, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan (Darfur and North/South) and Uganda. Two of these countries have been visited more than once (Uganda and Sudan).

In each case, IDD has provided concrete recommendations on improving the response to IDPs' needs aimed at Country Teams, IASC partners, and OCHA (including IDD), as well as host Governments and donors. All recommendations have been endorsed by the relevant Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators prior to discussion at meetings of the Senior Network and circulation to other stakeholders. In a number of instances, IDD staff have also provided specific technical advice (e.g. leading the drafting of protection strategies or return frameworks) at the request of the Humanitarian Coordinators.

IDD plans to concentrate its efforts in the coming months to ensuring adequate follow-through on the recommendations made to date, consolidating achievements thus far and targeting specific weak points where implementation of recommendations has been poor. In particular, IDD will endeavour to secure more concrete agency and donor follow-through. This focus is in line with the findings of the recent Donor IDP Evaluations Synthesis Report 'Learning from Evaluations of Support to Internally Displaced Persons', which stressed the importance of increased donor support to the collaborative approach at the country level and of the External Evaluation, which recommended that operational agencies should make more effort to implement recommendations emanating from field missions aimed at strengthening the collaborative response to IDPs on the ground.

To date, progress of varying degrees has been achieved on 45% of IDD's recommendations. In analysing obstacles to implementation, IDD has found agency follow-through to be particularly problematic. To assist in addressing this concern, IDD has analysed its recommendations thus far with a view to highlighting the major stumbling blocks and agreeing with IASC partners on how best to overcome them. This exercise has underscored four recurrent problem areas where more commitment to implementation from IASC partners is required:

- Protection deficit, in terms of the development of protection strategies and effective coordination and implementation of protection activities, including particularly SGBV-prevention and mitigation programmes;

- Insufficient strategic planning and management of the overall IDP response, including strategy development and implementation, and weak leadership on camp management issues;

- Inadequate presence on the ground in IDP-affected areas, and lack of resources and/or will to bolster capacity, especially on protection;

- Poor planning for and implementation of programmes in support of IDP return, transition and recovery.

Other recurrent concerns include lack of knowledge among Country Teams of the IASC Policy Package on implementing the collaborative response to internal displacement; inadequate data collection and analysis on internal displacement; and insufficient support to local and national authorities on internal displacement policy and legal issues.

The IDD has endeavored to utilize Network meetings over the past 7 months as the primary forum in which to discuss recommendations on strengthening the collaborative response both at the systemic level (through the finalisation of the IASC Policy Package) and at the country level (through discussion on follow-up to IDD mission recommendations). This is in line with the External Evaluation's call for renewed efforts to re-energize the Senior Network as a working group for consultation and for operational agencies to invest more in the Senior Network process.

In November 2004, the Network explicitly agreed that future meetings would focus on follow-up and not information-sharing. However, despite best intentions, agency participation in the Network has often been at too junior a level to enable a proper discussion of follow-through. Moreover, agencies have not always come prepared, despite advance warning of the country-specific action points to be covered at forthcoming meetings. This has meant that Network meetings continue to be more focused on information sharing rather than on agency accountability and performance in support of the collaborative approach. IDD recognizes that a more systematic approach is required on its side to inform partners of specific concerns that will be discussed well in advance, and commits to taking steps to achieve this. However, greater commitment from IASC partners is also a prerequisite to progress.

First background item on agenda item: IDPs

In order to ensure better follow-through on strengthening the response to IDP crises in the priority countries, IDD proposes a number of measures.

Proposed Actions by the IASC WG members:

- Endorse the proposed focus by IDD and the Senior Network in the coming period on enhanced follow-through on the implementation of IDD recommendations on strengthening the collaborative approach in the priority countries, including by seeking systemic solutions to the recurrent problem areas identified above and engaging more actively with donors and agencies.

- Approve IDD's commitment to initiate standardized follow-up reporting and mission recommendation tracking, and to provide clearer information to IASC partners in advance of Senior Network meetings on follow-up matters to be discussed.

- Agree to request their field representatives in the priority countries to report regularly to HCs, as well as their Headquarters, on progress and obstacles to implementation. (This will encourage more systematic reporting from HCs on status of recommendations, and allow IDD to identify and address systemic problems as they arise. OCHA's planned deployment of IDP advisers to bolster OCHA field offices and support to HCs on IDP issues should also assist in this regard.)

- Agree to send senior representatives, with decision-making authority, to future meetings of the Senior Network, to facilitate a more solution-oriented discussion of achievements and obstacles to implementation. Commit to providing more input on challenges to implementation with a view to developing joint strategies to overcome them.

Prepared by: Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division, February 2005