

Third background paper on agenda item: Linkages between the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) and other initiatives

<p style="text-align: center;">INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP 61 st MEETING</p> <p style="text-align: center;">22-23 June 2005 IOM (Geneva)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Linkages between the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) and other initiatives: <i>The Independent Study on UN Integrated Missions: Background Note</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Circulated: 17 June 2005</p>

The independent study team presented its *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, in May 2005. The report identifies a number of ways that the United Nations can better harness its resources to more efficiently and comprehensively respond in peacekeeping and peacebuilding situations, including with better safeguards to protect humanitarian principles and space.

In opening, the study highlights that there is currently no accepted definition or understanding of what constitutes an integrated mission. This has an impact on how different actors understand the aims of the mission and see their respective roles either within or in relation to the mission.

The report also notes that at least three dilemmas arise out of integration which it describes as: (1) the humanitarian dilemma which reflects a tension between the partiality involved in supporting a political transition process and the impartiality needed to protect humanitarian space; (2) the human rights dilemma which relates to the tension that arises when the UN feels compelled to promote peace by working with those who may have unsatisfactory human rights records, while still retaining the role of an “outside critic” of the same process; and (3) the local ownership dilemma which relates to the need to root peace processes in the host country's society and political structures without reinforcing the very structures that led to conflict in the first place.

In addition, the Report identifies the need to ensure that the long-term perspectives of transition and development are embedded from the outset of a mission, that preparations for “post-mission activities” are done early, and that funding practices are adapted to underpin the “integrated” nature of the operation.

The report then focuses on four key areas:

1. Strategic policy perspectives

The Report recommends that strategic planning be more inclusive, both at headquarters and in the field, and suggests that the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) should be the main mechanism for devising strategic frameworks, whilst the department handling the issue (which will usually be DPKO) should lead in terms of operational planning. In the field, the report recommends that each mission have a dedicated strategic policy planning capacity, reporting directly to the SRSG.

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The report also emphasises the importance of regular periodic review of the mission's mandate, strategic policy and operational plans. Again, the proposed Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office and the Secretary-General's Cabinet could play an important role in this regard and links between these institutions and the mission would need to be clearly set out.

2. Mission planning

A mission's operational objectives should be based on the long-term strategy for building sustainable peace. UNCTs should be engaged in the process to ensure coherent links between mandates, resources and agency competencies and consequently adapt their own activities to the priorities and objectives identified in the joint planning process. These objectives should reflect benchmarked transitional and long-term targets to ensure a smooth hand-over from the peacekeeping to the reconstruction and development phases of the UN's in-country activities. The purpose and operational objectives of the mission should be clearly communicated within the mission and to the host population and other stakeholders, making distinctions for independent humanitarian activity as necessary.

3. Mission design and structures

The main argument in the Report is that form must follow function. The desired function (i.e. overarching strategic objectives of the mission/"centre of gravity" of the mission) should determine the structure of the mission. One template does not fit all and only that which needs to be integrated should be integrated, resulting in asymmetric management.

The study recommends that the need to observe humanitarian principles in peacebuilding missions be recognised in all mission mandates. It proposes that generic guidelines be issued to ensure that humanitarian principles are observed and humanitarian space protected. In this regard, the study notes the need for a more precise agreement on what constitutes humanitarian activities and "humanitarian space", particularly in more complex peacebuilding operations. It suggests that a more restricted focus, for example, upon urgently required assistance to protect and save lives, would provide a clearer understanding of what was needed and why to safeguard the humanitarian operational environment. The study also recommends that office supporting the official directly responsible for humanitarian coordination (i.e. the OCHA office) be physically separate from the mission to ensure reasonable access by the wider humanitarian community. It further recommends the DSRSG/RC/HC should have responsibility for determining the appropriateness of "hearts and minds" campaigns and the use of QIPs.

4. Leadership and management

The study notes that clear generic guidelines and specific terms of reference are required to ensure coherence and coordination at the operation level between SRSGs, DSRSG/RC/HCs and Force Commanders. It also recommends that an independent oversight capacity be established to review and evaluate the mission's progress against clear benchmarks and guidelines.

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Update in the context of the IASC Working Group

The Principals of the ECHA Expanded Core Group have recently met to consider the study's recommendations and necessary follow-up action. In particular, they have tasked OCHA, DPKO and UNDG with preparing a commentary and implementation paper on the study recommendations and possible additional courses of action, as well as developing proposals for a revised SG's Note of Guidance and for improved mission planning and planning capacity. OCHA and UNDG have agreed to consult with the agencies, including NGOs, on what these proposals might include. DPKO has also agreed to prepare a Note of Guidance on the DSRSG/RC/HC's role in determining the appropriateness of QIPs and “hearts and minds” projects.

Proposed Actions by the IASC WG members:

- Provide comments on: (a) What should the consultative mechanism be to ensure better engagement of all agencies on the ground, including NGOs, in mission planning processes?
(b) What concrete guidelines could be provided for better protecting humanitarian principles and humanitarian space in integrated missions and what should the latter encompass?

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