

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE-WORKING GROUP
51st MEETING**

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**WHO Headquarters, Geneva
Room M505**

Agenda Item: Preparation for the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2003

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Preparations for the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2003

Background

To circumvent the difficulties related to IDPs, which were encountered during the 2000 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in 2001-2 Member States elected to choose themes that were less contentious in nature. In 2001 and 2002 the themes selected revolved around strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, reaching the vulnerable and the transition from relief to development. By selecting such broad themes, Member States hoped that the process of negotiating and reaching inter-governmental agreement on the SG's reports would be easier to come by. Success came in 2002 with the adoption of the first ECOSOC Resolution in 3 years.

Reporting Requirements

The 2002 ECOSOC Resolution contains many diverse and substantive elements, which need to be reported on in 2003. Apart from the progress report requested by the Resolution, Member States expect to be updated on general humanitarian developments covering the period 2002-3. The theme selected will then form the core of the Secretary-General's report.

It should be noted that the theme for the humanitarian segment is determined based on suggestions and consultations among Member States. The final decision rests with the ECOSOC Bureau, which is elected by ECOSOC Members in January/February, 2003. However, after consultations with the IASC, OCHA can informally provide ideas and inputs to support the process of selecting a theme.

On instructions from the Secretary-General, the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management is applying strict limitation to the lengths of reports presented to intergovernmental bodies (they should not exceed 8200 words). In light of these limitations and considering that the reporting issues stemming from the ECOSOC resolution alone are considerable, it is crucial that, for this year, the IASC encourage Member States to select a theme that is specific and focused.

Selecting a Theme for the Humanitarian Segment:

During initial discussion with some key delegations, some areas of interest were identified for consideration as a theme for ECOSOC. These include:

- Strengthening the humanitarian response and mobilizing greater resources for emergency humanitarian assistance for areas with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS;
- Strengthening cooperation among humanitarian and development organizations particularly the Bretton Woods institutions to facilitate the transition from relief to development;
- Providing a review with a view to making recommendations to donors on how to address the chronic underfunding for low profile emergencies.

The ECOSOC report will contain a progress report on the actions taken in response to the 2002 resolution and therefore the IASC may wish to consider specific elements of the resolution as a means for developing the theme.

Action:

- The IASC WG is invited to consider and provide comments on the above options for the suggested themes for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment in 2003. The IASC is also invited to suggest additional areas for consideration.