

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
56th MEETING**

**11-12 February 2004
Auditorium
WFP Headquarters, Rome**

**Update on the work of the IASC subsidiary bodies: TF on Natural Disasters-
Progress Report**

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The IASC WG had been increasingly concerned to note increasing human suffering and material destruction caused by cyclical natural disasters. Consequently, the IASC WG workplan for 2003 identified the area of natural disaster response as one its priorities.

Subsequently, the IASC WG meeting in July 2003 established a Task Force for Natural Disasters with the objective of conducting a critical evaluation of the status of preparedness of the IASC system to responding to natural disasters. The Task Force was requested to draw on the previous work of the IASC WG in the area of natural disasters, namely the Reference Group which, in the year 2000, came up with a number of valid recommendations, some of which had been implemented to date. The TF was also asked to examine other proposals such as that put forward by the IFRC.

The Task Force, composed of such IASC members as IFRC, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO and IOM, has, since its inception, met four times and made considerable progress. Based on a broad mandate given to it by the IASC WG, the TFND refined its TORs and developed an action plan for 2004 with a corresponding time frame. These were presented last November to the IASC WG, which approved the TORs and the TFND broad action plan. For the February 2004 IASC WG meeting, the TF was requested to:

- Report on the workshop planned for January 2004
- Present a more elaborated workplan for 2004
- Link its activities with the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning.

The attached detailed workplan represents the outcome of the TFND Workshop held in January 2004. During the workshop, the group has initiated the review of the 2000 recommendations and prioritised them for further action. The workshop also provided an opportunity for developing a list of most disaster-prone countries, based on commonly agreed upon criteria, from which a selected group of countries will be considered for implementation of a Pilot Project. Finally, the group has initiated the development of TORs and a methodology for conducting a Pilot Project, as described in the Action Plan, in order to critically evaluate the status of preparedness of the IASC system in the area of natural disaster response (duly linking the Task Force work with other IASC subsidiary bodies, as appropriate). The Task Force further

undertakes to identify resources for the implementation of the Pilot Project. The TF workplan for 2004 foresees the implementation of the Pilot Project and a critical evaluation of the system, on the basis of the results thereof, with clearly defined areas of responsibility and time-frame for implementation.

Prepared by: IASC TF on Natural Disasters