

**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-
Initial review of the 2000 IASC Reference Group on Natural Disasters
Recommendations**

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During the meeting of 16 January 2004, the ND TF conducted an initial review of the IASC RG recommendations from 2000 with a view to actualise and validate them. Since 2000, when the RG recommendations were made, significant changes have taken place at the UN and IASC level in terms of system, organizational structures, new initiatives, as well as actual practice.

In revisiting the recommendations from 2000, the TF identified several areas that may require follow-up action. Marked with **(P)** are those issues that could be included in the TORs of the Pilot project, i.e., issues that the Pilot exercise could help focus on during its implementation. Lessons drawn from the Pilot would then be reviewed at HQ. Marked with **(HQ)** are those items/issues that would require follow up mainly at HQ level.

COORDINATION

Overall the recommendations under this section remain valid; however there are aspects that need to be revisited. These include:

- In broad terms, it was felt that there is a need to better explain the relations between and respective role of DMTs vs UNCTs vs IASC/field as there may be duplication or redundancy, as well as opportunities to clarify/simplify organizational aspects and enhance the related guidance material **(HQ)**
- The status/efficiency of DMTs is not exactly known (the instructions establishing DMTs date back to 1991 and no in-depth review has been undertaken since then). TF Pilot project could therefore look at the above organizational aspects in selected countries **(P)**
- Guidance material for UNCTs should be revisited in line with the above, with improved SOPs and/or information material to be developed **(HQ)**

However

- The TF noted that coordination aspects at headquarters level and between HQ and the field were not appropriately addressed in the 2000 recommendations.
- It is generally felt that there is a need to strengthen horizontal coordination among emergency response actors and offices of the various agencies/partners **(HQ)**

- In particular the Early Warning and monitoring function requires enhanced and continued information sharing across organizations **(HQ)**.
- It is also felt that there is a need to take stock of the most recent initiatives under way by individual agencies/actors in this area and to strengthen this area of collaboration **(HQ)**
- These initiatives can be facilitated by the IASC SG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning **(HQ)**

PRE DISASTER CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The recommendations contained under this section should be substantively revisited to update the discourse on current IASC practice in overall preparedness, further to the work of the IASC SG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning as well as in the light of other recent developments, such as the increasing use of common services.

In general terms, the following observations were made by the TF;

- Emphasis should be placed on process aspects and issues (as per the IASC Inter-Agency Guidelines for Humanitarian Contingency Planning) not on a plan per se **(P) (HQ)**;
- The CP process should engage both field & HQ **(HQ)**;
- The field CP process should be based on efficient info sharing and participation **(P)**
- Focus on global monitoring based on both hazards and vulnerability and building on agencies' current initiatives, capacities and mandates **(HQ)**
- Outputs must be jointly owned and shared across participating IASC actors **(P)**
- At HQ level, there must be more commitment to effectively raise awareness of UNCTs and support their preparedness planning work **(HQ)**
- Clearly, UN + IASC must conceive their plans and pre-disaster activities as a way to support local actors (and not vice versa) **(P)**
- The decisions about the potential participation of bilateral actors and donors should be determined locally by UNCTs, based on criteria of opportunity and appropriateness **(P)**
- The existing IASC CP guidelines are for review in 2004 by the IASC Sub-Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning **(HQ)**
- Again, the roles of DMTs and IASC teams, as well as their relation to local actors and Government counterparts must be clarified **(P+HQ)**
- Is there any scope to review the efficiency/effectiveness of existing DMTs? **(P+HQ)**

The TF also reiterated that the IASC SG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning is the focal point for overall preparedness and contingency planning matters **(HQ)** and that duplication should be avoided.

ASSESSMENT

The TF felt that the recommendations under this section are partly outdated, particularly in the light of the changes that have taken place in UNDAC's TORs following the IASC review of the system.

- Regarding the coordination of assessments, the relation between RCs/DMTs/and IASC teams might require some further clarification (see above) **(P)**

- Do standard tools exist, i.e., joint methods, formats etc.? **(P)+(HQ)**
- Awareness raising training events and information material should address the system as a whole, clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of all actors including HQ actors **(P)+(HQ)**
- Need to link this discussion to initiatives under way in other IASC TF regarding common assessment methods/approaches **(HQ)**

TARGETING

- In general, it was felt that targeting in humanitarian operations is being conducted as per the recommendations **(P)**
- The existing Contingency planning guidelines provide some essential guidance on how to approach targeting during planning processes

LOGISTICS (HQ)

It was agreed to leave this theme for discussion at the February IASC-WG meeting in Rome.

It was noted however that since 2000:

- UNJLC was established
- WFP provided support to interagency logistics on a “when required” basis

EMERGENCY TELECOM / ICT (HQ)

It was agreed to leave this theme for discussion at the February IASC-WG meeting in Rome.

Since 2000 collaboration on Emergency Telecom/ICT has been very much “ad hoc”.

FUNDING (HQ)

The TF felt that all recommendations except for # 3 remain valid. It was noted that follow-up had been done on CAP related matters.

- For the last three recommendations **(P)** to look into lessons learned at local level

REPORTING + INFO SHARING

The TF felt that all recommendations need to be revisited and emphasised the need for enhancing information sharing at the global level **(HQ)**

- Need to clarify opportunities that may arise through the use of HICs **(HQ)**
- Need to look into good practice in the field of info sharing, lessons and standards (including) **(P)**, taking into account the work under way by the IASC TF on field Information Management.