

**IASC Secretariat**  
**28th WG - ECHA, IASC & Their Inter-Relationship**

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**Item 4. Respective Roles of ECHA, the IASC, the Steering Committee  
of the IASC and their Inter-Relationship.**

**ECHA/IASC RELATIONSHIP**

The respective TORs of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) are summarized as follows:

**ECHA:**

- 1) Assistance to the Secretary-General in harmonizing work programmes and formulating recommendations to inter-governmental bodies.
- 2) Addressing of humanitarian issues that could benefit from joint discussions with DPKO and DPA.

**Decision-making Process**

The Secretary-General has stated that the Executive Committee will exercise decision-making responsibilities for:

- i) matters within the authority of the head of each of the participating entities that are of common concern to these entities;

- ii) the formulation of recommendations to the Secretary-General on matters affecting all of the participating entities that require the Secretary-General's approval; and
- iii) the formulation of recommendations to inter-governmental bodies on matters that affect all or most of the participating entities.

It is expected that the decisions of ECHA will be taken by consensus, with the Secretary-General's office being kept fully informed. Where such consensus is not possible, the issue under consideration should be referred to the Secretary-General for decision.

### **IASC:**

- 1) making strategic policy decisions
- 2) making major operational decisions
- 3) advocating common humanitarian principles, collectively or individually, on behalf of the IASC
- 4) bringing issues to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, through the ERC
- 5) designating the Humanitarian Coordinators and selecting coordination arrangements.
- 6) arbitration where no consensus can be reached at the Working Group level
- 7) approving the general work programme of the IASC and the WG

### **Decision-Making Process**

The IASC will endeavour to take all decisions by consensus. In instances where there is no consensus but where there is a convergence of views among a majority of IASC members, the following will apply:

- i) on matters pertaining to the implementation of agreed coordination arrangements, the ERC will decide on the basis of the convergence of the majority;
- ii) on other important matters, the ERC will refer to the Secretary-General for a decision;

- iii) all decisions will be taken in full respect of the mandates of individual IASC members.

## **SYNERGY BETWEEN ECHA AND IASC**

Both ECHA and IASC are chaired by the ERC. Potentially this should allow for easier coordination and synchronization of agenda as well as discussions of and decisions on major humanitarian issues.

- 1) Since ECHA meets more frequently than IASC, urgent humanitarian issues could be more easily and rapidly tabled at the former forum. ECHA could therefore be engaged more rapidly with pressing humanitarian issues between IASC meetings.
- 2) Decisions taken by ECHA could, when presented and adopted by IASC, receive a wider consensus and support since the membership of the latter body extends beyond the United Nations to cover the larger humanitarian community.
- 3) ECHA discussions are binding on its members allowing for rapid preliminary response action giving time for IASC to study and review the same issues in depth.
- 4) ECHA and IASC should agree on procedural steps which could increase the synergy and linkages between the membership of the two Committees relating to agenda settings, sharing of conclusions of meetings and agreeing on what issues are best discussed at which fora.

## **CREATION OF A STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE IASC**

In the Report of the Secretary-General, “Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform”, it was stated that in order to enhance a rapid response capacity based on coherent policy, a Steering Committee of the IASC will be established. The Steering Committee will comprise UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a representative of the non-governmental organization community. The report further states that the full IASC membership will be informed of consultations in the Steering Committee and inputs will be sought as appropriate.

- 1) The establishment of the Steering Committee of the IASC requires further consideration with respect to ensuring to clarity in its role in relation to the IASC itself and ECHA (inter alia, which types of issues are to be referred to each body, the periodicity of consultations, etc.)

- 2) A decision will be required on the process for determining the NGO representative within the Steering Committee.

## **SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR IMPROVING WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECHA AND IASC**

Until such time as a joint IASC/ECHA Secretariat is able to be established, the following procedures could be implemented to contribute to enhanced coordination between the two bodies and minimizing duplication.

- 1) ECHA Secretariat to send the ECHA agenda to all IASC Members at least two working days in advance of the meeting, together with a request that any views on issues they would like to have the ERC raise be communicated directly to the ECHA Secretariat.
- 2) IASC Secretariat to reciprocate, i.e. copies of the agenda and background information to be sent to all ECHA Members not represented in the IASC with a request that input be provided to the IASC Secretariat. The agenda and other papers would be circulated at latest 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, consistent with inter-agency agreements.
- 3) ECHA Secretariat to distribute conclusions and decisions of all meetings to IASC members not participating in the Executive Committee. Conclusions and decisions also to be forwarded to all DHA staff via the Bulletin Board as well as to Humanitarian Coordinators. Again, the IASC Secretariat to reciprocate.
- 4) Once the IASC Secretariat receives the agenda for an upcoming ECHA meeting, it would advise the ECHA Secretariat of all recent decisions and actions taken by the IASC or its subsidiary bodies on those subjects. ECHA Secretariat to reciprocate. The two Secretariats should distribute any relevant documentation from the one committee to the other as part of the background material.