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Humanitarian Financing: Study Four and the Iraq Dimension: Draft ToR

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Project proposal extension summary

Study Four was designed to assess the impact of changes in humanitarian funding upon the United Nations. Arising out of this original intention, the ad-hoc group on the implications of changes in humanitarian financing agreed that the United Nations needed to determine how best to position itself in light of the increasingly complex and competitive aid environment, an environment clearly related to uncertain funding patterns. The terms of reference for the Study requested that the conclusions of the Study 4 be translated into what it described as an "action-oriented implementation plan."

There is a general feeling that Iraq today presents a most poignant example of complexity and competition in the world of humanitarian assistance. And based upon that perspective, it has been suggested that Study Four would greatly benefit from incorporating the Iraq experience into its ultimate findings. The proposal, terms of reference and suggested schedule for incorporating aspects of the UN's early humanitarian involvement in Iraq into Study Four are outlined below. It is hoped that this initial analysis might also serve other studies that will explore the significance of Iraq under the occupation forces for the UN's humanitarian role and responsibilities.

The conclusions arising out of this initial analysis of the Iraq operation will be incorporated into the final study, due to be presented in August 2003.

Background

Arising out of the 2002 ECOSOC four studies were launched in order to gain a clearer understanding about humanitarian funding trends and their impact upon what was called the competitive aid environment. Initially there were three studies: [a] to analyze donor aid flows; [b] to assess the ways that donor governments made funding decisions; and [c] to evaluate the quality of needs assessments. A fourth study, initiated by the ad-hoc group on the implications of changes in humanitarian Financing, was subsequently added towards the beginning of 2003 in order to assess the implications for the UN's humanitarian system of changes in humanitarian financing. This study has five broad objectives:

- [i] to describe how the effects of the competitive aid environment impact on the UN humanitarian system, including future funding;
- [ii] to assess the perceived "value-added" of the UN system in responding to humanitarian crises;

- [iii] to make proposals for enhancing and streamlining the UN system's range of services to assist the emergency and disaster afflicted, its so-called "humanitarian product", and possible funding implications of such proposals;
- [iv] to anticipate possible structural and procedural implications of changes in the UN's humanitarian product;
- [v] to reflect on humanitarian crises in the future in the context of the repositioning strategies proposed for the UN.

With these objectives in mind, UN OCHA believes that the implications of the war and eventual occupation of Iraq in March 2003 are fundamental to Study Four. The situation in Iraq continues to present the humanitarian community with one of the most complex and potentially seminal challenges it has had to face since the 1992 crisis in Somalia. The numbers and types of actors that have been engaged in devising and implementing a humanitarian response for the Iraqi people, the integrity of those humanitarian actors' various analyses, assessments and appeals, their relationships with the occupying powers as well as with the Iraqi people and neighbouring governments and the ways that humanitarian services were provided all suggest a catalytic moment in the history of humanitarianism.

For this reason, it has been recommended that a specific Iraq dimension be added to Study Four's findings and analysis. This addition to the study would strengthen its conclusions and recommendations while at the same time providing some background and baseline analysis for subsequent studies on Iraq which the IASC might wish to consider.

I - The Iraq dimension of Study Four – five areas of interest:

There are four aspects of the humanitarian community's involvement in the Iraq humanitarian situation that need to be explored in the context of Study Four:

[i] **the perception of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and the perceived types and levels of needs as of March 2003.** There were and continue to be many facets of the Iraqi situation that complicate the humanitarian challenge in Iraq, including its extensive ration system, its potential oil wealth and the legal obligations of those deemed to be occupying powers. In any event, it would be important in light of the objectives of Study Four to ascertain what the perception of "humanitarian needs" were and are in Iraq and how such needs were translated into humanitarian programmes;

[ii] **the numbers and types of actors that became involved in the response to Iraq's humanitarian crisis.** The international legal obligations of the occupying powers might well have been a determining factor in defining not only what were humanitarian needs but also who were humanitarian actors. In this portion of the analysis, one will want to see the range of humanitarian actors that sought to engage in Iraq, and also to gain some sense of what sorts of programmes and projects that sought to implement, more specifically how such actors defined their humanitarian roles and responsibilities. The impact of privatization and militarization of humanitarian assistance will be addressed;

[iii] **the role of the United Nations, including the role of the Security Council, in Iraq's perceived humanitarian crisis.** The UN's role and responsibilities in the Iraq humanitarian crisis will require extensive analysis over time. And yet, even now one should not lose the opportunity in the context of Study Four to assess how the UN's comparative advantages were used at the field level and also at headquarters. How – in light of the occupying powers' obligations, the range of humanitarian actors, the enormous level of potential resources available for humanitarian action and the situation's "high profile" – did the humanitarian arm of the United Nations position itself?

[iv] **of specific concern is the UN's role in its relations with the military forces of the occupying powers as well as with the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.** Study Four is concerned with assessing the ways that the UN translates its comparative advantages into value-added in times of highly complex and competitive aid situations. In this sense, there are three areas that require specific attention: [a] the first has to do with the ways that humanitarian principles, norms and standards were upheld and disseminated during the crisis; [ii] the second has to do with Iraq as a test of various arrangements devised since 1994 and more recently in 2003 to define the military-humanitarian interface; and [iii] thirdly the sorts of transitional, post-humanitarian arrangements that were developed with the UN and ORHA.

[v] **contingency planning and the financing of the contingency planning efforts and requirements.**

II -- The Iraq dimension of Study Four – specific objectives:

The overall rationale for incorporating the Iraq dimension into Study Four is to enrich the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Iraq dimension will form a short appendix to the study, but the main importance of the Iraq dimension will be the strength that the study gains by incorporating this potentially seminal event into its main text. There are six basic objectives that the Iraqi dimension of Study Four should pursue:

[i] To make preliminary observations on the ways that the humanitarian operations in Iraq were initially designed, assessed, needs determined and funded;

[ii] To comment on the roles of actors that were involved in preparations and implementation of humanitarian responses in Iraq including interface between humanitarian and political actors;

[iii] To explain how and why the United Nations humanitarian system "on the ground" positioned itself in the ways that it did, and in so doing to suggest what it felt were its major value-added to humanitarian planning and implementation;

[iv] To offer preliminary comments on the role that UN headquarters had in devising the structure and support mechanisms for humanitarian action in Iraq;

[v] To note the range of humanitarian services which the UN system provided and their linkages with and relationship to the activities of other humanitarian actors;

[vi] To ensure that the substance of the first five objectives noted immediately above are incorporated into the findings, conclusions and recommendations of Study Four.

III -- The Iraq dimension of Study Four – methodology:

The Iraq dimension of Study Four will depend principally upon interviews with representatives from the UN system, NGOs and principal governments, both in the field and headquarters. That said, the main emphasis will be the field. At the same time, the Iraq portion of Study Four will also benefit from available documentation that can be provided through, *inter alia*, UN OCHA, ORHA and Inter-Action.

The major emphasis will be placed on interviews, and it is hoped that this could be achieved at the field level – as noted in the section, below – during mid-July.

IV -- The Iraq dimension of Study Four – proposed timetable:

Since Study Four will have to be finalised by September 2003, it is proposed that the interview schedule at the field level would begin in or around 15 July for twelve days, and that the advice of the field would be the essential determinant in any schedule devised for Study Four.

Expected Decisions/Action Points by IASC-WG:

- Agreement on the Draft ToR for the “Study Four and the Iraq Dimension”.

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