Inter-Agency Standing Committee

PRINCIPALS Meeting

Final Summary Record and Action Points

21-22 May 2015

HOST: UN Habitat, Nairobi

*Circulated: 10 July 2015*

**DAY 1: THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2015**

**I. Introduction**

Dr. Joan Clos of UN-Habitat opened and chaired the first IASC Principals meeting held in the global South in Nairobi on 21 May 2015. The meeting provided an opportunity for the incoming Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mr. Stephen O’Brien, to meet with the IASC Principals.

The agenda was structured around three broad areas: addressing vulnerability in the Horn of Africa, progress in three of the five IASC priorities (Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action; Humanitarian Financing; and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), and expectations from the Secretary-General’s World Humanitarian Summit. The theme of urbanization underpinned the discussions. There was also a timely discussion on migration against the backdrop of the upsurge of boats of migrants on perilous journeys in the Mediterranean and Andaman seas.

On 22 May, the Principals met with a wide range of local and regional NGO and civil society actors to discuss regional humanitarian trends and the urban dimension of protracted conflicts.

**SESSION 1: ADDRESSING CHRONIC VULNERABILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA**

**II. Joining forces to boost resilience and protection in the Horn of Africa**

The discussion was facilitated by Leila Pakkala of UNICEF and was based on three presentations:

* OCHA presented a region-wide sub-national Risk Analysis for the Horn of Africa calling for joint action by humanitarian and development actors in border areas to address the underlying drivers of chronic vulnerability (see attached presentation).
* The World Bank presented their new focus on the extremely poor – many of which live in countries affected by conflict – and its cooperation with humanitarian actors, governments and civil society to address displacement, vulnerability and extreme poverty.
* A presentation by the DSRSG/RC/HC in Somalia on the Integrated Strategic Framework agreed with the Government to achieve development, peace and stability in Somalia, establish social safety nets, and provide durable solutions for refugees and IDPs.

The following issues were raised during the discussions:

* Past attempts to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development actions such as early recovery have not worked well. Humanitarian and development actors must work together from the start of the crisis. While working with governments is desirable to achieve durable solutions, there are challenges for civil society, accuracy of data, and operating in areas outside the government’s control that require different strategies.
* Experience with resilience has yielded mixed results, as it has at times been used as a solution, and has drawn upon humanitarian resources. It should rather be a means of attracting development funding to humanitarian situations.
* Harmonization of data on IDPs and refugees in the Horn of Africa is a challenge.
* Donors do not finance development activities in countries where there is an active conflict.
* The dialogue should include governments who are responsible to find political solutions.
* Housing and basic services are crucial to promote durable solutions and protection. Investments in infrastructures in border areas are critical. Yet bureaucratic regulatory constraints and policies of marginalization need to be resolved first.
* In the absence of functioning local governments, organized crime takes control of slums. We need to help establish semi-formal governments in new urban settlements and camps and turn displacement and migration into economic opportunities, including in border areas.

The facilitator concluded that there was agreement on the need to bring development and humanitarian programming together to address both chronic vulnerability and acute needs. In this effort all partners need to focus on ensuring a conducive environment for long-term programming and donors need to ensure multi-year flexible financing mechanism. She summarized the discussion as follows:

Action Points:

1. *Support the subnational analysis prepared by OCHA as good practice and as the basis for a joint strategy/plan of action that informs humanitarian and development programming. In doing so take note of the World Bank Horn of Africa initiative which is being rolled out in border areas. Action by: OCHA, World Bank and operational agencies by May 2016.*
2. *Roll out of subnational analysis in other regions, in concert and linked with other existing analytical tools based on effective sharing of data by humanitarian and development actors and use this joint analysis to engage with governments and donors. Action by: OCHA, World Bank and operational agencies by May 2016.*
3. *Convene a Principals meeting focused on resilience and better linkages between development and humanitarian actors in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East and agree to practical areas of intervention for the next three years. This meeting should explore how resilience strategies can incorporate protection and political issues and propose a typology of humanitarian crises that distinguish between areas controlled and not controlled by Governments. Action by: IASC secretariat with the Principals by May 2016.*
4. *Principals to advocate for multi-year programmes and funding cycles.*

**SESSION 2: IASC PRIORITIES**

**III. Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action**

***a) Politicization of humanitarian response***

The discussion was facilitated by Yves Daccord of ICRC and started with a presentation by Faizal Perdaus of ICVA on the key recommendations proposed in the discussion paper. The facilitator challenged the Principals to agree on a few key actions undertaken jointly to mitigate the risk of politicization of humanitarian assistance.

Action Points:

1. *Develop minimum standards for humanitarian evacuations looking at lessons learnt from evacuations in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in Syria (Homs). Action by: IASC Principals by May 2016.*
2. *Request a case study of cross-border and cross-line assistance in Syria. The IASC should examine this concept of operations and make recommendations for Syria and similar situations in the future. Action by: IASC Principals by May 2016.*
3. *The new ERC to convene a meeting with a sub-set of IASC Principals at the onset of a crisis to discuss complex political and communication issues as they emerge (e.g. funding for Yemen). Action by: ERC with support of the IASC secretariat.*
4. *Develop a communication agenda to trigger public compassion, increase the impact of the reports of the Secretary-General, and fend off attempts to politicize humanitarian action. Action by: ERC with the support of the Principals by May 2016.*
5. *Lead strategic engagement with civil society in order to hold governments to account for their humanitarian performance, and to ensure that the report to WHS and the Summit itself fully recognize the humanitarian role of NGOs. Action by: ICVA by May 2016.*

The ERC designate thanked all participants for this rich discussion which raised key questions: how to calibrate the existing structures to develop a united approach while leveraging the diversity of actors? How to get the right tools so that the humanitarian agenda can rise above politics?

***b) Impact of counter-terrorism on humanitarian action***

Counter-terrorism has led to a securitization of the context in which we provide aid and of the mindset of donors. Kyung-wha Kang of OCHA briefed on the discussion held during the March 2015 IASC Working Group meeting with experts on the issue of counter-terrorism. She highlighted the need for a dialogue with Member States to limit the adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures on principled humanitarian action; the need to make it clear that UN resolutions do not prohibit dialogue with groups labelled as terrorists; the need to include humanitarian exemptions in sanctions and counter-terrorism regimes, and possibly in donor agreements; and the need for the humanitarian community to strengthen risk management, due diligence and anti-diversion practices and to communicate these efforts clearly to stakeholders in coming months.

There was broad support to use the draft statement as key messages in individual advocacy but few supported its release as a joint public statement from the IASC. NGOs stressed that the statement provided useful content to advocate with donors and should also be reflected in the report prepared ahead of WHS, in particular, the reaffirmation of the humanitarian imperative to talk to all parties.

Action Points:

1. *Thank the Task Team for drafting the statement and decide to use its content as a reference point in negotiations with governments and donors, without releasing it publicly; Encourage further development of key issues and opportunities paper. Action by: Working Group by end of October 2015.*
2. *Request the Working Group to continue its work on counter-terrorism and OCHA to further engage with the multilateral counter-terrorism actors. In particular, work towards collective dialogue with donors when appropriate and to ensure counter-terrorism measures do not impede needs-based assistance and protection. Action by: Working Group and OCHA by May 2016.*

***c) Update on migrants in crisis situations***

IOM briefed on the migration trends and challenges posed to the humanitarian community.

* One in seven people in the world is a migrant today. Most migrants move legally and contribute to the development of their countries of destination and origin. There are an increasing number of migrants who are caught in situations of crisis. There are many protection issues around statelessness and fear of deportation.
* The current system of international norms focuses on IDP and refugees and often neglects migrants. Currently the IASC has no system in place to address migrants’ issues in countries in crisis. Strategic response plans and regional response mechanisms need to include migrants in countries in crisis.
* The state-led initiative “Migrants in countries in crisis” (MICIC) is meant to strengthen States’ capacity to manage the situation of migrants caught in crisis. It is led by the Philippines and the United States. It aims to produce a set of non-binding guidelines to help States and other stakeholders prepare and respond to the challenges identified in past crises. IOM hosts its secretariat. State-led discussions, while welcome and necessary, should not exempt the humanitarian system from reflecting on ways to improve the manner in which the phenomenon is being handled on the coordination and direct assistance fronts.

During the discussion, the following points emerged:

* Protection: Refugees and IDPs have benefited from the 1951 Refugee Convention and other aspects of multilateral approaches, however migrants have not benefitted from migration instruments or conventions. Member States have varying reflections on the role of international actors around migration. The High Commissioner for Refugees noted that he would like IOM to be integrated into the UN family to build support for a multilateral approach.
* Climate change: the Nansen Initiative co-chaired by Norway and Switzerland, with support from Germany, Costa Rica, IOM, UNHCR and others, focuses on cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and climate change but does not look into migrants. Both IOM and UNHCR ensure that the Nansen and MICIC initiatives are complementary.
* Root causes: considerable investments are needed to address the underlying causes of migration in countries of origin.
* Developing Guiding Principles on Migrants in Countries in Crisis is an option that several IASC organizations would like to explore, building on the lessons from the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It was suggested to convene a strategic senior level coordinating forum to ensure a UN voice on the issue while discussing with the member states and counterparts. There is a Global Migration Group composed of some UN agencies and IOM which focuses on development issues. IOM will table migration at the IASC as it is more representative of the humanitarian community in its membership and could serve as the strategic group to look into the issue of migrants in crisis.
* Xenophobia against migrants at times of crises is significant. Countries of origin have a legal obligation to protect migrants wherever they are. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants is active in this area.
* Women and migration: with a majority of migrants being women, UNFPA has seconded the former Director of Humanitarian Response to the UN Special Envoy on Migration to develop a specific policy that will be implemented by UNFPA.
* The role of middle income countries needs to be examined further as they serve as both transitory location as well as countries of destination. They present an entirely different problem as evidenced by recent developments in South-East Asia.

Action Points:

1. *Develop options to incorporate migrants in crisis as part of IASC thematic discussion, including potentially establishing a Senior Task Team, in order to assess the nature and full extent of the problem, response requirements and key policy issues. Options to be presented to the IASC WG in October for consideration at the December 2015 IASC Principals meeting. Action by: IOM*
2. *Inform the IASC on progress achieved in developing guiding principles on migrants in countries in crisis. Action by: IOM and UNHCR by mid 2016.*
3. *Provide key messages on migration in crisis for the World Humanitarian Summit. Action by: IOM in consultation with IASC Organizations by December 2015.*
4. *Write a letter to HCTs to include Migrants in Crisis in humanitarian strategies. Action by: ERC and IOM by September 2015.*

**IV. Update on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The IASC Champion, Mr. William Lacy Swing provided a mixed report under the priority of protecting beneficiaries from sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers.

* Ebb and flow of interest in PSEA: reviewing the history from allegations in West Africa in 2002 to the Secretary-General’s bulletin on zero tolerance in 2003, to mass-scale abuse of women and children in the DRC leading to new UN policies, the designation by the ERC of a PSEA champion in 2011, and yet again a perceived loss of momentum after PSEA was subsumed under the IASC priority of “accountability to affected people” in 2014. The number of senior agency focal points has diminished from 25 to 14 as of April 2015 and the problem persists.
* The Secretary-General 2014 report identified 79 new PSEA allegations, often concerning more than one person. In 2015, six allegations have been received in Ethiopia under the IASC Community-Based Complaint Mechanism pilot project. These allegations not only harm the individuals but also our reputation and ability to accomplish our mandate. It is outrageous and requires continued senior attention.
* The challenges include maintaining visibility and implementing the minimal operating standards (MOS). Many IASC organizations are weak in vetting and recruitment systems, in investigations and in trying to ensure culprits do not come back through other agencies. Heads of organizations must give full attention to focal points so they can get the message across. Progress needs to be made on the joint Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms in Ethiopia and DRC. Agencies that have supported these two pilots were thanked.
* PSEA needs to remain part of the IASC agenda. An extension of the mandate of the senior focal points is needed and senior focal point will need to be appointed at the most senior level and require that they participate and report back. A meeting will be scheduled for October 2015 and Mr. Swing is ready to continue the role of champion for another year.
* Mr. Swing requested the ERC to support a private sector campaign and will provide the ERC with further information.
* Standard operating procedures for inter-agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanism are needed in order to handle complaints as sometimes victims do not know whom to turn to. The Champion will refine the idea further and present concrete recommendations.

Action Points:

1. *Request that PSEA Focal Points, appointed at the highest seniority levels, continue to meet under IOM’s leadership for a period of one year in order to ensure implementation of the PSEA minimum operating standards within their respective agencies. IOM to provide a progress report in May 2016. Action by: IOM and IASC organizations by May 2016.*
2. *Request that the Principals support the PSEA media campaign coordinated by the SFP group and AAP/PSEA Task Team and currently developed by a private sector advertising agency. Action by: Principals by end of December 2015.*
3. *Request IOM to lead a task team of agency experts to develop global Standard Operating Procedures on inter-agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanism to handle SEA complaints and reports in any humanitarian setting and requests IASC agencies to appoint senior staff members with the necessary expertise and authority to participate in the task team. Action by: IOM by December 2015.*

**V. Future of Humanitarian Financing**

Daniel Gustafson of FAO and Christopher Bain of CAFOD presented the key findings of the report “Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis” prepared by CAFOD, FAO and World Vision under the 2014 work plan of the IASC Task Team on Humanitarian Financing. Mr . Gustafson facilitated the discussion. The report notes an increasingly complex crisis affected landscape, with two-thirds of humanitarian financing being spent on protracted crises. Looking at the future, the report notes an important role for national actors in addressing crises, with international actors acting only in exceptional circumstances. The report further proposes four transformative changes to increase humanitarian funding, its predictability and effectiveness in the future: (i) rebalance the division of labour; (ii) prioritize national-led response; (iii) embrace diversity of actors; and (iv) upgrade the system. In addition, the authors of the report proposed specific recommendations that the IASC could recommend to the High level Panel:

1. **Support a systematic shift to multi-year resilience programmes** and long term funding strategies in situations of protracted crisis.
2. **Establish a global catastrophe contingency fund** significantly larger than the current CERF and that could be marketed as a global public good.
3. **Remove the barriers to direct access to funding for national and local actors:** Due diligence and application procedures make it practically impossible for small local NGOs to access pooled funds.
4. **Ensure systematic transparency of reporting on funding passed to the national and local actors:** the humanitarian system is unable to track and make visible the added value each organization makes. At the moment data is not actually compiled to show how much is passed to national and local actors. The IASC needs to re-examine its processes.
5. **Reduce transaction costs:** humanitarian organizations need to clearly articulate their value added. The report shows that there are many inefficiencies that can be turned into opportunities to save money. UN and NGOs are invited to examine their current practices.

A lively discussion ensued with a number of organizations supporting the report as an excellent contribution to the reflection of this topic and others pushing for bolder recommendations in particular in the area of fundraising and innovation in the area of financial management. The following issues emerged:

**The humanitarian system is financially broke** - despite the generosity of donors – due to increasing needs, resulting from conflicts, climate change, and population growth. Currently, resources are being drained by the big crises and in the absence of unearmarked funding, it will continue to be difficult to respond.

**A “Super CERF”** funded by assessed contributions (as is currently being contemplated by Peacekeeping) could be a way to address this problem. NGOs expressed concern at “boxing the funding”.

**Redesigning humanitarian and development funding is key:** development funding is six times more than humanitarian funding while most humanitarian strategies today are exclusively related to addressing development failures. Development donors need to review their strategies and invest in resilience (e.g. Sahel and Horn of Africa). They need to support middle-income countries that are supporting humanitarian action (e.g. Lebanon). Safety nets are powerful solutions.

**Funding health emergencies response**: how will the super catastrophe fund be linked to the pandemic emergency facility being set up by the World Bank? The response to the Ebola epidemics was predominantly addressed through humanitarian channels.

**UN Reform:** the UN Development Group Working Group on the UN Reform is struggling with issues of common procurement, common premises and common messaging. Donors expect greater synergy from different UN entities. There is a need for a comprehensive system-wide package that would bridge the humanitarian and development work. Beyond the UN, the quality of IASC leadership will be judged on our ability to proactively plan and transform the current situation into opportunities.

**Funding for natural disasters and conflicts present different challenges and opportunities.** A number of initiatives have emerged for natural disasters, such as the Africa Risk Capacity led by African governments and influenced by WFP that is a market-based mechanism. New research by the World Bank regarding displacement shows that development investments can yield greater results in crisis settings than in other situations.

**Delivery of aid and return on investment**: an increase in ODA is unlikely and greater efforts should be made to improve project management, transparency, reduce transaction cost, empower local actors, and build innovation and resilience in the response. The private sector expects rigorous measurement of return on investment. A shift in mindset is urgently needed so people start looking at refugees, migrants and IDPs and urban settlements as new opportunities. This is the goal of Habitat III to recast urbanization as development.

**Innovative Fundraising:** IASC organizations need to diversify their sources of funding by reaching out to the private sector and proposing innovative fundraising strategies. One member suggested a tax on airline tickets and another suggested finding ways for political actors, in particular members of the Security Council, to be held accountable and pay a price for failing to resolve conflicts. Another suggested taxing the arms industry.

Action Points:

1. *Convene a small group of Principals to identify concrete proposals to diversify funding streams for humanitarian action and improve cost-efficiency based on a thorough review of the report “Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis” prepared by CAFOD, FAO and World Vision. Action by: ERC together with WFP and other Principals.*

**SESSION 3: IASC AND THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT**

**VI. Strategic Discussion on the Transformative Changes Required to Ensure that the Humanitarian Multilateral System is Fit for the Future, for Consideration for the World Humanitarian Summit**

This discussion was facilitated by Izumi Nakamitsu, UNDP. She invited Principals to put big ideas forward (e.g. assessed contributions for humanitarian funding) even if they seem difficult to implement. She highlighted the four issues questions raised by the ERC prior to the meeting:

1. Conflict and protection, including violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and accountability to both,
2. The gap between humanitarian needs and resources available,
3. Resilience building and disaster risk reduction,
4. Operational effectiveness.

John Nduna, SCHR, presented the key messages proposed by the Working Group to help shape the advocacy by each IASC organizations towards the WHS.

Kyung-wha Kang, OCHA, stated that the issues listed in the ERC’s message are the four priority areas of the UN Secretary-General. They will be addressed with the following actors: “conflicts” with non-humanitarian actors; “funding gap” with donors; “resilience building and disaster risk” with development actors; and “operational effectiveness” with the IASC and operational partners. She provided information on the WHS process including the remaining consultations and reports. She challenged the IASC to propose bold ideas that will have a changing effect on the system.

The discussion converged around the following issues:

**Key Messages**: several organizations thanked the Working Group for preparing the key messages and expressed their support for them. One participant challenged the group to propose five bold and inspirational messages on the most pressing issues in the next five years, e.g.: migration, arms, impunity, health care in danger, and conflict. The messages should call for a new alliance; reflecting on the fact that most aid today comes from informal sources and welcoming diversity as there is not one humanitarian system.

**WHS Process:** concerns were raised regarding the transparency of the WHS process. There has been insufficient opportunity so far for the IASC to engage with the WHS process.

**Report of the Secretary-General**: there were requests from several IASC organizations to be given the opportunity to review and input into the WHS Synthesis Report and the UN Secretary-General’s Report. The DERC noted that it would be inappropriate for the IASC to review the report of the Secretary-General as the WHS is about dialogue with non-traditional actors.

**Diversity of Participation in the WHS**: the substantive discussions will mean nothing if participation in the WHS does not include far more representation from affected countries including civil society and youth.

**Localizing Response**: the Secretary-General should talk about the critical role of civil society in humanitarian action.

**Inclusivity of the Humanitarian Formal Architecture:** How do we make the systems more inclusive? How do we change present perception of alienation the humanitarian architecture by organizations from the Global South ?

**Migration**: Migration is a new frontier of humanitarian action and we must explore how it can be better included in humanitarian coordination.

**Centrality of protection** and limits of what we can be done.

**The humanitarian system is not broken** but is overstretched due to the increasing number of protracted conflicts and the political stalemate.

**WHS Going Forward**: The incoming ERC pledged that the process would continue to be outreaching and consultative but without it getting in the way of the good, with the good being inspirational and trying to give us a new base to build the political will that lies behind decisions being made in the UN.

Action Points:

1. *Explore the possibility of an ad hoc meeting of IASC Principals and the Secretary-General on the WHS at an appropriate time. Action by: IASC secretariat by November 2015.*
2. *Request regular updates from the WHS secretariat/OCHA on the on-going consultative process and the drafting of the WHS Synthesis Report and the Secretary-General’s report. Action by: OCHA, including WHS secretariat, ongoing.*

**SESSION 4: IASC STRATEGY ON URBAN CHALLENGES**

**VII. IASC Action Plan on Urban Challenges**

Dr. Clos, UN-Habitat provided an overview of urbanization in developed and developing world and highlighted the links with the humanitarian agenda. Millions of people are finding refuge from conflicts in urban centres and there is a need for a timely and integrated area-based approach to urban planning so that the camps or city extensions have the capacity to generate wealth, socialization and safety. Habitat III provides an opportunity to communicate the added value of refugee camps to host countries and demonstrate that they offer development opportunities. He introduced the new Urban Action plan, which proposes three principles: 1) An area-based approach, 2) integration with local governments, 3) facilitating direct engagement with the communities.

After a few questions about the area-based approach, IASC Principals endorsed the plan with the following comments.

* There is a need for continued focus on food security and nutrition in urban areas and to develop social safety net programmes that provide access to food.
* Underline the support for empowering local communities in humanitarian response.
* Mayors must be sensitized to protection issues and protect IDPs from forced eviction.
* The fact that in many places, governments resist incorporating refugees into urban plans; HABITAT III could be a venue to pitch the idea of considering refugee settlements in a different manner.
* Leverage the power of socialization and education in cities (e.g. Ebola response).
* In reference to the tasking in the action plan, OCHA noted that the WHS Secretariat is a convener and cannot be tasked to create norms and standards.
* The implications of the area-based approach on coordination need to be analyzed. OCHA will release a paper on Urban Displacement in 2015.

Action Points:

1. *Implement the action plan on urban challenges as endorsed. Action by: IASC organizations and implementing agencies listed in the plan with the support of the Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Settings, by end of 2017.*

Prepared by IASC Secretariat

July 2015