**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE**

**PRINCIPALS AD HOC MEETING ON SECURITY BRIEFING BY DSS**

**Final Summary**

21 August 2015

The USG for Safety and Security (Peter Drennan) provided a briefing to IASC Principals on the evolving security threats to the UN and humanitarian community and proposed some considerations on the way forward. He made the following key points:

* The USG is changing the culture of DSS to focus on enabling programmes and make the department more service-oriented.
* Between 2005 and 2014, the complexity and nature of the threats have increased and it is no longer Al Qaeda only that is targeting the UN.
* Combination of three overlapping factors: the proliferation and increased sophistication of extremists groups, their increasing hostility towards the UN and humanitarians, and the expanded UN and humanitarian operations in conflict zones.
* Geopolitics, social, and economic factors are the main cause of conflict.
* Violence against humanitarian workers has gone up since 1997 and peaked in 2013.
* Number of fighters who have joined the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq exceed 20,000 and nearly one fifth come from Western European nations.
* The decentralized command and control of extremist organizations makes it harder to guard against attacks which can be decided by local commanders.
* Humanitarian workers are particularly vulnerable to attacks when on the move.
* NGOs are even more vulnerable than the UN in some contexts.
* Mitigating measures such as training, sharing intelligence, and security protection have proven to result in more safety in the field but more investment is needed.

These are some of the comments and suggestions made by participants:

* High security risk has become the new ‘normal’ and humanitarians must engage systematically with security providers and put issue on their agenda.
* Staying impartial in humanitarian programme delivery is crucial to security.
* Strategic analysis at global, regional and local level must anticipate future risks.
* Security is costly and pooling resources could help save on overheads. Dialogue with donors is needed to highlight security as an indispensable programme cost, not an overhead. DSS will brief donors of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group on 3 September 2015.
* Programme criticality implies managing the tensions between the wish “to stay and deliver” and the duty of care for staff (e.g. Yemen).
* UN must do a better job at taking gender into account in security management.
* Addressing the inequalities and other factors at the root of extremism is needed to reduce extreme violence.
* The UN and NGOs are fleshing out the security collaboration framework “Saving Lives Together”.
* UN needs to focus on long-term impact of incidents on staff and provide assistance.
* IASC Principals must demonstrate leadership to promote a culture of security awareness and management in their organizations.

IASC Secretariat, 24 August 2015