**IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team brown bag lunch with donors on Accountability**

**Minutes and Action points**

1. **Opening presentations**

Preeta Law, co-chair of the Task Team, and Astrid de Valon, coordinator, presented an overview on accountability, highlighting:

* The 3 components of accountability (taking account, giving account and being held to account)
* The complementarity between individual and collective accountability
* The links between accountability and protection
* A list of questions related to the drivers of change to move collective accountability forward

Nicolas Seris, Coordinator of Transparency International’s Humanitarian Aid Integrity Program, presented on Uwajibikaji Pamoja or “Accountability together” in Swahili, an example of collective action to enhance accountability. The programme is a web-based Integrated Complaint Referral Mechanism for over 42 partners operating in three counties in Kenya. The platform aims to improve quality and accountability of aid, is available to community members at grassroots level and facilitates the referral of complaints from one aid of basic service provider to another. Nicolas explained examples of impact and changes brought to agencies program based on feedback received, and highlighted that having the government on board was essential to ensure response and sustainability.

Both presentations are attached for reference.

1. **The point of view of donors : The USA and Turkey**

Ms Suzan Kyle, Attaché for Humanitarian Affairs at the Permanent Mission of the United States, highlighted that accountability is a central concern. Accountability is critical for a systematic and meaningful community engagement at every stage of the project cycle. Accountability mechanisms translate humanitarian principles into practice in humanitarian operations. It is not new, there is a long record of participatory approaches. Policies such as UNHCR’s Age, Gender, and Diversity policy are examples of accountability approaches. But being systematically accountable, at both individual and collective level is of course a challenge: it requires us to collectively accept to be influenced and finally evaluated by the diverse groups of communities we are aiming to serve.

The US congress now requires all recipients of US government funds to report on accountability to affected populations, for two main reasons: accountability is an approach based on rights and contributes to effectiveness, which is essential at a time of resources constraints. Suzan Kyle mentioned Andy Featherstone’s 2013 study, demonstrating impact with even minimum investment in accountability. (<http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/improving-impact-do-accountability-mechanisms-deliver-results.pdf> )

Suzan Kyle also stressed the importance of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian actors. Since 2003, organisations receiving US funds are required to have a code of conduct in place. Donors should also ensure that implementing partners not only have a code of conduct, but also have measures in place to actually implement it.

The importance of keeping sustainability in mind was emphasized along with the need to collectively derive lessons from sustainable projects to adapt and replicate these. Suzan closed stressing the importance of thinking beyond the provision of aid and focusing on strengthening resilience in order to support communities to support themselves.

Mr Berk Baran, Minister-Counsellor at the permanent mission of Turkey , highlighted that at the World Humanitarian Summit, which Turkey will host next year, the importance of placing people and communities at the center of our actions and thereby contributing to and demonstrating respect for the dignity and capacity of people, should be a central message. This principle has underpinned Turkey’s support to the 1.7 million Syrian refugees in the country. Berk Baran specifically mentioned the WFP e-card program enabling Syrian refugees to decide what they purchase and the efforts made to understand the food needs of Syrian refugees to ensure that appropriate foods are stocked. He concluded by highlighting essential areas to focus our efforts on:

* Ensure proximity and close dialogue with affected communities.
* Limit earmarked funding
* Ensure assistance is not supply-based.
1. **Discussion**

Cathrine Andersen from the Mission of Norway noted that accountability is not new: we should improve what we are currently already doing to be accountable, and use it to systematically to improve our accountability. Proximity seems to be the key: humanitarian action was much closer to communities fifteen years ago. Our focus is now overwhelmingly on management and coordination, at the expense of quality interaction with affected communities.

Alyoscia d’Onofrio from IRC mentioned an innovative approach for urban refugees in Lebanon, to search and rate services ranging from healthcare to financial services and retail: (see <http://www.rescue.org/press-releases/irc-launches-crowd-sourced-reviews-and-ratings-site-syrian-refugees-lebanon-24493>). He also raised the issue of the gender break down of complaints in the example presented by Nicolas Seris, wondering what is being done to ensure women represent a higher percentage of persons providing feedback.

Sandra Aviles from FAO confirmed that the World Humanitarian Summit consultations have indeed highlighted dignity and meaningful engagement with affected population as central issues. She noted accountability is a rights- based approach and we need to understand what it means in fragile contexts, and whose role it is to advocate for the rights if our approach is to be sustainable.

Panos Moumtzis explained that accountability has emerged as a key theme in the last five Operational Peer Reviews and the three missions organized by the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT). When Humanitarian Country teams were asked to self-evaluate implementation of the Transformative Agenda, accountability was the lowest self-rated area. While there is a commitment to accountability, both at individual agency level and collectively, what is lacking is the understanding of concretely how to do it, through the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

Preeta Law thanked everyone for their participation and engagement in the discussion, and highlighted the importance of continued exchanges like this. The task team is keen to get regular feedback and input from donors as well as agencies on the questions raised in the initial presentation, some of which are captured below:

**What can we do:**

* **to ensure political will and strong leadership for improved collective action on accountability commitments?**
* **to support meaningful and sustained inclusion of local and national voices in the global discussion on accountability, and in related global processes in the humanitarian system?**
* **to reinforce accountability and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in the preparedness phase and ensure buy in and ownership when crisis strikes?**
* **to develop incentives and sanctions promoting both individual agency and collective accountability ?**

List of Participants

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Organisation** | **Name** |
| 1 | Australian Permanent Mission | Leonie Oates-Mercier  |
| 2 | ECHO- EU Mission | Claire Moretto |
| 3 | EU delegation | Theo Kerckhoffs |
| 4 | Mision Permanente de Colombia ante las Naciones Unidas | Juan Carlos Moreno |
| 5 | Permanent Mission of Finland | Noora Rikalainen |
| 6 | Permanent Mission of Norway | Cathrine Andersen  |
| 7 | Permanent Mission of Thailand to the UN | Suzanne Roset  |
| 8 | Permanent Mission of Turkey to UNOG | Berk Baran |
| 9 | Swedish Mission | Antonia Hultin |
| 10 | Swiss Mission | Alexis Spitsas |
| 11 | U.S. Mission | Suzan Kyle |
| 12 | IASC AAP/PSEA TT & UNHCR | Preeta Law |
| 13 | Transparency International | Nicolas Seris |
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| 24 | IOM | Alexandra Hilleman |
| 25 | IOM | Annie Fogel |
| 26 | IOM | Tristan Burnett |
| 27 | OCHA | Francesca Fraccaroli |
| 28 | UNHCR | Adeline Sozanski |
| 29 | UNHCR | Adrien Muratet |
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| 36 | UNHCR | Michelle Ndhlovu |
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