IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action

REVIEW OF IASC 2008

POLICY STATEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

FINAL REPORT
(*Narrative*)

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**Commissioned by UN Women on Behalf of the
IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group
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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[1] Listed in alphabetical order

ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AMA	Australian Multilateral Assessment
ASG	Assistant Secretary General
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CAAP	Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations
CAR	Central African Republic
CBPF	Country-based Pooling Fund
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CCPM	Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring
CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DERC	Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator
DFID	Department of International Development
DGWH	Department of Gender and Women's Health
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDG	Emergency Directors Group
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
ERP	Emergency Response Preparedness
ESC	Economic and Social Council
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FTS	Financial Tracking System
GA	General Assembly
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBV/AoR	Gender-Based Violence/Area of Responsibility
GCCCMC	Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster
GEC	Global Education Cluster
GEEW	Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women
GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity
GEP	Gender Equality Programming
GERC	Global Early Recovery Cluster
GFSC	Global Food Security Cluster
GHC	Global Health Cluster
GLC	Global Logistics Cluster
GM	Gender Marker
GNC	Global Nutrition Cluster
GNWP	Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
GPC	Global Protection Cluster

GPPI	Global Public Policy Institute
GRG	Gender Reference Group
GSC	Global Shelter Cluster
GTG	Gender Theme Group
GURD	Groupe Urgence Rehabilitation Developpement
GWC	Global WASH Cluster
HAS	Humanitarian Affairs Segment
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDI	Human Development Index
HEM	Humanitarian Exchange Magazine
HFTT	Humanitarian Finance Task Team
HLCSWG	Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination Sub-Working Group
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HPCSG	Humanitarian Programme Cycle Steering Group
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HRC	Human Rights Council
HREA	Global Human Rights Education and Training Centre
IA	InterAction
IAHESG	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations Steering Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMC	International Medical Corps
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRA	Initial Rapid Assessment
LGBT	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MHCUA	Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas
MHPSES	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings
MIRA	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MOS	Minimum Operating Standards
MPA	Minimum Preparedness Action
NATF	Needs Assessment Task Force
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OASG	Office of the Assistant Secretary General
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPR	Operational Peer Review
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PHATT	Principled Humanitarian Action Task Team
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team

PIRES	Programme Planning, Implementation Reporting and Evaluation Support
ProCap	Protection Standby Capacity
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PVS	Private Voluntary Standards
RC	Resident Coordinator
RG	Reference Group
RGMHCUA	Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas
RRP	Rapid Response Team
SADD	Sex and Age Disaggregated Data
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant ,Time-bound
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SR	Special Rapporteur
SRP	Strategic Response Plan
STAIT	Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
SWG	Sub-Working Group
TA	Transformative Agenda
TOR	Terms of Reference
TT	Task Team
TTPR	Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WG	Working Group
WHO	United Nations World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WRC	Women's Refugee Commission

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the 2008 *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action* is to 'set out actions to be taken by the IASC to ensure gender equality, including through women's empowerment, is fully incorporated in all IASC work towards more effective and coherent humanitarian action'.

The current Review investigates how the *strategic objectives of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy* have, or have not been reflected in:
- The policy directives and operational guidance of the IASC and its membership.
- The measures taken to date by the IASC leadership, its members and the official humanitarian coordination mechanisms at the global and field levels to promote and protect the human rights of women, girls, boys and men in humanitarian action.
- The key components of gender equality programming that support effective humanitarian response and sustainable humanitarian outcomes, as defined by the Gender Policy itself.

Taking into account the recognized normative framework for promoting and supporting gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action and development, the methodological approach for implementing the current Review consisted of:
- An in-depth desk analysis of the available/accessible IASC documentation and products;
- A series of face to face interviews with IASC member agency representatives and other IASC stakeholders – including the Subsidiary Body and Global Cluster representatives.
- Telephone interviews with a select number of field-based Humanitarian Coordinators and/or their representatives representing the following humanitarian crises typology: conflict, natural disaster, refugees, sudden onset disaster and protracted crisis. [2]
- An online survey targeting the Cluster Leads and Cluster Coordinators in the selected field countries.[3]

B. KEY FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1. IASC Leadership and the Integration of Gender in Humanitarian Action

The in-depth desk review of documentation issued by or on behalf of the IASC Leadership (i.e. the IASC Principals, the IASC Working Group and the IASC Emergency Directors Group) revealed an inconsistency in the way the three key variables of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy – gender, age and diversity – are addressed and incorporated in directives, concept and position papers, and in reports of regular or *ad hoc* meetings issued by the various IASC Leadership groups.

In effect there is dissonance in the way that the IASC member agencies have tried to address the continuing challenge of integrating gender into their individual agency's corporate policies, strategic

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[2] Specifically, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Mali, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen and the Pacific Region. In the event IASC field level stakeholders were not reached in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan and Sudan.

[3] Disappointingly, and in spite of extending the deadline for submission, response to the Online Survey was 17%. With the exception of OPT which did not participate in the current Review, the Online Survey covered 12 of the selected countries and the Pacific Region. No response was received from Cluster Leads or Cluster Coordinators in Chad, Mali, Pakistan and Somalia. Response was received from two countries not included in the selected sample - Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

objectives and humanitarian programming, but conversely this is not systematically and coherently reflected in the outputs of the IASC, despite being developed by the same IASC leadership.

Interviews with the representatives of the IASC member agencies revealed awareness of key UN Security Council Resolutions on women in humanitarian crises, conflict resolution and peace building, and which confirm the importance of the IASC Gender Policy in strengthening the human rights-based approach to humanitarian action. However, such awareness is not explicitly reflected in key documentation issued by or on behalf of the IASC Leadership.

2. Strengthening Humanitarian Response and Gender Mainstreaming

2.1 IASC Transformative Agenda

The IASC Transformative Agenda (TA) - launched in 2012 – was developed in recognition of the need for 'substantive improvement to the current humanitarian response model' and to ensure 'the effectiveness of humanitarian response'.

However, despite the IASC Gender Policy explicitly setting out that 'gender equality is addressed adequately in all aspects of the IASC's work and direction of the IASC overall coordination and norm setting functions', overall the review of various documents issued as part of operationalizing the TA revealed that gender considerations were given limited consideration during the process of developing and launching the TA. For example, the *TA Revised Action Points*, issued in 2011 by the IASC Principals, omits explicit mention of gender, age and diversity and does not include any reference to the Gender Sub-Working Group (SWG) in place since 1998, or to the IASC Gender Policy itself.

Reference to the key terms in the IASC Gender Policy – i.e. gender, age and diversity and sex and age disaggregated data (SADD)[4] - is generally inconsistent in the TA directives and other relevant documentation. For example, though the *2013 IASC Joint Progress Reports on TA Implementation* includes reference to gender, age and diversity, as well as to the aim of achieving gender balance in humanitarian staffing in the field, this is not explicitly incorporated in the TORs of the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team[5] (STAIT) field missions, and by implication tends to be overlooked in TA field mission reports.

Requests by the Gender SWG for the IASC Working Group's support in raising the profile of the issue of gender in evolving Transformative Agenda discussions, as well as identifying and accessing more strategic entry points to help inform and shape tools and outcomes, were seemingly not heeded.

As such, members of the current GRG, along with interviewed Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) Advisers, were of the opinion that the opportunity was missed to ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated in the process of developing and implementing TA directives and guidelines aiming to strengthen humanitarian response.

2.2 Operational Guidance

The IASC Gender Policy refers to the responsibility of the IASC Working Group for ensuring that gender equality is incorporated in operational guidelines. IASC operational guidance documents issued over the past few years differ in the way they address cross-cutting issues in general, and gender, age, diversity, GBV and sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) in particular. Overall there is limited - if any - reference

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[4] Keeping in mind that the document 'Sex & Age Matter. Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies' (commissioned by UNOCHA and CARE) was issued in 2011.

[5] The Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT), was established by the IASC Working Group to support the roll-out of the TA and its application at the field level.

in these guidance documents to the humanitarian imperative to support gender equality and women's empowerment programming.

For example, the *2014 IASC Guidance for Operational Peer Review* which refers to 'appropriate gender and geographical representation' in respect of team composition, but otherwise omits explicit reference to mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting issues, or to SADD. Similarly, the *IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle Revised Guidance Tools for 2015* does not include explicit reference to gender, age, diversity, other cross-cutting issues or SADD.

2.3 Integrating Gender in Humanitarian Programme Cycle

The Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) is integral to the IASC TA. It aims to improve coordination, leadership and accountability through a single approach and response framework covering preparedness, needs assessment, strategic planning, monitoring, operational peer reviews and evaluations. The *2013 Reference Module for Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle* covers cross-cutting issues and gender equality, and whilst it includes reference to the Gender Marker, it contains no explicit mention of SADD.

2.3.1 Humanitarian Needs Assessment

The IASC Gender Policy explicitly refers to multi-sectoral needs assessments to ensure gender equality programming but again the follow up guidance is not consistent in how this is addressed. The *2012 Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments* identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), the Cluster Coordinator, and cluster/sector members for inter- and intra-cluster assessments. The document explicitly refers to gender and cross-cutting issues (defined as HIV, age and disability), as well as gender balance in needs assessment teams. The *2012 MIRA Approach* - covering process, methodology and tools – also includes explicit reference to gender, age, GBV, and gender balance in needs assessment teams and in targeting key informants. However, the *2012 MIRA Summary* - issued as a TA Reference Document - omits explicit mention of gender, age, diversity and other cross-cutting issues in discussion of the MIRA process, approach and outputs.

2.3.2 Humanitarian Needs Overview

The IASC Gender Policy calls on the IASC Leadership to ensure 'that a gender analysis informs the planning processes, including Humanitarian Action Plans and CAPs'. The *2015 IASC Guidance for the Humanitarian Needs Overview* (HNO) explicitly refers to gender sensitive analysis and SADD, while diversity is defined as covering LGBT, disability and ethnic/religious minorities. Gender analysis covers access to/control over resources; constraints in accessing assistance; effect of the crisis; as well as roles, responsibilities, needs and capacities.

However, analysis of accessible HNOs of the field countries covered by the current Review reveals significant variations in the extent to which these documents include an adequate level of gender analysis or the demonstrated collection and use of SADD.

2.3.3 Strategic Response Plan

The HNO provides the required evidence base for the HC and HCT to assess if the Strategic Response Plan (SRP) is effectively addressing the needs of the population affected by crisis and emergency. The *2014 IASC Guidance for Strategic Response Planning*, which aims to assist the HCT to develop the SRP, includes explicit reference to various gender related tools and approaches – including the Gender Marker; gender aware planning; mainstreaming gender and other cross cutting issues (defined as environment, age, disability, HIV/AIDS and mental health, 'among other issues relevant to the specific context'), as well as SADD, though does not refer to diversity.

Analysis of accessible SRPs of the field countries covered by the current Review reveals more or less the same pattern indicated above in respect of the country HNOs. SRPs of these countries refer to gender and/or GBV (as part of protection), or to women and men, but generally omit explicit mention of gender mainstreaming when discussing key constraints, or the link with contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment. In some sections of the SRPs there is general reference to 'people affected by emergencies' or 'displaced populations' without explicit reference to gender, age and diversity. Most of the SRPs reviewed explicitly mention SADD, some mention diversity (though without defining the term), but few SRPs refer to other cross-cutting issues.

2.3.4 Humanitarian Dashboard

The Humanitarian Dashboard is a tool designed for use by the HCT to 'facilitate dialogue, analysis and strategic programming throughout the programme cycle', and also serves to highlight information gaps that may require further assessments. Instructions on how to set up and maintain the Dashboard refer to 'affected people', 'people in need', 'people targeted/reached/covered' and omit explicit reference to gender, age, diversity and SADD.

2.3.5 Views of IASC Stakeholders

Whilst many of the global level IASC stakeholders pointed out that the HPC and its components have been effective in addressing some of the identified weaknesses of humanitarian action on the ground, some also conceded that the process of translating pertinent HPC guidelines on gender mainstreaming into effective action in the field 'has not been smooth'. This is also reflected in recent Operational Peer Reviews. Respondents also generally believe that effective implementation of HNO and SRP guidelines is linked to the performance of senior leadership in the field – specifically the RC/HC and the HCT

Field-level respondents point out that involving women and girls in needs assessment - as part of fulfilling the requirement of community participation - is an ideal that tends to flounder when put into practice. Intra-community dynamics and leadership may not only prevent soliciting the views of women and girls, but also that of boys and young men. It was also pointed out that it may be a fallacy to assume that SADD are not available when developing the HNO and SRP. This may be the case in countries ranking relatively low on the Human Development Index (HDI), or defined as 'failed states'. But it may also be the case that the humanitarian and development sectors are concerned with avoiding 'unnecessary' cost implications for efforts to compile SADD information in needs assessments and humanitarian programming.

3. Accountability and Minimum Standards for Integrating Gender in Humanitarian Action

3.1 IASC Members and Accountability

Overall the IASC full (UN) members include reference to accountability for gender mainstreaming in their organizations' strategic objectives, and have internal regulations in place specifying staff accountability for mainstreaming gender. Similarly, various IASC Standing Invitee agencies subscribe to accountability of their staff for mainstreaming gender in their programmes and operations.

Indeed, accountability for gender mainstreaming in the UN system is linked to the *United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)*, requiring mandatory reporting on the part of UN agencies to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UNWOMEN), the designated custodian of SWAP. It is therefore surprising that to date UNWOMEN is neither an IASC Full Member nor a Standing Invitee.

In fact, the importance of SWAP is recognized by the IASC; for example, in the *2014 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) of Large-Scale System-Wide Emergencies Guidelines* which specify that in line with UN-SWAP on gender equality, and the IASC 2008 Gender Policy Statement, 'the evaluation will apply gender analysis in all phases of the evaluation', and will 'adequately engage women, men, boys and girls of different ages' in targeted consultations. Moreover, the *2014 Joint Meeting of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and UNWFP Executive Boards* on gender mainstreaming performance standards reaffirmed the importance of gender equality programming in these organizations' strategic plans.

3.2 IASC Leadership and Accountability
The IASC Gender Policy states that the 'IASC Working Group is, through the co-chairs of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action, responsible for developing an accountability framework for monitoring the implementation of this policy and review its content every 5 years'. However, this task was never undertaken.

The 2012 IASC Transformative Agenda identifies accountability 'within and between the HC, HCT members, Cluster Coordinators and other cluster partners, based on a clear, concise, time-bound and results-oriented strategy to deliver' as a key cornerstone. However, there is no explicit reference to being accountable to the roles and responsibilities set out in the IASC Gender Policy for all levels of the IASC, its members and the humanitarian coordination structures in the field.

In fact, the *2014 IASC Gender Marker Assessment*, for example, defined the area of accountability as requiring attention. Specifically, 'a lack of clear lines of accountability within the coordinated humanitarian response for gender integration' was flagged by stakeholders at both the global and national levels.

4. IASC Subsidiary Bodies
4.1 Task Teams & Reference Groups
With the launching of the current IASC Architecture, the Gender SWG was in July 2013 restructured as the *IASC Reference Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action* (referred to as the Gender Reference Group/GRG). By definition this downgraded its status and authority compared with that of the former Gender SWG, which had been prescribed, in the Gender Policy, an important role in its implementation – including the management of the accountability framework. In effect, the IASC leadership signalled that gender is not perceived to be an IASC priority.

The GRG TOR – in line with its prescribed role in the IASC Gender Policy - specifies expected results and identifies tasks to be attained, which are underpinned by the 'key principles of gender equality and women's empowerment'. This includes developing an accountability framework for monitoring the implementation of the 2008 IASC Gender Policy; acting as a resource for mainstreaming gender in the IASC structure and activities; strengthening field-level gender capacity; influencing humanitarian standards to ensure 'proper provisions on gender equality and the empowerment of women'; and 'advocating for gender mainstreaming in the Transformative Agenda and related initiatives'. However, its status as a Reference Group has inevitably meant that the GRG has not been enabled to fulfil its function and responsibilities as spelt out in its TOR, and as prescribed in the IASC Gender Policy.

With regards the other IASC Subsidiary Bodies, the IASC Gender Policy calls on them to integrate gender equality into their annual work plans to 'demonstrate their commitments and actions to routinely

incorporate gender equality into their areas of work'. Review of the TOR of the IASC Task Teams[6] and other Reference Groups[7] indicates that overall efforts on the part of the GRG to engage with the other Subsidiary Bodies is generally not reflected in their TORs and annual work plans. Moreover, there are discernible inconsistencies in the way these Subsidiary Bodies address and incorporate gender, age, diversity, other cross-cutting issues and SADD in their working documents. Though this also applies to the TOR of the Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations, Including Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Team (AAP/PSEA/TT), its *2012 Operational Framework*, for example, which take into account the five AAP Commitments endorsed by the IASC Principals in 2011, explicitly refers to gender, age, diversity and SADD.

4.2 Views of IASC Stakeholders

Among the global IASC stakeholders there does not appear to be institutional memory regarding the 2*013 IASC Briefing Note on IASC Restructuring* clarifying the status of the GRG within the IASC Architecture. The same applies more or less in respect of the *2013 Report of the UN Secretary General on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Natural Disasters* explicitly referring to the contribution of the (former) IASC Gender SWG to mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action.

GRG co-chairs and various GRG participating organizations and agencies generally perceive it to be 'something of a challenge' to fulfil the role prescribed in the IASC policy and to subsequently implement the GRG TOR and annual work plans. Despite having a 'Gender Champion', the reality remains – perceived by some respondents - that gender as a thematic area is not perceived to be a priority within the IASC structure, as evidenced the TA documentation reviewed.

Overall discussions with co-chairs and members of IASC Task Teams and other Reference Groups regarding how gender is mainstreamed in their respective TORs and annual work plans reveals the variations noted in the desk review of pertinent documents. Some respondents are aware that gender, age and diversity may not be explicitly referred to in their guidance documents, but believe that such cross-cutting issues would be addressed at the operational level through the work of the global clusters.

Discussions with IASC TT and other RG representatives reveal some ambivalence regarding the role of the GRG. Various respondents would concede that they are not very familiar with the GRG TOR and 'how the GRG actually works'. Unless they attend the GRG meetings, IASC stakeholders would not necessarily be familiar with GRG meeting minutes. Neither does there appear to be much familiarity with GRG work plans, and the fact that these include reference to working with other IASC Subsidiary Bodies.

5. IASC Cluster System

5.1 Global and Field Level Clusters

The IASC Gender Policy explicitly refers to the responsibility of global cluster leads to provide guidance to the country level 'on how to integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting issue', and to work with all global cluster working groups and with the field level cluster system 'to strengthen their capacities to incorporate gender equality in cluster programmes'.

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[6] IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team; IASC Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience; IASC Principled Humanitarian Action Task Team.
[7] IASC Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas; IASC Mental Health and Psychological Support in Emergency Settings Reference Group.

Relevant to the current Review is how the IASC cluster system at global level addresses gender mainstreaming in the documents posted on their respective websites. The desk review of accessible documentation reveals that overall global clusters have mainstreamed gender and age in these sources.

However, the extent to which such mainstreaming is in place differs from one global cluster to the next. In addition, in some cases there is inconsistency in how gender and age are mainstreamed in documents posted by the same global cluster. There is no explicit mention of these variables in, for example, some cluster strategy plans, training tools, guidance notes, needs assessment, and thematic priorities. Either way, the IASC Working Group statement - 'given that populations are not homogenous, gender and other differentiations should be reflected'[8] - does not appear to have been consistently taken on board in the global cluster documentation reviewed.

The IASC Gender Policy is also explicit on responsibility for gender mainstreaming at the field level, ensuring that the TORs of the RC/HC, the HCT and the cluster/sector leads 'incorporate gender analysis and actions into programming, assessment and policy development', and that the 'needs of women and girls as well as men and boys are addressed'.

At the field level, the *Gender Marker Implementation Country Reports* reveal variability in how the cluster system integrates gender in programming. The GM country report template includes a section on 'cluster participation' covering the cluster system's 'commitment to gender', noting that country reports apply different terms to evaluate cluster commitment to gender. Moreover, the desk review of accessible cluster system reports reveals that performance of the same cluster in respect of commitment to gender mainstreaming may vary from one country context to another.

It is also relevant to note that, with the exception of the Logistics Cluster, the TOR for Cluster Coordinators posted on the pertinent global cluster websites includes reference to gender and age. Pertinent TORs also either mention diversity separately, or as part of other cross-cutting issues (though generally not defining what is meant by diversity). However, while the TORs for Education, Food Security, Health, Nutrition and Shelter Cluster Coordinators explicitly mention SADD, the rest of the clusters – CCCM, Early Recovery, Protection and WASH - do not.

The IASC Gender Policy also refers to inter-cluster coordination at the field level. Specifically the requirement that IASC Members and Standing Invitees 'will promote gender equality strategies in their work as members of the Humanitarian Country Team', and are encouraged to 'share and promote IASC materials and resources'.

The *revised 2014 Reference Module for Cluster Coordination*, issued as part of the TA products, elaborates on the objective of inter-cluster coordination and provides examples of inter-cluster response and operational issues. However, there is no explicit reference to gender, age, diversity or SADD in the section covering Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM).

Recent *IASC Operational Peer Reviews* (OPRs) provide some insight into the extent to which gender dimensions are integrated in the inter-cluster coordination mechanism, and the challenges affecting the process of integrating gender in programming and project implementation. Though keeping in mind variations in country context and type of crises, the OPRs carried out in the Central African Republic, Philippines and South Sudan conclude that gender mainstreaming in the cluster system is faced with a complexity of challenges that require to be addressed.

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[8]IASC.2013. 'IASC 85th Working Group Meeting. Final Summary Record. 28-29 October, p. 10.

5.2 Views of IASC Stakeholders

In discussions with key members of global clusters, respondents point out that the approach to gender mainstreaming in their respective clusters is reflected in their strategic objectives and operational guidelines shared with the field level cluster system. Respondents are generally aware of gender mainstreaming mechanisms and tools and point out that these are prominently displayed on their respective website.

Some global cluster respondents concede that follow-up on monitoring and reporting on how gender is mainstreamed at the field level may not be as optimal as required This is to varying extent due to limitations of human capacity and financial resources; with implications, for example, for frequency and coverage of training activities that global clusters can offer their respective cluster staff in the field, and which by all accounts would include gender mainstreaming. It appears that ensuring adequate financial resources to achieve strategic objectives and targets of the global cluster work plan may differ from one global cluster to the other. This is perceived to be due as much to successful fund-raising strategies, as to donor interest in funding a particular cluster, or a sub-cluster such as GBV.

No conclusive response was elicited regarding if, and to what extent, links are maintained between the respective global clusters and the GRG, and who should take the initiative in mobilizing such links. Similar to responses elicited from IASC Task Teams and other Reference Groups, familiarity with the GRG TOR and annual work plans differs from one global cluster to the other and tends to depend on participation of global cluster members in the GRG monthly meetings. Moreover, no conclusive response was elicited on whether the Geneva-based global cluster system has developed a joint strategic gender mainstreaming action plan applicable to all clusters.

Skype/telephone discussions with various cluster leads and cluster coordinators in various field countries covered by the current Review echoes some of the points raised by global cluster stakeholders; such as the challenge of ensuring that gender is effectively mainstreamed in intra-cluster programme approach and project implementation, as well as in inter-cluster coordination activities; and the role of field level leadership in ensuring that gender is effectively mainstreamed in humanitarian action on the ground.

The fact that inter-cluster coordination may be easier where the same UN agency leads a number of clusters was another point raised by various field level respondents; keeping in mind that the same cluster lead or cluster coordinator may be responsible for a number of clusters. However, as some respondents would point out, while some synergies between clusters are 'logical' and a more or less established way of working together, more effort is required to promote synergies between all clusters. Some respondents believe that this is not effectively addressed through inter-cluster coordination, and thus may constitute 'a missed opportunity to support a joint strategic approach to gender mainstreaming'.

Field-level cluster respondents would point out that effective gender mainstreaming also hinges on the source, type and depth of support that may be tapped into. In some cases response by global clusters to requests of support from the field may be timely; in other cases there may be a time-lag. Specifically as concerns requests for support on gender mainstreaming, field-level staff may need to find other information sources; especially where capacity for gender mainstreaming is insufficient which is deemed to be a 'chronic problem' given the relatively high staff turnover in the humanitarian sector.

Various field-level cluster staff would tend to focus on GBV in discussing gender mainstreaming, and also point out that interventions to combat GBV, including the culturally sensitive issue of FGM/C, may be

implemented in the development sector, yet the humanitarian sector seemingly fails to tap into this. This point is also deemed to be applicable to securing information on SADD. Either way, this would appear to reflect some awareness of the need to link humanitarian and development interventions. But there is also the view among some field level respondents that promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is not a priority in humanitarian action since the latter focuses on saving lives, which implies everyone irrespective of gender and age.

6. Gender Mainstreaming Mechanisms and Tools
6.1 Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) Project
The GenCap Project was initiated in 2007 under the auspices of the (former) Gender SWG, in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The impetus was recognition of the urgent need to improve gender equality programming in humanitarian interventions, and the aim to facilitate and strengthen capacity for and leadership in mainstreaming gender in humanitarian interventions through the short-term deployment of gender experts.

GenCap Updates provide information on the GenCap Project's financial status; deployment of Advisers; implementation of the IASC Gender Marker, and GenCap Technical Workshops. The GenCap Annual Reports (issued yearly since 2009) report on implementation of activities as specified in the GenCap Project work plans. Recurrent challenges impacting on implementation of the GenCap Project include securing adequate funding; recruitment/availability and retention of GenCap roster members; and the link with sustainability of gender expertise and knowhow following departure of GenCap Advisers. It is also noted that focus on the IASC Gender Marker – which apparently may take up much of the GenCap Advisers' time - can overshadow other required inputs and distract attention from capacity building to achieve gender equality programming. The latter is deemed to face challenges from a 'systemic, organizational and mind-set level'.

A key component of implementing the GenCap Project is the development of the *Monitoring & Evaluation Framework,* based on clear objectives; expected results chain, monitoring process, data analysis and evaluation tools; a template for identifying good/poor practice; as well as the required capacity building/training. A recurrent challenge is addressing the lack of SADD.

A series of *GenCap Experience Documents* was issued during 2008 – 2010, which aim to present technical background information and lessons learnt from deployment of GenCap Advisers in the field. Topics covered include gender in natural disaster preparedness; needs assessment; coordination; GBV and the cluster system.

6.2 Gender Tools
The *IASC Gender Marker (GM)* was jointly created by the IASC Gender SWG and the CAP, in response to the identified imperative 'to improve humanitarian programming and make humanitarian response more efficient', and linked to the expectation that clusters are 'accountable for advancing gender equality in their respective sectors'. The GM, application of which is mandatory in the IASC humanitarian structure, is deemed to offer benefits to the clusters as well as to affected populations. A particular characteristic of the IASC GM is that it is a tool focusing primarily on the project design level, and there are currently calls to further develop it to encompass project implementation.

Analysis of results and lessons learnt from implementing the GM reveals that 'challenges identified in previous years of Gender Marker application have yet to be resolved'; specifically in terms of 'sustainability', 'ownership and engagement', 'coding confusion', and 'the association of Gender with women's and girls' issues', as well as collection and analysis of SADD.

The *IASC Gender Alerts*, launched by the former Gender SWG, are incorporated in the GRG annual work plans. The aim is to alert humanitarian staff and stakeholders in the field by identifying priorities to ensure gender sensitive humanitarian response to ensure sustainable humanitarian outcomes. Gender Alerts flag the importance of including SADD in needs assessment and project development; and point out immediate actions required to mainstream gender in humanitarian response. Improving the content, analysis and timing of issuing the Gender Alerts is an on-going discussion within the GRG.

6.3 Knowledge Management and Capacity Building

As mentioned in the IASC Gender Policy, IASC Members and Standing Invitees are 'encouraged to share and promote IASC materials and resources, including related to work on conflict prevention, early warning, disaster risk reduction, and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation'. The Gender Policy is also explicit as regards capacity building, namely that 'members shall provide staff appropriate training and knowledge for meaningful contributions to inclusion of gender equality programming in IASC decision-making'.

IASC gender relevant knowledge products include the *2006 IASC Handbook Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs - Equal Opportunities* (available in several languages). The *2009 Review of eight IASC Products* includes the Gender Handbook, and revealed that the latter is used both as a knowledge and a capacity building tool. The *2011 IASC Product Guideline* drafted by the IASC Secretariat singles out the Gender Handbook as an example of how an IASC product may systematically reach its target audience when promoted by experts, such as, for example, the GenCap Advisers. The *IASC Global Cluster websites* have a sub-section on gender training tools and – with the exception of the Logistics Cluster – all mention the Gender Handbook

The Gender Handbook is incorporated into the *IASC gender e-learning course*, available free of charge via the IASC website. The shorter version of the gender e-learning course, condensed by the GRG, is hosted by the UNWOMEN Learning Centre in Santo Domingo. The websites of the CCCM, Education, Health, Nutrition and WASH global clusters include reference to the course. Various IASC Full Members, Standing Invitees and members of Task Teams and Reference Groups have committed to providing the gender e-learning course to their staff, as well as facilitating access for their partners.

The *2010 IASC Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* is also accessible via the IASC website, and is available in several languages. The *2010 Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response* is another relevant IASC product. Gender is mainstreamed in key sections and a separate chapter covers cross-cutting issues defined as age, diversity, environment, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, mental health and psychosocial support, though there is inconsistent mention of SADD in the pertinent checklist.

6.4 Cross-Cutting Issues

Relevant to the current Review is the conclusion of the *2010 Evaluation of the IASC Cluster System* that, some exceptions apart, integration of cross-cutting issues – defined as age, gender, environment and HIV/AIDS – in cluster system activities has been minimal. This is deemed to be largely due to limited inclusion of SADD; insufficient attention to cross-cutting issues during inter-cluster meetings; lack of clarity in respect of responsibility for integrating cross-cutting issues; insufficient capacity of cluster coordinators and limited guidance for integrating cross-cutting issues; limited attention to cross-cutting issues in needs assessments and lack of clarity in definition of this term. As a recent strategic review

commissioned by UNOCHA also reiterates, within the humanitarian stakeholder community, there is no apparent clarity regarding what constitutes a cross-cutting issue.

IASC Full Member organizations and Standing Invitee agencies, as well as IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the Global Cluster System, appear to have different definitions of what constitutes a cross-cutting issue. In some documents consulted for the current Review, gender and age are included in what may be referred to as the 'cross-cutting package', thus apparently according these two variables equal weight with whatever other cross-cutting issues may be included in the 'package'. In other cases, gender and age are mentioned separately. Either way, the 'cross-cutting package' adhered to by the different IASC stakeholder groups may include disability, HIV/AIDS, environment, and in some cases also variables such as culture, diversity, early recovery, GBV, governance, human rights, people-centric, protection and psychosocial/mental health.

6.5 Views of IASC Stakeholders

Discussions with selected Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) Advisers reveal the challenges they may face during their deployment. A key challenge flagged by all respondents is how much their experience in the field, and the extent to which they are able to fulfil the objectives of their deployment and their work plan, may hinge on the leadership of the RC/HC and by implication the HCT. Where such leadership is pro-active and supportive of gender mainstreaming, then other humanitarian actors will generally 'fall in line'.

The experience of some GenCap Advisers also reveals that it tends to be 'gender aware' humanitarian staff who may request support for strengthening integrating gender in humanitarian action, by implication acknowledging limitations of their capacity in this area. Moreover, effective inter-cluster cooperation reflects effective leadership for establishing and reinforcing synergies between the various clusters, and this facilitates the task of the GenCap Adviser to develop joint gender capacity training programmes and activities. But, as some respondents would also point out, relying on gender capacity training organized and implemented by the GenCap Adviser should not detract attention from the responsibility of the humanitarian leadership to ensure that cluster staff has basic knowledge of the key requirements for effective gender equality programming.

Responses to the Online Survey reveal that around 62% deem the work of the GenCap Adviser to be effective in encouraging humanitarian partners to consider gender issues in the HPC and integrating gender into the SRP; providing practical examples during gender capacity training; and sharing their knowledge of the local gender context. Reasons for deeming GenCap Advisers as not being less effective is linked to their short-term deployment; the tendency to focus on the strategic level; dedicating too much attention to GBV issues; weak strategy for dealing with the field level humanitarian leadership; focus on the GM and training; limited knowledge of the local context; and focusing on changing the local culture rather than improving the quality of humanitarian programming.

Discussions with global and field level stakeholders reveal variation in their familiarity with the IASC 2008 Gender Policy; the Gender Handbook, the Gender Marker and Tip Sheets, the gender e-learning course and the Gender Alerts. Moreover, not all IASC stakeholders interviewed or who responded to the Online Survey have participated in gender capacity training; reflecting that to date the latter is not mandatory in all the IASC Full Member organizations and Standing Invitee agencies.

Various global level respondents appear to be aware that cross-cutting issues are not clearly defined in, for example, key TA documentation, or in documents issued by IASC Task Teams and Reference Groups, or in global cluster products. It was pointed out that different organizations may define cross-cutting

issues according to their mandate and strategic objectives, and this will tend to be reflected in how Subsidiary Bodies and global clusters define which cross-cutting issues are relevant to their own work. The apparent absence of consensus on cross-cutting issues – and how gender, age and diversity fit into the latter - has implications for the content of global guidelines cascading down to the field.

Discussions with field level respondents reveal that they tend to perceive how to address gender and other cross-cutting issues as challenging, in particular in respect of monitoring and reporting on outcomes. Singling out GBV as a cross-cutting issue is by some respondents deemed to inadvertently 'artificially separate' it from what should be a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming to ensure development and implementation of gender equality programming and the link with women's empowerment.

C. CONCLUSIONS
1. IASC and Integrating Gender in Humanitarian Action
1.1 Mixed Results
The analysis of key IASC documents and products, the views and opinions solicited from interviews with global and field level members of the IASC stakeholder community, and the information captured through the Online Survey, reveal mixed results, inconsistent IASC Leadership on gender in humanitarian action, as well as missed opportunities for integrating gender in the work of the IASC bodies and structure.

On the one hand, overall progress is noted in development and implementation of gender mechanisms and tools (GenCap Project, Gender Handbook, GBV Handbook, gender e-learning course, Gender Marker and Tip Sheets, and Gender Alert). However, integrating gender in operational guidelines reveals rather mixed results.

On the other hand, the desk review of documentation issued by or on behalf of the IASC Leadership – Principals, Working Group, Emergency Directors Group – also reveals inconsistencies in the way the three key variables of the IASC Gender Policy – gender, age and diversity – are addressed and incorporated in policy papers, strategic directives and guidance documents.

1.2 Missed Opportunities and Lagging Momentum
The momentum for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action - evident in the work of the former Gender SWG, and to some extent in various IASC operational guidelines - appears to have become side-tracked by the time the IASC Transformative Agenda was developed and launched in 2012. It appears that the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT) did not much heed this slippage; reflected, for example, in the way gender, age, diversity and other cross-cutting issues, as well as SADD, are to some extent inconsistently addressed in various TA mission guidelines and reports.

The *normative framework* underpinning the TA – with its stress on leadership, coordination, accountability, capacity building, and advocacy/communications identified as key areas requiring attention for improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response – is implicitly based on the human rights-based approach defining responsibilities of duty-bearers towards rights-holders. By definition – even if this is not explicitly spelt out – this should include addressing gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action as part of the strategic objective of promoting and supporting gender equality and women's empowerment and inherent in various international human rights instruments.

Yet, as the in-depth desk review reveals, relevant TA documentation – for example, the TA Protocols and Priorities - are generally not consistent in the way they integrate gender, age, diversity and other cross-

cutting issues, or for that matter SADD. In fact, available/accessible TA documentation is largely silent on the existence of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy. Various IASC stakeholders contacted for participation in the current Review would indicate that it is the request for an interview that brought the Gender Policy to their attention.

The missed opportunity to ensure that the normative framework underlying the IASC TA takes appropriate account of the established normative requirements for effective gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action is to some extent mirrored in the recent restructuring of the IASC Architecture. In effect the composition of the latter has inadvertently created *systemic hurdles* to effectively integrating gender in humanitarian response and programming.

Indeed, there appears to be some contradiction between, on the one hand, IASC Leadership support to further strengthening and implementing gender mainstreaming mechanisms and tools, and, on the other hand, the decision to relegate responsibility for gender mainstreaming to the GRG which is not enabled to fulfil the role and responsibilities prescribed in the IASC Gender Policy.

The findings of the review generally indicate that efforts to overcome challenges that impede the institutionalizing of horizontal and vertical synergies in the work of the IASC - as required by the strategic objectives of the TA - may to some extent be further impeded by the evident weakness in the systemic integration of gender mainstreaming in the work of the IASC at global and field levels.

2. Accountability for Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action
The IASC 2008 Gender Policy is explicit regarding the responsibility of the IASC Working Group for ensuring that an accountability framework for integrating gender in the work of the IASC is developed by the (former) Gender SWG.

There does not appear to be institutional memory within the IASC stakeholder community why to date no accountability framework for integrating gender is in place, and why this omission was not followed up by the IASC Leadership; not even during the process of developing the Transformative Agenda which aimed for more coherent and effective humanitarian action and response and includes accountability in its strategic objectives.

In fact, the TA addresses accountability primarily in relation to affected populations, an IASC TA Priority reflected in establishing the AAP/PSEA Task Team, and supporting synergy with the work of the Global Protection Cluster. However, various IASC reports – for example, IASC Operational Peer Reviews and Gender Marker Assessments – indicate that the area of accountability for gender mainstreaming lacks clarity.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Addressed to the IASC Leadership
1.1 Gender Responsive IASC Architecture
The IASC Leadership should:

a) Nominate UNWOMEN to join the IASC group of (UN) Full Members to provide the requisite capacity to ensure the adequate and consistent integration of gender into the work of the IASC towards more effective and coherent humanitarian action and to provide its (SWAP-related) experience in the area of accountability for gender mainstreaming;

b) Ensure that the IASC's directives clearly and consistently spell out the requirements for effective gender equality programming both through gender mainstreaming and targeted actions based on gender analysis (as called for in the IASC 2008 Gender Policy).

1.2 Gender in Humanitarian Financing

The IASC Leadership to:

a) Advocate for adequate levels of humanitarian financing required to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action;

b) Integrate gender as a central facet of the work of the IASC Humanitarian Finance Task Team to ensure that the current funding architecture supports the funding requirements of gender equality programming in the humanitarian response;

c) Ensure appropriate funding is available to build the necessary capacity across the humanitarian system to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian actrin (as called for in the IASC 2008 Gender Policy);

d) Support the further development of the Gender Marker to cover both project design and project implementation.

1.3 Status of the IASC Gender Subsidiary Body

The IASC Leadership to:

a) Accord the GRG the required status and authority to function as an in-house resource and technical support for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action, and ensure that this is explicitly reflected in an updated GRG TOR;

b) Ensure that the GRG has the required human and financial resources to effectively fulfil its function as an in-house resource and technical support for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action;

c) Require the GRG to designate Focal Points for liaising with each of the IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the Global Cluster System as part of providing the required technical support for mainstreaming gender in their strategic objectives and annual work plans in a timely manner.

1.4 Gender in the IASC Normative Framework

The IASC Leadership, with guidance from the upgraded GRG, to commission a position paper on integrating gender in the IASC normative framework underlying the TA, to include:

a) presentation of key premises in the normative framework for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action - reflected in international human rights instruments and UN Security Council Resolutions - and the value added of symbiosis with the normative requirements of the IASC mandate, in particular the strategic approach of the TA;

b) proposal for effective inclusion of the IASC gender sensitized normative framework in strategic objectives and work plans of IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the Global Cluster System, and proposed indicators to track this process;

c) proposal for a strategic approach to integrating the IASC gender sensitized normative framework in the work of the field level cluster system, with anticipated value added in respect of strengthening inter-cluster coordination;

d) proposal for establishing the link with the accountability framework for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action.

1.5 IASC Gender Policy

The IASC Leadership to:

a) Update the IASC Gender Policy Statement, with the aim of:

- ✓ Ensuring that its objectives and proposed actions at global and field levels are 'fit for purpose' and it appropriately reflects the current global humanitarian system, as well as strategic and operational approaches to integrating gender in humanitarian response;

✓ Including strategic guidelines for bridging the divide between humanitarian action and development interventions, conducive to promoting and supporting gender equality programming and women's empowerment;

✓ Including guidance on minimum standards for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action, and the link with gender competency and commitments of members of the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels..

b) Issue a directive designating the updated IASC Gender Policy as a corporate policy to be taken into account by all members of the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels.

1.6 Mobilizing IASC Stakeholder Community

The IASC Leadership to issue directives for IASC Task Teams, other Reference Groups and the Global Cluster System to:

a) Update their TORs and annual work plans to ensure that they appropriately reflect normative and operational requirements for effectively mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action.

b) Check the gender sensitivity of their strategic and operational documentation, and update the latter if necessary, including avoiding gender neutral terms that may mask gender blind language;

c) Include in their TORs the mandatory requirement to utilize the GRG as an in-house resource and technical support for mainstreaming gender in their strategic objectives, to be reflected in their annual work plans;

d) Designate a Focal Point for systematically liaising with the GRG.

1.7 Cross-Cutting Issues

The IASC Leadership to provide clear guidance on how cross-cutting issues are to be addressed in IASC strategic objectives, operational guidelines and other relevant IASC products:

a) Designate 'gender' and 'age' as universal key social determinants, rather than being submerged in other cross-cutting issues.

b) Solicit consensus on the definition of diversity and ensure that this definition is taken on board by the IASC stakeholder community.

c) Provide guidance on what may constitute other cross-cutting issues which need to be taken into account in humanitarian programming and project implementation, to ensure coherence in humanitarian response and action.

2. Establish an IASC Accountability Framework to Monitor Implementation of IASC Gender Policy

The IASC Leadership to establish an IASC Steering Group comprising representatives from the upgraded GRG, other IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the Global Cluster System, with the time-bound mandate and TOR to develop an accountability framework based on the following proposed parameters:

a) Based on the roles and responsibilities prescribed in the updated IASC Gender Policy, develop a robust working accountability framework to monitor progress towards the objective and outcomes of the policy.

b) Identify measurable targets and related indicators at the global and field levels for results-based monitoring and reporting to efficiently and accurately inform the accountability framework on the extent that the policy is being effectively implemented.

c) Establish the required reporting mechanisms and responsibilities for all relevant IASC stakeholders and ensure that these are included in their TOR as deliverables.

d) Set up an IASC oversight committee to work in tandem with the upgraded GRG with the mandate to audit implementation of the accountability framework for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action.

3. Establish IASC Endorsed Minimum Standards on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Humanitarian Action

a) Identify minimum standards for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action that reflect the key objectives of the (updated) IASC Gender Policy, to be incorporated in the TORs of members of the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels; that support synergy between cluster activities at the field level; and also reflect the importance of addressing the humanitarian/ development divide.

b) The IASC Leadership to disseminate these minimum standards for mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action for consideration by the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, as part of the IASC document package to be submitted to this global gathering.

4. Strengthening Capacity for Integrating Gender in Humanitarian Action
With guidance from the IASC Leadership:

a) Develop a template that identifies gender-relevant competence requirements applicable to the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels; and ensure that this is incorporated in the TORs of the IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the global and field level cluster systems.

b) Require the mandatory participation of members of the IASC stakeholder community in the IASC gender e-learning course or its equivalent; and advocate for its inclusion in staff performance templates where this is not yet mandatory in IASC Full Member organizations and Standing Invitee agencies.[9]

c) Require the mandatory inclusion of the (updated) IASC Gender Policy, IASC Gender Handbook and IASC Gender Marker Tip Sheets in refresher courses for existing humanitarian staff, and in the induction course for newly appointed staff members, in the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels.

d) Commission a user-friendly guidance document that identifies good practice examples linked to key messages inherent in the Gender Marker Tip Sheets and in evaluations of humanitarian programmes - to be translated into the main UN languages.

e) Incorporate the good practice document and minimum standards for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action in gender capacity training of members of the IASC stakeholder community at global and field levels (refresher and induction training courses); and state and non-state actors in the pertinent country targeted for humanitarian assistance.

f) Disseminate the good practice document for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action for consideration by the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, as part of the IASC document package to be submitted to this global gathering.

E. Consultation and Feedback from the Working Group

1.1. Feedback from the Working Group
On the 26 June 2015, the GRG presented the findings of the report to the Working Group for the purpose of receiving their collective response and feedback.

There was a unanimous agreement amongst the IASC members that gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action is of fundamental importance to the work of the IASC and noted that the new Emergency Response Coordinator and the Secretary General recognizing the importance of

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[9] Taking into account that some IASC Standing Invitees agencies – with membership based on a network of national organizations - may require modifications in the approach to staff performance.

gender equality in humanitarian action. In addition, with the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit, this is an opportune time to ensure it is further integrated into the humanitarian system.

It was also unanimously agreed that the policy's prescribed Accountability Framework needed to be urgently established, as well as an updating of the policy to reflect the current humanitarian landscape.

A number of agencies stressed the importance of ensuring the development of the Accountability Framework and updating the policy are done so in a way that will have a significant positive impact on field operations and outcomes for crisis affected populations.

A number of agencies queried the review reporting that the Gender Reference Group had been 'downgraded' when it was changed from a Sub-Working Group to a Reference Group. They noted that the Task Teams were set with specific time-bound tasks, whilst the Reference Groups were established to provide more permanent communities of practice.

Most agencies queried the purpose of reopening the question of UN Women's membership of the IASC, asking what has changed since the last time the Principals had discussed the issue.

The Chair of the Working Group, ASG Kyung Wha-Kang, noted that the review did not highlight adequately the current difficulties that exist within the GRG, which have hampered its ability to function well. These issues had not been reflected in the report, which was not 'self-reflecting'.

As such, the GRG needs reforming to get past these difficulties. The Chair recommended it streamlined its working methods and TOR - in particular, with regards the number of co-chairs which instead of the current model of four, should be two - one UN, one non-UN.

The Chair called for the GRG to develop a restructured TOR for presentation to the Working Group in advance of the October Working Group meeting. In addition, the GRG should develop a 2 year work-plan that reflected the agreed on recommendations of the review report.]

1.2. GRG's Response
In response, the GRG welcomed seeing so many of the IASC member agency's in attendance which reflected how important the issue of gender equality is to the humanitarian community.

With regards the issue of the status of the Gender Reference Group, the "downgrading" term used was not to describe the original purpose of the decision per se but rather describing that by making the gender subsidiary body a Reference Group, it had removed the internal mechanism for managing accountability to the policy.

The GRG's working problems were acknowledged and the comments from the chair on the need to restructure the GRG by reviewing its co-chair arrangement and set out a 2 year working plan were welcome.

The comments raised by members of the IASC WG on UN Women's membership to the IASC were very informative especially in understanding the dynamics and perspectives on the issue. UN Women highlighted that this was one of the recommendations and not the main purpose of the review.

Action Points Agreed Upon by the Working Group

Following the presentation of the report to the IASC Working Group, there were a number of agreed upon action points. These are as follows:

- The IASC Gender Policy must be updated from its original 2008 incarnation to reflect the current humanitarian landscape.

- Based upon the updated version of the policy, the originally prescribed *Accountability Framework* needs to be urgently established.

- The development of the Accountability Framework and updating of the policy must be done in such a way that will have a significant positive impact on field operations and outcomes for crisis affected populations.

- The Gender Reference Group to develop a restructured TOR for presentation to the Working Group in advance of the October 2015 Working Group meeting.

- The Gender Reference Group to develop a 2 year work-plan that reflected the agreed on recommendations of the review report.