

**REVIEW OF IASC 2008 POLICY
STATEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION**

Annex 11

CONSULTATION:

***COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
QUERIES AND RESPONSE***

1. COMMENTS FROM WHO – 27 May 2015

- The recommendations are well articulated, however, for practical purposes, it would be better to (1) shorten them and (2) prioritize/timeline them.
- In prioritizing the recommendations, WHO would encourage those recommendations with specific application to field operations to take precedence, because that is the target point for greater integration, and where impact on populations will be most immediately felt.
- Elements with direct relevance to field operations include SDD, cluster coordination, and specific roles/ responsibilities for field staff in addressing gender. These elements are not explicitly reflected in the recommendations however, and we would encourage more direct/feasible/practical recommendations and/or requested actions on those. Challenges in cluster coordination, as well as the lack of SDD, are correctly pointed out in the report as large impediments of successful mainstreaming, and yet they do not come through in the recommendations.
- Closer coordination among cross cutting areas, including streamlining actions wherever possible, across all stages of emergency preparedness and response is another recommendation we would recommend. The more these can be aligned and systematically addressed in tandem, the more feasible their integration will be. Field operators are faced with requests to integrate actions from multiple areas, all of them important, but challenging to respond to all.
- As a separate review of the Gender Marker has recently been finalized, it would be good to coordinate/align recommendations of the two assessments, especially as they relate directly to field operations.
- The executive summary is LONG. While it contains the major points of the report, it is a bit disconcerting to discover at the end of it, that the bulk of the report lies ahead. Perhaps making use of the useful summary text boxes scattered through the document as bullet points for the executive summary would help shorten it.
- A minor note on the listing of WHO as UNWHO, which is more appropriate simply as WHO

2. RESPONSE MADE TO QUERIES FROM UNICEF – 19 June 2015

1.1. UNICEF - Just to note, that overall the report is very long (90 pages) and quite dense. Some of the analysis is very detailed, and particularly around the guidance notes and policies and its not clear other than as an annexe what value it brings to the conclusions and recommendations. The main body of the report reads more like a detailed annex for the summary. I would recommend restructuring.

RESPONSE - Indeed the report is quite dense. During the last GRG meeting it was agreed to develop a short executive summary that captures the main points. The long detailed report has been attached as an Annex.

1.2. UNICEF - The field analysis in comparison is relatively short and would benefit from some more explanation, particularly around what works well. There is practically no example of good practice from the field which would have been very helpful.

RESPONSE- The point is well taken. At the field level, the review targeted CAR, DRC, Haiti, Mali, oPt, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen and the Pacific Region. Interviews were conducted with RCs/HCs from CAR, the Philippines, Haiti, Colombia, South Sudan, Somalia, the Pacific Humanitarian Team and Yemen. Cluster representatives were interviewed from the target countries covering Protection, Education, WASH, Shelter, Health (and Reproductive Health Sub-Cluster), WASH and CCCM. The survey targeted 10 cluster coordinators at the field but only 17% responded. Also, the OPRs were another source. As you know no field mission took place.

1.3. UNICEF - The report suggests that making UNWOMEN part of the IASC would resolve, 1. the issue of implementation of the SWAP in humanitarian settings (p51), and 2. provide a “gate keeper” role to ensure that gender is taken into account in all IASC policies and guidance. This for me is to a large extent the role of the GRG, particular one with more capacity as recommended. It’s not clear what added value or specific actions UNWOMEN would take, above and beyond what the GRG can do, particular given the point made already in the report, that gender mainstreaming requires operational leadership (HC/ HCT), mainstreaming of gender by CC and technical expertise (p51). In other words all operational agencies need to look at how better to take gender into account. It would be important to explain the rational and potential impact of the recommendation in more detail.

RESPONSE - The recommendation that UN Women is made a member of the IASC is to ensure that the requisite capacity for the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment is present at the decision making and executive level of the IASC. It is at the Principals and Working Group levels that strategic, policy and operational decisions are made that have system-wide implications.

The idea is that as much as UNICEF provides a focus and leadership on children and education etc., and UNHCR on refugees and protection, the capacity needs to be there to ensure that the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment is properly reflected in these decisions and accounted for.

We are looking forward to identify how to achieve the same and influence the agenda politically and operationally with clear defined accountability measures as done in the case of UN-SWAP within UNDG.

UN Women’s mandate is to support the gender equality and the empowerment of women agenda globally. UN Women aims at contributing to humanitarian effectiveness including

through supporting IASC and its structures in delivering on gender equality and the empowerment of women commitments.

The gender subsidiary body's role is more at the working/ operational level to "provide guidance and support to all bodies and structures of the IASC including task teams, reference groups and global clusters and respective lead agencies based on contribution of its membership". It is not intended to be at the executive decision making level.

Another perspective is to maybe think of having "gender equality and the empowerment of women" established the same way as another early on "mainstreamed" thematic area such as protection, early recovery etc. It is also important to reflect on best practice as well.

1.4. UNICEF - There is a reference of the Gender SWG being "downgraded (p53)." The decision by the IASC WG was not to downgrade the group, but in a decision based on the need to limit IASC groups to make task teams time bound entities and not to maintain SWG. Gender was one of the few groups that were given a longer term mandate of advice and support, hence the reference group. It's not clear how changing back to a SWG would increase importance of the work (reference to p86- limited role of SWG). The recommendation around strengthen capacity to support the IASC is more relevant.

Linked to this, there is little mention of how the GRG functions, how decisions are made and how that could improve and reinforce gender mainstreaming and technical support in the field, and how the creation of a subsidiary body change or improve this.

RESPONSE - Your insights are much appreciated as the report states an information gap on this issue. The gender SWG was written into the 2008 Gender Policy Statement with very specific roles and responsibilities, namely:

The Sub-Working Group on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action will:

- (i) develop an annual plan to support implementation of this policy statement. The Gender SWG will provide guidance and support to all bodies and structures of the IASC to be able to incorporate gender equality into relevant aspects of their work.
- (ii) Develop an accountability framework for monitoring the implementation of this statement.

b) All other IASC subsidiary bodies will:

- (i) Integrate gender equality into their annual work plans to demonstrate their commitments and actions to routinely incorporate gender equality into their areas of work.
- (ii) Nominate a focal point to be responsible for inclusion of gender equality programming into the SWG annual work plans and maintain contact with the IASC SWG on Gender in Humanitarian Action.

However, as a Reference Group, the gender subsidiary body has no real function in the IASC. The Reference Groups are defined as: "Reference Groups are voluntary communities of practice

affiliated to, but not directly overseen by, the IASC. They are composed of technical experts from the IASC organizations and build a forum for exchange of knowledge in topics that are cross-cutting issues or remain relevant for the IASC, although not a current priority".

Furthermore, this definition clarifies that gender is *not a current priority*, despite the policy stating that *"The IASC is committed to achieving gender equality, ensuring the human rights of women, girls, boys and men are equally promoted and protected in humanitarian action, and ensuring that women, girls, boys and men have equitable and safe access to services provided"*.

The recommendation on changing back to the SWG, with the same functions set out in the policy is intended to significantly increase the importance and authority of the gender subsidiary body's role in the IASC. Otherwise, any other tested option that would achieve the key objectives and enable policy implementation in an accountable manner would be welcomed.

1.5. UNICEF - There is recognition of the key role GENCAP plays both in terms of integrating gender into IASC policy/ guidance documents and field support. What seems missing from the analysis is the level of technical capacity needed in the field to ensure that gender is taken into account. There is an issue, as the report points out, of the need to strengthen leadership and the framework within which gender advisers' work, but technical capacity is also a requirement.

RESPONSE - This is an extremely valid point. The GenCap has been recognized as important contribution in the field and also globally with regards to drafting guidance and developing tools. However, as pointed out in the OPRs, the field outcomes are very discouraging as far as gender equality is concerned. What comes out is the issue of sustainability, political will and operational support at the field which varies from country to country. The additional predictable capacity is paramount to making the change in the field especially when trying to influence the coordination, clusters and all the processes associated with humanitarian action.

1.6. UNICEF - P64- the issue of the gender thematic advisors not having a clear role, reporting lines and depending on entry points of traction with certain agencies or individual is key. It would be helpful to have a recommendation on how this should be addressed.

RESPONSE - This could be reflected based on the inputs received from the GenCap and also recent successful arrangement based on UN Women – OCHA partnership.

1.7. UNICEF - P65- concludes that mainstreaming gender in clusters is weak based on a 2010 evaluation. In the subsequent 5 years, there has been a huge amount of effort to strengthen gender in the clusters. This was mentioned on p64, but not included in the conclusion. This seems problematic, and a superficial analysis.

RESPONSE - As mentioned above, the response rate from cluster coordinators in the field was 17%. In addition to the 2010 evaluation, the review has also looked at the most up to date, available cluster guidance materials and documents including the *2013 Common Challenges and Lessons Learnt from the Cluster Approach* report and the *Gender Marker Implementation Country Reports*. It also refers to the results of the OPRs in three contexts. The report highlights

inconsistencies in the level of gender mainstreaming, not only from one cluster to the next, but also from one country to the next.

1.8. UNICEF - IASC WG nominated the OCHA chair of the IASC WG as Gender champion. The USG has been very active in her support of the GRG and gender mainstreaming. It would be important to reflect this in the document, and be clearer the limitations.

RESPONSE - *Whilst* the role of ASG Kang as the gender sponsor is acknowledged in the report but its importance is not emphasized sufficiently. This will be rectified in the presentation to the Working Group.

1.9. UNICEF - The report focuses on issues such as the humanitarian development nexus that prevent mainstreaming, or the challenges to implementation of TA guidance and policies on the ground and the limitations these challenges pose to gender. These are issues that are a challenge for all qualitative aspects of the response. It would be helpful to have some practical steps that could be taken while the longer issues continue to be worked on.

RESPONSE - At the last GenCap annual meeting that took place in Bangkok, UN Women asked GenCaps to reflect on the findings overall and provide recommendations from the field perspective. Excellent inputs have been received and shared with the GRG. They will also be reflected in the presentation to the working group and also in the subsequent steps to be undertaken.

1.10. UNICEF - The point is made in the document that there no strong evidence that gender is integrated into the implementation process (p45). Ensuring the gender is taken into account at the field level in programs is the broader issue that needs to be tackled, and it would be helpful to have some recommendations/ thoughts on how this should be done.

RESPONSE - This is a very valid point. The GenCaps already provided a number of very good recommendations and the GRG would need to sit down and identify ways to achieve that but also be captured under the accountability framework

1.11. UNICEF - On 2. Accountability framework should reference the AAP work, and also age. This would flow from the decision that age and gender are both “social determinants.”

RESPONSE - As recommended, the policy needs to be brought up to date. AAP and some other structures did not exist as a realized concept of the IASC in 2008, so its inclusion would be part of that updating process.

1.12. UNICEF - 2.d- its not clear if and what authority an IASC oversight committee might have. This is not currently part of IASC mechanisms, and is in fact the role of IASC WG

RESPONSE - The oversight committee would be the oversight function of the IASC, working with the Gender Subsidiary body to make sure that the Accountability Framework is adhered to – maybe the Sponsor alone can undertake the function.

1.13. UNICEF - 3.a- minimum standards may need to be sector specific, if too generic implementation may be a challenge

RESPONSE - Agreed and will make sure is reflected in the presentation

1.14. UNICEF - 3.b is ambitious given the timeline of end of July for WHS documents

RESPONSE - We will check with WHS but would definitely need political support.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW FROM GENCAP ADVISORS.

Country Leadership and Accountability: The ToRs of the HC and the HCT refer to gender, yet consistent application of this is absent from HCT strategies. Gender concerns, when included, is within the SGBV protection, prevention & response framework, or absorbed as a cross cutting issue. A significant limitation to advocating for gender equality in country operations is silence of the TORs on what are the measures and mechanisms for HC/HCT to demonstrate the IASC gender policy implementation. The centrality of gender equality and women empowerment within the humanitarian space, is consistent to the commitment to Human Rights Upfront as the 'lifeblood of the UN' is not included by the HCT as belonging to the humanitarian space, missing the opportunity to build on the conceptual framework and tools especially to ensure women leadership and participation in humanitarian action decision making.

Recommendations

- In-country humanitarian strategy to articulate outcomes on gender equality and this is followed with action plans and accountability framework articulating clear indicators at country levels, as well the mechanisms to monitor, which should be within country but also some line of monitoring from global level.
- Include minimum gender commitments for HCT & Cluster/sector Leads in their ToRs as guidance (e.g. standing agenda on gender in the HCT meetings, gender in humanitarian strategy).
- In countries with SRPs and follow up Operational Peer Review, to utilize reviews to ensure it monitors implementation of the Gender policy through the response, this would require ensuring is included in the ToRs of the OPR.
- In articulating its position on protection protocols and legal frameworks, HC and the HCT make the required references and linkages with the SCR on women, peace security and the IASC gender policy.
- RC and UNCT commitments and framework to promote gender equality in development (i.e. UNDAF), should be clearly articulated as to how the efforts and gains in development

will be promoted in humanitarian crisis, for the HC and HCT to build on those and also to be able to monitor progress into the recovery and post disaster.

SADD and gender analysis: SADD continues to be a critical challenge in field operations. At the same time, even in complex contexts (e.g. Iraq), NGOs and civil society actors collect disaggregated data for their internal processes and mention this information being 'lost up the pipeline'. This is a where HCT can take a strong leadership to ensure that the IM products which serve the purpose of identifying humanitarian priorities (e.g. dashboards, flash appeals, bulletins etc) are sex and age disaggregated.

Recommendations

- Humanitarian leadership and coordination (HC, HCT, Cluster/Sector leads) to articulate and demonstrate mandatory SADD reporting and analysis in key IM tools and products – Humanitarian dashboard, 5Ws, Flash updates, Cluster IM products by HCT and Cluster/Sector leads;
- Humanitarian leadership and coordination (including global) to ensure assessment tools and guidance, particularly MIRA, DTM and other tools, include SADD as mandatory. Country guidance for roll out should clearly articulate how to contextualize it maintaining a gender sensitive approach.
- Global Cluster ToRs include targeted guidance to Cluster/Sector Leads and IM staff on relevant technical support required towards to collect and analyze sex and age disaggregated data.
- Integrated Missions: Within integrated missions, the HCT works in silos even when the HC triple hats as DRSRG/RC/ HC. The IASC offers no clarity on how to engage across the political or peacekeeping missions; as well linking with early recovery and stabilization strategies. In many countries there is a 1325 NAP in place and a strong women group and CSOs that operate at local environments. This offers the space in country operations to be creative and adequately link the humanitarian assistance to the SCR 1325 and other relevant tools such as CEDAW.
- Recommendations
- IASC gender policy must articulate the linkages with SCR 1325 and vice versa, including clear roles and responsibility across the different mission functions, ensuring relevant synergies as well as respecting the distinctness between them (e.g neutrality of humanitarian mission vs political and security mandates of other units).
- IASC gender policy should also clearly articulate linkages with principles of WPS, in cases of countries with no 1325 NAP or no recognized conflict (i.e. Rakhine communal violence, Pakistan complex emergency, etc)

- Given the triple hatting of the HC, senior management of the DSRG/RC/HC includes senior gender experts from the different missions to ensure a comprehensive and complementary approach.

Coordination structure: Country operations have gender and GBV experts especially with UNFPA, UN Women and UNHCR. Once the emergency kicks in, the IASC gender handbook suggests setting up of a gender network with gender focal points. This may not be ideal and /or may be welcome given an already existing coordination heavy environment. There is also not always clarity on who is the lead on GEWE coordination in the humanitarian context. UN Women is mandated to support GEWE, including enhancing coordination structures in humanitarian action but their participation as the HCT member is country specific given their membership status within IASC. This absence of institutional leadership and coordination architecture (who is the holder of the IASC gender policy at the field level?) leads to gender issues falling through the cracks as it is seen as part of cross cutting issues or is assumed to be addressed within the protection cluster/sector and GBV sub cluster.

Recommendations

- Institutional framework for inter-agency gender coordination leadership in- country to be articulated in the IASC gender policy
- The gender architecture to include developing joint strategic approaches with Global Protection Cluster and the GBV AoR for strategic and operational, country level coordination, while maintaining their stand alone and specific outcomes on GEWE
- Role of OCHA and Inter Cluster Coordination in relation to gender coordination to be well articulated both at global and for local levels, in all stages of emergency. A guidance towards this reflected in the IASC policy.
- The IASC policy should provide a guidance note (i.e. as annex) on GEWE coordination providing different scenarios, as well as to what it means and how best to do it, to avoid falling into a cluster type coordination which might duplicate existing structures, particularly with GBV subcluster or Protection cluster, in absence of clear guidance on the mechanisms. Similarly a guidance note should clearly articulate the relation with existing gender networks and promoting local forums and networks including role of government.

Other recommendations:

- IASC gender policy to articulate synergies with the new IASC GBV guidelines and the Centrality of protection. Particularly practically for the country leadership.
- Coordination with the GBV AoR for the roll out of the new IASC GBV guidelines, which are primarily focused on GBV mainstreaming across sectors, to ensure coordination and synergy with Gender mainstreaming, particularly in practical guidance and tools at country level.

- Although IASC gender policy is an IASC policy document, it should still reflect flexibility for government to be able to articulate it, particularly considering humanitarian response in middle income countries and others where government lead the clusters/sectors.
- Considering other gender equality development processes and commitments, the IASC gender policy should be linked so gains and commitments in gender equality in the development sector are continued through humanitarian and vice versa, those gains from humanitarian can be sustained in development, particularly in contexts of natural disasters.

4. RESPONSE FROM THE IASC WORKING GROUP AFTER PRESENTATION ON 26 JUNE 2015

- There was a unanimous agreement that gender equality and women’s empowerment in humanitarian action is of fundamental importance to the work of the IASC.
- 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.

Specific Individual IASC member agency’s responses were as follows:

<p><u>OCHR</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed with all of the key findings in the report, including UN Women joining the IASC.
<p><u>WFP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the development of an Accountability Framework which should be based on good practice in all sectors. • Accountability framework should also reflect the transition between humanitarian action and development. • Agreed to the Next Steps included in the report presentation.
<p><u>UNICEF</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated that the report needed more field analysis. • Queried on the rationale of UN Women’s membership of the IASC – suggested perhaps it would make more sense to develop closer links between the CEB and the IASC.

- Stated that the analysis in the report on cluster coordination was based on old information and data.
- Queried the ‘downgrading’ of the Reference Group and how returning to its previous status would help.
- GRG should focus more on providing technical support to the IASC and the field operations.

FAO

- Gender equality and women’s empowerment must be central to humanitarian action.
- The Gender Marker needs to be further developed into a monitoring tool.
- Queried on the relevance of including UN Women as a member of the IASC.
- The review and its outcomes should put more emphasis on outcomes for the field level.

InterAction

- Queried the review’s point on how the Reference Group was ‘downgraded’ in the architecture restructuring.
- Queried on UN Women’s membership of the IASC – what has fundamentally changed since the last application that would warrant revisiting the conversation?

WHO

- The next steps of the process requires the development of relevant field applications.
- Did not support UN Women’s membership of the IASC.

UNHCR

- Did not see what relevance UN Women’s membership of the IASC would have to the humanitarian outcomes at the field level.

OCHA

- The next steps of the review should develop relevant field applications to improve humanitarian outcomes at the field level.
- The development of the Accountability Framework is urgent – the GRG should tie in to what already exists, including the AAP framework.
- With the World Humanitarian Summit in the near future, this is an opportunity for transformational change. The GRG should consolidate lessons learned and best practice to be brought to the WHS, as well.

IOM

- Being in the IASC WG for few years, queried the review’s point on how the Reference Group was ‘downgraded’ in the architecture restructuring.
- Supported the approach taken by other members and queried on UN Women’s membership of the IASC – what has fundamentally changed since the last application that would warrant revisiting the conversation?
- Queried on how GRG is supporting the other task teams in particular the work undertaken by the Accountability to Affected Population and the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (AAP & PSEA).

UNFPA

- Noted that many of the issues regarding accountability raised in the review were the same for GBV and the centrality of protection in humanitarian action.

UNDP

- Called for the Accountability Framework and revision of the policy to reflect the transition from humanitarian response to development.
- As the question of UN Women’s membership had been answered by the Principals, it would not be appropriate to reopen this issue.

Response from the Working Group Chair (ASG Kang)

- The Chair stated that she would personally welcome the inclusion of UN Women in the IASC as their technical expertise is invaluable. However, this issue had already been decided upon by the Principals and the Working Group would not recommend to reopen that conversation at this time.
- The Chair stated that the review did not highlight adequately the dynamic and issues that exist within the GRG. In her view, since the IASC’s gender subsidiary body had become the Gender Reference Group, it had not functioned well. The GRG had not brought anything substantial to the Working Group and its difficult internal workings had been noted. These issues had not been reflected in the report, which was not ‘self-reflecting’.
- The GRG needed reforming to get out of its ‘stupor’. The Chair recommended it streamlined its working methods and TOR. In particular, 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.
- The Chair stated that accountability is fundamental, but any Accountability Framework must mean something to the field. This should be reflected in the proposed work-plan of the GRG and in the direction given by the Working Group in October.
- The Chair noted that both the new Emergency Response Coordinator and Secretary General recognize the importance of 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.
- The Chair, based on in depth understanding of gender equality, provided once again her position with regards to “people-centred approach” which has led to blocking the work of the GRG by diluting the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Response from UN Women on behalf of the Gender Reference Group

- It was welcoming to see 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.

- Feedback received in writing by a number of member agencies was recognized as it was the detailed response provided to a number of questions raised in advance, which were not reflected during respective interventions. As such, members of WG were encouraged to further provide inputs prior to finalizing the report by mid-July 2015.
- 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.