

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
90TH IASC WORKING GROUP MEETING

Summary Record and Action Points

8-9 MARCH 2016

HOST: UNDP, NEW YORK, SECRETARIAT BUILDING, ROOM S-2727

Session 1: Humanitarian Financing and the Grand Bargain

Kristalina Georgieva, co-chair of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and Vice-President of the EU Commission, Hiroko Araki, High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Secretariat, Clare Dalton, ICRC, and Kate Halff, SCHR presented on the Grand Bargain discussions that took place in February in Amsterdam. Lisa Doughten, Co-Chair of the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, provided an update on activities in the IASC Task Team, related to the Grand Bargain. Sandra Aviles, FAO, briefed on ongoing work to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. Gordana Jerger (WFP) facilitated the session.

The Working Group sees the Grand Bargain as a significant aspect of the Agenda for Humanity of the Secretary-General. Concerns were raised that the issue of the financial gap is visibly on the WHS agenda as such and that the Grand Bargain will not address it. While the majority of IASC representatives agreed that partnerships with development actors needed to be strengthened, a few stressed that humanitarian action should keep its distinct nature in armed conflicts and not be subsumed in an all-encompassing development approach. While the Grand Bargain may only represent a part of the wider humanitarian financing discussion as envisaged by the Secretary-General, there is wide recognition that the Grand Bargain process represents a concrete stepping stone to a larger process and a cornerstone of the WHS process with the Secretary-General's vision being wider and its potential to influence donors should not be underestimated.

Work to increase efficiencies is under way and should be strengthened. But this should not be restricted to decreasing costs or increasing funds, but has to include more effectiveness in producing better outcomes for people in need of assistance. Humanitarian financing needs to be more flexible and predictable for achieving these results. Efforts need to be deepened by all constituencies, including donors, to harmonize approaches and prevent obstacles to effective response. The work of the Humanitarian Financing Task Team, in particular the WFP/UNFPA-led review of donor conditionalities, was highlighted. A concern was raised that the proposals by the Secretary-General might result in further centralization of decision making. Diversity and collaboration were deemed as valuable aspects of the current humanitarian system that should be preserved and further capitalized on.

Future change in the way humanitarian organizations work should build on ongoing humanitarian reforms and best practices developed over recent years, including on joint needs assessments. There are practical examples of implementing joined-up humanitarian-development programmes, and lessons should be drawn from real situations. There was a desire expressed by WG members to achieve greater inclusivity, reaching beyond the 31 champions (15 donors, 15 organizations, and Turkey) presently invited to the Grand Bargain discussion. Transparency would improve through greater information sharing and consultation outside of the formal Grand Bargain deliberations. Concerns were raised that by limiting it to the agencies with the largest annual budgets at the moment, the Grand Bargain may only result in limited change, unless those involved could ensure

that gains negotiated through the process are passed on to other, including smaller, humanitarian responders.

A further call was made not to lose sight of the need to increase inclusivity and strengthen the capacity of first and frontline responders, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his WHS Report.

Many participants highlighted the potential for the IASC to play a key role implementing the key outcomes of the Grand Bargain and of the WHS. A suggestion was made for the IASC to contribute to the development of a set of principles that could underpin collaborative efficiency alongside the ten commitments in the Grand Bargain. Many of the work streams still need to be worked out individually as well as collectively. More needs to be done to increase synergy and collective outcomes among different work streams than individual bodies take responsibility for.

The Private Sector was notably missing from the Amsterdam discussions. Repeatedly calls were made to focus on better outcomes for affected people and at country level. Some colleagues voiced a concern that risk management is missing from the discussion.

Session 2: World Humanitarian Summit

Mervat Shelbaya, WHS secretariat, briefed on the choreography of the Summit. Kyung-wha Kang, Chair of the IASC WG facilitated this session. The key components of the Summit will include high level roundtables, special sessions, a plenary, an innovation marketplace and an exhibition fair, as well as three outcome documents: chair summary, commitments to action document and Secretary-General's Report to the 71st General Assembly.

Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, OCHA, explained the thinking behind the Secretary-General's Report and presented WHS as a unique opportunity for change. He noted that a lot of the recommendations put forth in the report had been discussed over many years, yet not enough progress had been achieved.

Several WG members requested additional information on participation and logistics. They also expressed their readiness to work with OCHA on the WHS Roundtables and Special Sessions.

All present were in support of the WHS report of the Secretary-General. However, some thought that the report was light on natural disasters and pandemics, and others that it was overly UN-centric. There was a call for more clarity on the processes to determine how to move from the generic recommendations of the Report to the concrete actions needed to create change.

It was noted that the “new business model” proposed by the Secretary-General would retain and build on humanitarian principles and action specific to each context. It would entail a new way of working where humanitarian and development actors work towards collective outcomes, over multi-year timeframes, and based on comparative advantages. IASC organizations highlighted the importance of ensuring that the new business model is one which is developed with all relevant actors, to ensure ownership and buy-in. Several agencies cautioned that the “new business model” should be crafted in a way that respects diversity of actors and, humanitarian principles. Many recommendations in the SG’s report would require further discussion inside and outside the IASC and it was recognized that it will take time to develop this new way of working. A commitment to developing and implementing it gradually over the next few years would be a welcome outcome from the Summit.

The importance of the multi-stakeholder nature of the WHS was emphasized and many IASC colleagues shared the frustration expressed by Member States regarding the lack of transparency and consultation. They asked that more timely information be shared to increase ownership by

humanitarian organizations and governments at the highest levels. Colleagues also called for more information on Member States participation and intended commitments at the Summit. One participant stated that an intergovernmental process after the Summit would be one way to get more engagement from Member States.

A question was put to the Working Group as to whether the IASC should come up with a common strategic message on the WHS. While this was met with hesitation by some of the Standing Invitees at the IASC, other agencies support this. Many stressed the need for close engagement of the IASC in the post-Summit implementation stages. Donors had requested structured engagement with the IASC Working Group in the run up to the WHS.

One participant announced that they would support the adoption of a charter on disability at the Summit and that the IASC may be asked to translate the Charter into guidelines and practical action after the Summit. Others suggested that the commitments around displacement/migration at the WHS should be linked to other processes throughout the year including the UNGA Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants and President Obama's Summit in September.

Follow-up Action:

1. Suggest a process to develop a new business model in line with the recommendations in the SG report. Action by: OCHA by the end of April 2016.
2. Suggest principles to safeguard humanitarian space within the new business model for the consideration of the IASC WG. Action by: Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian/Development Nexus by September of 2016.

Session 3: Humanitarian-Development Nexus

Izumi Nakamitsu, UNDP and Amir Abdulla, WFP and Vice-Chair of the undg presented on the humanitarian-development nexus and the discussions on challenges and opportunities on joint analysis, planning and programming under the overall framework of Agenda 2030.

There was broad support for working towards collective outcomes informed by joint analysis, especially in protracted crises. Context- specific approaches need to be taken where integrated actions that include national actors will work. All supported the idea of multi-year planning but also highlighted the need to retain capacity for rapid response and acknowledge the role of local responders. Safeguarding humanitarian space and principles is seen as imperative by all participants.

There is a need to bring humanitarian-development issues into the UN's Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process, so as to engage Member States in the discussion on how to adapt UN operational activities to the changing context. This discussion should be inclusive. The IASC will explore the possibility of working with the Peace Building Support Office (PBSO), UN Working Group on Transitions and the undg in order to align different working streams. The World Bank, UNDP and OCHA had recently published insightful papers on forced displacement and multi-year planning. Moreover, UNDP and OCHA are preparing a think-piece on concrete ideas on how the humanitarian and the development could "do business differently".

IDPs are too often forgotten. The need to anticipate conflict and take action early rather than react was highlighted. Communities needed to be supported to build resilience.

Follow-up Action:

3. Map out development, peace building and economic investment processes, and their relevance and implication, for the IASC's attempt to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. Action by: IASC secretariat in collaboration with the Humanitarian and Development Nexus Task Team by October 2016.

Session 4: Movement of Refugees and Migrants

Karen AbuZayd, Special Adviser on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and Michelle Klein-Solomon (IOM) presented the key elements that would feature in the report of the Secretary-General under preparation for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 19 September 2016. Arafat Jamal (UNHCR) facilitated this session.

The Secretary-General report would be submitted in May 2016. Active consultations with many stakeholders, including member states and civil society, are ongoing. Member States are supportive of the process; there is a high degree of ambition but also sensitivity on the issue of displacement. Recommendations should be ambitious and realistic and they should strengthen international cooperation on refugees and migrants. The Special Representative noted the key role of IASC members in influencing the debate and taking recommendations forward. She welcomed the contributions of IASC members in the lead up and follow up to the September Summit.

Working Group members raised the following issues for incorporation in the report:

- The report must build on the 2030 Agenda, the WHS and other planned initiatives ahead of the Summit.
- The toxic narrative on migrants and refugees must be countered with clear and strong arguments supported by evidence on the positive impact of migration, also addressing the fear among host communities.
- The report must include language to maintain a focus on IDPs and their vulnerabilities. The Special Representatives encourage participants to provide inputs in coming weeks.
- A robust proposal on sharing responsibility and implementing the outcomes of the Summit should articulate the role of NGOs and civil society clearly.
- Lessons and best practices on addressing vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees by IASC organizations could provide useful insights.
- The key role of host communities, and protection measures introduced by countries of origin (i.e. Philippines and Nepal) in enhancing compliance by transit and destination countries.
- Respect for IHL, recognition of the vulnerabilities of women and girls, reference to displacement induced by natural disaster, and flexibility to adopt differentiated approaches in addressing vulnerabilities of migrants were raised as key considerations.
- Obligations of all countries - host, transit as well as countries of origin - to respect and implement all relevant conventions.

Follow-up Action:

4. Counter the toxic narrative on migration and refugees. Action by: IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, OHCHR, and NGOs in cooperation with Karen AbuZayd's office by September 2016.
5. Collectively contribute to the WHS High Level Roundtable on forced displacement and the September Summit. Action by: IASC in cooperation with Karen AbuZayd's office and Rapporteur of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs by September 2016.

Session 5: Protection

A sub-working group to the IASC has reviewed the recommendations of the Whole of System (WoS) Protection review. Brooke Lauten, NRC and co-lead of the WG sub-group on the WoS Protection Review presented the draft management response matrix for consideration of the WG. Michelle Berg, ProCap and pen holder for the protection policy, presented on the progress to date. Arafat Jamal (UNHCR) shared an overview of the GPC Strategic Framework. The session was facilitated by Clare Dalton (ICRC).

Michelle Berg briefed on the key steps that have been taken to prepare the policy and offered proposals for consideration by the members to fast-track the exercise. The proposal to limit the length of the policy document to ten (10) pages was broadly welcomed. Members agreed that the policy should focus on encouraging action at the field level. In order to guarantee transparency of the drafting process, the draft policy will be uploaded on google drive and only one person per organization will be allowed to provide comments. A workshop will be organized to endorse the policy. A process to address red lines will be agreed at the workshop.

The WoS Review put forth a multitude of recommendations. Brooke Lauten briefed on the status of the management response plan, which focuses on three key issues under discussion: (1) common information management system, (2) whole of caseload approach, (3) placement of senior protection officers in the office of Humanitarian Coordinators.

WG members raised some concern regarding the viability of developing a common information management system. However, they would share information on protection issues. Members noted that the proposed focus on a whole of caseload approach should allow flexibility for differentiated approaches and responses based on differentiated needs.

Links need to be strengthened between the protection cluster, the HC's office and the HCT. It was noted that an SPO might create an additional layer of bureaucracy and more confusion at the field level. The WoS Review recommended that Principals issue a letter on linkages of the Global Protection Cluster with the Human Rights Up Front initiative; WG members queried this recommendation. The Sub-group will look into working on a letter from the IASC to the Secretary-General's office looking at details on how the Human Rights Up Front Initiative links with the Global Protection Cluster. Others emphasised the need not to be over-prescriptive and to acknowledge that different context will require different solutions. Members requested time to fully review the management response before endorsing it.

Finally, progress on sourcing for a dedicated GPC Coordinator was welcomed with a request to establish an inter-agency recruitment committee. Related to this, the new GPC Strategic Framework (2016-2019) was welcomed. However, a concern was raised on the level of consultation held before releasing the final product. Global level support to its implementation will be imperative.

Follow-up Action:

6. Make protection policy relevant and clear to all field staff, articulate a clear definition of protection and be clear on the responsibilities of different actors. Action by: UNHCR in cooperation with TT by end of 2016.
7. The sub working group to integrate comments made at the meeting into the management response and re-circulate it to the WG for comments and endorsement. Action by: sub working group by end of April 2016.

Session 6: Humanitarian Financing - Discussion with donor representatives

This session was facilitated by Kyung-wha Kang, Chair of the IASC WG. The GHD Co-Chairs and Co-leads of GHD Financing Work Stream reflected on the current state of humanitarian financing, ongoing processes and key deliverables ahead of and post-WHS, including the Grand Bargain.

Donor representatives and most Working Group members highly welcomed structured interaction between the IASC WG and Member States. Ideally, such engagement should be regular and focused on broad aspects of mutual interest or concern. Engagement should be at working levels and could at times be expanded in a wider information sharing format. Themes proposed by donors for future discussion include: protection; capacity of frontline responders; humanitarian space; accountability to affected population; humanitarian-development nexus; joint analysis, and risk management.

Donor representatives raised following key areas of interest inviting collaboration in the lead up to WHS: advocacy and positive narrative on relevance of the GHD, need for principled funding, need for better partnership approach, diversification of financing tools and information sharing on lessons learned and best practices.

Working Group members welcomed the expressed shift in approach towards strategic partnerships, increased transparency on rationale behind earmarking, and commitment to greater flexibility including on reporting.

There was broad consensus on the momentum and potential success of the Grand Bargain. However, the focus on efficiency required more thought (as the focus must lie on strengthened outcomes, which is not necessarily achieved by greater efficiency alone). It is expected that the subsequent Sherpa meetings will result in concrete commitments and principles. Greater inclusivity must be guaranteed.

The donors congratulated the IASC for its contribution to the High-Level Panel report on Humanitarian Financing as well as the WFP/UNFPA-led review of donor conditionalities and their Implications for Humanitarian Response. It was noted that the section on counter-terrorism should be more nuanced and recognise governments wish to protect their citizens.

Follow-up Action:

8. Explore appropriate modalities of IASC engagement with donors on topics of mutual interest. Action by: IASC secretariat in collaboration with UNICEF, FAO, WFP, UNFPA and EDGs.
9. Update the paper on donor conditionalities to address the point raised by GHD Co-chair on counterterrorism. Action by: IASC TT on Humanitarian Financing by end of April 2016.

AOB, Summary of Action Points and closing remarks

Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Chair of the IASC WG summarized the discussions of the meeting and the key action points for implementation by the Working Group members with support of the IASC Subsidiary Bodies.

Members who propose agenda items were urged to present background documents in line with the set procedures. In particular, all meeting documents should be circulated at least fourteen days ahead of the meeting.