|  |
| --- |
| IASC PRINCIPALS AD HOC MEETING  SYRIA  15 July 2014  **FINAL SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS** |

**Summary of Discussion:**

***1. Introduction:***

The IASC Principals met to discuss the operationalization of UN Security Council resolution 2165, which authorizes the UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to use the border crossings of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, in addition to those already in use, to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need throughout Syria. The ERC stressed the importance of implementing the resolution immediately to provide vital life-saving supplies, in particular food and medicine, to people in need by the most direct routes, whether cross-border or cross-line. Several members praised the language of the resolution for supporting the ‘whole of Syria’ approach with cross-border and cross-line operations.

***2. Security*:**

With respect to security considerations, Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa are deemed the best crossing points from Turkey; The Al-Yarubiyah crossing with Iraq was deemed problematic given current circumstances and requires further assessment with UNAMI. The possibility of again using Nusaybin crossing in Turkey was raised now that two other crossings have been authorised. There was agreement that use of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa crossings would be tested first. A draft security risk assessment and standard operating procedures are being finalised by the HC and DSS. With respect to Jordan, the Al-Ramtha crossing can be used. The Government of Jordan is awaiting a detailed plan from the UN.

***3. Operations:***

There is broad understanding that the implementation of the resolution should not undermine or compromise the cross-border work currently undertaken by NGOs with access gained through years of negotiations. Including NGOs as UN implementing partners should not compromise other NGO activities already underway. The lack of trust between the UN and NGOs in southern Turkey was highlighted, while noting it had improved somewhat.

Activating the cluster system in southern Turkey was seen as an immediate priority by all IASC organizations. Information sharing and synergy were crucial to the success of the ‘whole of Syria’ approach. In terms of the modalities of the cross border operations, the EDG will draft an operational plan in collaboration with the country teams concerned. OCHA is deploying a small team immediately to Turkey to develop this plan.

Agencies expressed their readiness to participate in operations. The issue of post-delivery monitoring, inside Syria negotiations and implementation was raised. A question was asked about the possibility of setting up essential services such as health centres or safe spaces for children in areas that had been out of reach so far. Other issues raised included the importance of the northern region of Syria – the “wheat belt” of the country is in a context of continuous decline of production (2014 wheat production is expected to be 52 percent below the pre-crisis average). If cereal seeds are not planted in October, more food will have to be imported.

***4. Monitoring Mechanism:***

There was consensus that the monitoring mechanism should be simple and credible. Existing cross-border operations led by NGOs are not part of the mechanism. Several agencies expressed willingness to second staff to set up the monitoring mechanism and requested details about profile and timeframe.

***5. Diplomatic Engagement:***

An initial response from the Syrian Government to the resolution had been made to the RC/HC in Damascus. From the Government’s perspective, cross-border activities can only start once a monitoring mechanism is in place. Other points raised by Syrian officials related to preserving the sovereignty of Syria: 1) UN personnel accompanying convoys would need visas; 2) the Syrian government expects all details on convoys in advance, with the centre of gravity remaining in Damascus; and 3) any activity taking place outside of this framework would be considered illegal. The ERC reiterated that these points are not open for negotiation with the Syrian Government.

On the issue of notification to the Syrian authorities, it was clarified that the resolution calls for notification of cross-border and cross-line operations, not for authorization by the Government.

***6. Communications:***

Colleagues were asked to refrain from releasing convoy publicity that would raise expectations and cause disappointment if something delayed plans. The media line should be that IASC members are working on the quick implementation of the resolution. The HC will continue to liaise with the Government of Syria. The ERC will liaise with the P5 and other influential Member States to keep the momentum for greater access and principled humanitarian action. A small group will continue to manage the negotiations with non-state armed groups. The requirement for real-time information sharing between UN agencies and NGOs will be even more important as the cross-border plan is developed and implemented.

**Action points:**

1. *An inter-agency monitoring mechanism to be put in place.* ***Action by****: OCHA and IASC agencies, immediately and ongoing.*
2. *EDG and HCTs to develop a detailed* ***Operational Plan*** *(with information on security risks, modalities of operations for delivery, follow up and monitoring inside Syria, staff secondments and profiles, supplies, warehouse locations, crossing points, delivery points, and timeframe) to enable cross border-operations to begin ASAP* ***Action by****: EDG and HCTs, ongoing.*
3. *Clusters to be activated in Turkey.* ***Action by****: Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator in Turkey in consultation with HCT with full support of Global Clusters, immediately and ongoing.*
4. *Clusters to be activated in Syria.* ***Action by****: HC in Syria in consultation with HCT with full support of Global Clusters, immediately and ongoing.*
5. *Government of Syria, Security Council members and other influential governments to be kept informed of IASC plans.* ***Action by****: ERC, ongoing.*
6. *Restricted communication and unified media line until aid has crossed the border.* ***Action by:*** *IASC organizations immediately.*

*Circulated by the IASC Secretariat on 18 July 2014*