

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
IASC PRINCIPALS MEETING

**Background Note for the IASC Principals
Update on the “New Way of Working”**

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The area that received the most support at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was the commitment to the “New Way of Working that meets people’s immediate humanitarian needs, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years through the achievement of collective outcomes.”¹ The New Way of Working is at the centre of the Commitment to Action signed by the Secretary-General and nine UN Principals at the WHS, and endorsed by the World Bank. It also received strong support from NGOs, Member States and regional organizations, and the private sector. During their meeting on 7 and 8 June 2016, the IASC Principals agreed to take forward the New Way of Working in several country situations.

While rolling out the New Way of Working in the field is only now beginning, with several country teams and RC/HCs having expressed interest, operational and policy discussions on the New Way of Working have been moving forward. IASC members have started to discuss the New Way of Working at both headquarters and in the field. OCHA is informally mapping out examples and best practices where Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators and country teams are already changing the way they work, and is organizing a first regional, thematic discussion with humanitarian and development partners in Dakar, Senegal, in January 2017. Moreover, the Government of Denmark will convene a high-level meeting in Copenhagen in January/February, bringing together humanitarian and development partners from headquarters and the field, as well as donors and affected Member States and other partners to build further support for the roll-out of the New Way of Working – politically, programmatically and policy-wise.

At an inter-agency level, a joint retreat of the IASC Task Team on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Crises and the UN Development Group Working Group on Transitions was held in late October to explore what the New Way of Working entails in practice and how to support progress. The retreat resulted in strong support to the core concept of working to collective results over multiple years based on different actors’ comparative advantages.

Prioritization of where to take forward the New Way of Working should be field-led, as it requires a supportive and enabling field environment backed by headquarters. Several RC/HCs have already expressed interest and requested further guidance (CAR, Sudan, Colombia and, through the office of the Regional HC, the Sahel). Countries that are already part of the UN-World Bank partnership are also useful to consider moving forward (Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and CAR). The model in Haiti of the two-track approach to cholera may also offer opportunities for gathering good practice. Further policy guidance will be developed on the basis of these field engagements.

¹ As described at the WHS Roundtable on Ending Needs, based on the Report of the Secretary-General ‘One Humanity: Shared Responsibility.’ A collective outcome can be described as the result that humanitarian and development (and other relevant actors) want to have achieved at the end of 3-5 years, contributing to the longer term goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Outreach will continue to Member States to broaden political and financial support for the New Way of Working. Ultimately, this approach can only succeed if donors make necessary changes that will strengthen the nexus and enable broader access to a mix of flexible financial tools and greater alignment of existing funding mechanisms in support of collective outcomes. Key milestone in this engagement will be an event in the margins of the World Bank Spring Meeting in April, which will provide a forum to showcase the New Way of Working and demonstrate “investibility” based on the above country examples. The ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment in June will be another milestone for measuring progress, particularly in terms of political support.