Inter-Agency Standing Committee

91st IASC Working Group Meeting

**Summary Record**

25-26 October 2016

Host: OCHA, New York

1. **Opening remarks**

***Welcoming remarks by the Chair of the IASC Working Group***

Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Chair of the IASC Working Group (WG) welcomed participants, noting that the meeting took place at a time of transition: for the United Nations preparing for the Secretary-General-designate to assume his duties on 1 January 2017, for the coming change in the chairpersonship of the WG, and for the political landscape, with the United States’ elections approaching. She reflected that this period brings challenges, but also considerable opportunities for the IASC to shape the way that it works.

***Keynote remarks and interaction with Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN***

DSG Jan Eliasson drew on his extensive personal experience to analyse the past and current context for humanitarian action. He referenced the initial challenges in achieving GA Resolution 46/182, highlighting the subsequent evolution of humanitarian response. Reflecting on new trends, he noted the declining respect for humanitarian law, an exponential rise in displacement from conflict, natural disasters and climate change, and percentage falls in financial resourcing. He noted the changing ‘life of a crisis’, with increasingly slow onset situations and protracted transitional periods, and the impact on this for the timing of humanitarian engagement. He underscored the interdependence of the different pillars of the UN, and the increasing need to adopt a new mindset, to break down the silos and work ‘horizontally’, to support prevention, and for a ‘cultural revolution’ where humanitarian and development actors work more closely together: “Put the problem in the centre and gather those around the problem who can do something about it. Then you reach an informal division of labour between organizations”. He highlighted existing key instruments as potential tools: 25 years on, Resolution 46/182 remains a touchstone for humanitarian engagement, while the Sustainable Development Goals, and the *Outcome Report* of the WHS and its core commitments, provide frameworks to mobilise the system and engage with Member States to address root causes of vulnerability. The Human Rights up Front Initiative (HRUF) promotes increased focus and a more systematic approach and analysis by UN actors on human rights, although UN-wide training on human rights is needed. He suggested that early analysis of human rights violations can serve as indicators of crises to come, prompting preventative action. Recognising the bleak outlook global actors face, he called for humanitarians to use their own “anger” to fuel the fight against hopelessness, to mobilise people for good, and urged participants to recognize the world for what it is, but work for what it should be.

1. **Upholding the Norms that Safeguard Humanity**

***Human Rights up Front Initiative, Mr. Ben Majekodonmi, Executive Office of the SG***

Mr. Ben Majekodonmi shared his insights into the development of the Human Rights up Front Initiative (HRUF). Recalling its genesis from the Sri Lanka context in 2009, he explored the failures of a disjointed system, an incoherent response to the human rights violations, lack of accountability to fulfil UN responsibilities and the provisions of the Charter itself, and the disincentives for individuals to take action that had all prompted the initiative.

He outlined that HRuF seeks to change UN efforts in three ways: *cultural change*, calling on UN staff to take principled stances when confronted with serious human rights violations; *operational change*, enhancing preparedness to act through regular system-wide analysis and early warning; and *political change*, including through the UN System’s engagement with Member States. He drew attention to the new HRuF tools and mechanisms, including regular ‘scanning’ of situations through the Quarterly Review to identify emerging concerns and prompt early action. The Senior Action Group also helps assure high-level analysis, strategy and accountability, while ‘light missions’, quickly deployed to the field in response to RC requests, support RCs in raising human rights issues in difficult environments, and can help increase political space for, *inter alia*, civil society action. Ensuring engagement on human rights issues from different pillars of the UN – political, humanitarian and development – also facilitates more holistic analysis and potential action.

It was recognised, however, that despite these achievements, there is more to be done for full implementation. In discussion, attention was drawn to the need for, and challenge of, creating political space in which civil society can operate. Recognising that the HRuF is a ‘UN tool’, and, while expressing a willingness to engage, NGO representatives sought clarity on their potential role, including as ‘amplifiers’ for advocacy. The importance of advocacy, and related political engagement, was underscored, but this could also be more systematically approached. The value of a truly holistic analysis was stressed, noting that economic, social and cultural rights are not systematically integrated into analysis, nor are all relevant issues related to women and girls. Ensuring local-level capacity on this agenda remains a priority, and creating the right incentives for both individuals and organisations to take action. Participants also highlighted the need to more fully understand the linkage between on-going work on HRuF and the humanitarian protection agenda.

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to convene a workshop on HRUF, exploring the linkage with on-going work on protection. ***Action by: IASC secretariat to initiate dialogue with interested group by end first quarter of 2017.***

***Enhancing Advocacy and Speaking Out, Ms Patty McIlreavy, InterAction and Mr. Roberto Ricci, OHCHR***

In an environment where humanitarians are too often applying ‘bandaids to a world that is bleeding’, Ms. Patty McIlreavy emphasized the critical importance for InterAction of ‘speaking out’. Raising concerns that the ‘system’ itself is too passive and quiet, she shared InterAction’s, and its NGO members’, current wide-ranging public and private advocacy initiatives, including using newspaper articles, fostering concerted action to challenge government, finding interlocutors to ensure a voice in Congress, using different forums to analyse and raise issues (including roundtable discussions with ICRC) and engaging with more diverse actors, including the military. She called for more collective action by the IASC. Highlighting the critical issue of protection for aid workers themselves, she stressed the need for further engagement by the IASC on this, as it had not been given sufficient attention for a long time, and increased collective action on this concern. InterAction and its members are already taking this and other issues forward in their complementary work together, as outlined in its recent *Policy Brief: Civilians under Fire*.

Mr. Roberto Ricci challenged participants to explore why the Working Group should speak out, what it sought to achieve, and for whom. He emphasized the imperative to speak on behalf of affected people, supporting fulfilment of their basic needs, and as being essential to our own credibility. Too often, humanitarian actors self-censor, yet strong statements – as recently given by the High Commissioner on Human Rights – are possible. He highlighted the need for common analysis, and strong data, used effectively. The Chair of the WG noted that speaking out was indeed a fundamental right and it is corrosive if curtailed.

Stressing the need for more concerted efforts, participants drew attention to the disconnect between WHS commitments, and willingness to ‘speak’: in one example, 99 Member States made commitments on promoting respect for international law, while only 69 actually committed to speak out on violations. At the same time, for humanitarian actors, working in complex contexts with poor access, the lack of credible data to support advocacy remains a challenge for agencies. The need to revitalise and reinforce existing commitments to share data essential for evidence-based advocacy was emphasised, while recognising some of the caveats on how and when this can be done. Stressing the need to move beyond press releases, recognising that collective and complementary statements can magnify individual initiatives on speaking out, and that the IASC’s collective voice has been weak in the past, it was proposed that the IASC Working Group support advocacy at all levels, including by Principals, through identifying clear themes, prioritized on a quarterly basis, around which to focus efforts.

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to identify key themes and map out an orchestrated approach around shared advocacy, leveraging complementarity and defining roles and responsibilities, to share with IASC Principals, and then support their agreed action and follow-up. ***Action by: IASC secretariat to collate thematic ideas for review at the next IASC WG meeting in March 2017, and subsequent sharing with IASC Principals.***
* Agreed to engage with preparations for the ‘global campaign’ for high-level advocacy with Member States, as reflected in the Secretary-General’s World Humanitarian Summit Report and Outcome Document. ***Action by: OCHA to engage with relevant partners and provide an update at the next meeting in March 2017.***
* Requested the InterAction Policy Brief “Civilians under Fire” be shared. Link below:

<https://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Civilians_Under_Fire_FINAL_0.pdf>

1. **Translating the IASC Protection Policy into Practice**

Following endorsement by IASC Principals of the IASC Protection Policy in October 2016, the session explored next steps in rolling out and implementing the policy, and the expected roles of IASC Working Group and IASC Subsidiary Bodies, complementarity with other related policies/initiatives. A presentation and dialogue with Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild DSRSG/RC/HC Central African Republic (CAR), grounded the discussion in field reality.

***Presentation by Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, DSRSG/RC/HC***

Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild drew on his experience from multiple contexts framing his comments and suggestions on the IASC Protection Policy. He highlighted four key issues for consideration by the Working Group. He raised the need to *better define and clarify what protection means in practice*, clearly and concretely, beyond the all-inclusive current definition. In this context, he stressed the need to be modest, realistic and practical, without making false promises on protection on which the humanitarian community cannot deliver. He called for the humanitarian community *to move beyond a mandate-driven approach and analysis*, which can self-limit reflection on priority protection concerns, excluding context-specific issues, such as sorcery in CAR. He emphasised the need to *broaden engagement and joint action on advocacy* with a wider range of actors. He stressed the importance of *improving the use of data and data tools*, and move from a reliance on emotional appeals. He cited the powerful use of data, and trend analysis, in both Colombia and Afghanistan, that could be replicated.

Subsequent dialogue highlighted the essential role of senior humanitarian leadership, both globally and at country-level, the need for increased predictability and consensus within the humanitarian community on its key predictable deliverables to address protection needs, to increase engagement with the peace and security entities of the United Nations and draw on the expertise of other external actors, as well as increase engagement, dependent on the context, with civil society and local partners (whose role is not recognised in the annex to the current policy). Increased linkage with local networks and national actors, including the Red Cross, is already being explored. While noting that the IASC Policy had already been endorsed, Working Group members suggested that the ‘Global Protection Cluster Provisional Guidance Note: Humanitarian Country Team Strategies’ should be further strengthened to better reflect the role of civil society, including clear attribution of roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, to integrate risk analysis, and to ensure full use of all potential implementation structures and bodies. Guidance and support to country-level leadership on protection issues through the IASC should be fit for purpose and responsive to context-specific needs.

Following discussion, consensus was reached on the responsibility and oversight for the Policy roll-out. While recognising the important role played to date by the ‘hybrid Task Team’ in ensuring broad engagement on the policy and draft dissemination plan, it was agreed that, rather than continuing/formally creating a separate Protection Task Team, the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) would be the future custodian for promoting and supporting the Policy dissemination at global level, and through its field structures. However, the IASC Working Group itself would retain a clear oversight role, reinforcing accountability, with the GPC providing periodic reports to the Working Group on implementation of the dissemination plan and implementation of the Policy, in liaison with key stakeholders. The importance of all relevant bodies, including the Humanitarian Leadership Support Unit, IASC Emergency Directors Group and Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT), as reflected in the Dissemination Plan, playing their part and integrating this into their respective workplans was underscored.

Concluding the session, the Chair challenged the Working Group to ‘think out of the box’ on protection, broaden the current scope of protection activities, to build on the recommendations of the independent ‘Whole of System Review of Protection in the Context of Humanitarian Action’, and move beyond mandates to promote more holistic, strategic approaches. She stressed that future meetings would benefit from similar field briefings by leaders, and consultations with external experts to bring fresh perspectives.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested that discussion on protection to be included in the agenda for the next HC Retreat in May 2017. ***Action by: IASC secretariat to liaise with OCHA Humanitarian Leadership Strengthening Unit by end February 2017.***
* Asked that a forum for broader discussion on protection, including DPA and DPKO actors, be convened, to explore new complementary approaches. ***Action by: IASC secretariat to initiate the discussion with relevant actors to plan such a workshop by the first quarter of 2017.***
* Requested the Global Protection Cluster to further refine the provisional guidance note on Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategies in light of IASC Working Group discussion (including on risk analysis and engagement with local actors) and field feedback. ***Action by: UNHCR WG member to liaise with GPC on process for revision by mid-December 2016.***
* Agreed that the GPC would play a key role in implementation of the IASC Protection Policy in liaison with key stakeholders, providing periodic reports on dissemination and implementation to the IASC Working Group. ***Action by: GPC to lead in promoting and supporting implementation as set out in the dissemination plan and to report back to the WG at its next session (7-8 March 2017) on progress to date.***
* Asked the IASC and EDG secretariats to work together, and liaise with other bodies referenced in the Dissemination Plan as relevant, to ensure relevant actions, and clear timelines, from the IASC Protection Policy dissemination plan are included in respective 2017 workplans. ***Action by: IASC and EDG secretariats by first quarter of 2017.***
* Requested the EDG secretariat to engage with STAIT on dissemination of the IASC Protection Policy and the inclusion of protection in STAIT missions. ***Action by: EDG secretariat to liaise with STAIT by end of December 2017.***
1. **Enhancing Protection for Refugees, Migrants and IDPs**

***Presentation by Ms. Ninette Kelley, Director of UNHCR in New York***

Ms. Ninette Kelley reflected on the outcomes of the September 2016 High-Level Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, including on the commitments in the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, and the annexed Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). She noted the progressive nature of the Declaration, as States declared profound solidarity with persons who are forced to flee; reaffirmed their obligations to fully respect the human rights of refugees and migrants; and pledged robust support to those countries affected by large movements of refugees and migrants. She highlighted the continued need to work together to take forward hard-won achievements, and for on-going engagement on solutions, and investment in the resilience of refugees and sustainable programmes. She informed on the proposed CRRF pilots,and reflected on the current discussion by an internal UNHCR Task Team, on where and how they will be implemented. A number of contexts are being discussed, including Uganda, plus other sites depending on need and political will. A number of factors, including respective Government buy-in, will be important in piloting this somewhat different approach. While they will be taken forward in future, current Global Compact discussions on hold pending lessons from the CRRF pilot and UNHCR will look to engage closely with IASC partners on this. She also noted that UNHCR is increasing its dialogue with NGOs and civil society, including through the High Commissioners Dialogue.

***Presentation by Ms. Lea Matheson, Deputy Permanent Observer to the United Nations, New York***

Focussing on the migration elements, Ms. Lea Matheson welcomed the Declaration as a major, positive move. There had been a need to change the negative narrative on migration, and to deal with migration issues in a less disjointed way, while focussing on ‘higher level’ objectives and a longer-term vision on managing the reality of human mobility. Previously, the discussion of migration had typically been outside the UN system, given political sensitivities, but this inter-governmental engagement marked a significant step forward. By adopting the New York Declaration, the Member States made commitments to start negotiations leading to an inter-governmental conference on international migration in 2018 at which the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration will take place, as described in the Annex II of the Declaration. It was also agreed to develop guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations. She encouraged more involvement of humanitarian actors in the migration issue. She also noted that IOM has already brought the issue to the IASC for the past two years and positive developments already are underway, such as access to CERF and humanitarian pooled funds for -migrants caught in humanitarian crises. At the same time, she reflected on the challenge that internal silos pose for institutional engagement on migration, as focal points vary between a ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’ focus in organisational structures. Lastly, she encouraged –that organizations which are part of the WG play an active role in the work to counter ‘toxic narrative on refugees and migrants, including the “TOGETHER” campaign recently launched by the SG’.

Opening the discussion, the WG Chair noted that IOM formally became a related organization of the UN system during the signing ceremony of the New York Declaration, and welcomed IOM as a full member of the IASC. The WG discussed how its work and advocacy can best support realisation of key objectives, including development of the global compacts on refugees and migrants, and protection of refugees’, migrants’ and IDPs rights. A number of areas were highlighted for further attention, or where the New York Declaration was not clear, including on issues of child detention and health. UNHCR welcomed continued consultation on the Comprehensive Refugee Response with IASC members, including NGOs, noting that the first large formal consultation is provisionally scheduled for 8 November. IASC Working Group members suggested that at least one pilot take place in a country with ‘mixed’ populations: i.e. where refugees, IDPs and migrants are present, recognising the potential inter-linkage between such groups. It was appreciated that breaking out of ‘silos’, and joined-up responses, ensuring the complementarity between humanitarian and development responses, are essential, and how to achieve this should form part of the continued conversation on these affected groups.

The World Bank informed on the funding possibilities for fragile and conflict-affected countries through its Concession Facility. Following signature of the New York Declaration, government officials have been already approaching RCs and RC/HCs on this, and early guidance on their potential role in the Global Compact process is needed. Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu highlighted her forthcoming role, taking over from Ms. Karen AbuZayd as Special Adviser *ad interim* on follow-up to the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants for the next three months. She noted that she is looking forward to seeing what kind of normative aspects will be brought to the UN agenda, especially on migration issue.

***Presentation by Mr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons***

Mr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, noted that grave situation of millions of IDPs required renewed attention, the rethinking of approaches to prevention and response, and concerted action at all levels. While the World Humanitarian Summit has taken important steps in reaffirming that no-one should be left behind, limited attention was given to IDPs in the 19 September Summit. At the same time, the 19 September Summit reaffirmed the importance of meeting the immediate humanitarian needs for IDPs, as well as addressing longer-term needs and durable solutions, enhancing self-reliance and reducing vulnerability and providing support to IDP- hosting communities. He emphasized that IDPs, migrants and refugees should not be treated in silos, and that the failure of internal protection mechanisms, as illustrated in Central America, causes people to leave their countries. He also regretted that the attention on vulnerability often masks the specific protection needs of IDPs. He referenced the Secretary-General’s ambitious target for the international community: to reduce internal displacement, in a dignified and safe manner, by 50 per cent by 2030. He outlined the work already done to reduce displacement through prevention and durable solutions, and to promote strategic, monitored and time-bound actions to that end, in full compliance with international standards. He highlighted the rights of IDPs, including the right to housing. Reflecting on the challenges of engaging with governments, he noted that coordination was a poor substitute for Member States’ responsibility. As he ends his tenure as mandate-holder, Mr. Beyani noted the appointment of Ms Cecilia Jimenez-Damary of the Philippines as the new Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. Given the demands of the role, he also made the case for an SRSG position, while recognising that there are different views on whether this is necessary. In discussion, there was reflection on how the Working Group’s action, and advocacy in particular, can continue to address the plight of IDPs. The New York Declaration’s paragraph 20 prompts ‘reflection’[[1]](#footnote-1), and this is opportunity and entry point for future engagement. In this context, the possibility of a high-level event on IDPs in 2017, accompanied by a Global Campaign on internal displacement, was raised. While reflecting on the specific needs of groups, occasioned by their status, such as refugees, the Group also underscored the importance of continued emphasis and adherence to a vulnerability and needs-based, rather than ‘status-based’, response approach. In closing the session, there was wide agreement that such discussions underscored the WHS commitment that ‘nobody should be left behind’.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested UNHCR to facilitate IASC agencies’ involvement in formal consultations on the CRR Framework. ***Action by: UNHCR, as the lead, to ensure the IASC agencies’ involvement in formal consultation, as appropriate, until the adoption of a global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration in 2018.***
* Asked OCHA to engage with relevant partners on paragraph 20 of the New York Declaration to lead a reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for internally displaced persons and to prevent and reduce such displacement. ***Action: OCHA to provide an update at the next IASC WG meeting in March 2017.***
* Agreed to continue to pursue all efforts to keep refugees, migrants and IDPs ‘on the agenda’ and counter the xenophobic narrative, including through engagement with the Special Adviser *ad interim* on follow-up to the Summit on addressing Large Movement of Refugees and Migrants . ***Action by: As the new Special Advisor takes up her role, the IASC secretariat to request details of opportunities for IASC engagement by end of December 2016.***
* Asked the IASC Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian/Development Nexus with a focus on protracted contexts (IASC HDN TT) to use the Working Group discussion of refugee, migrant and IDPs issues to nuance their analysis and take this into account in their work. ***Action by: IASC HDN TT.***
* Requested that the IASC secretariat circulates information on World Bank’s Global Concessional Financing Facility. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat to share information on WBG’s Global Concessional Financing Facility by end of November.***
1. **Taking the Grand Bargain Commitments Forward**

Ms. Gordana Jerger, a member of the new Grand Bargain ‘Facilitation Group’, and Ms. Melissa Pitotti, ICVA, which co-chaired the concluding Grand Bargain meeting, held 5-6 September 2016 in Bonn, led a Working Group conversation on the Grand Bargain, exploring the potential intersections with the work of the IASC Working Group and its subsidiary bodies.

***Presentation by Ms. Melissa Pitotti, Head of Policy, ICVA***

Ms. Pitotti gave an overview of the agreements and outcomes from the Grand Bargain meeting in Bonn, walking through a ‘mapping’ of collective action, drawn from the outline plans of the ten Grand Bargain workstreams, and their relationship to current IASC work. She pointed out that IASC Subsidiary Bodies are already explicitly involved in the workstreams of the Grand Bargain, with the exception of one on the use and coordination of cash-based programming. It was noted, however, that groups such as CALP are already playing a role here.  An analysis of the Grand Bargain workstream 2-pagers raised a number of questions and comments in discussion, including: how can we better sequence related pieces of work (e.g. promoting the IATI data standard alongside harmonizing/ simplifying reporting); how and with whom do we engage when opinions are split and decisions need to be taken, for example with regard to the localization marker, and that the original intent of the Grand Bargain commitments is appropriately ‘translated’ in the work then taken forward; what is the role of IASC bodies such as the IASC Principals’ cash task force, the now dormant needs assessments task force (NATF), and the reference group on protracted displacement; and what should be done about gaps in collective action, for example with regard to the commitment to transparent and harmonized cost structures; how to ensure appropriate division of labour, including between the EDG and the Working Group, noting that the EDG is already taking forward some elements, such as needs assessment, and there is a need to ‘connect the dots’ and guard against duplication of effort and confusion; and how to maintain an emphasis also on donor implementation, given that their own emphasis appears rather than on agency fulfilment of the Grand Bargain. In this context, was noted that the recent letter and communication to UN executive boards came from only a small number of donors on Haiti, and, while the Grand Bargain is primarily focused on protracted crises, the donor letter singled out an emergency response (Haiti).

The integration of the Grand Bargain, as much as possible, into existing forums was encouraged, noting that such forums include a range of formal IASC and informal inter-agency groups, including CALP and on-going work on the Core Humanitarian Standard. Similarly, it was suggested to sequence discussions within the IASC, the GHD, and other forums so they build upon, rather than repeat, one another.  Some gaps were also identified. For example, the lack of a place for “strategic discussion” with donors and need for clearer decision-making processes. The need to improve understanding of what the Grand Bargain actually entails, and the follow-up, was stressed, with the suggestion of creation of a basic guide on the Grand Bargain”. Some caution was also shared on giving the impression or turning the Grand Bargain into the main tool for WHS follow-up. It was also noted that the funding gap is not addressed by the Grand Bargain, and should still be taken forward.   Looking forward, it was agreed that an update on the Grand Bargain be included in the agenda of the March 2017 Working Group. An updated analysis of progress and gaps could be presented and discussed at this point, in advance of the Grand Bargain meeting to be held on the margins of ECOSOC. The Chair noted that that the incumbent of the P4 Grand Bargain secretariat, hosted by the IASC secretariat, will have a key role to play in supporting Grand Bargain follow-up and helping the fine-tuning and maintenance of the existing mapping. There is likely to be strong, continued interest in this process, including from the incoming Secretary-General.

**The Working Group:**

* Asked the IASC secretariat to update and fine-tune the “Mapping of Grand Bargain workstreams and IASC engagement” matrix, reflecting action by both IASC and other actors, where known. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat to update and share the revised matrix by end of January 2017.***
* Requested the IASC Subsidiary Bodies to review the work plans in order to ensure the Grand Bargain and WHS commitments become integrated parts of their respective work plans. ***Action by: the IASC Subsidiary Bodies by March 2017.***
* Requested the relevant secretariats (IASC, EDG and Grand Bargain secretariats) ensure close liaison in on-going tracking of follow-up on the GB by IASC bodies. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat, EDG secretariat and Grand Bargain secretariat to maintain regular contact on GB follow-up.***
* Requested that that an update on the Grand Bargain be included in the agenda of the March 2017 Working Group. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat to ensure that Grand Bargain is included in the next IASC Working Group meeting (7-8 March 2017) agenda.***
1. **Dialogue with the ERC**

The first formal address and dialogue by the ERC with the IASC Working Group since his appointment in June 2015 provided an opportunity for interactive discussion. The ERC shared his reflection on the WHS process, its outcomes and his vision for the follow-up process within the IASC, and the role in this that the IASC Working Group might play. The ERC commended Working Group members on their contribution in the preparatory process for the WHS, the engagement at the Summit, the many multi-stakeholder commitments, and referenced the on-going efforts in the follow-up process at different levels. Noting the Summit was a worthwhile endeavour, he reiterated the urgency and primary responsibility of the humanitarian community to work together constructively to deliver, and to build and secure trust of the most vulnerable populations. He emphasized the need for the IASC to engage collectively in the follow-up process, referencing both the work on the Grand Bargain, including the importance of following through agreements on needs assessments, as well as enhancing HCT effectiveness. He encouraged IASC members to use the PACT mechanism for reporting against WHS commitments.

In discussion, Working Group members sought continued ‘transformation’ in current system change, stressed the importance of continued pressure on Member States to take political action, to respect humanitarian principles and IHL and address the root causes of humanitarian need. Responding on the complexity of multi-stakeholder engagement, the ERC noted that, while respecting different mandates and accountabilities, we are, in effect, regarded outside of the UN as ‘one eco-system’, expected to deliver for the ‘public good’. He encouraged development of policy to address the ‘tough issues’ that did not receive sufficient commitments at the Summit, as well as continued strong advocacy on humanitarian principles. Discussing the role and interaction with donors, the ERC reaffirmed the importance of close engagement with donors at global and field level, while indicating the need to maintain separate IASC ‘humanitarian space’ in formal IASC structures. Referencing the recent donor letter on the implementation of the Grand Bargain in Haiti, the ERC suggested that this provides an opportunity for dialogue with donors, including on how we, and they, are delivering on commitments, and reiterated that the IASC must demonstrate the added value of its interventions.

1. **Post-World Humanitarian Summit: taking stock and moving forward**

***Presentation by Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, OCHA***

Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer briefed on next steps following the release of the WHS *Commitment to Action* Report, the SG Report on the Outcome of the WHS, and the launch of the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation (PACT), aimed to advance and sustain momentum on in implementing commitments and advancing the overall Agenda for Humanity. He was clear that the humanitarian community is not responsible for delivering against all the twenty-four ‘strategic shifts’ under the five core responsibilities[[2]](#footnote-2), but that an essential element of the follow-up is continued outreach to Member States for stronger political leadership to prevent and resolve conflicts, and to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law. Success, however, is also reliant on individual and collective action by IASC organisations. He sought support from IASC members to self-report on their commitments on the PACT (when available early next year) and to provide additional thematic analysis/reports for the annual report documenting progress. He also noted the plan to have a stock-taking meeting within the next five years.

In discussion on next steps in the inter-governmental process, it was noted that WHS outcomes have already informed ECOSOC deliberations, and this will continue in 2017. WHS outcomes are also informing on-going General Assembly ‘Omnibus Resolution’ and QCPR negotiations. The OCHA-led December 2016 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum provides further opportunity for engagement. Responding to a plea for advance timeframes, realistic deadlines and clear guidance for input to reports, and clarity on the expected level of engagement by IASC actors, OCHA will share details on the reporting framework shortly. Clarity was also sought on the expected role and/or engagement with the Regional Steering Groups established during the WHS consultation process. The 24 transformations provide a useful basis for mapping on-going IASC collective activities’ contribution to desired outcomes, similar to the initial mapping against Grand Bargain workstreams, and will help clarify what the IASC can and cannot do, while providing a basis for regular updates on progress in future Working Group meetings.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested OCHA to schedule a briefing, continue engagement, with IASC partners on WHS follow-up, in particular the roll-out and design of the PACT as well as the expected WHS commitments progress on the modalities for WHS tracking and reporting. ***Action by: OCHA to share information and schedule briefing session by end 2016.***
* Requested that the IASC secretariat collate information from the IASC Bodies and map this against the identified areas Agenda for Humanity transformations, feeding progress updates into relevant tracking frameworks. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat to request and map information on activities by end January 2017, and track progress until end of 2017.***
* Requested OCHA to provide regular updates on WHS implementation to the WG, and in this respect decided to retain WHS progress as a standing item on the IASC WG agenda until the end of 2017. ***Action by: the IASC secretariat to ensure WHS as a standing item until end of 2017.***
1. **Advancing the work of IASC Task Teams and Reference Groups**

***Presentation by Mr. Arafat Jamal, Head, Inter-Agency Coordination Service, UNHCR***

As a WG sponsor, Mr. Arafat Jamal presented some of the initiatives being taken forward by the Task Team on **Accountability to Affected People** (AAP). Referencing the GB commitments on the “participation revolution” and approaches by the *Network for Empowered Aid Response (*NEAR), he sought Working Group support for proposals for better engagement of national actors in country-level operations, as well outreach by the WG itself to increase national actor involvement at global level. ‘Fiches’ outlining suggested actions by cluster and inter-cluster groups on strengthening AAP and protection through each phase of the HPC now provide concrete guidance, and support is available through the Task Team ‘helpdesk’. Roll-out of the IASC Protection Policy, and its emphasis on HCT protection strategies, prompts inclusion of clear outputs on both AAP and PSEA in these, strengthening related accountability, and ‘standing items’ in HCT meetings were also recommended. Noting its dissemination by the ERC to HCs, and suggesting further distribution through other networks, use of the *Inter-Agency Best Practice Guide on Community-Based Complaints Mechanism (CBCM)* for PSEA was encouraged, while the inclusion of both PSEA and AAP in HC performance frameworks was also noted (ERC Compacts and appraisals), and the need to ensure alignment with UNDG on common messaging and inclusion of PSEA in RC ToRs and accountability frameworks. Noting the Task Team proposal that the WG facilitate collaboration with diaspora organizations, as a bridge to national organizations, by establishing a ‘diaspora focal point’ within the IASC WG, there was a request for greater clarity on the intended outcome of this proposal.

***Presentation by Mr. David Coffey, co-chair of the IASC Reference Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action***

Within the context of a wide range (20%) of WHS commitments related to gender, Mr. David Coffey shared on-going priorities for the Reference Group, including a proposed roadmap for revision of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy and development of an Accountability Framework. He noted that the review will establish steps and define roles and responsibilities to promote the integration of gender into the coordinated humanitarian process including the use of SADD and context-specific gender analysis throughout the HPC; and seeks to ensure inclusion of local and national women’s groups and gender expertise in clusters and other entry points to the HPC, ensure gender focal points in HCTs, and establish targets to ensure that humanitarian country teams achieve gender parity. The revision exercise will be participatory and consultative, recruitment of a consultant is currently on-going and a series of consultation are planned at the global and field level. In discussion, the Reference Group was encouraged to review and build on lessons and practices from related initiatives and existing mechanisms including, GBV accountability frameworks and GenCap. Agreeing the outlined process for the revision, including an Expert group meeting to establish the scope, parameters and areas of focus for the IASC Gender Policy Update and the accountability framework, establishment of a Steering Group, and consultations with key stakeholders, the IASC Working Group looked forward to receiving the outline of the proposed policy revision content and potential accountability framework for comment and endorsement.

***Presentation by Mr. Bruno Lemarquis, Deputy Director of UNDP Crisis Response Unit***

Mr. Bruno Lemarquis gave an overview of the 21-22 October 2016 Retreat of the IASC Task Team on Strengthening Humanitarian-Development Nexus and the UNDG Working Group on Transition. The retreat marked an important milestone as the initiation of collaboration between these two systems, aiming to enhance understanding on joint analysis and joined-up planning across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and to agree on an initial road map of actions. Overall, there was wide endorsement from participants on the elements of the New Way of Working, and particularly on the need to work towards collective outcomes. It was agreed during the workshop that the initial focus needed to be in supporting the field in its rollout – while also ensuring that the HQ processes from both the IASC and UNDG side are able to capture lessons and, best practices. In this regard, he announced the planned launch of an online platform to facilitate sharing of lessons from the field. ‘Top down’ guidance from the Headquarter level and the introduction of additional new instruments should be limited. Meanwhile, strengthened partnerships with IFIs and NGOs, as well as collective advocacy to Member States and donors should be pursued. The need for a nuanced, context-specific approach was emphasized. The WG participants echoed the positive results of the retreat, while recognizing that the New Way of Working would require cultural changes, developing common language and indicators across agencies/organizations and staff capacity development in the medium-long run. Finally, it was noted that collaboration with the World Bank and other IFIs would need to be a crucial component of any operationalization of the humanitarian-development nexus which itself would need further work in terms of identifying opportunities and potential synergies that could be encouraged through joint analysis and continuous engagement with IFIs The concept of accountability to affected populations should be further clarified while engaging development actors.

1. **Changing the way the IASC WG works**

***Presentation by Mr. Arafat Jamal, Head, Inter-Agency Coordination Service, UNHCR***

Mr. Arafat Jamal, UNHCR, made reference to the IASC WG continuous examination on how it can become more outward-looking, strategic and relevant. Reforming the IASC has been an ongoing discussion, with several proposal papers already produced on the topic, including the IASC ‘quick wins’ (2012) and the 2014 ODI IASC review. He noted the unique nature of the IASC in bringing together both the UN and non-UN. Quoting the ERC’s notion of ‘one ecosystem’, he said that, to certain extent, the world already sees the IASC WG as one. But, given its strengths, such as frequency of meetings and seniority in participation, there should be more to show as outcomes. On its purpose, he noted that the WG is about harnessing the expertise, collective voice and being a normative body. He would like to see the WG as a “go to place”: both a developer of normative frameworks, but also giving advice when needed. He reminded the Group of past attempts to ensure sequencing between the IASC Principals and the WG, which could, but did not always, produce some desired results. He sought enhanced interaction between the WG and the EDG, and noted the need to eliminate artificial barriers. The WG’s relationship with other IASC bodies and networks, including its own subsidiary bodies, the STAIT and the clusters, could also be reviewed and reinvigorated. He noted that the IASC has already explored ways of ensuring greater inclusiveness and better regional representation and diversity in the past, but issues for membership, broadening partnerships, and engagement of local organizations, as well as with inter-agency structures at regional level still need consideration and agreement. Some practical ‘ways of working’ could also be revisited, including on how agendas are developed and background papers support decision-making. In conclusion, he suggested conceptualizing the IASC WG as a space – intellectual, authoritative, practical – that can take decisions and derive policy on its terms, while keeping itself aligned with other IASC bodies, in sync with other multilateral processes and mechanisms, and attuned to global trends.

WG participants underscored the importance of ensuring a field connection, as demonstrated by the participation of Mr. Hochschild’s in an earlier session, and a link to the Principals. Similarly, the taking forward issues of collective concern, rather than defending individual mandates, should be a priority. The ERC’s comment on the IASC being “policy-light” was seen as indication of lack of strict prioritization by the Group on issues. Bringing in external people to challenge the WG, and ‘ground truth’ its work, was also proposed. It was agreed that further discussion on the relationship with the EDGs, donors and regional IASC networks was needed. The WG Chair noted that it must be more nimble, responsive and relevant for humanitarian action on the ground.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested that a small working group come up with proposals to enhance the way the IASC WG works for further consideration by the WG and the in-coming WG Chair. ***Action by: UNHCR WG member, with the support of the IASC secretariat, to organize a working group, and draft a proposal by the end of January 2017.***
1. **Closing Remarks**

In the last Working Group as Chair, the Group expressed their heartfelt thank you for Ms. Kang for her dedication and commitment since taking on the post of DERC in April 2013. It was noted that, in her new role, she will continue to interact with UN officials, Member States and civil society to ensure an informed and smooth transition, and support the common humanitarian endeavour.

**Annex:** A diagram of the 5 core responsibilities and 24 strategic shifts



1. New York Declaration, Paragraph 20: We recognize the very large number of people who are displaced within national borders and the possibility that such persons might seek protection and assistance in other countries as refugees or migrants. We note the need for reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for internally displaced persons and to prevent and reduce such displacement. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The annexed WHS diagram includes the 5 core responsibilities and 24 strategic shifts. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)