Inter-Agency Standing Committee

92nd IASC Working Group Meeting

**Summary Record**

5-6 April 2017

Host: FAO, Rome

**Opening remarks**

***Mr. Daniel Gustafson, Deputy Director-General, FAO,*** welcomed participants and, in his opening remarks, noted the exceptionally difficult time faced globally, with an unprecedented number of intractable and protracted crises.He suggested this presents great challenges but also great opportunities, including a Secretary-General well-versed in humanitarian affairs and conflict prevention, and the opportunity to bring work that went into the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and Grand Bargain (GB) to fruition, and make the changes envisaged. The IASC Working Group (WG) can be at the heart of this, deciding how to take new ‘big ideas’ forward.

***Ms. Ursula Mueller, Chair of the IASC WG***, thanked FAO for generously hosting the WG, and welcomed the opportunity, as the new DERC, to listen and learn from WG representatives. She noted that the IASC, as the UN in general, is in a time of transition. In a context of multiple complex emergencies, including the threat of four concurrent famines, she stressed the importance of a humanitarian system fit for purpose. She urged the WG to focus on concrete outcomes and results, to use the meeting to take stock of its role and identify clear actions for WG support for the IASC Principals in making strategic, timely decisions, defending humanitarian space and principles, and ensuring an effective operational response for people in need. She reflected that this period brings challenges, but also considerable opportunities for the IASC to shape the way it works.

1. **A Vision for the IASC in a changing world**

***On taking up her role as the Chair of the IASC WG, Ms. Mueller*,** drawing on her personal experience, conversations with IASC partners to date, and engagement on the Secretary-General’s UN reform agenda, outlined her vision for the IASC in a changing world. She stressed the need to identify opportunities and challenges given current political change, and the role the WG could play in relation to the SG’s new structures, while still maintaining a measure of necessary independence. Ms. Mueller stressed the opportunity, through the ERC and DERC engagement, to influence high-level decision-making around the Secretary-General’s reform agenda and provide a clear, strong collective voice in the Deputies Committee and Executive Committee, making humanitarian concerns clear. She noted the unique nature of the IASC, encompassing UN and non-UN actors, and with a GA-mandated humanitarian leadership role recognised at global level and in the field.

She outlined a vision of an IASC making a difference through timely and informed strategic decision-making, to which its members are committed and accountable, and where the WG could help provide evidence and build ownership for key actions. She stressed the role of the IASC in providing, and reinforcing, the normative framework through targeted advocacy, by ensuring relevant – and only necessary – policy is developed, and clear and consistent guidance is given to the field. She noted that the IASC should be nimble and responsive to what is actually needed and requested by field-based partners, supporting the field, rather than demanding from it. She saw the potential for a WG prepared to speak out, to reflect common messages, and focussed on results – delivering for people – rather than competing for visibility, getting bogged down in process and inter-agency squabbles. She indicated her support for the New Way of Working (NWoW), informed by her own past experience, and to more effective cooperation between humanitarian and development actors and action, while stressing her commitment to defending humanitarian principles and space. With a diminishing resource-base, she highlighted the need to be as effective as possible, spending human and financial ‘capital’ wisely, and to have streamlined, efficient and effective structures to facilitate IASC work. Quoting Goethe, she stressed that ‘willing is not enough; we must do’.

The WG supported the Chair’s vision, and agreed to engage with the Secretary-General’s reform agenda. It looked for modalities for the IASC to feed into Executive and Deputies Committee, and Chief Executive Board (CEB), deliberations and influence the forward agenda, including through sharing the Early Warning/Early Action report, to enable the IASC to deliver vital background to Principal’s decisions. The WG reaffirmed the need to trust each other, recognise what it has already achieved, and be more confident in what it can do, including through a more focussed workplan. Above all, WG members agreed it must be clear on its role and purpose and define its comparative advantage and provide added value to the field, this will ensure its relevancy is established. Participants agreed it should manage its engagement with other actors, capitalising on and recalibrating its relationship to member states, reaching out more broadly including to those with no clear donor label, the private sector, and beyond the ‘like-minded’. The WG wished to clarify relationships within IASC structures, including ensuring equitable participation of all IASC members (small or large, full members or standing invitees), to manage expectations of its role, to better communicate externally what the IASC is, and does.

***Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ethiopia*** brought her experience from working in a country where humanitarian concerns are being addressed in a development context, and where there is strong Government ownership and willingness to connect. Analysing the IASC role at country level, in providing policy guidance and in supporting the field, she sought a clearer link between the IASC at global and field level, enabling the voice of HCs, and better communication on the role and composition of IASC structures, mandate and objectives, and the ability for field actors to inform global advocacy initiatives and the IASC’s role in advancing major humanitarian issues. In contexts such as Ethiopia, she stressed the need to tailor and contextualise IASC field structures – HCTs and clusters – to ensure relevant national actors are also effectively engaged. She queried the operational value of some IASC guidelines and, while recognising the value of the policy and the normative framework, stressed it must be relevant to the field. She called for a predictable, accessible ‘go to’ place for surge support for the field response (including humanitarian technical expertise and logistic capacity). She noted the support provided by a ‘UNDP Nexus’ adviser, and asked questions regarding the potential role of the IASC in support of and providing guidance to HCs on the H/D nexus and the NWOW at country level. She highlighted the relevant areas of focus in Ethiopia with respect to the nexus, including (i) work on evidence; (ii) bundles of approaches; (iii) financing mechanism, including for early action; and (iv) adjustment of planning instruments, including the UNDAF. A nexus working group has been set-up to move the agenda forward. Discussion reinforced agreement that field concerns and experience must drive policy development and need-specific global support, as well as the importance of having the right actors in HCTs, including NGOs, and of recognising and building on national interest in both local and global engagement in key initiatives, such as Copenhagen.

1. **Interactive Discussion on Shaping the Vision of the IASC**

***Facilitated by: Ms. Patty McIlreavy, InterAction***

Building on the previous discussion and analysis, the WG discussed proposals put forward to enhance the way the IASC Working Group works, clarify the relationship between structures, ensure more strategic linkage between policy and operations at the IASC, and to ‘work smarter’ and more effectively to provide relevant and effective field support. Throughout the conversation, there was significant agreement on the need for a change aimed at limiting fragmentation and duplication, and improving communications and inter-connectivity among IASC partners and IASC bodies, and between operational and policy action.

***Mr. Arafat Jamal, UNHCR and representative of sub-working group on IASC strengthening,*** briefed on proposals emanating from a small group convened following the October 2016 WG meeting.[[1]](#footnote-1) The six proposals, informed by prior evaluations and analysis of the IASC’s ways of working, impact and efficiency, did not necessarily reflect a consensus, but rather options to stimulate discussion. The proposals included restoring the operations and policy focus of the WG, revising the 1994 IASC Action Procedure; greater linkage of the WG agenda with that of the IASC Principals, while retaining some autonomy for outreach and decision-making; better linking the WG and Emergency Directors Group (EDG), through the establishment of an Operations and Policy Group (OPG), with a single merged secretariat, and direct links to Clusters, the STAIT and Task Teams; to consolidate, elevate and diversify OPG membership, including through an ASG-level core group and possible rotating co-chair; to focus OPG meetings around one theme, suggesting the NWOW could be appropriate for 2017; and a number of changes to working methods to favour results and diminish process.

In WG discussion, there was a strong emphasis on streamlining, building synergies, while ensuring that key ‘value-added’ functions, including the dynamism, field focus and result-oriented approach of the EDG, were retained, and core functions valued by members, be safeguarded, namely: Humanitarian Coordinators performance appraisals; the ability to focus on time sensitive crisis, plan response requirement and troubleshooting; field visits to catalyse action at the HCT level; horizon scanning which contributes to annual review of current operations, identification of potential risk areas and mitigating measures. There was a strong emphasis on the need to consult the EDG so that decisions are fully aligned between both groups. Proposed ways forward should also be discussed with the EDG to ensure a smooth transition and retaining important functions. Some noted the lack of linkages to the field and search of purpose of the present WG, stressing that any transition should not be rushed and that the modality of transition should be carefully considered. The WG recognised the need for the IASC WG and the EDGs to be brought more closely together, possibly merged, to ensure greater coherence and efficiency in supporting field response as well as addressing strategic and institutional challenges and the need for common advocacy around joined-up solutions, approaches and communications and/or messages. The WG sought provision of more joined-up support by the IASC and EDG secretariats, with broad support for a single secretariat servicing the IASC Principals, WG and EDG. A joint WG/EDG meeting, chaired by the DERC was proposed as a means of exploring how this could work in practice. This would not affect meeting planning, including EDG ad hoc meetings, already in progress and any transition to a new structural configuration would be handled carefully.

An aligned agenda between the IASC Principals, WG and EDGs was recommended, driven by field concerns, the implementation of key WHS outcomes, and partnership for a more effective response. All agreed the importance of linked agendas, the role of the WG in supporting the IASC Principals, and underscored the potential ability to align with and/or inform elements of the UN Secretary-General’s reform agenda. There was consensus that new, unnecessary layers must be avoided, with no agreement on the creation of an ASG-level core group, although one annual ASG-level meeting was suggested. The WG stressed the need for early identifcation of agenda items, facilitating necessary consultation with constituencies, to be supported by concise background papers with clear decision points, and – where appropriate – including participation during identified sessions of relevant [non-IASC] stakeholders.

The WG sought more agile, nimble, purpose-driven and time-bound work in support of IASC priorities by effective IASC Task Teams/subsidiary bodies, overseen by and accountable to the IASC WG. The DERC suggested reviewing the relevance and mandate of existing IASC Subsidiary Bodies in light of considerable change and global challenges. Overall, the WG highlighted the need to reduce the capital expended on process, to ‘think outward’ rather than being solely introspective, to be better connected with field-based partners and other key stakeholders and dynamics, to increase its impact. The role of the STAIT was also highlighted during the debate. The STAIT was highlighted as a useful structure, based on senior individuals and working with field teams. There is, however, a clear need for more clarity and better coherence on its role vis-a-vis the Working Group and in regards to policy development, piloting, implementation, and monitoring.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested the Chair of the IASC WG, with support of the IASC secretariat, to outline a proposal reflecting elements agreed above, to share this for quick comment by WG members, for subsequent presentation to IASC Principals for their decision. ***Action by: Chair of the IASC WG, supported by IASC secretariat, by 11 April 2017 for comment by WG members (by 14 April 2017) and submission to IASC Principals (by 19 April 2017).***
* Proposed, subject to IASC Principals endorsement, a combined Working Group/Emergency Directors meeting, chaired by the DERC, testing this modality in practice and with a focus on policy and operational response. The theme for the meeting to be developed by the IASC and EDG secretariats working closely together (the IDP issue was suggested as a possible theme).  ***Action by: Proposal to be shared with IASC Principals by Chair of the IASC WG. If agreed, substantive preparation by IASC and EDG secretariats. Meeting timing to be determined.***

1. **Creating Essential Links: Diversity and Inclusivity**

***Facilitated by: Mr. Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF***

Introducing the session, reference was made to the perception of the IASC as a ‘Western Club’, with its critics questioning the relevance of ‘top-down’ decisions by a limited membership for the broader humanitarian eco-system, there have been increased calls for more inclusivity and diversity of ‘non-western’ actors at the regional and local levels, especially coming out of the World Humanitarian Summit. Noting that this issue will be on the IASC Principals Retreat agenda, the Working Group recognised the need to ground WG deliberations in field realities, and the role of other communities, including civil society and the private sector. It discussed avenues for greater, more effective, cooperation with the humanitarian eco-system, and opportunities for a more inclusive, diversified IASC, without prejudice to light, streamlined structures and processes, and ensuring an effective response.

***Ms. Laila Muriithia, Refugee Consortium of Kenya*** shared analysis from ICVA’s reflection paper, prepared with input from partners, exploring why diversity is sought, and putting forward propositions aimed at strengthening IASC inclusivity. She noted under-representation of non-governmental organisations, and the voice of ‘Southern’ partners in the IASC, despite their significant role and expertise in providing assistance in crisis areas, as well as past conversation on these issues. She stressed that, even if more people are brought around the table for the appearance of inclusivity, it will not necessarily result in more effective humanitarian response. Most important is to ensure a diversity of perspectives and thinking. Diversity would not be achieved by expanding the membership of the IASC, but through better sharing information, consulting with and listening to local stakeholders, and enabling partners, in particular Southern partners, to access field-based coordination structures, such as HCTs, and to have a voice in IASC mechanisms.

She noted numerous examples of the IASC already using existing mechanisms, such as subsidiary bodies, to bring together a broader range of actors beyond formal ‘IASC membership’, the opportunities provided by technology, the ability to use existing mechanisms (clusters, HCTS, regional inter-agency groups), the possibility of inviting external actors to bring innovative thinking, the need to ensure an accessible language for coordination, and for better clarity and communication on what the IASC does, making agendas relevant to field actors, and using the already-strong field footprint of existing IASC members to inform IASC deliberations.

In discussion, the WG concluded that neither increasing membership, nor an ‘IASC plus’ would automatically (or on its own) ensure greater diversity. They did, however, stress the need to ensure greater outreach and engagement with more diverse actors in the field, in particular, through existing field structures, and to build on the experience and contacts from the WHS, as well as existing regional groupings. Outreach to broader constituencies could also be facilitated through early identification of issues and agenda items. Members recognized opportunities to better utilize existing forums and members’ ‘footprint’, including partnerships at operational, field levels. In addition, the WG suggested taking WG meetings to the field, direct engagement with field-based partners, allowing them to set the agenda, as well as more consistent field representation in WG meetings. WG members noted the wish for complementary and collective communication and engagement with donors, as well as member states and the G77, on issues of key collective concern and relevance, without prejudice to humanitarian principles. The WG agreed that it must learn lessons from its previous engagement, revise how it communicates outwards, including on what the IASC is, what it does, and where it has impact.

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to update the mapping of regional inter-agency bodies and/or key fora to support potential engagement, including communication and information exchange. ***Action by: IASC secretariat by second quarter of 2017.***
* Within the current framework of the WG, members are committed to pursue task-focused diversity, bring field representation consistently into WG meetings on relevant agenda items, involve relevant external actors in discussions, encourage HCTs to engage more widely at field level, and consult more widely on issues and actions. ***Action by: All IASC Working Group members.***
* Committed to the early identification of agenda items to ensure sufficient time for broad-based consultations to ensure better representation of broader views. ***Action by: IASC secretariat with IASC Working Group members.***

1. **The Secretary-General’s Reform Agenda**

***Facilitated by: Ms. Ursula Mueller, Chair of the IASC WG and DERC***

Participants discussed the implications of the Secretary-General’s reform agenda for the international humanitarian community, assessing how IASC concerns and messaging might influence agenda-setting, strategic decision-making and policy formulation. They sought entry points for discussions with other actors on these issues, and to identify the WG and broader IASC’s role and contribution to the SG agenda, while also maintaining a measure of independence.

***Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office*** addressed participants on the Secretary-General’s reform agenda, including on prevention, and the implications for the IASC and the broader humanitarian system. He noted the starting point for the Secretary-General’s reforms in a recognition that, in the face of myriad challenges and escalating crises, the UN response to date has not worked and there is a necessity for change. He outlined elements of the new focus, which builds on the WHS Agenda for Humanity, the QCPR, the Sustaining Peace Agenda and the HIPPO report and other studies and reviews over recent years including those on management. He highlighted the greater focus on a broad-based and holistic approach to prevention and resolution of conflict, including mediation initiatives, addressing governance, and taking human rights issues and development activities into account. The SG has sought a multi-dimensional people-centred approach, moving away from the fragmented, isolated, mandate or institution-driven responses in the past. The Secretary-General seeks to enhance the cross-cutting analysis, capacity and political will, critical for both prevention and early warning. He seeks greater accountability to outcomes and results, rather than process, empowered RC field leadership, and nimble, quick action. He noted a focus on outcomes, joined-up action, on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on management reform, and on achieving gender parity. The Executive and Deputies Committees, very new decision-making structures, bring together the humanitarian, development, human rights and peace-keeping constituencies. Concluding the inadequacy of previous approaches, he also elaborated on the challenges he saw ahead, all of which called for reform to enable a collective response including to the global threats to multilateralism, a strengthened ability to identify frontier issues such as genetic engineering and technological developments, adding that a paper outlining the SG’s vision on the preventive agenda was forthcoming.

Reflecting on the IASC and its potential contribution, he highlighted the opportunity to build on the success already achieved over the last 25 years in achieving greater coherence within the humanitarian community. He suggested the IASC should now look at achieving coherence and more consistent engagement *beyond* its own humanitarian community and join the effort to break down siloes. In discussion, WG participants generally welcomed the emphasis on working more closely together, the opportunities for innovation, and focus on collective results. Members asked on the new incentives for collaboration, including around the New Way of Working, while stressing the value and importance of finding modalities to ensure the IASC voice, including that of non-UN actors, is heard in the various structures. Mr. Hochschild noted that UN leaders are now being held accountable not only for the efficiencies within their own organisations, but also for their accountability to collective results. He indicated that the ERC/DERC currently bring the IASC community voice into the EC/DC, which other agencies being brought into relevant discussions, while the Deputy Secretary-General is also setting up an Advisory Panel on achieving the SDGs which will include both UN and non-UN actors. Responding on the future of the RC/HC role, he indicated that the focus is on ensuring that the RC role is empowered, better equipped, and with better guidance on cross-cutting issues in particular, to perform their duties.

1. **Internally Displaced Persons**

***Facilitated by: Ms. Ugochi Daniels, UNFPA***

In October 2016, the WG agreed the importance of sustained attention to IDPs, and the need for further reflection on strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for IDPs, as well as to prevent and reduce such displacement. The discussion provided an opportunity, through presentations on four current initiatives, to strengthen the response and raise the visibility for IDPs, understand where there are gaps in or issues with the IDP response, and where – collectively – work should be intensified.

***Professor Walter Kaelin*** shared an overview and recommendations from an OCHA-commissioned study: *Breaking the Impasse: Reducing Protracted Internal Displacement as a Collective Outcome*. He highlighted the analysis of what is meant by, the causes for, and the impact of, protracted displacement on IDPs, host communities, local governments and others. The study proposes a move from programme outputs to collective outcomes that prevent and address internal protracted displacement. He noted the focus on working with both humanitarian and development actors, reinforcing the relevance of early action to strengthen coping mechanisms, even when durable solutions are not yet possible. He highlighted seven elements contributing to collective outcomes: joined-up analysis and a clear evidence base; definition of outcomes; a strategic outlook; inclusive planning processes; adequate norms and institutions; outcome-orientated programmes; and transversal financing. He stressed – in addition to and in coordination with life-saving activities - the need to analyse the causes for displacement, many of which are often of political and developmental nature, and the need for a more developmental approach to protracted internal displacement, that understands IDPs require both immediate support, but also livelihoods, security of tenure for housing and land; aims to reduce poverty and vulnerabilities; focuses on area-based approaches including host communities, rather than individual beneficiaries; promotes a whole-of-government approach; looks at institutional and systemic issues (such as fiscal decentralization). He encouraged humanitarian actors to integrate a resilience perspective into their responses. The next steps include proposed multi-year action in 3-5 countries, support for UNCTs/HCTs with guidance on more coherent use of existing planning tools, the potential for new planning tools, ensuring monitoring and evaluation systems focused on outcomes, clarifying/strengthening the role of RC/HCs, engaging with the SG/DSG’s system-wide internal displacement initiative, revising the SG’s 2011/20 decision on durable solutions and considering a 2018 high-level event.

***Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs*** also emphasized the need for a comprehensive and agreed-upon evidence-base for measuring progress towards durable solutions and noted the work already undertaken to operationalise the *2010 IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs*, the work being done by the Joint IDP profiling service (JIPS), and on-going development of indicators to measure progress and develop guidance and capacity-building material for governments. With the project now in piloting phase, which will inform the evidence-base, pilots are planned in Colombia, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Myanmar, Ukraine and Sudan. She noted the importance of a ‘whole-of-Government’ approach and of ensuring IDP participation in decision-making. Project work should be completed by end December 2017, with endorsement sought from IASC Principals for the guidance and indicator library in 2018.

***Ms. Tristan Burnett (IOM)*** outlined IOM’s new *Framework for Addressing Internal Displacement*, currently being consulted with key stakeholders to ensure transparency on the approach, and gather insights to ensure that the Framework reflects how IOM can best support States in their efforts to address internal displacement challenges and its role within the collective system. She noted that IOM is already a consistent actor in the collective response to IDPs, and addressing displacement is a significant part of its emergency response work. In the face of changes in the contemporary landscape, IOM’s framework sets out its organisational priorities, the principles for its engagement, including its support to national and local authorities, and a people-centred approach, respecting humanitarian principles, work to increase resilience and self-sufficiency of IDPs and a call for greater preparedness and risk reduction. The Framework was developed in order to ensure that IOM operations follow strategic approaches that are contextual, comprehensive, collaborative, innovative, and evidence-based. The latter entails using data and analysis to understand mobility in crisis situations, including the extent of displacement and the changing needs and locations of IDPs through the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix. Roll-out of the Framework will be part of a broader process to continually review IOM’s capacities and operations on internal displacement.

***Mr. Arafat Jamal (UNHCR)*** outlined the focus of UNHCR’s on-going internal review of its operations as a strong responder on displacement, including in its cluster role. Drawing from six geographically representative field situations (Iraq, Ukraine, South Sudan, CAR, Myanmar, Syria), capturing the whole cycle of displacement, the review analyses how UNHCR’s response can be more effective, predictable and coherent. The review recognises some challenges in cluster leadership, funding and capacity, reaffirms the centrality of protection, the importance of national development plans and legal frameworks, and the lack of focus on durable solutions from the outset of a crisis. He noted the need for the right staff on the ground, a sound evidence base, and an enhanced inter-agency response. Looking forward, there will be an emphasis on operational delivery, leadership on protection, responsible humanitarian disengagement/handover to other actors and mechanisms, and involving IDPs themselves in the search for solutions.

In discussion, WG participants noted the considerable similarities, and potential complementarity between the respective initiatives, including the focus on protection, a clear evidence-base, engagement with government, the link to the SDGs and emphasis on developmental approaches and durable solutions, as well as attention to host communities. Participants cautioned on the number of pilots, often in the same countries, noting also similar pilots on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The value of donor engagement was stressed, as well as with Governments themselves, both for visibility on the issue as well as for more flexible financing. A nuanced, context-specific local approach was emphasised, given the particular challenges of conflict-induced displacement and the need to maintain humanitarian space to respond. As a key driver of displacement, advocacy on the prevention of conflict, respect for IHL and cessation of hostilities was strongly recommended. The potential of a high-level event was recognised; the need to further develop clear objectives and proposed outcomes was stressed, as well as the importance of ensuring complementarity with other events (e.g. on migration) including possible field based events.

Given the proliferation of on-going IDP initiatives, and extensive studies already being undertaken, the role and focus of the current Reference Group on Protracted Displacement was questioned by a number of WG members. Some referred to the group having faced challenges in fully developing ToRs, define a clear task, or proceed pending completion of the various studies underway. Given agreement on an IASC WG/EDG focussed discussion on IDPs, with potential support from Professor Kaelin, the RG was not formally required by the IASC WG until or unless next steps and tasks could be clarified by the WG itself. It was also suggested that the WG Chair would seek the direct engagement of the Deputy Secretary-General in mounting a system-wide response given her earlier interest and engagement in the cause.

**The Working Group:**

* Requested the Chair of the IASC WG to seek the support of the Deputy Secretary-General, and engage with the ASG for Strategic Coordination, on the mobilisation of a system-wide response for IDPs. ***Action by: Chair of the IASC WG by mid-April 2017.***
* Agreed to undertake an analysis and mapping of on-going IDP initiatives to identify gaps, common/complementary approaches, and possible collective ways forward to inform IASC Principals discussions on IDPs and a system-wide response. ***For Action: IASC secretariat to consult with WG to identify lead/task team, in cooperation with Prof. Kaelin, by second quarter of 2017.***
* Agreed to draft and issue an IASC statement advocating for political and other action to better prevent and resolve conflict as one of the key drivers of displacement, emphasizing respect for IHL, human rights and the Guiding Principles on IDPs. ***For Action: IOM in cooperation with UNHCR by second quarter of 2017.***
* Recognized the potential for a high-level event on IDPs and asked to further develop the proposed outcome, audience, location while also noting a risk of crowding the agenda for 2018. ***For Action: OCHA to consult with WG colleagues by end of 2017.***
* Subject to endorsement of the combined meeting by IASC Principals, agreed that the policy and operational response on IDPs be the focus of the proposed IASC WG – EDG meeting or retreat, serving to inform IASC Principals discussions, the more holistic system-wide response, and engagement with donors/member states on this issue. ***Action by: Meeting to be scheduled by DERC, supported by IASC secretariat (by second quarter of 2017).***
* Agreed to consider the purpose of the IASC Reference Group on Protracted Displacement in the context of the broader review of relevance and mandates of all IASC Subsidiary Bodies, as suggested by the DERC. ***For Action: IASC secretariat to inform the RG Co-Chairs (by 17 April 2017).***

1. **Sustaining Peace and The New Way of Working**

The session provided an opportunity for participants to be updated on the work of the Task Team on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. Introducing the session, ***Mr. Daniel Gustafson, Deputy Director-General, FAO,*** noted the explicit linkage between freedom from want and peace in its founding charter from 1945, while highlighting the need to provide guidance to the Task Team on how to position itself and focus its workplan in the context of the broader engagement on the New Way of Working, as well as vis-à-vis the Sustaining Peace agenda.

***Mr. Bruno Lemarquis (UNDP) on behalf of the TT on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus,*** helped to demystify the New Way of Working (NWOW), noting the paradigm shift this represents for how we work, while it is not new in its essentials. He noted that the NWOW is above all about common sense. He noted the focus, in line with the WHS Commitment to Action, to reduce needs, risks and vulnerabilities, requiring new institutional measures, a multi-dimensional approach and political commitment to change. He stressed that the approach must be context-specific, one size does not fit all, and – in conflict situations – a clearer division may be required, with the humanitarian imperative, respect for IHL and centrality of protection as key, while in other situations engagement with government and resilience-building is possible. He noted that the field, and field leadership, must drive the approach, with HQs translating this into a more system-wide response and guidance and making the necessary changes (policy, tools, accountability, incentives, etc.) to unlock the blockages and foster joined-up approaches. He highlighted key elements of the NWOW, including the call for more coherent, joint analysis, possible in most contexts; the need to look at more joined-up and aligned planning (dependent on context), with the SDGs as the broader framework, and looking to multi-year collective outcomes. He suggested that UNDAFs and HRPs must be able to speak to each other. Country-level leadership must be empowered to move the agenda forward, and given the required support; support teams/people ‘multilingual’ in the logic and culture of diverse systems, should be developed[[2]](#footnote-2); context-specific coordination architecture must be fit for purpose including to foster coherence where relevant; and there remains a need for better integrated financing instruments, and to build donor support for them to resolve their internal architectural silos between traditional funding streams. The Copenhagen meeting on the NWoW, organised by Denmark, OCHA, UNDP and the World Bank in March 2017 further raised the profile of this agenda, with further meetings planned in the margins of the April World Bank Spring Meeting, and in Turkey in May, to maintain the political momentum.

In discussion, participants noted the importance of focusing on what is happening at country level, better communicating what the NWOW means, the role of the NGO community, and achieving greater clarity on the relationship with the humanitarian element. Clarity was sought on roles and responsibilities in providing field support to the NWOW (IASC TT, also with its collaboration with the UNDG; EDG; UNDP/OCHA; STAIT), the current lack of clarity leading to some level of confusion at field level. Some noted that issues such as budgetary siloes required high-level institutional, rather than country, solutions, and reinforced the critical role of States, as well as donors, in the discussion. At the same time, multi-disciplinary approaches were welcomed, and the need to be open to experimentation and potential to change, stepping out of the strait-jacket of one year planning and financing, and to explicitly give RC/HCs the space to define their context-specific way forward. Given the shortage of time to discuss in the meeting, the WG did not feel able to provide the required guidance to the Task Team. It was felt the relationship with the peace agenda remained unclear and required further unpacking as it appeared to divide the group, but a lack of clarity on the drivers for these, and continuation of the Task Team (beyond the March 2018) would have to be dependent on a clear tasking. In this context, a more robust discussion at a later date was recommended.

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to schedule an ad-hoc IASC WG dedicated discussion on the New Way of Working and the challenges at field, HQ and capital levels to provide the Task Team on the Humanitarian-Development and Peace Nexus with concrete guidance on their time-bound tasks. In preparation, requested the TT to review their background paper and increase the clarity of their request, as well as reach out to RC/HCs with the objective of clarifying gaps and required guidance***. For Action: IASC secretariat and TT on HDN by end of May 2017.***

1. **Strengthening Communication for the IASC through Social Media**

***Ursula Mueller, Chair of the IASC WG and*** ***DERC*** facilitated a conversation with the WG on the opportunities for strengthening the voice and advocacy of the IASC through more collaborative use of social media. She noted that, building on the key role played by the WG in strengthening the IASC’s collective voice, more systematic engagement on and reflection of key messaging and products could highlight, and act as a multiplier, for the considerable advocacy, work and impact of IASC partners individually and collectively, in support of effective humanitarian assistance. Some recent, positive collaboration was noted within the UN Communications Group on common messaging around the ‘Four Famines’, intended to sound the alarm, motivate donors, communicate the humanitarian impact, secure unimpeded access, and foster stronger alignment between humanitarian and development actors. Strengthened collaborative social media engagement and content creation would also increase understanding of what the IASC is and does, develop its ‘brand’, and highlight the work of the IASC members, as had been emphasised as essential during earlier discussion. By building on already existing and completed content and providing it with enhanced platform for collaboration, value would be added with minimal additional costs or capacity. The IASC already does this to some extent, including through its existing Facebook and Twitter platforms, links to its website, and in its Newsletters, while many other organisations have actively enhanced their presence and engagement on social media.

In discussion, WG participants noted previous efforts on ‘branding the IASC’, attempts to project an image of togetherness and impact, and the limited success of this initiative. While creating an ‘IASC brand’ and targeting specific audiences may be challenging at the higher level, there was recognition of the need for better and more consistent communication and information-exchange on the IASC, and the opportunities to leverage each other’s websites, communication groups and amplify existing work and content. Noting that even minimal engagement on this can be resource-intensive and require dedicated staff, WG recommended ‘starting small’, being realistic about the level of visibility that can be achieved, and avoid creating Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs).

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to include IASC members logos on all its various social media platforms, including hyperlinks, and a collaborative approach to amplify existing messaging and content of IASC partners through these social media platforms. **Action by**: IASC secretariat, to engage with IASC Focal Points.

1. **Any Other Business and Closing Remarks**

***Ms. Ursula Mueller, Chair of the IASC WG and*** ***DERC*** advised participants of the **update on the roll-out and implementation of the IASC Protection Policy** provided by the GPC and shared with the background documents, in accordance with the agreement that the GPC share regular updates on its work on this. She also highlighted the **update provided on the Grand Bargain** by the GB Secretariat, which is now hosted by the IASC secretariat. The Chair indicated that previous **Action Points** would be shared with the IASC Working Group members with the Draft Summary Record for their feedback. She noted that, in future, a new feature on the IASC website will facilitate monitoring of Action Points endorsed by the Principals and Working Group, providing access to up-to-date information on the status of implementation of action points by IASC organizations.

***Mr. Neil Marsland,* updated the IASC WG on development of Inter-Agency El Nino Southern Oscillation Standard Operating Procedures (ENSO SOPs).** Following the 2015/16 El Nino event, a group of UN agencies and NGO partners have come together to work on a framework outlining how inter-agency partners can better coordinate and act earlier to such events in the future. Work has progressed with its scope and audience recently re-defined, and with the revised SOP concept recently presented within the IASC Reference Group on Early Warning Early Action and receiving positive feedback. In the revised outline, the target audience for the ENSO SOPs is IASC partners and relevant development agencies at global, regional and national level, with the key objective being to provide a practical and structured framework, to be endorsed by the IASC Principals, for the initiation of early actions to mitigate the humanitarian and development impacts of extreme weather caused by ENSO events. He noted that work on finalizing the SOPs is very timely in view of the latest ENSO forecasts which show a 50-70% probability of an ENSO event developing in the second half of 2017. Redrafting is now underway in line with the revised concept, wide consultation will take place in May/June, before sharing with the WG for input and endorsement, and further submission to IASC Principals (proposed for September). Given different perspectives on how detailed the SoPs should be, the emphasis is on ensuring that they are kept relatively focused for now, with the potential to be further expanded later if required.

Given the possibility of an ENSO event, a Global Analytical Cell, including RG members, additional NGOs, WMO and the START network, has already been established, and will next meet on 21 April, to analyse 2017 El Nino forecasts and the regions/countries most likely to be affected. In parallel to the finalization of the SOP document, the aim is therefore to already activate the first phase of the SOPs, pertaining to global coordination and information sharing, in the coming weeks and to start to engage with donors for critical early resource mobilization. The latter may need concerted advocacy, given donor reluctance to fund early action/prevention, despite recognized advantages of doing so. In discussion, IASC WG members welcomed the initiative to act early, and the engagement with the Reference Group in developing the SoPs. The WG recommended broader engagement horizontally and vertically, with national and regional actors/bodies, and on integrating protection in the response. The WG also commended the positive role of the El Nino Special Envoys in 2016.

**The Working Group:**

* Agreed to support the IASC secretariat in monitoring and updating this Action Point monitoring tool. ***Action by: IASC Focal Points (by end of May 2017).***
* Circulate outstanding and in progress Action Points for feedback to the WG, together with the summary record. ***Action by: IASC secretariat (by end of April 2017).***

1. UNFPA, IOM, IFRC, WFP, SCHR, World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, IASC secretariat (observer). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNDP has developed the People Pipeline Initiative. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)