

## Notes of 2018 IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team Retreat

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<b>Date:</b>	24 and 25 January 2018
<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Melissa Pitotti (ICVA), Lisa Doughten (OCHA)
<b>Facilitator:</b>	Sheilagh Henry (OCHA)
<b>Location:</b>	Hotel Novotel, 19 rue de Zürich, Geneva, Switzerland
<b>Host:</b>	WFP

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### Agenda

1. HFTT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES
2. SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GRAND BARGAIN FACILITATION GROUP
3. SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GHD
4. REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS MADE ON 2016/2017 HFTT WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES
5. FORMULATION OF 2018/2019 HFTT WORK PLAN

## SUMMARY

The 2018 IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT) retreat took place in Geneva on 24 and 25 January 2018. The retreat had broad attendance of over 50 participants representing 7 NGOs, ICVA, 12 UN agencies, ICRC, IFRC, GB secretariat and the World Bank. The main objective of the retreat was to develop 2018/2019 HFTT work plan, which was fully achieved. The first draft of the work plan is currently under revision and will be finalized during HFTT meetings in February and March. The retreat also included sessions with GHD donors and with the technical members of the GB facilitation group. The information provided by GHD and GB served as input to the development of HFTT work plan ensuring complementarity between the groups.

## HFTT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The HFTT co-sponsor Gordana Jerger (WFP) briefed the group on key developments in the IASC. There was recently a meeting of co-chairs and co-sponsors of all task teams and reference groups. The HFTT was identified as one of the most active groups and humanitarian financing was recognised as one of Principals' priorities. It was recommended that HFTT enhances synergies with task teams on humanitarian development nexus and on principled humanitarian action.

There were two meetings of the Principals recently and a clear need was identified to develop a new system of classifying emergencies (replacing L-3 system). John Ging and Rudi Muller of OCHA were tasked to review the system and present a proposal by 31 May.

Several other key issues were underscored such as the need for better data, stronger coordination with parliamentarians, more collaboration with the private sector and strengthened efforts towards achieving Grand Bargain commitments.

As for the structural changes in the IASC, the Working Group will be reviewed by April, the Principals agreed to establish an informal deputies' forum, and the SG will establish an executive committee.

The director a.i. of OCHA Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilisation Division Lisa Doughten briefed the group on OCHA's new structure and the creation of the financing division. The new division clusters all humanitarian financing functions of OCHA under one roof. It will include Pooled Funds management branch based in New York and Resource Mobilisation branch based in Geneva. The division will also include the new Humanitarian Financing Strategy and Analysis section, which is currently under development.

Having led HFTT for over three years, the two co-chairs opened the chairmanship of the group for expressions of interests. Initially three candidates expressed interest: UNICEF, OCHA and UN-Women, however later UN-Women withdrew the application. On the NGOs side, several NGOs encouraged ICVA to continue playing the role of HFTT co-chair and ICVA agreed to continue this function.

Consequently, the UN co-chairmanship was put to the vote. The voting was however inconclusive because UNICEF and OCHA received equal number of votes. It was then agreed to refer to the IASC secretariat for decision.

**Action Points:**

1. HFTT to enhance synergies with task teams on humanitarian development nexus and on principled humanitarian action
2. IASC secretariat to revert to HFTT on the selection of new co-chair

## SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GRAND BARGAIN FACILITATION GROUP

The Grand Bargain facilitation group was represented by the following technical members: Lindsay Hamsik (Interaction), Hiroko Araki (UNHCR), Marie Schirrmeister (Germany), Elena Garagorri-Atristain (ICRC) and Antoine Gerard (OCHA). The members briefed the group on quid pro quo approach and the need to communicate better on GB achievements. It is very challenging to have an aggregate picture of the status of GB implementation. It is expected that the GB communication will improve with expanded GB secretariat.

They also emphasised that the GB, though important, will not close the funding gap. Out of additional USD 15 billion needed for humanitarian action worldwide, perhaps \$1 billion could be saved through the Grand Bargain.

There was a meeting of the co-conveners of all GB workstreams on 23 January and key issues of importance to HFTT were discussed. These issues are earmarking, multi-year funding, localisation, transparency and humanitarian development nexus. The need was identified for clear definitions, data and information on earmarking, multi-year funding and transparency. HFTT, being a group of practitioners, could provide valuable inputs in these areas that would support decision taking.

Another important area discussed in the meeting of co-convenors was the humanitarian development nexus. The GB needs inputs from HFTT on the financing aspects of the nexus.

The two groups agreed that there is too little communication and cooperation between the GB and HFTT. The GB would like to see the work supporting the GB commitments being reflected in HFTT work plan. Participants agreed that there should be frequent meetings of co-conveners of the GB workstreams and HFTT activity leads on specific issues.

The HFTT inquired about GB work with regards to innovations. The GB technical members explained that the GB should focus on change processes and going into innovative financing could possibly undermine its focus. Innovative financing should therefore be taken forward by other forums.

HFTT also inquired if there are plans to merge GB workstreams into a package of transformative changes and apply it at country-level. The GB technical members explained that it is being discussed and that the goal is to make changes at country level but unless headquarters change, the field will not change.

### Action Points:

3. Include activities supporting GB workstreams on earmarking, multi-year funding, localisation, transparency and humanitarian development nexus in the 2018/2019 HFTT work plan
4. Consider developing specific activities aiming at provision of definitions, data and information on earmarking, multi-year funding and transparency
5. Ensure that frequent technical meetings take place between HFTT activity leads and GB workstream leads on issues of intersection between the two groups

## SESSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE GHD

The GHD was represented by Catherine Gill (Australia), Thomas Weithöner (Germany), Hong-Won Yu (Canada) and Dylan Winder (United Kingdom). The GHD briefed the group, as agreed previously with the HFTT secretariat, on GHD work on localisation, multi-year funding and reporting. GHD expressed readiness to also brief on key issues discussed in GHD with regards to the humanitarian development nexus or other areas of interest. However, due to the time limit of this session and highly technical nature of humanitarian development nexus discussion, it would be better to organise a separate meeting on this subject.

The GHD briefed that their key objective with regards to the multi-year funding is the exchange of information, experiences and best practices between donors. There is still a lack of clarity and evidence on the extent of the value added of multi-year funding. HFTT could provide valuable inputs on this field.

The GHD is also considering the principles of localisation and what are their implications on donors. The GHD workstream plans to compile best donor practices on localisation. The workstream explores the mechanisms allowing for providing more funding directly to local and national actors; the quality of partnerships; and the question on how different organisations approach capacity development.

The GHD endorsed the definitions developed by HFTT and GB workstream. Looking ahead, the GHD needs to work on more buy-in from emerging donors and needs more voices from global south. The GHD recognises that localisation can mean working directly with and supporting leadership by local authorities (national and sub-national) and in that way can go beyond the GB definition of localisation in terms of recipient – donor relations.

The GHD is also working on simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements. The GHD did a survey on reporting and suggested that restrictive donor conditions may not be the correct term because a large part of actual reporting is not triggered by donors for legal reasons or due diligence and accountability purposes. Reporting is used by organisations for many other reasons such as coordination (UN with partners), advocacy, program management (internal oversight) and resource mobilization. It needs to be recognised what requirements are donor driven and what requirements are agency driven. Question also remains which of these requirements can be satisfied with one harmonized reporting template.

In addition to reporting requirements, some GHD donors continue to be interested in development work on common indicators. (UK and US push for results-based performance through indicators to design, monitor and reward results.) Donors would also like UN agencies to report to FTS grants they provide to implementing organizations at the local level (“downstream”).

HFTT inquired if there are any opportunities to discuss the financial reporting. GHD offered that a separate meeting could be organised on it, but reflected that some donors are currently not very flexible on harmonized financial reporting because of strictly binding legal requirements.

HFTT members also inquired how far parliaments in donor countries are informed on donor plans of making changes towards meeting the GB commitments.

GHD explained that they represent governments but also engage with Parliaments and domestic authorities. They must use sophisticated arguments to convince their domestic bodies of what additionality for instance multi-year funding or less earmarking will buy. Direct engagement from international organisations with Parliaments and communities can be helpful in building the case for humanitarian assistance and flexible financing.

For instance, the public in some countries are sceptical about the value of humanitarian aid. It is critical that donors can demonstrate the value added of humanitarian assistance to the public in their countries.

The UK representative briefed that collectively, the donors agree that the case for the use of cash in humanitarian action is made. It is one of many tools and it can be very important. Worldwide only about 7 per cent of humanitarian assistance is delivered in cash, while the UK believes that this figure could be as high as 40 per cent.

The GHD and HFTT members recognised that it is important to operationalise interaction on regular basis on specific fields between GHD and HFTT. The workstream leads in GHD should be in continuous contact with HFTT co-leads.

#### **Action Points:**

6. Ensure that ad hoc technical meetings take place between HFTT activity leads and GHD workstream leads on topics of mutual interest, such as multi-year funding, localisation, reporting requirements, transparency and humanitarian development nexus
7. Explore GHD recommendation that UN agencies should report to FTS data on grants to implementing partners

## **REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS MADE ON 2016/2017 HFTT WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES**

Each activity lead briefed on the progress made so far towards the achievement of 2016/2017 HFTT work plan. The briefings were followed by the plenary discussion on which activities are completed and which activities should be carried forward to the 2018/2019 work plan. The key points on the progress made so far have been reflected in the [2016/2017 HFTT Progress Report](#) published after the retreat.

## FORMULATION OF 2018/2019 HFTT WORK PLAN

Following the progress reports, the HFTT discussed in plenary the formulation of 2018/2019 outputs. The group agreed to split the former output 1 “Adequate humanitarian financing, which is context appropriate and accessible to operational organisations on the ground” into two outputs. First will focus on concerted action towards bridging the funding gap. And second will focus on effectiveness, efficiency and accessibility of humanitarian funding. The group agreed that the work on the remaining three outputs should continue, however outputs were modified to reflect current thinking on HFTT priorities.

Once the outputs were formulated, retreat participants split into five groups to formulate specific activities within each output. Proposed activities were then refined through plenary discussions. Upon the completion of the retreat, the HFTT secretariat compiled the first draft of the 2018/2019 work plan and shared it with HFTT members for review. The work plan will be finalised through HFTT meetings in February and March 2018.

### Action Points:

8. Activity leads to organize consultations on specific activities and provide inputs towards the finalization of the 2018/2019 work plan

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