

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING

Draft Summary Record

4 December 2017

Host: WHO

Health Epidemics Simulation

The session focused on validating the IASC system-wide activation procedures for an infectious disease event adopted by the IASC Principals in December 2016. As part of the simulation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator supported by the Director General of the World Health Organization led a discussion to consider recommendations of the Emergency Directors Group in response to a health outbreak in an anonymous country with global repercussions. Principals focused on activation of an IASC System-Wide L3 Response and appropriate in-country coordination mechanisms; clusters to be activated; appointment of key leadership at country and regional-levels; and identification of funding sources

1.2 Principals underscored the importance of ensuring the right leadership profile, taking into consideration technical, organizational and communication skills, experience in public health and humanitarian emergencies and consideration of existing candidates in the Humanitarian Coordinators pool. Principals agreed that the Emergency Relief Coordinator in consultation with the WHO Director General should select the Humanitarian Coordinator. In cases where the appointment of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator giving priority consideration to those already holding leadership posts in the countries concerned is deemed appropriate, Principals emphasized the importance of clear delineation of roles and definition of accountability line from the onset. Principals highlighted the need to diversify funding sources and proactive messaging in this regard, including use of existing funding mechanisms dedicated to preparedness and prevention including the CERF, as well as the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility, and a replenished WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies, noting the need to take into consideration, funding of local actors. Principals also underscored the importance of proactive collective communication during an outbreak and central role of WHO in this regard. WHO noted it was taking steps to strengthen its data collection and information sharing capacity. Principals recommended a nuanced flexible approach to cluster activation, noting the required specificities during a global health crisis. They pointed out cluster activation should be minimised, strategic and ensure strong linkages with the health pillars.

1.3 The IASC Principals agreed to:

1. Review the IASC system-wide activation procedures for an infectious disease event to ensure they are fit for a multi-country response, and to clarify the IMS/health pillar-cluster interface, with clear delineation of roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines. **Action by: WHO, Emergency Directors Group (May 2018)**

2. Map and explore measures to strengthen the global pool of emergency preparedness and response capacity deployable also for health crises, including through close collaboration with governments and donors. **Action by: WHO and IASC secretariat in consultation with Principals (May 2018)**

3. Consult with the CERF secretariat to establish, whether CERF funding allows for flexible deployment to support response to a health outbreak and measures that could be taken to guarantee such flexibility if required. **Action by: Emergency Relief Coordinator in consultation with WHO**

IASC Structures beneath the Principals

2.1 The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (DERC) emphasized that ensuring IASC structures are streamlined, with the understanding that ‘form follows function,’ with clear direction, priorities and enhanced interlinkages, is a common goal for all. The DERC proposed the establishment of an IASC Deputies Forum at ASG or equivalent level including NGO and ICRC/IFRC members. The idea is not to propose a new bureaucratic structure or institute new decision-making systems, but rather to create an informal mechanism that allows for a real-time sharing of agendas and information and addressing issues of common interest, including in relation to issues on the agendas of the new structures created by the Secretary General, i.e. the Executive Committee, the Deputies Committee and the Steering Committee to advance Humanitarian-Development Collaboration. The Deputies Forum would support IASC Principals’ strategic decision making. It would support strengthening the flow of information thus enabling a stronger IASC voice in these new structures on issues and contexts that directly concern humanitarian stakeholders. The DERC noted that while influencing the reform agenda it was important to protect humanitarian space and maintain IASC independence. The DERC recommended that the Deputies Forum is established as an informal ad hoc structure.

2.2 The DERC furthermore proposed to develop and strengthen strategic partnerships with donors in support of effective humanitarian action, engaging with donors on key operational issues where their support is required and/or strengthen advocacy and resource mobilization. Concretely, she proposed a closer exchange between the Deputies Forum and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), as an inclusive group of donors, which is based on clear principles.

2.3 Lastly, the DERC noted the necessity to ensure that an adequate number of IASC Subsidiary Bodies are effective, purpose-driven and undertake time-bound activities in support of IASC priorities and tasked by Principals.

2.4 Principals expressed their support for the establishment of the Deputies Forum as an informal structure for sharing strategic information, noting that the intention was not to create new decision-making structures. They emphasised the need for an empowered IASC secretariat including speeding up the process of combining the current IASC and EDG secretariats to provide more joined-up support through a single secretariat servicing the IASC Principals, Deputies Forum, Working Group and Emergency Directors Group.

2.5 Principals also welcomed developing a strategic dialogue with donors, and endorsed the DERC’s proposal for a closer exchange between the IASC and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), through the Deputies Forum. Some Principals expressed reservations vis-à-vis limiting the number of

Subsidiary Bodies. They noted that those which are effective should be retained if not strengthened. On the way forward regarding the outstanding joint WG-EDG meeting , the Principals propose to hold a combined IASC Working Group/Emergency Directors Group meeting on IDPs, chaired by the DERC.

2.5 The IASC Principals agreed to:

1. Set up the Deputies Forum as described in paragraph 2.1 above, and in conformity with the points summarised in paragraph 2.4. **Action by: Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by the IASC Secretariat.**
2. The Deputies Forum to review the Terms of Reference of the IASC Working Group and propose to IASC Principals a way forward on activities of the Working Group. **Action by: Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by the IASC Secretariat, with the Deputies Forum by May 2018.**
3. The Deputies Forum to review the Subsidiary Bodies below the Working Group and to propose to IASC Principals a way forward. **Action by: Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by the IASC Secretariat, with the Deputies Forum by May 2018.**
4. Take forward joint EDG-WG meeting. **Action by: Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by IASC Secretariat.**

Any Other Business

- The next regular IASC Principals meeting to take place on 31 May 2018.