

IASC TASK TEAM ON STRENGTHENING THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS IN PROTRACTED SETTINGS

Summary Report on Informal Bilateral Meetings with Task Team Members

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Purpose:

The following summary is drawn from a series of informal bilateral meetings with members of the IASC Task Team on strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus in protracted settings. The aim of these meetings was to get a focused sense of each agency's priorities on implementing work within the Nexus and the New Way of Working considering also the intersection with the Sustaining Peace Agenda and how the Task Team can serve as a collective platform for the work ahead in 2017. The substance that follows is not attributed to any specific agency, but captures the general impressions of the task team membership (i.e. FAO, ICVA, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WBG, WFP, WHO¹).

Main outcomes:

- As the global, regional, and country level discussions on the new way of working and how to implement it picks up steam, it is important now more than ever to have a common and shared narrative that outlines one view of what it means in practice. In this regard, activities under Output 7² of the joint Plan of Action of the IASC HDN TT/ Working Group on Transitions were seen by most agencies to be of utmost priority.
- While the discussions in the Task Team are interesting and bring to light some of the important issues in our understanding of the NWOW and the humanitarian development nexus, the TT must ensure that this thinking is discussed, endorsed, and has the backing at the Working Group and Principals level.
- The approach to implementing the new way of working should be demand driven, and coordinated. While it is expected that agencies will move forward corporately, the new way of working will only succeed if it is rolled out in a coherent manner across the system. In this sense, the TT should play an active role in being a repository for both organizational activities as well as inter-agency ones. A shared website was proposed.
- It is increasingly clear that through discussions at field level that implementation will need to be backed up with guidance when appropriate. For some agencies, the current guidance on humanitarian response represents the "old way of working".
- In the development and peace/security pillars, the UNDAF and the IAP respectively are now at varying stages of review or revision. While new humanitarian guidance informed by early promising lessons is not quite necessary at this early stage, it should certainly be envisioned in the medium term. As for the UNDAF and the IAP, the TT should seek to be involved in the development of these documents, not simply react and comment on them once they are circulated.

¹ Red denotes agencies with whom the co-chairs are yet to have an informal bilateral meeting with.

² Shared communication narrative on the need for strengthening collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace communities developed.

- At the same time it was felt that adapting both humanitarian and development guidance is the first phase of what should be more integrated guidance on the nexus. There are a set of issues of programmatic and structural nature, that fall in a 'missing middle' between the two sectors. The TT should position itself as a forum to discuss the need for guidance and frameworks that guide cross sector action in transition, recovery, and stabilization, building on the efforts made under Early Recovery.
- It was also felt that the peace pillar and how the humanitarian-development pillars interact with it needs to be approached very carefully. The two sustaining peace resolutions are very ambitious and gives greater scope for UN agencies funds and programmes to actively engage in peacebuilding. Some agencies expressed reservations about the extent to which this is practically possible.

One only needs to look at the recent and increasing attacks on health care workers and humanitarian convoys to understand that bringing humanitarian actors into the sometimes explicit political realms, needs to be approached extremely delicately.

Some agencies expressed the need to make a distinction in approach regarding the 'peace' dimension of the New Way of Working. It was proposed by a few agencies, that the IASC HDN TT focus on *implementing* the actions required strengthening humanitarian-development nexus, while articulating how that nexus can *contribute* to the sustaining peace. This will require clearly outlining how the step changes envisioned in the HDN relate to reducing root causes, human rights, prevention, and mitigating the consequences of discrimination, marginalization,

- In terms of the membership of the TT, there needs to be greater participation and contribution from NGOs and the consortia that represent them. It makes little sense to discuss and refine the NWOW, without this important voice.
- Likewise it was felt that the World Bank is well place to contribute and shape the discussions around the humanitarian and development nexus. At the very least, agencies asked the co-chairs to create structural linkages with the UN-EU-World Bank partnership mechanisms.

In addition to these linkages, the TT must actively look to provide substantive input into the EU-WB processes related to the humanitarian development nexus. The members of the IASC need greater say in the programmatic implications of the process. One avenue to explore could be for the TT to serve as a help desk at the proposal stage, to help countries frame the content of the requests.

- Linked to this, some agencies felt that the financing aspect of the new way of working needs greater attention. There has been some thinking around normative and technical support to country teams, but this rarely includes helping them understand and map the financial flows in-country and how best leadership can leverage these funding sources in support of achieving collective outcomes.
- For all agencies, it was clear that implementation and country support needs to be the priority for 2017. While agencies will invariably have different country focusses (some mentioned for example include, South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania), it was clear than some countries could be supported jointly.

- The workstreams around the new way of working and the humanitarian development nexus are sprawling and every widening. For 2017, the TT's workplan will need to be revised to have explicit links with other forums working on the subject, as well as clear deliverables linked to events and processes the TT wishes to influence.
- To this end, some agencies volunteered to draft generic terms of reference, and agreed that where corporate or sector specific missions were undertaken, the TT would be briefed of findings and relevant outcomes.

Conclusion:

Activities of the HDN TT planned for 2017 should

- a) centre on **developing a common understanding of the new way of working and how sustaining peace fits into the humanitarian development nexus;**
- b), **developing joint terms of reference and identifying 2 or 3 countries to support, and**
- c) **establishing a mechanism for systematically learning from these activities as well as agency specific missions.**

These priorities areas should at the very least be endorsed and supported by the Working Group, if not by the Principals themselves it is held. Further, it has been suggested that the TT requests the WG a name change to: *The IASC Task Team on the New Way of Working*.

Next Steps:

- **Co-chairs to report back to the TT on the findings presented in this document**
- **Reflect agency priorities in revised workplan and in draft shared narrative**
- **Present zero drafts of shared narrative, key messages, and generic ToRs for country support, jointly developed with the UNWGT**
- **Convene next meeting TT to discuss the above, and linkages to Working Group and Principals**