
IASC Results Group 5 - Humanitarian Financing

19 May 2020

Summary Record

IASC Results Group 5 on Humanitarian Financing met on 19 May 2020 to discuss (i) the upcoming OPAG session on humanitarian financing; (ii) proposals for a harmonized approach to funding flexibility in the context of COVID-19; (iii) proposals to address the inconsistency in unlocking and disbursing funds to NGOs further the IASC Principals' request; (iv) the upcoming meeting between the IASC Principals and the GHD co-Chairs; and (v) a brief update from ongoing workstreams.

The below captures action points agreed upon and a brief summary.

Action Points

- Co-Chairs to share draft inputs for the OPAG session on “donor conditionalities/flexibility and reporting in light of COVID-19” with members for feedback.
- IASC secretariat to arrange a meeting of all Results Groups co-Chairs to better leverage connections across different Results Groups.
- Co-Chairs to connect with Results Groups 1 and 4 to coordinate messaging for the relevant OPAG meetings.
- Co-Chairs to share with members the finalized *Proposal for a Harmonized Approach to Funding Flexibility in the Context of COVID-19* for the sign-off by the Group.
- Co-Chairs to submit the *Proposals to Address the Inconsistency in Unlocking and Disbursing Funds to NGOs in COVID-19* to the Principals to inform their meeting on 21 May.
- ICVA to arrange, in consultation with the localization sub-group, a webinar ahead of the next GHRP update as outlined in the *Proposals to Address the Inconsistency in Unlocking and Disbursing Funds to NGOs in COVID-19*.
- OCHA to arrange a session with FTS colleagues at the next meeting.

UPCOMING OPAG MEETING

Co-Chairs briefed that, in light of current events surrounding COVID-19, the face-to-face OPAG meeting originally scheduled for 28-29 May would be replaced by a series of five virtual sessions. Each of the five sessions will focus on COVID-19 issues, including those specifically tasked to the OPAG/RGs by the IASC Principals. Colleagues spearheading this critical work in the respective Results Groups will be invited together with respective co-Chairs to present the issue and progress made to date. Results Group 5 will be presenting on 4 June in the following two sessions: (i) Donor conditionalities/flexibility and reporting in light of COVID-19; and (ii) Progress update of Results Group 5. Co-Chairs will share draft inputs for the substantive session with members for feedback.

CAFOD suggested aligning the messages for the OPAG substantive session with the *IASC Interim Guidance on Localization and the COVID-19 Response* under development by Results Group 1, while Oxfam proposed liaising with Results Group 4 to contribute financing angles to its OPAG session on linkages between the GHRP, SPRP and the socio-economic plan. Co-Chairs agreed on the need to better connect with other Results Groups on cross-cutting issues. While the upcoming OPAG sessions can provide a good opportunity for such collaboration, they noted the utility of having a separate meeting of all Results Groups co-Chairs to better leverage possible connections.

CAFOD further highlighted the importance of bringing the voices of national and local NGOs into the localization discussion at the OPAG. Co-Chairs noted that several national NGO representatives are sitting in the OPAG, with whom Results Group 5 could connect prior to the meeting to empower their voices.

PROPOSAL FOR A HARMONIZED APPROACH TO FUNDING FLEXIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Co-Chairs thanked members for further comments to the *Proposal for a Harmonized Approach to Funding Flexibility in the Context of COVID-19*, which will be extensively incorporated into the final draft. Co-Chairs will soon share the final draft for the sign-off by members. Key comments included an ask to clearly limit the commitments to the COVID-19 response, while an assessment will be conducted by end of 2020 to see what might convert into a long-term implementation. Challenges were also noted with regard to the language around the “blanket approach” of no-cost extension, which required further thinking to balance pushing beyond the status quo and being realistic. Several recognized the need to further discuss the commitment to “cost classification and recovery”, which will be carried forward by a sub-group to be formed, taking into account different cost scales of national NGOs and donors’ inconsistency.

Co-Chairs highlighted the need to continue reinforcing good linkages with donors all the way through the system, while continuing efforts among the IASC partners regardless of the advance on the donor side. Co-Chairs reminded that the proposal was being developed as a follow-up to the *Key Messages on Flexible Funding for Humanitarian Response and COVID-19* and, once finalized, would be submitted to the OPAG and onward to the Principals.

PROPOSALS TO ADDRESS THE INCONSISTENCY IN UNLOCKING AND DISBURSING FUNDS TO NGOS IN COVID-19 RESPONSE

Co-Chairs thanked Save the Children, CAFOD, NRC, UNHCR, OCHA and UNICEF for drafting the *Proposals to Address the Inconsistency in Unlocking and Disbursing Funds to NGOs in COVID-19 Response*, as a follow up to the Principals request. Save the Children thanked members for inputs and contributions and briefed on the four proposals captured in the paper: (i) Step-up efforts to engage NGOs in country-level HRP and related processes; (ii) Capitalize on pooled fund mechanisms and consider opportunities for further effectiveness and efficiency gains to improve funding to NGOs; (iii) Increase funding to NGOs via UN agencies; and (iv) Ensure timely and disaggregated reporting of funding flows from UN agencies to NGOs.

CAFOD suggested arranging webinars at regional/sub-regional level to inform national NGOs ahead of each GHRP update, as a practical follow-up action to the first proposal. ICVA and UNICEF expressed support for this initiative. ICVA noted the need to further define what type of presentation to deliver, whom to engage with, and what existing models to take as a reference. ICVA suggested arranging at least one webinar before the next GHRP update and incorporating the outcomes of the upcoming Principals discussion to refine a way forward. The localization subgroup was invited to contribute to this initiative. UNFPA welcomed this initiative as an opportunity to gather broader evidence as to the imperativeness of the four proposals.

UNICEF stressed the need to encourage NGOs to report to the FTS to have a holistic picture, to which OCHA proposed a session with FTS colleagues in the next meeting to exchange concerns and practical solutions, including possible collaboration around the fourth proposal on tracking. It was also noted that connecting with the FTS team could be a channel for Results Group 5 to provide inputs on the financing section during the GHRP revision process.

OCHA shared that a number of options under the OCHA pooled funds were being discussed internally and with the ERC to expand the funds to NGOs, with further details to be shared soon. UNHCR suggested spelling out the definition of the pass-through funds in the proposals, as it may bear different meanings to different audiences.

Co-Chairs suggested updating the Proposals based on the additional feedback received at the meeting and share it with the Principals to inform their meeting on 21 May. Their suggestions will be incorporated into the final texts.

GHD-IASC PRINCIPALS MEETING

Co-Chairs shared that a meeting between the IASC Principals and GHD co-Chairs (ECHO and Switzerland) would take place on 5 June. While agenda items are under discussion, the focus is likely to be on flexible and unearmarked funding in light of COVID-19.

BRIEF UPDATE ON ONGOING WORKSTREAMS

DI shared that a catalogue identifying **funding and financing instruments for joint humanitarian development programming** would be finalized in the following week.

UNICEF briefed that the work around **providing a concrete business case for efficient and effective quality financing** is ongoing in collaboration with the Grand Bargain Workstream 7+8, with the final product to be shared with members the following week.

Co-Chairs will bilaterally reach out to the co-leads of various workstreams to touch base on the progress and prepare for the upcoming OPAG session as needed.
