
IASC Results Group 3 – Collective Advocacy
4 August 2020

Summary Record

IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy met on 4 August 2020 to discuss (i) COVID-related food crises common messages for OPAG consideration by WFP and FAO; (ii) an update on the Covid-19 protection advocacy messages by RG3 co-Chairs; (iii) World Humanitarian Day by OCHA; (iv) a debrief on the RG3 OPAG presentation by RG3 co-Chairs; (v) an update on COTER by RG3 co-Chairs; (vi) an update on climate change key messages by sub-group co-Chairs.

Action points:

1. RG 3 members to share comments on the RG3 food security key messages and RG3 climate change key messages in track changes by 7 August to alfirev@un.org.
2. RG3 co-Chairs to consider ways to take forward a political engagement strategy regarding food insecurity and cross-cutting issues jointly with WFP and FAO.
3. OCHA to report back on lessons learned regarding WHD at a future RG3 meeting, especially regarding the availability of adequate footage for films.

COVID-related food crises common messages for OPAG consideration by WFP and FAO

- Referring to the food security key messages developed for RG3, [Ms. Geeta Bandiphillips from WFP](#) noted that they built on the [hotspot analysis](#) prepared by WFP, FAO and the Global Network Against Food Crisis. The report had been presented to the IASC Principals the previous week.
- Highlights of the hotspot analysis and key messages: The number of acutely food insecure people may rise significantly from the already 135 million food insecure people in 2019. Twenty-seven countries may face hunger due to COVID; and government capacity is strained due to multiple economic shocks.
- In terms of a regional overview, food insecurity levels in the **Latin American and Caribbean** region are expected to rise by 269 per cent, resulting in the poverty rate expected to rise from 30 to 37 per cent, which is compounded by the fact that remittances are expected to decline by 19 per cent. In **East Africa**, food insecure hotspots are Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan, and the region is confronted with the worst locust outbreak in 25 years, as well as flooding in the spring of 2020. In **West and Central Africa**, the number of food insecure people could double to 56 million people. In **Southern Africa**, COVID-related containment measures hampered the food chain process from production to processing, transport and consumption. Up to 42 million people may require food assistance this year, compared to 26 million in 2019. In **the Middle East and North Africa region**, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq are of greatest concern. In **Asia**, Afghanistan and Bangladesh are on the food insecurity watch list.
- Overall, **pre-famine conditions in South Sudan and Yemen** are of greatest concern due to the devastating cross-cutting impacts of COVID-19. 'Famine' hasn't been used in advocacy messaging yet, in part for media-associated reasons. In this context, the Yemen COVID related fatality rate of 27 per cent (of confirmed cases in hospitals), which is the highest in the world, is all the more concerning. Regarding Yemen, UNFPA highlighted the interlinkages of food insecurity and other sectors, such as malnutrition, as UNFPA was addressing the needs of 1.1 million pregnant women facing severe malnutrition in Yemen.

- Ms. Justine Texier from FAO outlined the recommendations comprised in the key messages and the hotspot report, notably the need to maintain and scale up critical food assistance in existing crises; remain alert to emerging food insecurity hotspots; adjust programming, e.g. in terms of mobile money and e-vouchers, as well as in terms of physical distancing adjustments in the response; minimize interruptions in the food chain, including by supporting local food production and income opportunities; reach excluded groups in rural and urban areas, such as pastoral communities; address the disproportional impact the crisis may have on women and girls; ensure 'do no harm' by adapting interventions in the design phase to minimize social tensions; strengthen national protection and governance systems; and scale remote monitoring and assessment to facilitate evidence-based programming; invest in partnerships to ensure a consistent approach by all relevant stakeholders.
- Ms. Bandiphillips emphasized the funding challenges, especially because food security is not a sector that is prioritized in discussions. FAO commented that the agency had only received 10 per cent of the requested US\$428 million thus far. In response, RG3 co-Chair Ms. Arakaki recommended that emphasis be placed on the interlinkages of different sectors, rather than highlighting particular sectors.
- In the ensuing discussion, the RG3 co-Chair Ms. Shoko Arakaki noted that she had referenced the development of the food security key messages by RG3 during the recent Principals' discussion on this topic.
- UNHCR posed a question regarding the dimension of access with regard to the food security key messages; and suggested to also reference protection, as well as to target specific audiences in the key messages. In response, WFP noted that access was more prominently highlighted in the hotspot report, suggested that UNHCR send edits regarding the protection reference, and recommended that individual agencies adapt the messages for their target audiences.
- As for the target audiences, the RG3 co-Chair Mr. Anglade commented that the same comments had emerged during the discussion on the protection key messages, and that in that context, the target audiences would be considered during the advocacy strategy. The RG3 co-Chair Ms. Arakaki added that during the Principals' discussion, the focus was on Member States engagement, and that the ERC had offered to brief the Security Council if the food insecurity would affect the conflict dynamics. The RG3 co-chair Mr. Anglade added that the potential impact of food insecurity on conflict dynamics was also included in the key messages.
- WFP observed that approaching the Security Council via the [SCR 2417 \(2018\)](#) which condemned the starvation of civilians, and qualified the unlawful denial of humanitarian access as warfare tactics, was an option, yet that a consistent approach among partners would be important if such an advocacy approach was chosen. WFP also referred to the effectiveness of advocacy during the 2017 early warning system.

Covid-19 protection advocacy messages by RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG3 co-Chair Mr. Anglade and the IASC Secretariat noted that feedback from the OPAG members to the protection key messages initiated by the Global Protection Cluster had been integrated, and that they were to be submitted to the IASC Principals for endorsement.
- In response to WFP's reflection whether developments needed to be monitored regarding the possibility of food being used as a weapon of war, the RG3 co-Chairs referred to the respective normative framework, i.e. SCR 2417 and the recent [COVID-19 resolution](#) by the Security Council.

World Humanitarian Day (WHD) by OCHA

- Ms. Kirsten Mildren of OCHA highlighted that while OCHA was the custodian of WHD, the campaign drew on engagement by partner organizations and Member States. Traditionally, the WHD had three components: events,

media, including messages; and the campaign side. At the same time, WHD partnered with Humanitarian Outcomes on attacks against aid workers. Accordingly, 2019 was the year with the highest number of attacks observed thus far with over 500 attacks recorded, and Syria was the place where the greatest number was recorded. OCHA also partners with WHO on attacks against healthcare workers.

- The **2020 COVID-19 theme ‘real-life heroes’** focuses on issues faced by aid workers in the field, and the **key messages** shared with the RG3 before the meeting therefore highlighted access, funding and other challenges. The RG3 protection key messages had fed into the WHD key messages.
- The **film** may not end up being used given the feedback received, which related to challenges in finding available footage among IASC members on women in leadership roles and local organizations involved in the response.
- In the ensuing discussion, WHO emphasized that its Director General had expressed concern over attacks against health workers during COVID-19 multiple times, which seemed to be on the rise, including in countries not categorized as conflict contexts according to reports. RG3 co-Chair Ms. Arakaki commented that COVID had revealed that attacks against frontline workers occurred not exclusively in conflict settings.

Debrief on the RG3 OPAG presentation by RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG3 co-Chair Ms. Arakaki reported back to RG3 regarding the 9 July OPAG meeting, where the OPAG commended the RG3’s progress on its workplan; acknowledged the challenges relating to collective advocacy among member organizations, e.g. in terms of humanitarian diplomacy; and the importance of RG3 to be joined up with other RGs given overlapping workstreams.
- The RG3 co-Chair Mr. Anglade added that of the four RG3 workstreams, first, the COTER sub-group had a clear direction of travel given the 2019 IASC Principals meeting. Second, the RG3 encountered difficulties adding value to the humanitarian diplomacy already taken forward by individual organization in a fast-paced manner. In response, the OPAG suggested to be more closely engaged in the EDGs’ horizon scanning sessions. Third, the RG3 was working well around common messaging, including on climate change. Fourth, OPAG encouraged RG3 to finalize the study on armed non state actors.

Up-date on Counter-terrorism (COTER) and humanitarian action - RG3 co-Chairs

- In the absence of the sub-group co-Chairs, the RG3 co-Chair Mr. Anglade noted that at the 30 July sub-group meeting, InterAction presented on the evidence-building workstream, and outlined three initiatives: i) building a repository of existing reports relating to COTER; ii) developing a set of key recommendations to support consistent messaging on this issue; iii) developing a database to capture members’ reported incidents of when they are affected by a COTER measure. As for the third component, InterAction was in discussions with the IASC secretariat to establish such a database.

Up-date on climate change, humanitarian action and collective advocacy - RG3 sub-group co-Chairs

- The sub-group co-Chair Ms. Kirsten Mildren noted that the climate change key messages were part of the RG3’s workplan on developing common messages.
- In terms of process, RG3 members were commended to send comments by the end of the week, after which they were to be submitted to the OPAG.
- As for the utility of these messages, Ms. Mildren noted that September onwards a number of climate change events were being organized. The UN climate action taskforce is meeting every other month, and in this context

the humanitarian climate change messages are thus helpful to add a humanitarian angle in the run-up to the GA and other events.

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