

IASC Results Group 1 – Operational Response
26 January 2021
Summary Record

IASC Results Group 1 on Operational Response met on 26 January 2021 to discuss (i) progress in 2020 and priorities for 2021; (ii) RG1- Donor Engagement on Centrality of Protection, (iii) debrief from OPAG Meeting on Protection; (iv) progress updates by Localization and BAI sub-groups, and (v) any other business.

Action points:

1. CoP sub-group to provide robust inputs on the design of the survey and identification of protection priorities **[CoP sub-group]**
2. Provide relevant support to BAI sub-group to reinforce HC buy-in for the planned case studies in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Venezuela **[RG1 Co-Chairs and OCHA's Humanitarian Leadership Support Section]**
3. Share feedback on the upcoming localization guidance and whether to pursue global targets for indicators **[RG1 members]**
4. Share calendar invite for the upcoming RG1 meetings **[IASC secretariat]**

1. Progress in 2020 and Priorities for 2021

Mr. Rein Paulsen, RG1 co-chair, thanked RG1 members for their dedicated support throughout 2020. He acknowledged that RG1 sub-groups have not only delivered against some of their core deliverables but also responded to requirements of COVID-19 with agility generating a series of useful guidance notes and tools. He listed some of the outputs finalized by RG1 sub-groups including the ToRs of the IASC Protection Policy Review, a discussion paper on countering stigmatization for OPAG, interim guidance on localization and COVID-19 response, operational guidance on data responsibility, the update of the RC/HC handbook, and interim ERP guidance for COVID-19 response, among others. These outputs have influenced and informed various discussions and decision-making processes at the IASC level, a validation of the importance of RG1's work.

Mr. Paulsen noted that RG1 also went through a prioritization exercise following the Emergency Relief Coordinator's decision to extend IASC structures mandate until end 2021 and call for rationalization of priorities. As such, the Humanitarian Leadership, Data Responsibility and Early Warning Early Action sub-groups were no longer formally associated with RG1. Nevertheless, they continue to operate under individual agency leadership and RG1 co-chairs will continue to provide leadership and guidance, as needed.

Given the approaching IASC Principals' discussion on IASC structures in May 2021, Mr Paulsen noted the importance of delivering on key outputs as soon as possible and inform the Principals discussion in May 2021. In order for RG1 to position itself in the best way ahead of this meeting, sub-groups were requested to deliver on their top priorities before May and plan to complete other priorities by end October 2021 to provide sufficient time for endorsement processes. Finally, he called upon RG1 sub-groups to build in uptake and socialization elements into their work to achieve greater impact.

Ms. Jenny McAvoy, the Centrality of Protection sub-group co-chair, informed that it had two key priorities; commencement of the IASC Protection Policy Review, and development of agreed, specific and measurable Centrality of Protection in practice indicators. On the IASC Protection Policy Review, Ms. McAvoy noted that management and administrative arrangements will be in place in the first half of the year and underlined the importance of ensuring multisectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement for both the Policy Review and development Centrality of Protection in practice indicators. Finally, she called on sub-group members to take on larger roles and

noted initial thinking to plan for a strategic discussion on how the sub-group could further support Centrality of Protection once relevant processes on key priorities are up and running.

The Localization sub-group informed it has three key priorities for 2021, namely: i) development of IASC guidance on meaningful engagement of local organizations in coordination structures, ii) finalization of the framework for the engagement of local governments and humanitarian actors, and iii) selection and onboarding local and national NGOs to the sub-group as per the OPAG request from September 2020. The draft guidance on meaningful engagement of local actors in coordination structures is expected to be finalized by April while local and national NGO's selection and onboarding would be completed by end March 2021.

The Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments sub-group noted its key priority was to develop normative guidance on these impediments by utilizing the three case studies, which are currently under development.

2. RG1- Donor Engagement on Centrality of Protection

Mr. Rein Paulsen informed participants on the increased donor interest and engagement in RG1's work. The meeting was a useful opportunity to exchange views between the IASC and the donor community, reinforce efforts on Centrality of Protection, and explore regular dialogue opportunities to strengthen protection outcomes. The meeting was attended by RG1 co-chairs, CoP sub-group co-chairs, UNHCR, ProCap and the Global Protection Cluster. RG1 sought donor support on three areas; (1) financial contributions towards the IASC Protection Policy review, (2) meaningful engagement on the Review and the development of agreed, specific and measurable Centrality of Protection in practice indicators, and (3) regular dialogue on protection priorities. Mr. Paulsen noted that RG1 agreed to hold regular dialogue and consultations on the IASC Protection Policy Review and development of Centrality of Protection indicators, as well as specialized meetings on issues of joint interest including linkages between protection, humanitarian access/bureaucratic and administrative impediments.

Ms. Jenny McAvooy provided an overview of the key elements discussed in the donor meeting. Donors framed the discussion around opportunities for regular dialogue as duty bearers as well as a potential contribution to achieving protection through their diplomatic function going beyond financing protection. The CoP sub-group co-chairs focused their presentation to donors on three areas; (1) overview of IASC Protection Policy and perceived challenges to achieve protection outcomes, (2) development of Centrality of Protection indicators, and (3) the upcoming IASC Protection Policy Review. Some of the key themes raised in the discussion included the varying practices around how HCT protection strategies have been taken forward, different levels of prioritization and cultivating collective buy-in for protection by HCTs, issues around the distinction between HCT strategies and Protection cluster activities, the role of non-protection actors in HCT protection strategies, the need for integration of protection throughout the programme cycle, the need for a multidisciplinary approach to achieve protection outcomes, and integration of protection across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Some donors informed that they have started to integrate protection outcomes into their humanitarian strategies. Finally, they expressed interest further exploring linkages between protection and humanitarian access including on how their diplomatic capacities could further support protection outcomes.

In the ensuing discussion, members welcomed donor interest in RG1's work on Centrality of Protection going beyond humanitarian financing and including their role as duty bearers. Members discussed the importance of maintaining donor dialogue and cultivating donor support in humanitarian diplomacy as well as ensuring all HCT members support the achievement of protection outcomes. The linkages with the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action was also key as the IASC Protection Policy Review will soon be launched. It was agreed that RG1 would proactively engage with donors using the IASC Protection Policy Review and development of CoP indicators as entry points for regular dialogue.

3. Debrief from OPAG meeting on Protection

Mr. Julien Schopp, RG1 co-chair, noted that OPAG discussed protection issues on 21 January. The discussion consisted of two segments; (1) protection impact and response during the COVID-19 response, and (2) reinforcing protection across the IASC structures. UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and ICRC presented key trends around protection risks and threats in the first session while UNHCR discussed its revised proposal to elevate protection across IASC structures.

Mr. Sam Cheung, UNHCR, briefed members on the OPAG discussion. Mr. Cheung focused on UNHCR's revised proposal which went through a consultation process since it was first presented to OPAG in October 2020. The proposal had three key objectives; (i) elevate protection inclusively and dynamically across the system without creating new structures, (ii) capitalize on the operational presence and multi-disciplinary expertise of IASC members and beyond, and (iii) apply lessons learned from HCT protection strategies to better integrate protection in all global strategies and advance protection outcomes on the ground. The UNHCR proposal had three key elements. First, joint OPAG-EDG protection analysis briefings targeting various IASC structures and relevant non-IASC and operational organization. These would be co-organized by protection and non-protection actors to leverage the full analytical capacities of the IASC system with findings documented as an analytical product for use by OPAG and EDGs. OPAG agreed to hold a first briefing on a pilot basis and then consider continuation. The discussions at OPAG highlighted that protection risks due to COVID-19 could be the theme of this first briefing though this would be further refined. As a next step, UNHCR would consult with organizations/structures and technical experts to refine the theme and prepare a first briefing. The second element of the revised proposal was to collectively identify protection priorities at the global level using the HCT Protection Strategy approach. This would entail identifying one to three protection priorities meriting global situation monitoring and providing regular updates on each priority. OPAG members discussed the importance of feeding such analysis and monitoring to EDG and IASC Principals discussions and decision-making processes. OPAG asked UNHCR to circulate a survey to rank priorities and articulate them. The third element was around supporting Results Groups to achieve protection objectives and outcomes through their deliverables. Consultations would continue to help reinforce Results Groups in linking their outputs with current protection risks, priorities and outcomes. In sum, the OPAG agreed to move forward with the UNHCR proposal as a working paper and rank priorities.

In the ensuing discussion, members discussed the importance of further refining the themes and priorities and ensuring that these themes support decision-making processes. Likewise, members noted the importance of the survey design which should serve to identify priorities based on risk patterns rather than as general categories of concern for individual organizations. This could support a good model of prioritization and the learning from this experience could serve the humanitarian system as a whole. Some members suggested considering what is achievable in what timeline and noted the importance of working towards outcomes that will help countries achieve recovery and development. There was agreement that UNHCR and the Centrality of Protection sub-group would work together on the design and development of the survey and prioritization of these protection risks to be addressed.

4. Progress Update by Localization and BAI sub-groups

Ms. Kathryn Strifolino provided an update on the progress made by the sub-group on key priorities and welcomed the renewed UN agency participation and support in the sub-group's work. The sub-group identified Afghanistan, Nigeria and Venezuela as the next country case studies developing a methodology and buy-in from counterparts at the country level to roll-out the case studies. The country selection was undertaken based on consultations with sub-group members and considering geographic representation. Several tools were developed to facilitate data collection

and analysis. Data collection would start soon with case studies expected to be finalized by early summer. The sub-group is also working with the IASC's P2P project for a closed-door high-level workshop to test the guidance before its roll-out. Ms. Strifolino noted the sub-group's request for RG1 co-chairs' and OCHA's support in sharing support letters with HCs in these three countries to facilitate further support to the case studies at the country level. Ms. Strifolino noted the recent donor interest in the sub-group's work and highlighted that the sub-group would involve donors in some of its consultations to ensure their buy-in and support on resolving BAI issues.

Ms. Stella Ogunlade and Ms. Eman Ismail, Localization sub-group co-chairs, provided an update on the progress of their sub-group. They noted that the sub-group was working on a draft guidance note on localization in coordination structures which would be shared with RG1 members in coming days. Consultations would be held with RG2, RG5, GCCG, as well as several INGO and national NGO consortia. Ms. Ogunlade requested RG1 members to share relevant resources to be included in the Localization repository, share feedback on the draft guidance and whether to include global targets for indicators. Ms. Ismail noted that the sub-group recently opened a call for local actors to join the sub-group with the process expected to be finalized before the end of March 2021. The sub-group designed a simple and transparent process and criteria including geographic representation for the selection of local organizations. A committee would review these applications. The sub-group requested that local NGOs that would be onboarded are supported by RG1 members through twinning and/or orientation as well as regular information sharing. Finally, the sub-group co-chairs noted that the framework for the engagement of local governments and humanitarian actors was being developed and would be shared with RG1 members in due course.

5. AOB

OHCHR noted that its new representative in RG1 would be Ms. Emilia Cermak.

RG1 co-chairs expressed their gratitude for the efforts made by each sub-group and encouraged them to deliver against their priorities as soon as possible. They also informed members that the next RG1 meetings will take place respectively on 18 March and 25 May 2021.