
IASC Results Group 3 – Collective Advocacy

6 April 2021

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FINAL Summary Record

IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy met on 6 April 2021 to discuss (i) Debrief of OPAG meeting on COTER/ RG3 progress update; (ii); Joint advocacy on famine prevention (including briefing by Mr Arif Husain, Chief Economist, WFP) and discussion on RG3 involvement; (iii) Presentation on updated best practices on non-state armed actor engagement (NSAG)

Action points

- **RG3 members urged to encourage their management to sign on to the ICVA open letter on famine prevention available [here](#), and circulate widely among partners.**
- **RG3 members encouraged to share their advocacy efforts with the RG3 co-chairs to enable broad dissemination, e.g. AWYAD. [ACTIONED]**
- **RG3 co-chairs to circulate the draft IASC best practices of engagement with Non State Armed Group for RG3 comments.**
- **IASC secretariat to change the date of the May RG3 meeting from 4 to 5 May [ACTIONED]**

Debrief of 26 March OPAG meeting on COTER/ RG3 progress update by RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG3 co-chairs debriefed RG3 about the take-aways from the 26 March OPAG meeting that had focused on counterterrorism (COTER) and the RG3 progress update. The COTER co-chairs (InterAction, OCHA, Save the Children) presented the IASC Counterterrorism Database, InterAction's CT counterterrorism (CT) and humanitarian action resource library, the forthcoming HC guidance on counterterrorism, and the draft IASC Solutions Proposal To Address the Negative Impact of Counterterrorism and Sanctions on Humanitarian Action. The RG3 co-chairs also referred to a forthcoming webinar between the COTER co-chairs and the members of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative and the forthcoming presentation of the tools during a briefing session at the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships week.
- A progress update was provided on climate change, and the IFRC proposal to place climate change on the agenda of a forthcoming IASC Principals meeting was also mentioned.
- The RG3 co-chairs underscored the broad support expressed by OPAG for the work of RG3 relating to COTER, climate change initiatives, protection and food security key messages developed by RG3 in 2020. The RG3 co-chairs had referred to the RG3's inherent challenge regarding collective advocacy and advocacy responses to fast-changing situations. An action point related to the best practices on non-state armed actors that will be presented to the OPAG on 27 May. As for the review of the IASC structures initially scheduled for May 2021, it has been decided to postpone this Principals discussion until later in 2021 when the next ERC is in place.

Joint advocacy on famine prevention (including briefing by Mr. Arif Husain, Chief Economist, WFP) and discussion on RG3 involvement

- The RG3 co-Chairs highlighted the recently established [High-level Task Force \(HLTF\) on Preventing Famine](#) by the UN SG, including OCHA, FAO and WFP as members, that should draw on support of other IASC members. At the [29 March IASC Principals meeting](#) 'advocacy messages and suggested actions covering the next six months with a focus on resource mobilization; improving humanitarian access; and ensuring better collaboration on data to preventing famine in the countries facing immediate risk of imminent famine in 2021' were requested. Drawing on RG3 and the Global Food Security Cluster had been mentioned as key platforms for collective advocacy.
- Mr. Arif Husain from WFP highlighted the main three indicators of hunger: i) increasing no. people in chronic hunger; ii) increasing no. of people in acute hunger; iii) increasing levels of extreme poverty. The numbers were on the rise in all these three areas for five years prior to COVID-19 due to the main drivers of hunger, i.e. conflict, climate change, and economic marginalization. In most places, a combination of these drivers was observed. In terms of projections, chronic hunger will increase by as many as 132 million people this year according to FAO. According to the WB, extreme poverty will increase by 150m people this year. According to WFP, acute hunger will double from 135 m people at the end of 2019 to 270m people by the end of this year. Recognizing that the methods of various institutions are different, WFP is observing the changing situations in terms of food security, consumption, access to markets, and coping capacities via mobile systems in 38 countries. COVID-19 aggravated the situations given governments' capacities to financially deal with these challenges. Within the last 12 months, countries spent more than US\$20 trillion on the disease and its economic consequences (IMF, CNN article), i.e. more than 1/5 of the global GDP on dealing with the disease and its economic consequences. Accordingly, the gap between needs vs amount of resources will further expand. Overall, the situation is likely to continue until the main root cause of war and conflict is addressed, as 60% of these people are conflict-affected.
- The **call of action between WFP and FAO** underscores the urgent resources needed to avert famine now, i.e. that \$5.5 billion is urgently requested to cover the needs of people in IPC4 - of this \$5 billion is needed immediately for food assistance for 34 million people in 41 countries (at \$.45 per daily meal for one year), while \$0.5 billion is needed for immediate livelihoods assistance for 20 million people. WFP underscored the need to use unified messaging vis-à-vis Member States.
- He also recalled the **definition of famine** i.e. 20% of population in geographic unit is starving; in that place, 30% of children are severely malnourished; and that in that place the death rate for both adults and children (2 per 10,000 per day for adults; 4 per 10,000 per day for children) has doubled. Naturally, reaching that stage means that the response has failed. Hence, lives needed to be saved now, during the IPC4 stage.
- Unlike famines in the 20th century which revolved around droughts, the 21st century famines revolve around conflict. Therefore, **different methods than traditional mortality surveys needed to be found** to assess famines. Therefore, relatively easy to measure indicators needed to be identified to assess famine in a conflict zone.
- The **cost of inaction** (opportunity cost) in the economic sense may be considered as a chain of effects, e.g. extreme poverty linked to destabilization, which in turn is linked to forced displacement.

In the absence of root causes being tackled, the protection and access to conflict-affected people is key, and this has become everyone's problem for economic, political and humanitarian reasons. Upon WFP's query regarding the **involvement of IFIs to address the cost of inaction**, Mr. Husain commented that the WB developed its first-ever Fragility-Conflict-Violence Strategy in 2020, with the understanding that a cost was involved in waiting for enabling development conditions. To this end, breaking the silos between humanitarian and development initiatives was key to enable peace and increase the well-being of people. The IASC secretariat referred to a conversation within the IASC nexus financing sub-group, during which the challenges of engaging with IFIs were highlighted, including due to the different humanitarian and development planning and funding timeframes. UNICEF commented that **additional funding may also be available in climate action**, which may be of importance given the correlation between climate and hunger.

- UNICEF referred to **forthcoming papers on famine prevention and response**, highlighting the forthcoming call for more comprehensive and early action, e.g. the need for investments in water and sanitation. As ending conflict was outside the control of humanitarian actors, Principals in late March agreed on the need of the change of behavior of parties to conflict, as well as the need for localized data to better target limited resources, as well as triggers. As for triggers, UNICEF was working on an index of water scarcity, which had a close correlation to malnutrition. UNICEF had recently briefed the G7, including on the HLTF.
- The African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD) invited participants to join the **virtual National Dialogue on enhancing the refugees' and Host communities' Rights in Uganda** to take place **on 14 April** and co-organized by AWYAD and Oxfam and in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office and with support from Belgium. Part of the dialogue was to focus on the worsening food security situation for the 1.4 million refugees in Uganda (the bulk of which originating from South Sudan), and for the host communities and their right to food.
- On famine prevention advocacy efforts, WFP and ICVA respectively briefed on i) **advocacy messages developed by WFP and FAO**, which were under review; and ii) **to the Joint Open Letter developed by ICVA in support of WFP/FAO's call of action** to help raise the alarm about the drastically increased levels of hunger based on a large numbers of CSOs/NGOs encouraged to sign on and add logos to the letter online available [here](#) **by 19 April 2021**. The language in the letter is aligned with some other senior CSO representatives' statements, e.g. the [Security Council statement by the CEO of Oxfam](#). Partners are called upon to amplify the message through their own advocacy efforts to influence states at the global and country level. On 20 April, the letter will be published, which would coincide with a number of events, including the one-year anniversary of when WFP initially announced that famine was on the horizon.
- OCHA is developing a **communication strategy** in line with the HLTF's objective of averting famine within a six-month timeframe, focusing on resource mobilization, as well as touching on conflict, access and data. The target audience is donors and Members States at various levels, incl. Security Council level, the G7 in the first half of June, the Yemen high-level pledging conference. A joint trello is under consideration, as well as a joint hashtag, e.g. #fightfamine (which was also used for the four famines a few years ago).

- FAO briefed that the **Global Food Security Cluster was working on a statement** on averting famine targeting external stakeholders, which should be consistent with the messaging of the open letter, and bring in a human face to the issue. The Food Crisis Report may be launched between 4-6 May. World Vision underscored that other constituencies not represented at the IASC were also engaged in famine prevention, e.g. **Civil Society G7 Global Working Group that had sent letters to Ministers.**

Presentation on updated best practices on non-state armed actor engagement (NSAG)

- The RG3 co-Chairs provided the highlights of the forthcoming RG3 document regarding the engagement with non-state armed groups in humanitarian action, including that the number of non-international armed conflict has more than doubled since the early 2000 – from fewer than 30 to over 70; between 60 to 80 million people live under the direct State-like governance of armed groups according to ICRC; in 2020 the ICRC identified 614 armed groups of humanitarian concern to the organization globally. Out of this totality, 26 (about half) armed groups were located in Africa, and 132 in the MENA region.
- Key findings related to a hesitation of engaging with NSAG despite the firm legal basis, including due to counterterrorism implications, a lack of clearly articulated internal policies from leadership to mitigate the risk of engagement, and high staff turnover resulting in loss of institutional memory; and joint operating principles (JOP) not always being rolled out effectively.
- Best practices included ensuring understanding of the legal framework, including the domestic legislations; determining direct vs. indirect engagement with NSAG; determining who to engage with NSAG on behalf of the organization; negotiation tactics, whether collective, individual or both; developing tools prior to engagement; gaining acceptance of the community for safety and security aid workers; ensuring clear leadership decisions.
- The comprehensive report will be circulated to the RG3 and will be presented to the OPAG on 27 May.

AOB

The RG3 May meeting will be changed from Tuesday May 4th to Wednesday, 5 May.