

IASC's Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) Meeting
2 June 2021

TOPIC: HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION (HDC)

SUMMARY RECORD

INTRODUCTION

The Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) convened on 2 June 2021. The primary objectives of this meeting were to discuss: 1) The mapping of good practice on humanitarian-development collaboration (HDC) and opportunities for engagement with peace actors; 2) the provision of support, including technical surge capacity, to humanitarian leadership; 3) learning on financing across the nexus, and way forward; and 4) the status of other RG4 priorities for the remainder of 2021 and agree on a way forward.

SESSION 1: HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION (HDC) AND LINKAGES TO PEACE

In his introductory remarks, the OPAG co-Chair, Mr. Geir Olav Lisle welcomed participants, including RG co-Chairs, Chairs of the Associated Entities and presenters to the meeting. He noted that operationalizing HDC with linkages to peace was a key priority for the IASC to support reducing risks and vulnerabilities to affected populations; and that HDC was an area of particular importance for field humanitarian leadership.

Ms. Marta Valdes Garcia, co-chair of IASC Results Group 4 presented the preliminary findings of the mapping of good practice in the implementation of humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approaches, with contributions from 17 countries. The process ensured geographic diversity, participation of local and national actors to provide an appreciation of context specific elements. The mapping has identified some significant positive advances: i) In Burundi, the RC/HC led a collective outcomes process, and in Haiti, the leadership ensured that the nexus featured as a standing agenda item on the HCT and UNCT agenda; ii) the example from Colombia indicated progress in the use of shared analyses that informed the different plans in the humanitarian, development and peace workstreams; (iii) in the DRC, there are efforts towards joined-up planning and harmonizing funding strategies/ workplans among bilateral and multilateral donors, facilitated by a donor group analyzing nexus priorities; and (iv) in Somalia, the government has endorsed a triple nexus steering committee. She noted that progress varied regarding a shared understanding of the nexus and collective outcomes. Areas in need of attention included the need for dedicated nexus capacity (capacity is already available in DRC and Haiti); strengthened alignment of programs and projects towards HDP priorities/collective outcomes; as well as targeted funding towards collective outcomes. She also highlighted some critical gender dimensions, noting that in some countries, efforts have been made to strengthen the participation of women organizations in peace processes, in line with UN Security

Council Resolution 1325. The mapping will be presented in a synthesis report, a virtual interactive map, and individual country reports.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members commended RG5 for the mapping of good practices. They noted the demonstrated leadership of the RC/HCs in HDC. Members emphasized the need to identify activities that have a peace dividend, which are critical in addressing the root causes of conflict. Members expressed the preference to capacitate all staff on the nexus approach, as opposed to the deployment of dedicated nexus capacity, which should be a matter of last resort. Several IASC members are establishing a nexus academy providing standardized training to nexus advisers. RG4 is supporting the academy's curriculum. Participants drew attention to the recent Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, which had underscored the limited integration of gender considerations in nexus guidance and work. Members also highlighted the importance of data to facilitate development actors' engagement in nexus situations, drawing reference to the UNHCR and the World Bank Joint Data Center, and the need to assess efficiencies gained at operational levels as a result of applying a nexus approach. Calls were made for risk related recommendations to support the prevention of violent extremism, mitigate counterterrorism measures, facilitate stabilization efforts, and ensure the protection of affected populations while safe-guarding humanitarian space. In this regard, a recommendation was made to support 'common risk assessments' assessing multi-dimensional risks (e.g. conflict, climate-induced migration and displacement, COVID-19 and its socio-economic consequences etc.) for all actors engaged in the nexus.

A 'maximalist' approach to HDC was encouraged to facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders and better sharing of information with operational settings on globally led nexus processes, e.g. the work of OECD/DAC INCAF with its direct link to development donors, the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and its work on priority countries, the New Way of Working (NWOW), and the Global Network Against Food Crises; engagement with governments on national plans as 80 per cent of funding is being provided bilaterally; meaningful engagement with local actors (including women-led organizations), as many local actors operationalize the nexus on a daily basis.

Action Points

- 1) Expedite the finalisation of the best practices document on Humanitarian Development Collaboration and its linkages to peace (HDPC) considering the following **[RG4]**:
 - Need to look more closely at the peace aspect of the nexus and the extent to which the nexus can address the root causes of conflict.
 - Importance of strengthening common risk assessments.
 - Building climate induced migration and displacement into the nexus discussion (as it is likely to eclipse conflict induced migration and displacement).
 - Need to collaborate with and complement other efforts (including that of the Joint Steering Committee and the OECD/DAC INCAF)

- 2) Assess the advantages of placing nexus advisers in RC/HC offices to foster collective efforts **[RG4]**

SESSION 2: NEXUS FINANCING

Mr. Jeremy Rempel, RG 5 co-chair explained that the thematic priority of nexus financing was inherited from the previous iteration of IASC structures, specifically the IASC Task Team on Humanitarian Financing. Mr. Angus Urquhart, Crisis and Humanitarian Lead, Development Initiatives, presented RG5's [Scoping Paper on Financing Humanitarian Development Collaboration relevant to humanitarian actors](#), highlighting that it focuses on financing 'across' the nexus spectrum, rather than financing 'the' nexus, which would imply dedicated or even siloed funding streams, as well as on the 'alignment' of funding sources, rather than stretching humanitarian resources for nexus activities. The scoping paper was informed by findings from country consultations. He noted that the findings indicated a dearth of good practice, with emerging practices tending to be used as stop-gap, rather than a sustainable solution, as well as being very context-specific in nature. Key takeaways of the scoping paper revolved around joint analysis (including on the root causes of conflict) as a precondition for joined-up priority setting and programming/collective outcomes; effective coordination through clearly defined and delineated roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders (including government, UN system, financing actors) and the important role of country-level leadership; and the need to increase the provision of quality funding as a catalyst for adaptive multi-year programming.

Mr. Urquhart added that the shared RG5 advocacy messages focus on quality funding and aim at stimulating a dialogue with actors across the nexus, including development actors and donors, thereby linking to the Grand Bargain dialogue, and the OECD DAC recommendations on nexus financing. They underscore the importance of increasing the availability of quality funding; cascading quality funding to local partners; tracking funding flows in crisis-affected areas; how quality funding can address the socio-economic consequences of COVID; and the nexus approach in current famine prevention efforts (e.g. G7, UN Food Systems Summit). The messages are accompanied by a communications plan.

RG5 co-chair Ms. Alice Sequi recommended that the IASC's nexus financing efforts should build on the on-going nexus financing efforts by other actors, including RG4's mapping of good practice; OECD/INCAF's research on financing across the nexus; and the JSC's deep dive on Niger. She noted that nexus considerations had to date prioritized analysis and planning elements, rather than nexus-related financing elements. Given RG4's institutional relationship with above-mentioned actors and the need for an integrated approach between planning and financing, she indicated that RG5 will engage RG4 to bring the two workstreams together on nexus financing.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members expressed support for the scoping paper and the related advocacy messages, noting that 78 per cent of humanitarian funding is channeled to settings with protracted conflicts. As for engagement with actors across the nexus, OPAG members echoed the importance of linking up efforts with OECD/INCAF, the JSC, RG4, the Grand Bargain - which has mainstreamed nexus during the current iteration - and potentially the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative; engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFI) and the global/local private sector, by tailoring language to specific audiences, including by framing it as a 'poverty reduction' to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) rather than 'nexus' dialogue, and by drawing on financing strategies and Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs).

To operationalize the nexus, members underscored that it was key to invest in prevention, mitigation and anticipatory action, thereby stretching the risk tolerance in conflict settings to ensure a timely release of funds for prevention. Additionally, consideration may be given to mapping of donor practices and innovative financing approaches such as blended financing that bridge the humanitarian-development divide, on which the private sector and IFIs tended to come together, e.g. on practices such as blended financing and debt relief applied across the nexus. Members further highlighted ongoing discussions with the World Economic Forum and the World Bank around 'financing levers' that played a role in shaping the UN Food Systems Summit.

Action Points

- 1) Update advocacy and key messages based on feedback received at the meeting, considering; prevention, building on capacity of local actors, and tailoring of language to development actors and IFIs [RG5]

SESSION 3: RG4 WORKPLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

RG4 co-Chair Ms. Rachel Scott highlighted the overarching goal of RG4 to facilitate the reduction of humanitarian needs, by focusing on behavior change. She noted key outputs delivered inclusive of the IASC guidance on collective outcomes, the issue paper on linkages to peace, and the mentoring support package. She highlighted ongoing initiatives; influencing the OECD/DAC INCAF nexus financing research given its significance in terms of accountability tool for donors; preparing good practice on local NGOs, as well as on climate and disasters; developing an app on humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) linkages to peace; providing support to the nexus academy; maintaining the community of practice; and fostering shared analysis in coordination with DCO. Good practice on humanitarian principles was not considered a key priority anymore. On partnerships, RG4 engages with OECD/INCAF on a range of issues - with Interpeace on the piece component, and with RG5 on the financing component.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members expressed broad support for RG4's investment in advancing work on HDC with linkages to peace, as well as for continuing this work in 2022. Collaboration between RG4 and RG5 was considered key. On humanitarian principles, an OPAG member commented that based on its conversations with IFIs, the aspect of humanitarian principles remained relevant. OPAG co-chair Mr. Lisle concluded by applauding RG4 for the work taken forward, and its effort of streamlining efforts with other critical platforms, including the OECD/DAC, JSC, among others.

Action Points

- 1) Finalise delivery of key workstreams before the end of 2021 [RG4]
- 2) Consider practical ways to get guidance/tools to be better accessible and useful to the field [RG4]

AOB

The next OPAG meeting will be on 28 June 2021 when the first protection dialogue will be convened in collaboration with UNCHR.

ANNEX: PARTICIPANTS LIST

OPAG Co-Chairs	Mr. Geir Olav Lisle, Deputy Secretary-General, NRC
FAO	Mr. Daniel Donati
	Mr. Patrick Jacqueson
ICVA	Ms. Mirela Shuteriqi
ICVA - ACBAR	Ms. Lisa K. Piper
ICVA – COAST	Mr. Reza Chowdhury
ICVA - FRD	Mr. Azmat Khan
ICRC	Ms. Alexandra Boivin
IFRC	Mr. Frank Mohrhauer
	Ms. Alexandra Sicotte Levesque
InterAction	Ms. Kate Phillips-Barrasso
InterAction – Catholic Relief Services	Ms. Emily Wei
InterAction – Global Communities	Ms. Pia Wanek
IOM	Ms. Tristan Burnett
OCHA	Ms. Wafaa Saeed
OHCHR	Mr. Roberto Ricci
SCHR - Christian Aid	Mr. Michael Mosselmans
SR on HR of IDPs	Ms. Kim Mancini
UNDP	Mr. Peter Batchelor
UNFPA	Mr. Ingo Piegler
UN-HABITAT	Mr. Filiep Decorte
UNHCR	Ms. Annika Sandlund
	Mr. Guido van Heugten
UNICEF	Ms. Meritxell Relano
WFP	Mr. David Kaatrud
	Mr. Gian Carlo Cirri
WHO	Mr. Rudi Coninx
	Mr. Kevin Ousman
World Bank	Ms. Maria Dimitriadou

Mr. Andrew Wyllie, co-Chair RG1 on Operational Response, Chief Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Branch, OCHA

Ms. Meritxell Relano, co-Chair RG2 on Accountability and Inclusion, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection, UNHCR

Ms. Marta Valdes Garcia, co-Chair RG4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration, Deputy Humanitarian Director, Oxfam

Ms. Rachel Scott, co-Chair RG4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration, Senior Partnership and Policy Advisor, UNDP

Mr. Jeremy Rempel co-Chair RG5 on Humanitarian Financing, Head Humanitarian Financing ICVA

Ms. Alice Sequi co-Chair RG5 on Humanitarian Financing, Chief Pooled Fund Management Branch, OCHA

Presenters:

Ms. Marta Valdes Garcia, co-Chair RG4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration, Deputy Humanitarian Director, Oxfam

Ms. Rachel Scott, co-Chair RG4 on Humanitarian Development Collaboration, Senior Partnership and Policy Advisor, UNDP

Mr. Jeremy Rempel co-Chair RG5 on Humanitarian Financing, Head Humanitarian Financing ICVA

Ms. Alice Sequi co-Chair RG5 on Humanitarian Financing, Chief Pooled Fund Management Branch, OCHA

Mr. Angus Urquhart, Crisis and Humanitarian Lead, Development Initiative

Mr. Patrick Jacqueson, co-Chair, RG5 Nexus Financing sub-group

IASC secretariat: Ms. Mervat Shelbaya, Head, IASC secretariat