

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

DEPUTIES GROUP

SUMMARY RECORD AND ACTION POINTS

16 September 2022

Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (DERC) and Chair of the IASC Deputies Group, convened the first face-to-face meeting of the Deputies Group to discuss racism and racial discrimination, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH), cash coordination, and the Deputies Group forward planning.

Session 1: Racism and Racial Discrimination

Introduction

The Chair recalled the events of 2020, including the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, noting that the IASC Principals reaffirmed their pledge to zero tolerance of racism and racial discrimination in 2020. The IASC has since developed an [Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination action plan](#) and compiled [best practices](#) by IASC members. Against this backdrop, the session aimed at creating a safe space for participants to (i) explore further how they could foster anti-racist organizations, including by actively dismantling patterns of bias and racism that have been deeply embedded in the system; (ii) share both inward and outward responses to race-related conflicts; and (iii) consider leadership responsibilities and practical ways for the Deputies to lead by example and take purposeful action towards more diverse, inclusive, and racially equitable organizations.

Discussion

The Deputies reflected on their experience dealing with and tackling racism and racial discrimination, noting the importance of intersectionality such as age, gender, and other diversity characteristics. They agreed that racism and racial discrimination should be framed as part of diversity, equity and inclusion discussions. IASC members also shared lessons learned and experiences in tackling racism and racial discrimination.

Some members shared their experience addressing racism and racial discrimination in their organizations. They reflected that having dedicated staff for the diversity, equity and inclusion portfolio that has access to leadership, as well as establishing “stronger together” groups. Further, they discussed that having regular dialogue on racism and racial discrimination, developing an action plan and codes of conduct, and aligning efforts with other UN processes, proved instrumental for their organization. An internal review provided opportunities to take stock of efforts.

Other members reflected on the Secretary-General's Task Force which provided opportunities to exchange and collectively identify actions to tackle racism and racial discrimination across the UN. An action plan was developed for diversity, equity and inclusion while leadership sessions and capacity building efforts were undertaken. The need to recruit widely to achieve diversity while also addressing issues of marginalization and micro-aggression was recognized. In this respect, one member launched initiatives including internship and volunteer programmes to attract talent from the global south. Some members provided perspectives on fostering diversity within their boards and workforce which culminated in a diversity, equity and inclusion compact.

Deputies expressed appreciation for the open discussion and committed to remain seized of the issue. There was agreement that each organization is starting from a different baseline and that progress is based on learning and mutual support.

Conclusions and Follow-up Actions:

1. Develop and endorse a compact capturing commitment of the Deputies Group to address Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [**IASC secretariat in consultation with members of the Deputies Group**];
2. Table racism and racial discrimination at an upcoming Deputies Group meeting focusing on concrete actions and deliverables [**IASC secretariat**].

Session 2: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

Introduction

The Chair recalled that the Deputies agreed to formulate a workplan to meet the targets in the IASC Strategy on PSEAH. The strategy articulated three major commitments: (i) to operationalize a victim and survivor centered approach to reporting, assistance, and investigations; (ii) to promote lasting change in organizational culture; and (iii) to support PSEAH capacity at country level. She welcomed the newly appointed USG Christian Saunders, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Improving the UN response to SEA and ASG Jane Connors, UN Victims' Rights Advocate to the session. The session aimed at reaching consensus on the ToR and annual workplan for the IASC Technical Advisory Group as well as considering resourcing options, PSEAH risk analysis and the ToR of the Investigations Panel to translate the five-year PSEAH strategy into action.

Mr. Justin Byworth, World Vision International/SCHR, representing the IASC Champion for PSEAH, presented the ToR and annual workplan of the Technical Advisory Group for endorsement. The workplan defines how agencies will work towards implementing the IASC Strategy on PSEAH.

Ms. Wendy Cue, Senior Coordinator for PSEAH in the IASC secretariat, presented the SEA Risk Overview (SEA-RO), a composite index developed to identify drivers of risks, compare across countries and track changes over time. The tool, modelled on the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) is composed of 40 indicators across four dimensions: Enabling Environment, Humanitarian Context, Operational Context, and Protective Environment.

Mr. Byworth noted that the SEA RO will be used to prioritize the top 15 countries which would need to have dedicated PSEAH Coordinators. Several options were considered, and the

proposal presented sought political support so that resources could be jointly mobilized. Mr. Byworth noted the efforts made by previous Champions to provide capacity at country level. Amongst three proposed options, the recommended one was a deployment modality using NORCAP, similar to the GenCap/ProCap project where the expert reports directly to the HC and is deployed through a roster maintained by NRC. The deployment can be on the request of a UN agency.

Mr. Byworth presented the Terms of Reference (ToR) for an Expert Panel on standards for SEA and Sexual Harassment Investigations to enhance accountability through victim-centered and trauma-informed investigations. As per the ten-year review and the IASC Strategy, the ToR outline the way forward to set up a panel of experts to ensure a victim-centered approach to investigations as well as harmonize and improve investigation practices.

Ms. Kelly Clements, as Chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Sexual Harassment, drew attention to the enhanced collaboration with the UN, co-led by OCHA and UN Women and encouraged synergies between the work of the CEB and the IASC on sexual harassment.

Discussion

The Deputies supported and endorsed the workplan and the ToR for the Technical Advisory Group on PSEAH. UN Victims' Rights Advocate Jane Connors expressed support and indicated she would join the Technical Advisory Group.

The Deputies acknowledged that the SEA-RO is beneficial, considering existing resource constraints. This tool will help identify high-risk contexts and inform on where more training, capacity, and resources are needed. Some members indicated that they were carrying out their own risk assessments, and the data provided by the SEA-RO could complement these efforts. They noted that the current version should be considered a beta version, considering limitations including the reliance on desk assessments which may not reflect current field capacity. It was acknowledged that indicators were being developed to measure field capacity more systematically. In addition, the SEA-RO indicators could be layered with agency-specific data to generate information for internal decision-making. The political sensitivities of making the SEA-RO public were raised, and for this reason a public launch was not being considered at this time.

The Deputies recognized the need for dedicated and sustained PSEA coordination capacity and to identify funding. However, some members flagged the need for more discussion, and to consider lessons from models such as the UNFPA roster and the NORCAP PSEA project.. As long as consensus was reached at the TAG, the Deputies Group would be able to ensure a rapid turn-around by electronic endorsement of the recommendation. If such consensus is not reached by end November, the Deputies Group may consider holding an ad hoc meeting to outline a way forward.

The Deputies expressed broad support for the TOR of the expert panel on the investigation. However, members noted the importance of agreed principles on a victim-centered approach before the expert panel is established. To consider the perspectives of all members, more time was needed to provide feedback, clarify scope, and consult subject matter experts in addition to investigators. They also noted that the composition of the panel should also be specified in the terms of reference.

Conclusions and Follow-up Actions:

1. The Terms of Reference and annual workplan of the Technical Advisory Group were endorsed [**Deputies Group**];
2. Release SEA RO beta version for use, adaptation, and feedback [**Deputies Group with support from IASC Technical Advisory Group on PSEAH**];
3. Reach consensus on preferred option for PSEA Coordinator capacity for electronic endorsement. [**IASC Technical Advisory Group on PSEAH, by 15 November**];
4. Revise Terms of Reference on Panel of Experts for Investigations [**IASC Technical Advisory Group on PSEAH by 14 October**].

Session 3: Cash Coordination

Introduction

The Chair framed the session noting the IASC Principals endorsed the cash coordination model in March 2022 and asked for the Deputies to guide the newly established global Cash Advisory Group (CAG) in the development of a transition plan. The CAG had now developed a draft ToR and transition plan for consideration by the Deputies Group.

Ms. Marina Skuric-Prodanovic, OCHA, introduced the CAG, a group of twelve senior technical representatives. Members include UN, INGO, Red Cross/Crescent Movement, a network, and local actors. The inclusion of local voices within this forum was underlined as being in line with wider commitments on localization. She outlined the functions in the TORs noting that these were closely aligned with the IASC model on cash coordination.

Ms. Annika Sandlund, UNHCR, presented the draft transition plan. The plan provides an overview of 41 IASC contexts, mixed and pure refugee settings with an estimated timeline for their transition to the new model. The transition plan was drafted based on a survey, the results of which were consulted and agreed upon with a large number of stakeholders. She outlined the key pillars of the model that the estimated transition time was based on the linkage to the inter-sectoral space, the leadership profile of the group, funding, and the degree to which there was local leadership and engagement.

Ms. Sandlund highlighted that the adoption of the model should add value and strengthen the already operational cash working groups. As the transition plan is a living document, it will be regularly updated. Ms. Skuric-Prodanovic and Ms. Sandlund acknowledged that the funding and capacity will likely be required at both global and country level and requested the Deputies' support to advocate for these to further benefit local actors.

Discussion

The Deputies commended the work of the CAG and expressed their appreciation for the development of the TORs through an inclusive and consultative approach. They acknowledged the human and financial resources required and requested that the funding and capacity requirements were further refined during the next update from the CAG. Several Deputies reiterated their willingness to provide technical support and guidance. The topic of data

protection was highlighted for the CAG to consider in their upcoming workplan, given its relevance for large-scale cash programmes. The Deputies closed by acknowledging the technical expertise of the CAG and noting that unless support is required, the CAG should proceed with its agreed functions as outlined in the TORs.

Conclusions and Follow-up Action Points:

1. Endorse the CAG ToRs and Transition Plan [**Deputies Group**]
2. Further refine funding and capacity requirements and share with Deputies during the next update [**CAG**]

Session 4: Deputies Group Forward Planning

Introduction

Ms. Mervat Shelbaya, Chief, IASC secretariat, briefed IASC Deputies on the forward agenda. She indicated that the topics proposed in the forward agenda take into account extensive consultations leading to the endorsement of the IASC's bi-annual strategic priorities, including the seven issues to be prioritized and tackled by the Deputies Group (*namely, (1) Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH); (2) Racism and racial discrimination; (3) Review of the IASC's response to IDPs; (4) Climate change; (5) Humanitarian financing; (6) Cash coordination; and (7) Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls*). She also noted that the proposed forward agenda takes into account the need to avoid duplication and complements the efforts of other IASC structures, including the OPAG and EDG (such as gender, which had just been discussed by the OPAG, including with a briefing by the IASC's Gender Reference Group on areas of progress and focus). She informed that the forward agenda was shared for discussion and noted that it would be adjusted to reflect guidance from the Deputies, earlier discussions (including progress made and the level of maturity of several topics such as cash coordination, PSEA and the IDP review), and capitalizing on key opportunities and milestones (such as COP27 and COP28).

Discussion

Deputies expressed appreciation of the background note and broadly agreed with the proposed agenda items. They noted that several issues are advanced in terms of work, and there is momentum around them, such as cash and PSEAH, which do not merit considerable time and investment of the Deputies Group. As such, they proposed that the forward agenda be revised to focus on 3-4 key priority areas to address complex issues and further clarify each session's expected outcomes. There was broad agreement on the need to include racism and racial discrimination and the Deputies requested a structured discussion for the next session; engagement with IFIs – focusing on strengthening engagement with IFIs to address the root causes of vulnerability and scaling up what is already working well in the field; climate – looking at the link between early warning, anticipatory action, and climate, and WFP offering support in this area; the IASC review of the response to IDPs – with a request for engagement prior to the finalization of the report; IASC 2023-2024 Strategic Priorities - with a request for early engagement to ensure that the priorities and structures are approved on time to be rolled out by early 2023. Furthermore, some members indicated that, while gender is discussed at the OPAG, further consideration should be made on the need to bring it to the attention of the Deputies Group. Similarly, questions arose regarding the Deputies Group's role in taking forward the recommendations of the independent review of the implementation of the IASC protection policy and also for the Deputies to consider the effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

Conclusions and Follow-up Action Points:

1. Update the forward agenda to reflect feedback provided by the Deputies and work with the membership to clarify the focus and outcome of the various sessions [**IASC secretariat in collaboration with the membership**]

List of Participants

1. Ms. Joyce Msuya, **Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator**
2. Mr. Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General, **FAO**
3. Mr. Nils Melzer, Director, International Law, Policy & Humanitarian Diplomacy, **ICRC**
4. Ms. Shahin Ashraf, Chair of **ICVA**, a.i. (Head, Global Advocacy, Islamic Relief Worldwide)
5. Ms. Mirela Shuteriqi, Director of Policy, **ICVA**
6. Mr. Julien Schopp, Vice President, Humanitarian Policy and Practice, **InterAction**
7. Ms. Nena Stojilkovic, Under Secretary-General for Global Relations, Diplomacy and Digitalization, **IFRC**
8. Ms. Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director General for Operations, **IOM**
9. Mr. Nada Al-Nashif, Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, **OHCHR**
10. Mr. Gareth Price Jones, Executive Secretary, **SCHR**
11. Mr. John Plastow, Acting Global Programs Director, **SCHR - Oxfam International**
12. Mr. Justin Byworth, Global Lead – Disaster Management, **SCHR-World Vision**
13. Ms. Asako Okai, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director for the Crisis Bureau, **UNDP**
14. Mr. Ib Petersen, Deputy Executive Director, **UNFPA**
15. Mr. Raf Tuts, Director, Global Solutions Division, **UN-Habitat**
16. Ms. Kelly Clements, Deputy High Commissioner, **UNHCR**
17. Ms. Natalia Winder-Rossi, Director, Social Policy Social Protection, **UNICEF**
18. Ms. Valerie Guarnieri, Deputy Executive Director, Programme & Policy Development Department, **WFP**
19. Dr. Ibrahima Soce-Fall, Assistant Director General for Emergency Response, **WHO**
20. Ms. Mervat Shelbaya, Head, IASC secretariat