
IASC Results Group 3 – Collective Advocacy
8 June 2020

Summary Record

IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy met on 8 June 2020 to discuss (i) an update on COVID-19, incl. a briefing by WFP, the next revision of the GHRP, humanitarian access, increased vulnerabilities, and a briefing on protection of civilians by the Global Protection Cluster; (ii) counter-terrorism and humanitarian action (iii) climate change; (iv) common narrative around World Humanitarian Day.

The below captures action points agreed upon and a brief summary.

Action points:

1. All RG3 members to amplify advocacy efforts in support of common services to ensure funding beyond July.
2. RG3 co-Chairs to invite RG5 co-Chairs to the next RG3 meeting to brief on how to conduct advocacy for greater funding for humanitarian organizations, in particular to NGOs around the next GHRP revision.
3. RG members to share their thematic key messages with the IASC secretariat (Alfirev@un.org) for dissemination by the RG3 co-Chairs to the Results Group in view of enabling the amplification of advocacy efforts - particularly joint key messages on access (by UNICEF and OCHA); on food security (FAO); on protection (Global Protection Cluster);
4. The Global Protection Cluster to present to the RG3 the findings of its study on key parameters of an advocacy strategy.
5. IOM/UNHCR/OHCHR to consider disseminating the draft 'practical measures to strengthen bilateral and collective advocacy on human rights issues for migrants and refugees' requested by the IASC Principals across RG3, to seek input from members;
6. IASC secretariat to collate IASC guidelines related to vulnerable groups and share with RG3 to enable the amplification of advocacy.
7. IASC secretariat to disseminate updated list of key events.

Up-date on COVID-19 and advocacy

Presentation on Financing of Common Services for COVID-19 Corporate Response - Amer Daoudi, Director, WFP

- Mr. Daoudi provided an overview of the common services, noting that it comprised cargo, passenger travel, and medevac. In terms of cargo, health and humanitarian supplies had been sent to 120 countries thus far, and the service was planned to be expanded to 144 countries. As for passenger services, the common services were currently available for humanitarian, including health responders in Asia, the MENA region, and Africa, and soon in Latin America. The SG had sent letters to all heads of states, and asked RCs to follow up on obtaining permission for flights to pick up passengers and bring in responders. This service was not competing with the private sector, and will be phased out upon resumption of commercial flights. Regarding medevac, to date 10 air ambulances had been dispatched.

- At the current funding level, Mr. Daoudi emphasized, operations could be sustained to the end of July. Of a requested US\$965m, \$180m had been received or topped up with WFP corporate contributions.
- In terms of collective advocacy, WFP and OCHA noted that an IASC letter was sent and an Op-ed was published in the Guardian. Given competing funding requests, the RG3 co-Chairs suggested that IASC members could help visualize the story how these common services serve as backbone of the humanitarian response, and therefore enable impact on the ground. WFP commented that visualization material was available. InterAction commented that it sent a letter to donors on how these common services benefit NGO response as well, and recommended concrete conversations with donors, including the Good Humanitarian Donorship members.

Potential joint advocacy around next round of revisions of the GHRP - RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG co-Chairs invited the Group for suggestions on how to jointly advocate for the GHRP, given its current funding level of 18% with \$1.18 bn received, and ahead of the 16 July revision. The co-Chairs noted that the emphasis of the next GHRP update would be on demonstrating collective results. Evidence-based advocacy was required to showcase added value of humanitarian operations.

Humanitarian access: collection of evidences on reduced access and reduced humanitarian action as a result of COVID-19 restrictive measures, potential joint advocacy - RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG3 co-Chairs noted the difficulty of obtaining a consolidated picture, as in some contexts access constraints increased, whereas in others restrictions had been lifted.
- OCHA updated about its efforts to obtain a more consolidated picture, which was difficult given the constantly evolving situation.

Food security and nutrition impact of the COVID-19 - presentation by Yvonne Forsén, Chief of Food Security Analysis Service in Research, Assessments and Monitoring Division, WFP

- Ms. Yvonne Forsén briefed that in the course of 2020, the number of people facing acute food insecurity could almost double, by increasing from 135m to 265m people as a result of COVID-19 according to WFP's projections. These projections were based on the assumption that the loss of income due to job loss or remittances would negatively affect food insecurity, including in countries not previously associated with a food crisis. Other worrying developments were the falling oil prices, shrinking flow of foreign direct investment, droughts in addition to COVID-19, and reduced access to basic services, such as health, education (with more children drawn into income-generating activities), and nutrition.
- On advocacy, Ms Forsén noted that efforts should focus on strengthening national protection systems, including national food, health and education systems, to support governments in making systems more efficient or strengthening them. WFP's efforts focus on data/analytics (VAM), the provision of policy and programme advice to governments, and operational support. To this end, WFP noted the need to tailor messaging to donors and Member States.
- In the ensuing discussion, FAO highlighted the importance of focusing advocacy efforts on prevention, and the ability of policy-makers to avert a food crisis. To this end, FAO was rolling out a global data facility with information on livelihood impacts; the SG policy brief on food security was to be issued the following day, and OCHA noted that the friends of the food security group would meet the same week.

Protection of Civilians and COVID-19 - Presentation by Dorothy Sang from the Global Protection Cluster

- The RG co-Chairs noted that InterAction was developing a brief on stigmatization related to COVID-19 for RG1, which would be ready by the following week.
- Ms. Dorothy Sang briefed on POC challenges, including new displacements and reduced access, requiring protection monitoring to adapt, e.g. in Colombia where vulnerable communities expressed concern about potential repercussions when reporting protection concerns. The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) was exploring a paper on linkages between conflict, protection and COVID-19 and invited other RG3 members to engage with the GPC.
- Ms. Sang noted that the GPC's study that identified key parameters for the advocacy strategy was close to finalization, and RG3 members were invited to engage in the way forward of this advocacy strategy that would focus on funding, centrality of protection, and reaching vulnerable groups in light of COVID-19.

Increased vulnerability of some groups and COVID-19. Opportunities for joint advocacy - RG3 co-Chairs

- Further to the action point of the IASC Principals to strengthen advocacy vis-à-vis migrants and refugees, UNHCR briefed that the ERC suggested for IOM, UNHCR and OHCHR to work on practical measures.
- UNHCR noted that IDP protection may also to be tabled at the IASC Principals meeting, so draft key messages could be shared with RG3. The RG3 co-Chairs commented that the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement also released guidelines on IDPs and COVID-19 which could be drawn on.
- In addition, the RG3 co-Chairs referred that a series of guidance had been issued on vulnerable groups including on children, women and girls, people with disabilities, and elderly people. It was suggested that the IASC secretariat collected these guidelines to enable RG3 members to amplify related messages and foster practical use of advocacy messages.

Up-date on Counter-terrorism (COTER) and humanitarian action - RG3 sub-group co-Chairs, InterAction and OCHA

- InterAction briefed that the second meeting of the RG3 COTER sub-group had taken place, focusing on four priority workstreams: solutions, including humanitarian exemptions, COTER guidance for HCs; a strengthened evidence base to inform policy recommendations; and engagement in the COTER architecture. At the last meeting, OCHA had presented its mapping of the COTER architecture, and had outlined the areas where humanitarian engagement may be a worthy endeavor. Related to that, Ms. Fionnuala Ni Aolain, United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, had provided a briefing about her report prepared for the General Assembly, for which she was currently soliciting inputs.
- InterAction further noted that the next meeting would focus on the evidence base of counter-terrorism legislations.
- OCHA added that the advocacy efforts would focus on every IASC member to carry its own private and public messages to specific stakeholders, rather than engaging in a collective initiative.
- The RG co-Chairs noted that a side event of the ECOSOC HAS was organized on counter-terrorism sanction and humanitarian action on 11 June.

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

- IFRC noted that the sub-group had developed talking points on climate and COVID, with messages highlighting the need of investment in these issues during humanitarian crises, including in a green and resilient recovery - 'build back better', as well as in preparedness for shocks.
- IFRC also referred to a recent webinar focusing on awareness-raising on climate-related humanitarian issues at the national level, and in this context how national adaptation plans were developed, and how concerns around the humanitarian impact of climate change could be integrated. The World Bank in this webinar had spoken to the need of resilience as a recommendation for governments to consider in their stimulus packages.
- IFRC also noted that the co-Chairs of the sub-group and RG3 were engaged in discussing the way forward on the group's workplan. The big climate change events around which humanitarian advocacy efforts referenced in the workplan were supposed to be focused on had been delayed – COP to Nov. 2021, and the Adaptation Summit to Jan. 2021 - while some pre-COP meetings were planned over the next few months.
- OCHA commented that the SG had lent a strong voice around World Earth Day; messaging around World Environment Day and Oceans Day was still coming out.
- OCHA noted that the UN systems-wide climate change taskforce had discovered via messaging around Earth Day that climate change advocacy was still taken up by the media and social media, yet that all messaging had a COVID focus. It seemed that the General Assembly climate-related event in September may be folded into a SDG event to focus on the interlinkages ranging from climate, environment, socio-economic dynamics, to COVID.

Common narrative – World Humanitarian Day (August 2020) – RG3 co-Chairs

- OCHA noted that the campaign initially planned to focus on climate change refocused on 'actual heroes' influenced by comic heroes to show what humanitarians were doing in the field during COVID-19. A NPR podcast series would highlight the work of frontline responders, and the security aspects would be highlighted in cooperation with Humanitarian Outcomes. The idea was to make it easy for humanitarian organizations to join the campaign without having to invest a lot of work in it.

Up-date engagement with Armed Non State Actors – RG3 co-Chairs

- The RG3 co-Chairs updated that a revised version of the report on engagement with non-state actors, which had been delayed by COVID, would be ready by the end of June.

AoB

- World Refugee Day - 20 June.
- OCHA noted that the Syria pledging conference hosted by Brussels was planned for 29 and 30 June.

Yemen

- Noting that the Yemen programs were on the brink of closure earlier this year, partly due to the initial lack of a Humanitarian Response Plan, OCHA explained that messaging around the humanitarian situation in Yemen initially focused on the challenges of providing assistance in the north due to donor concerns of providing funding for the north, some of which had subsequently been allayed.
- Advocacy then scaled up on how programs would be affected due to underfunding and related analysis was shared with Member States. COVID aggravated that situation even more with people dying before reaching the hospitals, and health workers unable to operate ventilators.
- Prior to the 2 June pledging conference, an IASC Principals statement was issued. The funding request in the HRP extension document amounted to \$2.23bn for the remainder of the year, of which \$1.35 bn was pledged, while the HC had shortly before released a statement emphasizing that \$1.6bn was the minimum to carry out life-saving operations. As a result, health workers will not get incentives to carry out their work, and food programmes are also affected.
- Currently, the SG was following up with Gulf donors that had pledged less than in previous years due to the oil crisis. Internal discussions were ongoing on how to further prevent closure of programs in the context of COVID.
- Regarding the KSA block grant of \$500m, \$300 was to be channeled directly to UN agencies, and \$200m to INGOs.
- In closing, the RG3 co-Chairs highlighted the concerns around donor conditionalities jeopardizing humanitarian principles in Yemen, and affirmed that the disbursement speed represented an utmost priority along with the need to underscore the protection crisis.
