

IASC Results Group 1 – Operational Response
18 March 2021
Summary Record

IASC Results Group 1 on Operational Response met on 18 March 2021 to discuss (i) the framework for engagement between local authorities and humanitarian actors (ii) key messages and asks for the upcoming OPAG meetings on localization and bureaucratic impediments, and (iii) update on next steps regarding the IASC Protection Policy Review.

Action points:

1. RG1 members to provide red line comments on the Operational Guidance for Engagement between Local Authorities and Humanitarian Organizations by end March **[RG1 members]**
2. Consult HCs on minimum standards for participation of local actors in HCTs and develop global indicators without targets on localization in coordination **[RG1 Localization sub-group]**
3. Work with OPAG counterparts to submit nominations for the IASC Committee **[RG1 members]**

1. Framework for Engagement between Local Authorities and Humanitarian Actors

Mr. Julien Schopp, RG1 co-chair, invited UNHABITAT to present the draft Framework for Engagement between Local Authorities and Humanitarian Actors. This framework was developed following the December 2019 IASC Principals meeting which noted the need for systematic and stronger engagement between local governments and humanitarian actors. UNHABITAT undertook consultations with the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis on principles guiding the Framework as well as with RG1's Localization sub-group on substantive aspects of the Framework.

Mr. Filiep Decorte, UNHABITAT, discussed the background and rationale for this Framework highlighting that the purpose of the Framework is to provide a tool to reinforce engagement between local governments and humanitarian actors in ensuring more effective preparedness, prevention and response to humanitarian crises in urban crises. The Framework would consist of two components; (i) a statement of principles and commitments to be endorsed by IASC Principals and UCLG, and (ii) an operational guidance note to operationalize these principles to local contexts. The Operational Guidance would have to be contextualized in humanitarian crises to adjust to the situation on the ground including the type of disaster. Using the Humanitarian Programme Cycle as a starting point, the Operational Guidance would provide guidance and tips on how to engage on assessments, response planning, and coordination issues while aiming to build trust and strengthened understanding between humanitarians and local authorities. The Localization sub-group provided some feedback already on the draft Framework including the need to bring out community engagement, accountability to affected populations, and gender dimensions.

RG1 members expressed their appreciation of UNHABITAT's work and inquired about how the Framework could be applied in non-urban settings; how the Framework foresees engagement with various levels of government and differences between priorities of various government authorities, and how the differentiation between being de-facto and state authorities might play out. UNHABITAT informed that the Framework will be applicable to all geographic areas with a governance structure and acknowledged that sometimes there are disconnects between national and local government with humanitarians advised to work with both levels on key phases of the response. The Framework hints at the humanitarian organizations may help better coordination between different levels of the government, and encourages humanitarian actors to identify bureaucratic impediments including through collaboration with local communities. Finally, the Framework recognizes the importance of understanding local dynamics and recommends a contextualized approach with regards to de-facto vs state authorities.

2. Key Messages and Asks from OPAG on Localization and Bureaucratic Impediments

Mr. Andrew Wyllie, RG1 co-chair, informed RG1 members that RG1 would present to OPAG on localization and RG1's progress on its priorities on 24 March, and on bureaucratic impediments on 26 March. Mr. Wyllie noted that IASC Principals have kept both localization and bureaucratic impediments on their agenda throughout 2020 calling for catalytic

progress on both issues. RG1 was uniquely positioned to inform policy direction on these subjects and feed into OPAG decision making. He underlined the need for RG1 to agree to some collective asks and messages for OPAG and invited Localization and Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments sub-group co-chairs to brief members on planned presentations.

Ms. Stella Ogunlade, Localization sub-group co-chair, discussed the progress of the localization in humanitarian coordination guidance and associated key asks from OPAG. Ms. Ogunlade informed that the draft guidance was consulted with RG1, RG2, RG3 and RG5 as well as GCCG, GRG, and several local and international NGO consortia , as well as through a number of regional consultations with national NGOs in different languages . The Guidance would seek to promote participation of local and national actors, strengthen leadership of local actors in humanitarian coordination structures, and encourage a two-way capacity strengthening approach. The Guidance introduces indicators to assess progress against aspirations and consider a minimum standard on local NGO participation in HCTs including women-led organizations. Ms. Ogunlade sought views of RG1 members as to whether to introduce global targets for the indicators, engagement with government authorities, and recommend a minimum level of participation for local NGOs in HCTs. These would then be raised with OPAG.

RG1 members discussed the pros and cons of developing global indicators, targets and recommending minimum standards on local NGO participation in HCTs. There was agreement to track indicators at global level and work with relevant entities to develop a commonly agreed definition of women-led organizations. Members indicated that RG1 could pave the way for inclusion of local actors by introducing minimum targets but recognized there might be cases where HCs/HCTs might need to consider contextual realities. There was agreement to not set global targets for now, but instead determine benchmarks for Year 1 and also consult some field operations on whether there should be minimum levels of participation of local actors in HCTs. It was agreed that to the extent possible indicators that are used are coherent with those that are being considered for the IASC AAP tracker. There was also agreement that for now until there was a clearer definition of WLO and WROs it would not be possible to disaggregate data. Finally, the Guidance would be applicable in IASC settings and those interested in applying it in other coordination settings would be welcome to do so. A localization guidance for refugee settings was also underway and would be cross-cited in the IASC guidance for coherence purposes.

Ms. Kathryn Strifolino and Mr. Jeremy Wellard, BAI sub-group co-chairs, presented on the progress of the sub-group and key messages prepared for OPAG. Ms. Strifolino noted that three case studies were underway in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Venezuela, and findings of these studies would feed into the development of a normative guidance for HCTs on bureaucratic impediments. Some challenges were encountered in the roll out of these case studies. As such, a key ask for OPAG would be for OPAG members to be an ambassador for RG1's work on bureaucratic impediments with their country offices, share lessons learned and best practices from their work on bureaucratic impediments. Likewise, the sub-group was reaching out to HCs in these countries explaining the approach and understanding what would be most useful to them in terms of an output/tool. Members agreed with the general outline of the key messages for OPAG with the sub-group scheduled to further refine them on 23 March.

3. Update on IASC Protection Policy Review

RG1 Centrality of Protection sub-group co-chairs, Ms. Dina Abou Samra and Ms. Jenny McAvoy provided an update on the progress of the planned review of the implementation of the IASC Protection Policy. Ms. Samra noted that NRC agreed to be the administrative host for the Review, acting as budget holder and contracting and managing the team of consultants, as outlined in the ToRs. A budget and proposal was developed and would be shared with key donors for their consideration by late March. NRC would issue the bid as soon as possible so that the Review could start in early May. The IASC committee would function as a strategic sounding board for the team of consultants conducting the

Review and would be composed of ten individuals including an equal number of UN and NGO representatives, one ICRC representative and one Humanitarian Coordinator. Terms of reference for the IASC Committee were endorsed by OPAG, and circulated for nominations. RG1 members were encouraged to work with OPAG counterparts to nominate candidates for the IASC Committee.