

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

FINAL SUMMARY RECORD AND ACTION POINTS

Geneva, 29 May 2019

Host: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Opening Remarks

The Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, welcomed the IASC members and thanked Mr. Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the IFRC, for hosting the IASC meeting in the newly inaugurated headquarters of the IFRC, noting the symbolism of meeting aptly at the IFRC as it celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019.

Session 1: Horizon Scanning [PRINCIPALS ONLY]

The IASC discussed key humanitarian crises with the objective of building a shared understanding and approach to address the specific challenges confronting the system to respond effectively to the urgent humanitarian needs on the ground. Their discussions specifically focused on the following crises: Sahel Region, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Rohingya crisis, Yemen, Venezuela, and Libya (*a readout of this session was shared separately*).

Session 2: Coordination with Key Global Processes (UNDS Reform, and Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration)

Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator, provided an update on the UN Development System (UNDS) reform process, highlighting that the primary objective of the reform is to enhance coherence, capacity and effectiveness through greater integration. A centre piece of the reform is the empowerment of the Resident Coordinator (RC) function and the establishment of the Development Coordination Office (UNDCO). He noted that the RC Offices are expected to provide leadership and coordination within the UN Country Teams to ensure collaboration and strengthened cross-pillar planning processes, in support of nationally defined Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities. System-wide planning and programming was to be facilitated through a revised United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to be developed in collaboration with Government and key stakeholders, beyond UN Agencies, including government, non-UN agencies and civil society. Mr. Steiner highlighted opportunities presented through the work of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC), which strives to better join up humanitarian and development efforts with linkages to peace, which are critical to contribute to the achievement of the SDG in crisis-affected countries. On the basis of a review of seven pilot countries, the JSC will present recommendations to the SG and UNSDG on further steps.

Principals expressed support for this important reform process and their interest in ensuring it delivers on results. The issue regarding the need to ensure the preservation of humanitarian

space and humanitarian principals and the importance of better sharing information and engaging with non-UN members throughout the reform process was underscored. A proposal was also made for the IASC to be the primary vehicle for humanitarian actors to engage on the UNDS reform, not only during the implementation phase on the ground, but in informing global policy level discussions and decisions. Concerns were expressed on the coordination levy as well as the over complication of coordination processes.

Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees, presented an update on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) which was endorsed by a vote of the UN General Assembly last year. The Compact seeks to build larger coalitions to make responses to refugee crises more effective in four key areas: i) strengthening the support to host countries, ii) promoting approaches that are inclusive of refugees, iii) reinforcing legal pathways for refugees to reach better protection, and iv) identifying sustainable solution to refugee situations. He highlighted the transformative opportunities presented through humanitarian-development collaboration, including in terms of effectiveness, impact and resource mobilisation.

The first Global Refugee Forum would take place on 17-18 December 2019 in Geneva at Ministerial level, and will bring together key stakeholders, including member states, civil society, private sector amongst others, to take stock of progress made since the NY Declaration and to seek pledges for support in the implementation of the Compact. While high-level political attendees will be critical to garner the required political weight, attention and commitments to the GCR, the engagement and championship of key stakeholders, including UN, civil society, NGOs and others, will be critical. IASC Principals acknowledged the ongoing work in support of the GCR, and noted the need to recognize the critical work and responsibility taken on by host countries, particularly from the Global South, at the upcoming Forum.

Ms. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director-General of IOM, briefed the IASC on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which is a non-binding instrument that offers a blue-print for managing global migration in all its dimensions. It was adopted by the UN GA in late 2018 and consists of 23 objectives addressing the full scope of international migration, including issues relevant to humanitarian action, such as saving lives, reducing vulnerabilities, among others. The UN Migration Network was created in October 2018 by the Secretary-General to ensure an effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to assist Member States' implementation of the GCM and is coordinated by IOM. She noted that the UN Migration Network is already up and running and is finalizing a workplan which will soon be shared widely with partners, has set up working structures, and is in the process of creating a start-up fund with an initial goal to raise US\$ 25 million during the first year (noting that to date only two Member States have made pledges, namely the UK and Germany). A Steering Committee, which will rotate annually, chaired by DG/IOM and comprising 3 UN entities (ILO, WHO, UN Women), 3 donors, 3 Member States and 3 stakeholders, is also being established for the start-up fund. Lastly, Ms. Thompson noted that the annual GCM meeting will take place on 11 December in Geneva and invited IASC members who are part of the UN Migration Network to participate.

The Principals welcomed the progress made in moving the GCM forward. They urged IOM to share regular updates on the process, including clear narrative on the Compact and what it aims to achieve and how.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- Schedule a more in-depth discussion on the UN Development System reform at the next IASC meeting [*IASC secretariat*].
- Regularly share communication products on the progress of the UN Development System Reform with the IASC members [*UNDP sharing it with the IASC secretariat for further circulation*].
- Share a clear narrative with the IASC members on both the Refugee and Migration Compacts laying out what the Compacts are, what they aim to achieve, and what are their respective processes to operationalize them [*UNHCR and IOM*].

Session 3: Ebola Preparedness and Response

Dr. Mike Ryan, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme, briefed the IASC on the current state of the humanitarian response to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and noted that, despite the significant efforts already made to contain the outbreak and an extensive vaccination campaign, serious challenges emerged in the past few weeks which continue to present a high risk for national and possibly regional spread. Key challenges involving insecurity, political manipulation and community distrust are hampering the outbreak response. High population movement poses difficulties for case identification and contact tracing. Dr. Ryan further noted the need for a strengthened multi-sectoral response in close collaboration with communities and local authorities.

The IASC noted that the response efforts to date have been commendable. In an effort to step-up and further reinforce and strengthen the collective response efforts, the IASC unanimously agreed on the need to activate the “*IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events*.” The activation would be in zones where transmission is occurring and is likely to occur, with the possibility of including other geographical areas should the disease spread. The focus of the activation will be on the five key strategic priorities outlined by WHO and the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG), namely: i) adapted, scaled up and improved execution of public health operations aimed at breaking transmission chains and ending the epidemic; ii) strengthened political engagement to create an enabling environment for the response; iii) strengthened multi-sectoral humanitarian coordination and response interventions that fosters greater community engagement; iv) timely and sustainable financing, monitoring and reporting on the use of funds in collaboration with the World Bank and key donors; and v) leadership for a contingency cell in Goma to ensure preparedness actions. There is also a need to redouble preparedness efforts in other countries. Recognising the key role of NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, they also supported a joint approach including in coordination and planning mechanisms. They also noted the need to strengthen information flows with respect to security. It was also acknowledged that there needs to be a more focused narrative on creating an enabling environment for community ownership rather than purely a focus on an enabling political and security environment.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- Activate the ‘*IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events*’ for health zones in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in which Ebola transmission is occurring and likely to occur (*with the possibility of including other geographical areas should the disease spread*). Activation will be for an initial period of three months (*with a possibility of extension, if required*). [ERC]

- The activation will focus on the 5 key strategic priorities presented by WHO and agreed to by Emergency Directors on 16 May (*see above*).
- Financial allocations are being made from the Common Humanitarian Fund (Country-Based Pooled Fund) and will be considered from the CERF subject to the discussions on the Fourth Strategic Response Plan (SRP), which is now in preparation. [ERC]
- The need to strengthen regional preparedness. [IASC members]
- Regularly update key collective messages. [IASC members]
- An Operational Peer Review (OPR) will take place as stipulated in the protocols; the exact timing to field the OPR is yet to be determined [*IASC's Peer-2-Peer Project*].

Session 4: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment of aid workers

Ms. Henrietta Fore, IASC Champion on PSEA and Sexual Harassment and UNICEF Executive Director, proposed language to revise Principle 4 of the IASC Six Principles on PSEA which discourages sexual relations between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries¹. Many agreed on the need to move towards a stronger and more clear prohibition, given that such a relationship can affect the credibility and integrity of humanitarian work. Given the urgency to come to a collective position and demonstrate IASC commitment to PSEA, Principals were asked to consider the position as reflected in the proposal as a minimum common denominator to be further improved in the near future. Principals requested more time to consider the revised language, agreeing to revert within two weeks with any formal objection and suggested text.

Ms. Fore provided an update on progress against the IASC Plan for Accelerating PSEA at country level, based upon results from the survey by 34 Humanitarian Coordinators/Humanitarian Country Teams (HC/HCT). In many countries, the ability for victims to report is not easily accessible or available (only a few countries reported the ability to investigate allegations in under seven days). She also noted that the system is challenged when it comes to providing victim support.

She requested IASC members' support to commit more resources, to chair PSEA networks at country-level, and to deploy dedicated PSEA Coordinators. Currently, 24 PSEA networks have co-chairs, with fifteen of those having dedicated coordinators. Several agencies have stepped forward with commitments: WFP will provide six coordinators, UNICEF five, and WHO two. IOM is also providing inter-agency training for PSEA coordinators.

Ms. Fore asked for more in-country hotlines, noting that only 15 countries reported having dedicated hotlines or complaints mechanisms. In addition, of the 13 countries that reported funding levels in their humanitarian response plans, seven were less than 30 percent funded for gender-based violence (GBV) or child protection services. The target is to achieve 50 per cent funding across all HRP.

Principals thanked Ms. Fore for her leadership and work as IASC Champion, noting progress made from the last report. They supported the IASC Best Practices document, and requested that, in addition to PSEA being a regular session at the Principals meeting, the IASC should

¹ Any sexual relationship between those involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection and beneficiaries (in conflict/high risk situations) that involves – or appears to involve - partiality, preferential treatment or improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships also undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

strengthen communication and engagement with the field. The reactions of some organisations to the allegations in Mozambique demonstrate that a more collective response is still needed. Strong field leadership was recognised as a critical factor in achieving progress. A study commissioned by the Irish Consortium of GBV has shown that investment in survivor-centred approaches can be effective. It was noted that beyond technical adjustments, there is a need to create culture change, recognising that the #metoo movement has contributed to more space to speak up. The inclusion of NGOs in PSEA country networks was also underscored.

In reaction to the request for additional support, UNDP indicated that it could look into the adaptation of reporting hotlines. OHCHR offered human rights advice and to help develop and establish procedures, especially on support to victims. IOM noted that they were developing a new platform to report PSEA cases, for both internal and external audiences, and will explore the feasibility of a common, inter-agency platform. SCHR stated that it was reviewing the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and was working through barriers to expand membership.

Going forward, it was proposed that the IASC could work on harmonising standards, especially across the UN and with donors, as well as harmonising available training and including support for national NGOs. IASC members were requested to support HCs and HCTs to collectively engage on PSEA and sexual harassment, noting the high level of engagement during the Humanitarian Coordinators retreat in 2019 and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators' recognition of the need to step up commitments.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, thanked Ms. Fore for her leadership as Champion and shared his vision on areas that he wishes to focus on when he assumes his role as IASC Champion for PSEA and Sexual Harassment as of 1 September 2019. Specifically, Mr. Grandi highlighted that he will emphasize the advocacy role of the Championship mandate, while the ERC confirmed his role as overall coordinator. Mr. Grandi also proposed dedicating an IASC session to examine how power and authority is exercised and what type of leadership is needed in the humanitarian community to prevent abuse. Furthermore, to better advocate and show commitment, Mr. Grandi proposed a joint field visit of IASC Principals with the UN Victims' Rights Advocate, Ms. Jane Connors. Mr. Grandi also proposed the establishment of a fund to support IASC organisations and affiliated partners, including local NGOs, for country-level actions that will improve communication with communities to address PSEA.

The ERC announced that from 1 September 2020, the next IASC Champion on PSEA and sexual harassment will be the Executive Director of UNFPA, Ms. Natalia Kamen.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- Consider revised language on principle 4 of the IASC Six Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, given an overall agreement to move towards a stronger position, and to indicate in writing by 17 June if they do not agree with the IASC Champion's draft language, and if not, what alternative language they would like to propose. Should there still be no consensus, the ERC will determine the way forward. The language will be further strengthened in the future.
- Publish the IASC Best Practice document and continue to share updated best practices through the IASC secretariat [*IASC members and IASC secretariat*].
- Continue to support the IASC Strategy for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment, the IASC Plan for Accelerating PSEA at Country Level

in Humanitarian Response and the work of the IASC Champion for PSEA and sexual harassment [*IASC members*].

- Develop coordinated messaging on PSEA to transmit to the field through each IASC member agency [*IASC members and IASC secretariat*].
- Advise on the successor to UNFPA as PSEA/SHA Champion [*ERC by 1 September 2020*].

Session 5: Global Humanitarian Overview

The ERC presented on the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) and highlighted four priorities which serve to strengthen the GHO. Specifically, there will be a stronger narrative on output-level results and impact of humanitarian action in the 2020 GHO; a clearer distinction between the needs and response plans; strengthened coverage of vulnerable groups including women and girls and people with disabilities; and an overview of medium-term financial requirements. The ERC presented the timeline in the lead up to the launch of the GHO and sought the respective IASC organizations' contributions as follows: by 25 October input for the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNOs) to be submitted; by 1 November input into the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) are expected; the 2020 GHO will be simultaneously launched in Berlin, Brussels, Geneva, London and Washington on 4 December 2019. IASC Principals were invited to advise of the launch event they wish to participate in. The need to maintain the apolitical nature of the document (particularly in light of growing pressures by some Governments to negotiate the content of the document) as well as the need to ensure linkages to the SDGs was underscored.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- Reinforce the importance of submitting inputs leading up to the production of 2020 GHO in accordance with the timeline outlined above [*IASC members with the support of OCHA*].
- IASC Principals to advise OCHA on interest to be part of the 2020 GHO launch events on 4 December 2019 taking place in Brussels, Berlin, London, Washington, or Geneva [*Note: The World Bank is confirmed for the Washington launch*] [*IASC members and OCHA*].

Session 6: Severe/Sustain

The ERC noted that the IASC had decided in December 2017 on the need for two systems to replace the old L3 mechanism, namely, a “Scale-Up” protocol and a “Sustain/Severe” designation. In November 2018 the revised “Scale-Up Protocols” were finalized, however, discussions on “Sustain/Severe” remain contentious. He noted that a revised concept note reflecting views expressed by various organizations was shared for discussion and that the intention was not to seek approval on it.

Participants welcomed the progress made thus far in further developing the sustain/severe concept note. A few organizations questioned the purpose/ added value of the designation particularly in light of other key process, such as the Humanitarian-Development Nexus efforts through the Joint Steering Committee among others, to address the needs in protracted crisis situations. One suggestion was made to pilot the designation in a few countries. A question

regarding the operational implications of the designation on the various organizations was raised. Further clarification was sought on the criteria to transition from Scale-Up to Sustain and a proposal was made to align the designation with the Grand Bargain efforts, particularly visa-a-vis multi-year funding. The need for an additional protocol in light of developments over recent years was questioned, noting the need to first get “Scale-up” implemented (and deactivated) successfully. Mixed views were expressed on the purpose of Sustain, whether to address nexus situations or to improve financing.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- Highlighted the work on the Severe/Sustain concept so far;
- Agreed to work further on the issue, reflecting on the comments made [OCHA to facilitate discussion].

Session 7: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Mr. Vladimir Cuk, CEO of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), provided an update on progress made as well as the opportunities and challenges faced in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. He noted that persons with disabilities represent the largest minority group, with an estimated one billion people (15% of the global population), and elaborated on the many challenges and barriers they are facing in emergency settings. He noted that persons with disabilities are four times more likely to die or be targeted in conflicts. He indicated that not enough consultations are taking place with persons with disabilities and underscored that programmes that are developed without consulting people with disabilities can be fatal.

Mr. Cuk welcomed the increasing international momentum and commitment to advancing disability inclusion in humanitarian action, which he attributed to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) where the issue of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action was raised for the first time ever. He underlined that this topic has been further prioritized through the Global Disability Summit in 2018 where 175 commitments were made of which 80 were for conflicts and crisis settings; the first-ever UN Security Council Arria Formula discussion in 2018 on the impact of conflicts on persons with disabilities; the recently endorsed UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS); and the work being done to develop IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (the first humanitarian guidance being developed by persons with disabilities, to be completed this year).

Mr. Cuk proposed four recommendations to the Principals: i) Include Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in the work of humanitarian agencies and consider the IDA and OPDs as information providers and partners, not only as beneficiaries; ii) Swiftly endorse the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and support their implementation; iii) Prepare for the implementation of the UNDIS in humanitarian settings, including by allocating technical capacity and resources; and iv) Appoint an IASC Champion on the rights of persons with disabilities and include the issue of Disabilities regularly in IASC meetings.

The IASC Principals reaffirmed their commitment to make humanitarian action more inclusive, however, there was recognition that in some cases it takes time to convert the commitments made to action. Recent or ongoing achievements include the ten commitments made by the World Bank, UNFPA’s focus on empowering young persons with disabilities during the Global

Disability Summit in July 2018; the Disability Inclusive Development guidance developed by UNDP in December 2018; and the report to the Human Rights Council on the Internally Displaced Persons with disabilities being developed by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs (The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs added she would work closely with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and would reach out to IDA for consultations). The Principals reiterated the lack of reliable disaggregated data on persons with disabilities and noted the need to boost inter-agency cooperation in this regard. Better use of technology and increased staff training were also highlighted as critical areas of work. Principals welcomed the forthcoming finalization of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and agreed on the need to support their implementation and dissemination.

The IASC Principals agreed on the following:

- *The IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action will be finalised by July 2019 [Results Group 2 - Accountability and Inclusion, Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG)].*
- *Include the issue of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in future IASC meetings [IASC secretariat in consultation with the ERC].*

AOB

The next IASC meeting will take place on 5 December in Geneva. Suggestions for issues/topics to be discussed at the upcoming IASC meeting are welcome.
