

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

PRINCIPALS MEETING

Final Summary Record and Action Points

**03 December 2018, Geneva
Host: ICRC**

Humanitarian Diplomacy

Mr. Peter Maurer, ICRC President, reflected on ICRC's distinct role and experience in humanitarian diplomacy. He spoke about the serious challenges with compliance to International Humanitarian Law and engaging with belligerents. He noted the importance of engaging with belligerents on the basis of the Law and the need to constantly identify the best equation and dynamics to work towards a more positive outcome.

He stressed that the IASC could do more to coalesce around collective or complimentary approaches in tackling issues of common concern. There was a need to do more to better leverage what the various members were doing to address common challenges on the ground, and have a clearer understanding of how the members engage with the various actors, and how this engagement can better support and promote other members' work. In that regard, there was room to better strategize on timing and sequencing of engagement with interlocutors in a way that leverages the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of the members. Equally as important was addressing the conundrum between public and private diplomacy – noting that there were opportunities in striking a balance and capitalizing on members that could speak up and those who engaged more through quiet diplomacy. He acknowledged that this needed to be done taking into consideration the different mandates, governing bodies and constituencies that each of the members have.

Given the seriousness of the issues confronted, he encouraged the members to move away from individual actions and move more towards strategizing on what each can do separately or jointly to flexibly collaborate on specific issues. He indicated that humanitarian diplomacy was easier around issue-based topics rather than context-based issues, and proposed quietly collaborating on a number of issues, including potentially around next year's 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Convention as well as on counter-terrorism and shrinking humanitarian space.

IASC Principals supported the call for more strategic quiet coordination vis-à-vis advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy efforts and suggested identifying a number of key issues/contexts around which they can collaborate (which could include the 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Convention, engaging with donors on addressing the impact of counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian action, and specific contexts where there are increasing access challenges). They noted the importance of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee, which brings together the UN humanitarian, political, development, and human rights interlocutors in the system, among others, to ensure better coherence and strengthened humanitarian diplomacy efforts. Furthermore, they acknowledged that humanitarianism has changed considerably and has become more political, economic and social, and that there was a need to recognize this and engage with interlocutors accordingly. They also acknowledged that humanitarian diplomacy has become more complex with the advance of many new actors, which has to be factored into

members' engagement. In this context, they stressed that mandates are of importance as enablers of humanitarian diplomacy efforts. Linked to this, they emphasized the need to ensure that engagement and advocacy targeted public opinion, including that of the youth, to ensure maximum impact, and that it would require using a narrative and language that was more socialized and comprehensible. They also relayed that 'exclusivity' must be avoided and that more could be achieved with other non-IASC interlocutors/groups.

The IASC Principals agreed to:

1. Task the IASC secretariat to identify issues/opportunities for coordinated action and flexible informal collaboration (*which could include the 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Convention, engaging with donors on addressing the impact of counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian action, and specific contexts where there are increasing access challenges*).
2. For the ERC to further utilize on the Secretary General's Executive Committee as a key platform to ensure more coherence around humanitarian diplomacy efforts.
3. Adopt a Statement on Yemen – published on December 3 (signed by 20 IASC Principals).

Review Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Aid Workers (SHA)

Ms. Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, outlined actions of the *Proposal for Advancing PSEA at Country-Level* under three main priorities: 1) safe, accessible and dignified reporting that is gender and child sensitive; 2) quality SEA survivor assistance; and 3) enhanced accountability, including through prompt and respectful investigations. She announced that UNICEF had set aside USD 11 million for country-level responses and appealed to IASC Principals to contribute additional resources. In response, WFP noted they would dedicate several USD million for PSEA country-level responses, and UNHCR noted they estimated USD 9 million would be needed in 2019 for SEA and SH activities, in addition to UNHCR's work in its field operations in relation to SGBV prevention and response, as well as Age, Gender and Diversity mainstreaming, which incorporates community-based feedback mechanisms. InterAction has been supporting NGO members to achieve commitments made in the InterAction CEO Pledge on Preventing Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Harassment; in October 2018 hosting a senior leadership retreat which assessed progress to date on PSEA/SHA. InterAction was recently awarded a multi-year multi-million USD grant to provide resources and capacity for members to make internal changes and pilot collective solutions to PSEA/SHA in the NGO sector.

Principals urged more proactive and coordinated communication with donors on that the IASC is taking action with existing resources, however increased funding was required to meet identified priorities. ICVA referred to the 22 donors' commitment during the International Safeguarding Summit held in London on 18 October 2018 to strengthen organisational capacity and capability across the international aid sector, including building the capability of implementing partners to meet the minimum standards.

Ms. Jane Connors, United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate, supported the strategy and the proposal, noting it is anchored in a victim-centred approach. She underlined the importance of establishing linkages between the humanitarian and development sexual exploitation and abuse

networks at field level and urged for more field victims' rights advocates in humanitarian contexts. She suggested the IASC to promote her proposed statement on victims' rights.¹ She also urged that communities be part of the process from the outset and throughout in designing activities to prevent and respond to SEA. She noted the recent joint UN Chief Executive Board (CEB) and IASC meeting of investigatory bodies on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, where steps were taken to entrench a victim-centred approach in investigations. She emphasised more work was required to clarify how the proposed PSEA country-level structure will engage and collaborate with existing country-based mechanisms and structures, as well as further consultation with country-based development actors. Ms. Connors offered her offices' cooperation in exchanging information, including on PSEA mapping efforts.

The IASC Principals unanimously endorsed the strategy and welcomed the victim-centred and field-oriented vision of the proposal. In addition, members agreed on the need to develop further details on resourcing, resource implication, implementation and assessment which would be informed by the on-going mapping exercise as well as requests from Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) and build on what already exists in specific contexts.

Principals agreed to endorse the strategy and the proposal and build on the ongoing mapping on PSEA to fill gaps and identify a timeline towards achieving outputs and outcomes. Members acknowledged that effective implementation requires strong cooperation and collaboration across the system and across sectors. They also requested reporting back on progress.

The IASC Principals agreed:

4. To adopt the “*Proposal for Advancing PSEA at Country-Level*”, with details on resource requirements/implications and implementation arrangements to be further developed.
5. For the IASC Champion on PSEA/SHA to report back on progress in the implementation of the strategy and proposal.
6. For IASC members to commit resources towards implementation of the proposal and for proactive and coordinated communication with donors on both existing IASC efforts and the need for increased additional financing.

AOB

The IASC Principals also agreed to:

7. Send suggestions for topics to discuss at their May 2019 meeting to the IASC secretariat in order to assist the Emergency Relief Coordinator in finalising the agenda.

¹To Note: This will be discussed at the UN High Level Steering Group on System-Wide Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse on 10 December 2018.