

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Recommendations Related to the Review of the Capacity of the United Nations (UN) System for Humanitarian Assistance

I. COORDINATION

1. There are two aspects of Humanitarian Coordination: strategic and operational. The former includes the overall direction of the humanitarian programme; setting of goals for the programme; allocating tasks and responsibilities and ensuring they are reflected in a strategic plan in accordance with agencies' mandates; the advocacy of humanitarian principles and negotiating access; ensuring that resource mobilization for the programme responds to priorities as agreed in the strategic plan; monitoring and evaluating the overall implementation of the programme to ensure that changing circumstances and constraints are identified and responded to; liaising with the military and political participants of the international community, including that of the UN. Operational coordination comprises: substantive coordination in relation to specific sectors, geographical areas, and beneficiary groups; and provision of common services for humanitarian participants in areas such as security, communications, common logistics systems.

2. The IASC under the chairmanship of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), decides on the appropriate field coordination mechanism for each complex emergency, on a case by case basis, drawing from a range of options which include: the Resident Coordinator as Humanitarian Coordinator, the lead agency, and in special circumstances, the Humanitarian Coordinator distinct from the office of the Resident Coordinator or lead agency. The coordination arrangements described below should take full account of the fact that activities on behalf of certain beneficiary groups, such as refugees, are cross-border in nature and cannot be addressed only through a country-based approach. Furthermore, coordination arrangements will respect existing mandates of humanitarian organizations and the competence of the Secretary-General or the General Assembly (GA) to decide upon such mechanisms. In addition, the evolutionary nature of a complex emergency requires that the IASC review coordination arrangements systematically with a view to changing them as and when appropriate. It is therefore necessary to continuously monitor existing coordination arrangements to draw on the experiences of the UN system.

3. In order to achieve a more holistic approach to coordination, to streamline coordination, to broaden the focus of humanitarian response to encompass not only immediate life-saving interventions but also livelihood sustaining activities, and to ensure a greater linkage between relief and development, the IASC agreed that normally a humanitarian coordination arrangement on the basis of the Resident Coordinator system with the following elements will be established:

- a. In situations of complex emergencies, the IASC, under the leadership of the ERC, will recommend candidates who could serve both as Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator to carry out functions of strategic coordination. The Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in his capacity as manager of the Resident Coordinator system, will ensure that these candidates are included in the selection process for Resident Coordinators, in accordance with procedures and criteria for that process.
- b. The current Resident Coordinator will be confirmed as the Humanitarian Coordinator should it be determined by the IASC that s/he has the necessary profile. Otherwise, the IASC will recommend rectification of the situation.

- c. In order to expedite prompt decision on the appointment of Resident/ Humanitarian Coordinators with the necessary skill, experience and leadership that command the respect and support of the humanitarian community, the ERC should maintain a roster of qualified candidates, drawing upon recommendations of the IASC members. The ERC will seek the approval of members of the IASC for candidates of the roster, drawing on the best available from within and outside the UN system who would meet the approved criteria for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. The roster would also be used to appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator on a temporary basis - in cases where it is determined that the Resident Coordinator does not have the necessary profile to be a Humanitarian Coordinator - until a person able to perform both functions is found.
- d. The Humanitarian Coordinator is accountable to the ERC. The Humanitarian Coordinator should not be charged with operational responsibilities to ensure impartiality in discharging his/her coordination functions.

4. However, in complex emergencies where coordination of policies and activities at the regional level is required, or where a country-based Resident Coordinator, for functional reasons, cannot serve effectively as Humanitarian Coordinator, the IASC, under the leadership of the ERC, may consider the designation of a lead agency to be tasked with the discharge of the responsibilities of humanitarian coordination. This designation shall be made according to the particular circumstances of the emergency and drawing from an inter-agency analysis of those circumstances.

5. Factors influencing the designation of a lead agency are that i) the various sectors of assistance being delivered are closely related to the mandate of the agency; ii) the assigned agency has the capacity to undertake strategic coordination needs and to establish and maintain both sectoral and common operational support mechanisms, while at the same time executing the operations specific to its mandate; and iii) the agency has a presence on the ground and/or is able to mobilise rapidly. The lead agency will be selected from among the members of the IASC and its country-director will be designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator. In such an arrangement, the agency country-director will be accountable to the ERC for his/her responsibilities as Humanitarian Coordinator, while continuing to be accountable to his/her own Executive Head for activities within the agency's mandate.

6. In addition, the ERC may decide, after consultation with the IASC, to appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator on an exceptional basis in countries where there is no Resident Coordinator in place and in countries where the ERC, guided by the IASC, determines that the in-country situation means it would not be viable for the Resident Coordinator or a lead agency to carry out the humanitarian coordination functions. As soon as the situation permits, arrangements should be made for the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Resident Coordinator functions to be carried out by the same person or, as necessary, for a lead agency to be appointed.

7. The regional dimension of humanitarian response should be taken into account in deciding coordination arrangements while respecting the mandates of the humanitarian organizations. To that end the ERC may decide, after consultation with the IASC, to appoint Regional Humanitarian Coordinators in complex emergency situations not falling predominantly under the mandate of any agency. In such instances Humanitarian Coordinators of countries in the region should work as a team under the guidance of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator.

8. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, in accordance with the IASC approved Terms of Reference (TOR) for the humanitarian coordination function, will work in close consultation with humanitarian organizations in-country in discharging his/her functions.

9. In order for humanitarian coordination to be discharged effectively, it is necessary for humanitarian organizations to contribute to the support structure, including the seconding of staff. When the Humanitarian Coordinator is not the Resident Coordinator or from the lead agency, the administrative support for his/her office should be provided, in general, by one of the operational agencies in the field. In addition, as required, operational responsibility for the UNDP programme in-country should be delegated to the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative. Similarly, in a lead agency arrangement, operational responsibility should be delegated, as required, to a deputy.

10. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator may also propose to the ERC that the IASC designate an agency to carry out a lead role in operational coordination for a specific target group, geographical area or technical sector. This lead sectoral agency would be accountable to the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for the performance of its operational coordination responsibilities.

11. The IASC has supported and endorsed the proposed role for the World Food Programme (WFP) as an agency which offers significant comparative advantages in providing logistics and transport services for material resources, while at the same time recognizing the prerogatives of individual agencies to seek the most effective and appropriate arrangements in each particular field situation.

12. Depending on the functions and responsibilities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in a given country or region, his/her relationship with the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be clarified at the earliest possible instance. The IASC, under the leadership of the ERC, should ensure that the humanitarian perspective is reflected in the policy discussions of the UN Secretariat, and in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, and thus, in the mandate of the UN missions subsequently established. The ERC should ensure that the SRSG if appropriate is briefed on the humanitarian programme, including its coordination arrangements. In both these tasks, the ERC will draw on the guidance of IASC members both at field and headquarters levels.

13. In situations where the SRSG has overall responsibilities for the activities of the UN System, at the field level, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should ensure that the SRSG is fully informed of and consulted on the programmes and activities of humanitarian organizations in-country. S/he should seek the advice of the SRSG on issues arising from the humanitarian programme that might influence political or other events outside the humanitarian sphere. The SRSG should ensure that the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is consulted on matters that might have an impact upon the humanitarian programme. The institutional links between the SRSG and the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be designed to maintain this close dialogue while protecting the particular identity and objectives of the humanitarian programme. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should continue to be directly accountable to the ERC regarding emergency humanitarian assistance. It is the responsibility of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator at the field level and the IASC, under the leadership of the ERC, at the global level, to ensure that the coordination between the humanitarian programme and the political and peacekeeping activities of the UN is sustained, and thus that the humanitarian perspective is taken into account in decisions taken by other entities of the UN and in particular in the Security Council.

II. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Coordination

14. The ERC, as chairman of the IASC, will be the focal point at Headquarters level for the inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance to IDPs. This responsibility includes: (i) global advocacy on both assistance and protection requirements; (ii) resource mobilization and the identification of gaps in resources for IDPs; (iii) in consultation with external institutions, promotion of the establishment of a database and global information on IDPs, including monitoring and issuance of periodic situation reports; and (iv) support to the field on IDP-related humanitarian issues, including negotiation of access to IDPs.

15. At the field level, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator will, in full consultation with the inter-agency country team, be responsible for the strategic coordination of assistance to IDPs. This responsibility will include addressing IDP humanitarian requirements before, during and after an emergency, serving as an advocate for the assistance and protection of IDPs, as well as recommending division of responsibility among agencies to the ERC. The TOR for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators should be amended to explicitly state their responsibilities with respect to IDPs.

16. At Headquarters level the IASC-Working Group (IASC-WG) will serve as the forum for consultations on all IDP matters. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with the Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG) on IDPs, have worked out the TOR for facilitating this aspect of the Working Group's functions.

17. The IASC recognizes the operational expertise and experience of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in providing protection and assistance for IDPs over many years. The IASC notes that UNHCR's involvement with the internally displaced is guided by certain criteria, including requests from UN organs, and linkages with its mandated functions.

18. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator may recommend to the ERC, in consultation with the in-country team and on a case-by-case basis, a lead sectoral agency from among the relevant humanitarian organizations to be designated by the IASC to assume operational responsibility for IDPs, including camp management where appropriate.

19. An inter-agency project is underway to develop guidelines for better practices on IDPs which will enhance the synergy between assistance and protection of IDPs. Such guidelines will be drafted by the RSG on IDPs and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with OCHA and IASC members. At the same time, the potential role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) has to be further assessed.

20. The role of the RSG on IDPs should focus primarily on advocacy for IDP protection and assistance, and the setting of global standards and principles for enhanced protection, drawing where possible upon existing legal instruments and protocols, and making recommendations on how the application of existing instruments and protocols can be made more effective.

Agency Capacity

21. In order to minimize the risk of duplication of activities and/or to ensure that gaps in assistance to and protection of IDPs are identified, an inter-agency forum, at present the IASC-WG at the Headquarters level and the in-country Disaster Management Team (DMT) at the field

level, will address these issues. The IASC-WG and the DMT should advise the ERC on the need to provide technical assistance for the assessment of the impact of concentrations of internally displaced populations on the environment.

Information

22. The UN system and the non-UN community should ensure jointly that their efforts in the common pursuit of sound and reliable IDP information be made as complementary as possible. The IDP database, to be commissioned and reported on by the OCHA, is expected to ensure a step in that direction if all actors cooperate.

23. The in-country DMT should be made responsible for reporting on IDP situations on a regular basis through the Resident Coordinators and this function should be included in their job-descriptions. Such reports should be forwarded through the ERC to the IASC. The OCHA, the RSG on IDPs, UNDP and any other interested members of the IASC will work together on the development of a definition of the modalities of this reporting requirement.

24. An IDP-related training module should be developed and include training for IDP reporting and legal norms dealing with protection of and humanitarian assistance to IDPs as well as practical measures for providing protection and assistance to IDPs, especially women and children. IASC members will work closely together with the RSG on IDPs on the development of such a module.

III. LOCAL CAPACITIES/RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

25. In order to ensure that relief, recovery and development are concomitant and mutually reinforcing activities, the IASC agreed to the following cardinal principles, namely

- (i) that recovery be built on the efforts and actions of the people and communities concerned;
- (ii) that the processes of recovery begin during an emergency;
- (iii) that responses to the immediate needs created by an emergency must also begin laying the foundations for recovery; and
- (iv) that disaster prevention and emergency preparedness should be major objectives of development programmes, in particular in disaster-prone areas or political situations.

26. UN system relief and development practitioners should, as a matter of principle and routine:

- (i) identify and regularly assess/monitor vulnerabilities, local capacities and coping mechanisms among affected populations and institutions at the earliest opportunity during, or in advance of the onset of, crisis;
- (ii) design and implement response strategies which, while addressing critical life-saving needs, will simultaneously strengthen coping mechanisms as well as utilize and build upon prevailing local capacities, including those of women, in the planning and delivery of assistance;
- (iii) clearly define the synergy between relief and development activities, ensuring that relief interventions do not undermine local capacities but, rather, lay foundations for a sustainable recovery;
- (iv) ensure that emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes and resource mobilization activities prioritize support for capacity building interventions; and

- (v) clearly define their exit and/or handover strategy to local interlocutors.

IV. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

27. The IASC recognized the need for an approach to resource mobilization which will meet prioritized needs within a broader strategic framework - one which sets clear goals for the humanitarian programme, contributes to addressing the root causes of the crisis and forges the links with recovery. The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) should serve as a resource mobilization tool for the implementation of the strategic framework and as such to facilitate the setting of priorities.

28. Donors should ensure the availability of up-front resources to humanitarian organizations of the UN system to support contingency planning and preparedness measures within an integrated inter-agency framework.

29. Modalities for achieving access to such resources need to be discussed and agreed upon. The setting up of trust funds, utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) or the individual emergency funds of operational organizations, in accordance with their rules and procedures, are options to consider.

30. The OCHA, in full consultation with IASC members, should ensure that within the consolidated appeals there is clarity regarding:

- (i) the division of labour among humanitarian partners to address the emergency;
- (ii) what portion of the global needs for a specific country or region is being addressed by the UN system (and implementing partners);
- (iii) the channels through which donors are requested to provide funds;
- (iv) the relationship between the consolidated appeal and any other resource mobilization mechanism or instrument which may exist (Round Tables, Trust Funds, etc); and
- (v) the identification of gaps in current resource mobilization efforts including CAP, Round Table, Trust Funds etc.

31. The preparation of the CAP should be a field based exercise. Agencies should ensure that their representatives participating in the process have the necessary delegation of authority, whenever applicable, and backstopping from Headquarters. There should also be a dialogue with donors in-country.

32. Priorities for incorporation in the consolidated appeals should be established through the setting of objectives within a strategic planning process. While UN agencies should assume greater responsibility for ensuring prioritization within their mandated sectors of responsibility, there should be a more vigorous inter-agency process to review and decide on priorities based on the priority goals established within a strategic framework. This process should take place at the country level with the appropriate participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), donors and, where appropriate, representatives of the local government. The ERC, and the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and in-country team at the field level, should play a proactive role in ensuring prioritization, particularly among sectors as well as in instances where there is no inter-agency agreement.

33. Appeals should highlight efforts made both collectively and by individual agencies to promote enhanced UN system complementarity of programmes, coordination and efficiency (the latter including logistics, telecommunications, common premises, security, etc).

34. Within the CAP, greater attention should be paid to the rehabilitation and development dimension in humanitarian response activities and support for the inclusion of local capacity building activities wherever possible during the emergency.

35. In recognition of the importance of protection and respect for human rights in creating the conditions conducive to sustainable solutions in countries affected by complex crises, activities of the Office of the HCHR (OHCHR) should be incorporated in the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals, whenever appropriate. Activities of OHCHR which may be suitable for inclusion in the Appeals include monitoring, analysing and reporting on human rights violations and intervening to protect human rights, and possibly to raise tolerance and respect for human rights and human rights infrastructure in the post-conflict reconstruction, especially during the rehabilitation and recovery phases. Also, the activities of UN agencies having a protection mandate, in particular UNHCR and UNICEF, should be highlighted in the Appeals.

36. Within the CAP, consideration should be given to the regional dimensions of complex crises and efforts should be made to incorporate the resource requirements related to repatriation within appeals as they are prepared.

37. NGOs and relevant inter-governmental organizations should be fully associated at all stages of the CAP.

38. The Government should be, whenever possible, closely associated with the preparation of the CAP.

39. Efforts should be made, whenever possible, to align the time frames of ongoing consolidated appeals with the calendar year programme and budgetary cycles of the UN agencies.

40. Recognizing the need for maximum flexibility in responding to humanitarian needs in complex crises (where there are rapidly changing circumstances and a likely need to redeploy available resources to meet newly emerging needs), donors are requested to minimize earmarking of contributions in favour of a more flexible approach (which would involve close collaboration between the donor and recipient agency on the actual utilization of that contribution). If the evolution of a complex emergency requires a change in coordination arrangements at field level, the ERC will seek to assure the necessary transfer of resources for coordination to the appropriate coordination structure.

41. In complex emergencies field coordination is to be resourced through the CAP, as presented by the ERC. Resources for such coordination should go directly to the entity designated to provide administrative support.

42. Given there may not always be time for agreement on a comprehensive strategy at the beginning of an emergency, the flash appeal remains a useful mechanism to address immediate requirements at the onset of an emergency. Other options for identifying resources for field coordination prior to the launching of a CAP include: utilization of interest accrued on the CERF by the OCHA; identification by the OCHA of additional mechanisms for resource mobilization for coordination; and utilization of available capacity of IASC member agencies.

43. Contributions in-kind of commodities and services can form a valuable component especially in emergency response situations. Donors should be encouraged to provide in-kind contributions to the extent that they correspond to the priorities and specifications defined in the CAP.

44. NGOs who have agreed to the strategic framework and whose needs are reflected in the CAP should have access to the CERF.

45. Instead of establishing a new mechanism, the CAP should be broadened to cover not only relief but also rehabilitation and recovery requirements as and when required. These arrangements should be utilized until such time as other medium and long term resource mobilization mechanisms such as round tables and Consultative Groups can be organized. These should be placed within a strategic plan which clearly sets the objectives for the humanitarian programme to be formulated at the beginning of the process, and at the country level. Development partners should be invited to participate at the outset in the formulation of such a strategic plan.

46. The Resident Coordinator should ensure continuous consultations with organizations of the UN system at the country level in the preparation for and prior to a Round Table to ensure smooth transition between the Consolidated Appeal and Round Table Process.

47. Donors should support timely availability of resources for the essential post conflict recovery phase (to cover both humanitarian assistance and recovery activities including, inter-alia, those measures which support stabilization, reintegration of returnees and displaced persons, demobilization and mine clearance and economic and social rehabilitation). In that respect the recommendation of the DAC Task Force on conflict, peace and development that resources must be earmarked for coordination should be acted upon.

48. The recommendation of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda that donors adopt rapid and flexible procedures for disbursing recovery funds along the same lines as procedures for emergency assistance should be acted upon.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

49. In order to improve the overall effectiveness and accountability of the UN response to humanitarian needs, a simple field-based monitoring system should be established in all complex emergency situations in which the UN system is involved.

(i) The establishment of the system should be an inter-agency effort carried out under the leadership of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator.

(ii) The system should be tailored to local circumstances and requirements.

(iii) Every effort should be made to ensure the full participation in the programming and review process, of NGOs, donor representatives as well as national and local entities of governance, in order to maximize the effectiveness and coverage of the monitoring system.

(iv) The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should ensure that common indicators of progress are utilized in order to reduce the risk of duplication in data collection and to help identify information gaps.

(v) The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should establish a forum for information sharing and analysis.

(vi) Methodological work at the Headquarters level of UN system agencies involved in complex emergencies should be maintained to refine the use of monitoring tools, in particular through the identification of best practices and reliable indicators.

50. As envisaged in their TOR approved by IASC, Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators will serve as the focal points for the joint monitoring of humanitarian assistance system.

51. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should, in collaboration with all relevant participants, set objectives with clear benchmarks of assistance that reflect the capacity of the system to respond to the humanitarian needs and are realistic in the light of external constraints.

52. The IASC should define the type of inter-agency mechanism needed to review monitoring issues at the central level in order to identify best practices, compare experiences and continue to refine monitoring tools for humanitarian programmes.

53. The process of monitoring should be clearly articulated in each consolidated appeal, and resources required for monitoring (and other programme related functions) should be identified in the CAP.

54. The field based monitoring system should be coupled with the already functioning financial tracking of CAPs performed by the OCHA. This would form the basis of a consolidated reporting system on the overall direction and performance of a specific humanitarian programme.

55. A system of reporting should be established on the source and application of funds, thus tying together the narrative and financial information enabling effective monitoring and evaluation. To this effect each CAP should be subject to periodic review to enable necessary adjustments and modifications therein.

56. The donor community should be associated with every step in the process (i.e. assessment missions, establishment of CAP priorities, monitoring of implementation, etc) for donors to be provided with a complete picture of the humanitarian response and to facilitate the identification of gaps and bottlenecks.

57. The IASC will devote one of its forthcoming sessions to the issue of lessons learned and evaluation, and address the possibility of the maintenance of an inter-agency mechanism.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

58. Simplified procedures and generic job descriptions that include TOR and a list of required competencies should be developed. A standardization of competencies required for the full spectrum of field activities, such as the one developed by UNHCR, would facilitate the formulation of job descriptions (often lacking in field missions) and performance appraisal. A standardized post-assignment evaluation should be utilized to facilitate decisions on further employment.

59. A more equitable gender and geographical balance in emergency staffing should be obtained. This will facilitate, inter-alia, communication with beneficiary groups.

60. The need for new recruitment of staff for each emergency adds costs to the system and reduces the speed and effectiveness of emergency response. This can partly be offset by ensuring that the development of rapid response teams, trained and contractually prepared to enter the

field at short notice, is harmonized and instituted broadly within the UN system. Instituting a core of emergency staff who may be deployed when needed and serve other functions or train for their roles between deployments should be widely instituted among agencies.

61. The majority of internationally recruited UN personnel serving in crisis situations are funded by programme budgets and serve under limited term contracts that carry no expectation of renewal. Agencies and their governing bodies should ensure that such personnel are provided with adequate entitlement packages (e.g. insurance) commensurate with the risks and difficulties these staff face in the field. In addition, "out-placement" assistance should be instituted for short-term staff at the end of their contracts to assist them in finding their next job.

62. It is necessary for humanitarian organizations of the UN system to maintain cooperative working relationships with institutions which provide specialized training for crisis response, in order to seek appropriate training for personnel.

63. IASC members should continue to facilitate and coordinate the preparation of training materials and identify additional training resources for field staff, including orientation to the UN, preparation for mission assignment, with briefings for family members, and job specific training.

64. IASC members should ensure that a proper mechanism is put in place to coordinate the development of a training module on the management of personnel in emergencies covering recruitment, administrative procedures and psycho-social dynamics for both headquarters and field-based managers. The latter area should include topics such as stress management, transformation of interpersonal conflict, alcoholism, career development and the requirements of family units.

65. There are long-term consequences for staff because of inadequate support for families. Health and life insurance coverage, including coverage for a post-mission period, and financial support for family visitation should be made available to all internationally recruited staff, regardless of contractual category.

66. Agencies should ensure that adequate health care including rest and recuperation is provided for field staff. Also training in first aid and personal health should be instituted. Post-mission debriefings and counseling should become an integral part of a field assignment.

67. With respect to security arrangements, special consideration should be given to all women employees, local and international.

68. The IASC should ensure that the appropriate UN bodies intensify their efforts to address the fact that local staff are frequently the most vulnerable, yet have contractual terms and security arrangements significantly less supportive than international staff in the same mission. A system-wide employment and career development policy for local staff should be developed to address this problem.

VII. INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

69. The full potential of the IASC has yet to be realized. To this end the IASC must have the necessary authority and support from all its members in order to fulfil its role as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination at Headquarters level, to act on policy issues, and to ensure timely inter-agency response to complex emergencies. Given the complexity and urgency

of crisis situations that the IASC is expected to address, there must be in place a consultative mechanism which is conducive to quick decisions. It was also agreed that the IASC should assume a more active advocacy role and develop arrangements to facilitate the implementation of advocacy strategies.

70. The specific concerns expressed thus far about the inter-agency process relate to the authority of the IASC, ownership by members, impartiality of its secretariat, quality of preparation for meetings and effective follow-up of decisions taken by the IASC. In order to address these concerns new TOR and Action Procedures for the IASC and its working Group have been adopted.

71. Recognizing the need for assuring impartiality of secretariat support, it was recommended that the ERC ensure a strengthened and separate administrative IASC support structure within the OCHA. In order to ensure cohesion and avoid duplication, a joint IASC/ECHA Secretariat has been established in the OCHA, reporting directly to the ERC.

72. The OCHA as a whole should provide substantive secretariat support to the IASC. It is recommended that the support for the IASC and its Working Group be incorporated in the OCHA annual work plan which should be finalized after the IASC has agreed on its annual agenda.

73. Members of the IASC should contribute actively to putting items on the agenda of the IASC and its Working Group. They should prepare the necessary background papers on items which they propose. They should also put on the IASC agenda potential actions they may undertake which have an impact on other humanitarian actors.

74. Members should enhance their commitment to the IASC process by actively participating in the preparation of IASC and IASC-WG meetings as well as the implementation of their decisions. To this extent agreement has been reached that a) all Action Points and Summary Records will be disseminated to all field offices and that, where appropriate, as decided by the IASC or IASC-WG, Action Points could be submitted to ReliefWeb for posting; b) participants at the Weekly Inter-Agency Meetings in Geneva and New York should report regularly to the Secretariat on implementation of decisions and have responsibility for highlighting any problems being experienced; c) each member establishes focal points with the Secretariat for responding to the need for urgent consultations regarding the IASC or its Working Group.

75. In order to enhance decision-making by the IASC the following process has been proposed:

(i) The IASC will endeavour to take all decisions by consensus;

(ii) In instances where there is no consensus but where there is a convergence of views among a majority of IASC members:

- on matters pertaining to the implementation of agreed coordination arrangements, the ERC will decide on the basis of the convergence of the majority;
- on other important matters, the ERC will refer to the Secretary-General for a decision;
- all decisions will be taken in full respect of the mandates of individual IASC members.

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