1. Mr. Rashid Khalikov, the Chair of the IASC Working Group, welcomed participants to the video conference, which included all IASC organizations, except IFRC and UN Habitat. Mr. Khalikov outlined the purpose of the meeting which was to discuss the results of the 4 to 6 November 2009 workshop held near Geneva on ‘strengthening evidence based humanitarian decision making’ and to build on the related discussion from the 75th IASC Working Group meeting. He stated that all participants had the opportunity to review the draft workshop report including the conclusions and next steps. In addition, the Chair noted the progress made in the dashboard technical meeting held on 30 November 2009.

2. Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer of OCHA reiterated the conclusions of the workshop on evidence based humanitarian decision making, which proposed that the development of the dashboard be integrated into the Needs Assessment Task Force work plan, with the Task Force taking an oversight role and a Dashboard Technical Group to undertake the day-to-day development and design of the tool. Mr. Strohmeyer reported that the recent dashboard technical meeting reviewed the previous prototype and participants discussed the adjustments required to reflect protection and rights issues, the relief to recovery continuum and how best to include funding and response of national actors and NGOs on the Dashboard. Further discussion would take place, including at a face to face meeting in mid-January 2010. Mr. Strohmeyer noted that numerous design proposals for the dashboard had been made in a revised dashboard prototype to enable field testing to recommence by February 2010 with the aim of field-testing in up to 4 countries by June 2010. He also indicated that a stock-taking exercise is scheduled for end-June 2010 to discuss progress which will be later presented to the IASC Working Group in July 2010. In terms of needs assessment, he added that a revised budget for the NATF had been developed and circulated on 4 December for endorsement of the NATF on 18 December. Mr. Niels Scott of OCHA noted that there have been quite profound differences among IASC organizations on needs assessments, but that consensus was being built and now was the time to move ahead. Mr. Scott outlined a time frame for producing operational guidance on needs assessment by June 2010. He highlighted the significant level of resources being invested in the capacity building element, with a target date for initial deployment of March 2010. Similarly, on information management, which was linked to needs assessment, the first part of the “One Response” website was underway and would be developed further.

3. During the discussion, WFP, FAO, ICVA and UNICEF noted that the series of workshops and meetings that took place in November marked the beginning of the technical discussion on the dashboard and questioned whether the timeframe for further field testing as outlined by OCHA was realistic. In addition, FAO noted that several of the design proposals were not complementary and would need to be resolved, and added that the discussion of budgets at this stage was perhaps premature until the outcome of the discussion on the Humanitarian Dashboard was clearer.
4. WHO highlighted the agreement among the workshop participants to continue identifying a core set of indicators for each cluster that could be used as building blocks for needs assessment. WHO emphasized that agreement of indicators would not reflect agreement on a common methodology and did not want to see a forced unification of tools. WHO considered the dashboard a desirable instrument for decision making, advocacy and relevant for the country response, with the country team being the fundamental owners of the instrument. WHO would like to see complete alignment between the core indicators developed in the Needs Assessment Task Force and the further development of the dashboard. Therefore, WHO supported the merging the dashboard into the work plan of the Needs Assessment Task Force, but if this proposal raised issues on whether it should be an IASC product, then it could alternatively be identified as a multi-cluster/sectoral tool.

5. UNICEF pointed out that the report noted that the purpose of the dashboard remained unclear, and as a consequence this issue should be addressed as a priority. UNICEF remained as committed as ever to support the collective effort as long as the issues surrounding the product and its use were resolved. While UNICEF supported the integration of the dashboard into the Needs Assessment Task Force, the integration would imply that the Task Force review its terms of reference, perhaps in a manner similar to the review of the issues of humanitarian financing with technical sub-groups to address particular areas of work. UNICEF questioned whether the issue was ripe for discussion at the IASC Principals meeting and called on all organizations to be consistent in their messages to donors, as some donors appeared to be receiving mixed messages on the willingness of all participants to support the collective effort.

6. IOM noted that the documents referred to governance, but asked who would have the responsibility over the tool once it was fully developed.

7. ICRC focused its comments on the difficulty of using the dashboard in situations of armed conflict and reminded participants that when the discussion of the dashboard began, there was resistance from IASC organizations and yet, at this point the Working Group was being asked to agree to the integration of the dashboard into the Needs Assessment Task Force. While ICRC understood the logic of integration, it was not thrilled to see this contested tool in an IASC process. ICRC would not obstruct its further development, but suggested it be viewed as a humanitarian coordinator tool, but not as a product of the humanitarian community. ICRC remained concerned with the way protection and security was presented, as well as how local governments might react to the dashboard, and how donors intended to use it. ICVA supported ICRC and noted that the workshop report made it sound as if all participants supported the governance proposal, which was not the case. With regard to the proposed action points, ICVA would not like to welcome the conclusions in the report, as many issues remained unresolved and several ICVA members did not agree with the recommendations in the report. ICVA expressed concern at integrating the tool into the work plan of the Needs Assessment Task Force, given that the Task Force had so many issues already in its work plan and expressed a preference for the dashboard to remain an OCHA initiative. Finally, ICVA did not feel it appropriate to discuss the issue at the next IASC Principals meeting and would not support further field tests until the conceptual issues, many of which had been raised consistently since the dashboard was first presented, were resolved.

8. In the proposed action points, UNHCR supported the proposal to place the development of the dashboard within the mandate of the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force, but requested clarification on how it would move forward. UNHCR viewed needs assessment as the priority over the dashboard and suggested the activities be sequenced appropriately. UNHCR remarked that the OCHA staff leading these initiatives were split between Geneva and New York and called for clarity on the roles of each section. UNHCR suggested that the Needs Assessment Task Force meeting scheduled for the 18th of December would be an opportunity to address the sequencing and prioritization of time frames outlined in the work plan, as well as the issues highlighted from today’s meeting. Finally, regarding the core indicators, UNHCR said there was a need to define
what was meant by indicators, as well as their proposed use, and added that the protection cluster was having difficulties in defining indicators.

9. In response to the comments, the Chair noted the reluctance of the participants to discuss these issues at the IASC Principals meeting, but said that the Emergency Relief Coordinator was keen to bring it to the table to try to advance the issues, knowing that complete resolution was unlikely. The Chair also noted the commitment of IASC organizations to evidence-based humanitarian decision making, as well as the need for resolving key issues related to needs assessment and the development of the dashboard. With regard to the outcome of the workshop, the Chair said the development of the dashboard must be overseen by some group and that the Needs Assessment Task Force, given the overlap of substantive issues, would be the most appropriate entity. Mindful of the comments of ICRC, the Chair said that integrating the Dashboard into the NATF did not imply that the IASC logo be placed on tool and agreed that the dashboard be seen to be primarily a strategic tool for the Humanitarian Coordinator without necessarily reflecting the view of the whole humanitarian community. Further field tests were needed to develop the methodology and concept of the dashboard so as to address the concerns raised by IASC organizations. The Chair acknowledged the difficulty in endorsing the report of the workshop and proposed that the Working Group welcome the workshop without specifically referencing the report. He suggested the issue not be discussed in the April Working Group meeting, but rather a short session be held in the July 2010 Working Group meeting to provide an update on needs assessment and the humanitarian dashboard.

10. In a final round of comments, UNICEF emphasized that the terms of reference of the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force must be reviewed to allow for strategic oversight of the development of the dashboard. FAO said the decision to integrate the two initiatives placed a significant responsibility on the Needs Assessment Task Force and that its next meeting the participants should work out the relationship between the development of core indicators, the development of the dashboard, and the prioritization of activities. UNICEF clarified that it was not trying to delegate the resolution of policy issues to the Task Force and emphasized that the IASC Working Group needed to provide leadership and direction, which FAO strongly supported. ICVA said that significant conceptual and policy issues should not be pushed to a technical level task force and would distract the Task Force from completing its already packed work plan on needs assessment, which was needed first in order to “feed” the dashboard. ICVA added that it supported moving forward on the challenges and concerns but not necessarily to advance the dashboard. Finally, several participants reiterated their view that a discussion in the next IASC Principals meeting of these issues would be premature and unproductive.

11. The Chair thanked the participants for the rich discussion. He agreed the terms of reference of the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force would need to be adjusted to oversee the development of the dashboard and to balance the strategic and technical points. He assured UNICEF and FAO that the IASC Working Group needed to provide the clarity on conceptual issues and would allocate an appropriate length of time during the July Working Group meeting, but that the Needs Assessment Task Force should be empowered to address some of the key concerns.

**The IASC Working Group:**

1. Welcomed the workshop held of 4-6 November 2009 on “Strengthening Evidence Based Humanitarian Decision-Making” as well as the technical meeting on the dashboard and agreed to work together to resolve conceptual issues and advance these initiatives.

2. Agreed that the humanitarian dashboard development would be overseen by the Needs Assessment Task Force and this responsibility would be added to its terms of reference and
work plan, but that the dashboard would not use the IASC logo or be presented as an IASC product. **Action by: IASC Needs Assessment Task Force**

3. Agreed there would be no discussion of needs assessment and/or the humanitarian dashboard at the 76th IASC Working Group meeting, (tentatively scheduled for 4-7 April 2010); that a session of an appropriate length at the 77th IASC Working Group meeting (tentatively scheduled for 7-9 July 2010) would be held to monitor progress and that a comprehensive report from the Needs Assessment Task Force would be presented at the 78th IASC Working Group meeting (tentatively scheduled 10-12 November 2009). **Action by: IASC Needs Assessment Task Force, with the IASC Secretariat**

*Prepared by: IASC Secretariat – January 2010*