

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE  
80<sup>TH</sup> IASC WORKING GROUP MEETING

**Proposed 'Roadmap' for Review of CAPs**

17 November 2011  
Labouisse Conference Room, Basement Floor,  
UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza (44<sup>th</sup> Street)  
New York

*Circulated: 2 November 2011*

**1. Background and Related Activities:**

- 1.1. Since 2005, the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) has undergone substantial reform and improvement. Efforts have been made to introduce strategic elements into the process. So far, however, assessment and stock-taking have been piecemeal. In view of the momentum of the current IASC humanitarian reform effort (see below), there is growing pressure to identify those aspects of CAPs which should be adjusted in order to make it a *more strategic and effective framework* for planning, implementing and reporting on humanitarian response.
- 1.2. At the outset of 2011, the IASC Principals launched an initiative to improve the international humanitarian response system. The Principals and an *ad hoc* Directors Task Team have met several times this year to discuss priority areas identified as crucial to achieving this. These include:
- a) strengthening leadership and coordination (particularly by HCs, HCTs, clusters, and OCHA);
  - b) improving accountability for performance;
  - c) 'streamlining' the cluster approach so that the focus is firmly on results rather than process;
  - d) ensuring agencies have the rapid response capacity required for large-scale emergencies;
  - e) improving accountability to affected populations; and
  - f) building national and local capacities in emergency preparedness.

The aim of the IASC Principals is to have most of the resulting recommendations completed and the remainder well underway by their final meeting of the year (scheduled for 13 December in Geneva).

- 1.3. At the IASC Principals meeting on 19 April 2011<sup>1</sup>, under ‘**improving accountability for performance**’, there was agreement on “...*the need for clusters to develop strategic plans; for CHAPs to be more strategic; for the IASC to pilot a peer review process in one or two countries in 2011; for the scope of the RTEs process to be adjusted; and for the Principals Task Team to clarify the relationship between Cluster Coordinators, HCTs, and Humanitarian Coordinators. ... (The ERC) also committed OCHA to further disseminate best practices of strategic CHAPs and to provide a graphic illustrating the different phases of the humanitarian planning process, encompassing cluster strategies and the CHAP.*” Eight related recommendations emerged from this discussion, including for “**The CAP Sub-Working Group to present options for more strategic CAPs/CHAPs to the Principals Task Team for discussion by September 2011**”.
- 1.4. The ad hoc Directors Task Team further reflected upon this at a meeting on 28 September<sup>2</sup> and have proposed the following to the Principals Task Team (PTT):
- a) “...*The PTT therefore endorse the need for a strategic, focused and prioritised humanitarian plan/framework for the humanitarian response at country level. To this end, the PTT agree to encourage Humanitarian Coordinators to lead HCTs in creating and regularly updating a strategic plan, on the basis of which the general prioritisation of the humanitarian response may be further developed (e.g. through CAPS and CHAPs).*”
  - b) *The PTT agree that while there is no substitute for effective leadership, there is nonetheless an obligation on IASC Principals to ensure that the humanitarian architecture supports rather than obstructs both good leadership and the achievement of optimal results. In this regard, the PTT recognise that improvements are required to the humanitarian architecture at country level to simplify unnecessary complexity and remove ambiguities which currently undermine accountability and results...*
  - c) *The PTT request the IASC CAP Sub-Working Group to accelerate their work on improving the content and fulfilment of the CAP guidelines, to facilitate the development of a more strategic approach where prioritised interventions are clearly and measurably those that will have the most efficient and effective humanitarian impact.*
  - d) *The PTT request the IASC CAP Sub-Working Group to review current guidelines and procedures for the development of Flash Appeals with a view to enabling their completion and publication within the first few days of a crisis.*”

The above provides the context, which is still evolving, for the proposed review of the CAPS/CHAPs

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to ‘IASC Principals Meeting on 19 April 2011, Final Summary Record and Revised Action Points’, in particular to pp. 7-11 (paras. 18-25 and Action points #19-26).

<sup>2</sup> IASC Directors Task Team, Summary Record and Recommendations to the Principals Task Team, 28 September 2011, Montreux

- 1.5 In terms of cross linkages with related initiatives, the review should take into consideration recent work by the IASC SWG on Humanitarian Financing on transaction costs, preparedness and the program based approach. Regarding the latter, in early 2011 the Humanitarian Finance SWG commissioned a study<sup>3</sup> to determine whether two of the main vehicles to coordinate fundraising for humanitarian response - the Consolidated Appeal Process and the Common Humanitarian Funds - could potentially be improved by the introduction of a 'programme-based approach'. According to the study, a programme based approach is 'a means of strategic planning, resource mobilization and reporting based on programmes as the basic unit of organisation'. It is recommended that the results of this study be considered in the effort to make CAPs more 'strategic'.

The IASC has also developed the Gender Marker as a tool to improve the quality of humanitarian programming and ensure that the CAPs are gender responsive. It is also recommended that the review of the application of the tool in CAPs is included in this review process.

- 1.6 Also, it should be noted that relevant recommendations are also emerging from the SWG on the Cluster Approach. As this SWG is considering how to streamline the programme management cycle and measure performance, there should be linkage between the work of these two SWGs to avoid a 'piece meal' approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Abby Stoddard, 'Prospects for Integrating a Programme-Based Approach in CAPs and Common Humanitarian Funds – a Scoping Study', revised draft 8 June 2011). The report outlines two possible options for moving forward on the question of the programme-based approach. Both options potentially represent a qualitative jump in the system's overall strategic planning and performance assessment, and could strengthen the collective action and coordination mindset of actors in the field. The report findings and recommendations still need to be discussed with other interested stakeholders, namely the NGO community, global cluster leads and the donor community.

## 2. Purpose of CAP review:

2.1. According to the 2012 CAP Guidelines, a CAP is:

*“..the humanitarian system’s concerted action plan for large scale crises that require response by more than one agency. (Despite its name, it is only secondarily about fundraising.) This action plan contains a needs analysis; a strategy (with clear measurable objectives, indicators and monitoring plan); cluster (or sector) response plans including detailed operational planning and budgets (ie. projects). It thus also serves as the basis for monitoring and accountability – whether the humanitarian system has done what it said it would do, and whether this has had the necessary effect.”*

2.2. Generally, then, a CAP review should measure whether CAPs have these contents and are serving these purposes as designed, and (if so) whether that is having the desired effect – effective, efficient humanitarian action. To determine that, a kind of study over time is needed, because CAPs are not supposed to be one-off snapshots, but rather a continuous framework in which needs are analyzed, response is planned, resources are allocated, and results are monitored. In other words, a review should measure to what extent CAPs as products live up to their own standards, and to what extent HCTs use them as they should.

2.3. The CAP review exercise will undertake the following steps:

2.3.1. Define and agree upon the characteristics of a ‘strategic’ CAP in line with the intent of the IASC Principals

**OUTPUT:** definitions and a ‘checklist’ of criteria for reviewing common humanitarian action plans

**TARGET DATE:** **30 November** (depending on CAP season workload; the aspiration is to have a SWG-endorsed proposal for the Principals meeting 13 December)

2.3.2. establish a baseline of 2011 CAP documents (based primarily on a document review)

**OUTPUT:** a measurable 2011 baseline using the above criteria, against which to monitor and report on progress over the next few years

**TARGET DATE:** **31 January 2012**

- 2.3.3. Define a methodology and TORs for a review of 2012 CAPs (to possibly include a document review; an indepth desk review of selected CAPs; a more in-depth field review through RTEs; identification of best practices and shortcomings; and a feedback mechanism to HCTs where improvement is needed ).<sup>4</sup>

**OUTPUT:** Terms of reference for a review of 2012 CAPs

**TARGET DATE:** 31 January 2012

### 3. Proposed timeline for this ‘roadmap’:

<b>TASK</b>	<b>BY</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
1. Agree on ‘roadmap’ for review of CAPs	CAP SWG	Endorsement at IASC WG meeting <b>16-18 November</b>
2. Agree on definitions and criteria for ‘more strategic CAPs’	CAP SWG	<b>30 November</b> (depending on CAP season workload; the aspiration is to have a SWG-endorsed proposal for the Principals meeting 13 December)
3. Complete baseline desk review of 2011 CAP documents (based on agreed criteria)	CAP Section (with SWG)	<b>31 January 2012</b>
4. Finalize TORs for review of 2012 CAPs (the timeline of the review itself will be elaborated depending on the TORs themselves)	CAP SWG (in consultation with other IASC SWGs as appropriate)	<b>31 January 2012</b>

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 1 for a selected (but not exhaustive) list of issues to consider.

## Annex 1

### Making CAPs more 'strategic' – some wider questions

While developing the roadmap for making CAPs more strategic, the CAP SWG has identified some larger issues to be considered regarding wider processes and the CAP as a tool.

- To make CAPs more strategic, we need to consider:
  - 1) the process for preparing a CAP
  - 2) the 'humanitarian action plan' (CHAP) and
  - 3) the funding/appeal document. Merging the action plan and the fundraising document into a single CAP make it less strategic, with attention focusing on the latter purpose. Consideration should be given to separating these.
- There does not exist an overarching strategic plan at the country level (involving all actors and reflecting what all actors are doing). This needs to be addressed to allow for prioritization and focus within the CAP.
- As Flash appeals and CAPs differ depending on the context being addressed (e.g. first time emergencies, short-term disasters, protracted situations ), the strategic characteristics of each will vary.
- Whilst CAPs are supposed to be the response plan to humanitarian disasters, the majority of CAPs are in protracted crises. CAPs are often being used to fill the vacuum and provide for other needs /objectives (e.g. preparedness / transition), in many country contexts. Consideration should be given to how we address these additional demands coherently.