IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) Meeting
23 March 2023

Summary Record

INTRODUCTION

The Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee convened on 23 March. The OPAG co-chair, Ms. Valerie Guarnieri, welcomed participants and presenters and laid out the primary objectives of the meeting, namely to 1. Discuss OPAG's role in providing leadership on normative issues and on change processes to drive forward operational impact and deliver a more accountable and effective response; and 2. Discuss progress made and challenges encountered by IASC Task Forces (TF) on Humanitarian Development Collaboration (HDP) and Linkages to Peace, Accountability to Affected People (AAP), the Centrality of Protection and on Humanitarian Space with a focus on Counter-Terrorism (COTER) and Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments (BAI) to support TFs in bringing key deliverables across the finish line.

SESSION 1: ADVANCING OPAG'S STRATEGIC AND NORMATIVE ROLE

Ms. Guarnieri welcomed Mr. Mohamed Ag Ayoya, the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator (HC/RC) of the Central African Republic (CAR), to share his reflections on leading humanitarian operations in the country and his expectation of OPAG and the IASC.

Mr. Ayoya briefed OPAG members on the humanitarian situation in CAR. During his presentation, he focused on three of the four pillars of CAR's Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP): AAP, localization, and the HDP-Nexus. He also discussed the key challenges related to protection and BAI. In the current protracted crisis, he emphasized the critical need to maintain current levels of humanitarian funding, while also increasing development funding to promote structural investment and avoid perpetuating dependency. Overall, he underscored the importance of securing sustained financial support to effectively address the complex and ongoing needs in CAR. Mr. Ayoya requested OPAG's guidance and sharing of best practices to enhance AAP and HDP Nexus programming. Specifically, he welcomed support in developing key AAP tools for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to ensure strategic decision-making is based on feedback from crisis-affected people. He also sought OPAG's advice on implementing the HDP Nexus in collaboration with local actors amid limited financial resources, and on the actual or desirable role of humanitarian organizations in providing basic services. Mr. Ayoya emphasized the need for identifying and agreeing on minimum standards to facilitate capacity-sharing between international and national actors in CAR.

Thanking Mr. Ayoya for his time, Ms. Guarnieri invited Ms. Shuteriqi, ICVA's Director of Policy, Ms. Fuhrman, InterAction's Director of Humanitarian Policy, and Mr. Jones, SCHR's Executive Secretary, to frame the discussion on OPAG's role and suggested focus.

Ms. Fuhrman encouraged OPAG members to articulate precise opinions and proposals, keeping in mind the goal of identifying the efforts and activities to maintain, discontinue, or adapt to enhance OPAG's relevance and effectiveness.

While touching on the questions and ideas presented in the joint background paper for this session, Mr. Jones recalled that OPAG's increased meeting frequency has overloaded members and sparked conversations on how to enhance the value of OPAG deliberations, with the aim of optimizing the time and resources allocated to OPAG meetings. He proposed focusing discussions

on key strategic issues, such as on key policy implications arising from the humanitarian response in Afghanistan for other operations in fragile or protected crises, such as Yemen; how to adequately define, and strike, the balance between humanitarian response and resilience in protracted contexts; crafting normative responses to challenges identified by the Emergency Directors Group (EDG), and putting financing concerns into perspective, including donors' need to maintain domestic support. Mr. Jones suggested that OPAG accountability should shift to an outcome-oriented approach, geared towards direct contact and support to HCs and HCTs.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members unanimously agreed that the precious time spent together should be put to best use by leveraging collective brainpower in a more strategic manner. Several members cited the OPAG meeting convened on the Secretary-General's *Emergency Platform* policy brief as a good example of a thought-provoking, substantive and forward-looking OPAG meeting. OPAG members suggested enhancing interconnectedness of priority issues taken up by OPAG and its Task Forces with system-wide reform processes such as the Secretary-General policy brief series in furtherance of *Our Common Agenda*, or OCHA's Flagship Initiative. Building on Mr. Ayoya's briefing and in reference to recent emergencies, some members proposed that humanitarian financing should be an OPAG priority, incorporating localization, and potentially focused on specific country contexts, such as on north-west Syria in the aftermath of the earthquake. Several members recommended stepping up efforts in identifying policy gaps, or needs for policy adaptation, as well as systematic normative challenges encountered through the work of the TFs. Some members called for better analysis and lessons learned, including on IASC policy and guidance update by country programmes, to streamline OPAG's work.

Members agreed on increasing direct contact with HCs, HCTs and clusters, enabling focused and demand-driven work, responsive to actual operational priorities and arising challenges. In this sense, members appreciated Mr. Ayoya's concrete asks, and received them as further evidence that OPAG's repertoire of action must include prioritizing, socializing and legitimizing IASC policy. Several members underscored the need to clarify policy priorities for field colleagues, but also to assess the actual effectiveness of the various IASC policies. Others underscored Mr. Ayoya's asks warranted increased collective advocacy efforts. Overall, OPAG members converged on shifting the focus from process to bringing about observable change for crisis-affected people.

Regarding TFs and Associated Entities, OPAG agreed to allow space for organising their work more independently while continuing to provide oversight and support as required. Some members suggested scheduling further discussion around the future of TF and IASC priorities. Lastly, OPAG members called unanimously for strengthened collaboration with the EDG and closer linkages with the DG, the IASC Principals and with key stakeholders beyond the IASC, noting this to be a collective responsibility.

ACTION POINTS

1. Beyond the focus on the work of the TFs, OPAG to shift focus of meeting discussions to strategic and substantive operational priorities as suggested and agreed to by OPAG members (also derived from EDG engagement or as arising at country level). [**IASC secretariat, OPAG members**]

2. OPAG to provide support and guidance to Task Forces when required on specific challenges with email updates provided by the Task Forces to OPAG as required. [**IASC Task Forces**]

3. Strengthen links with other structures, including EDG and GCCG and non-IASC structures. [**IASC secretariat, OPAG members**]

4. Set aside time to consider what OPAG's advocacy role is and how to undertake advocacy effectively [**OPAG members**]

5. Identify how to strengthen engagement with HCs and HCTs, so as to inform OPAG discussions and decision-making and ensure the group is driven by field priorities. [**IASC secretariat, OPAG members**]

6. Explore opportunities to capture guidance from HCs to inform OPAG's work. [**IASC secretariat**]

7. Ensure that the OPAG members take active steps to mainstream and share IASC-endorsed guidance within member organizations and develop internal guidance to inform how the IASC endorsed policies translate into action. [**IASC OPAG members**]

8. Share relevant IASC products with the HC/RC CAR. [**IASC secretariat**]

9. Engage with the HC to support his ambitions on localisation and increasing funding to local NGOs to 20 per cent. [**OPAG members**]

SESSION 2: HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES TO PEACE

Ms. Guarnieri welcomed the presenters, Ms. Marta Valdés and Mr. Peter Batchelor, the co-Chairs of TF4 on HDP and Linkages to Peace and laid out the objective of the forthcoming discussion: discuss opportunities and challenges delivering on the HDP Nexus and drive impact in the field, including progress of priority TF4 workstream on the role of humanitarians providing basic services and sector specific guidance on strengthening humanitarian-development-peace collaboration.

The co-Chairs set the scene by providing analysis on how collaboration across the Nexus had evolved. They underscored that the triple nexus goes beyond the work of the TF4, being a collective responsibility of humanitarian and development actors pushing for system-wide change. They regretted that this change was not yet forthcoming and that there was a limited commitment to coordinate across the nexus. They stressed that system-wide change cannot be a quick fix; nor can it be measured by the delivery of tools and guidance, but by the transformational impact of collective action. They noted progress had been achieved on a better understanding of what the HDP Nexus entails, strengthened leadership at field level, increased joint analysis and in many cases adoption of collective outcomes. However, significant challenges persist around coordination, programming, and financing across the HDP Nexus, and the HDP Nexus is more prevalent in the humanitarian agenda than development or peace ones. Also, development financing flows are not yet prioritizing fragile countries or protracted crises, where humanitarian organisations are asked to step in beyond their mandate.

TF4 has focused on shifting the narrative, socialising existing guidance, maintaining a vibrant community of practice and influencing key HDP Nexus processes and policies beyond the IASC, while discussing country specific nexus issues and working towards collective action and providing field colleagues with technical tools as required. The TF4 co-Chairs highlighted that cluster and sector guidance on strengthening humanitarian-development-peace collaboration was in its final stages. Work on the role of humanitarian organizations delivering basic services looking at four country case studies is ongoing and will be completed by the end of this year. Work on financing

across the HDP Nexus is yet to be defined, building on a forthcoming TF4, UN DAC Dialogue and OECD INCAF workshop. In conclusion, the co-Chairs requested OPAG's support on:

- Ensuring greater connections between HDP Nexus initiatives.
- Requesting IASC Principals to support advocacy with bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on the need to bring development funding to fragile contexts and increasing their risk tolerance, possibly through identifying a sponsor or champion.
- Socialising existing guidance and raising the work of TF4, amplifying key messages on the HDP Nexus and supporting country programmes in implementing IASC policy.
- Challenging the TF to deliver but also refocus (suggesting deprioritizing the work on conflict sensitivity in light of existing guidance) so it can bring key workstreams to the finish line.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members welcomed the co-Chairs' reflections, agreeing with the identified three main bottlenecks (coordination, programming and financing). They expressed support for the two ongoing priorities on basic services and strengthening the peace element of the HDP nexus, noting that field colleagues continued to request support on the HDP Nexus. Members welcomed the strong TF4 collaboration with key stakeholders beyond the IASC. Members agreed that humanitarians and development actors needed to identify how to collectively support maintenance of basic services in fragile settings. While development funding needed to be brought to fragile contexts, there was also an opportunity to adapt humanitarian approaches, strengthening joint planning and working towards collective outcomes, while also investing to bring affected people to the table and strengthening working with local actors. Members agreed that more needed to be done to break silos and strengthen coordination across the HDP Nexus. One member suggested earmarking work across the HDP Nexus in HRPs. OPAG members agreed to elevating the conversation, strengthening collective advocacy in concrete country contexts. At the same time they agreed members needed to strengthen socialising and adapting IASC guidance and tools through individual country programmes and operational practice. Members agreed to take forward the work on conflict sensitivity through individual country programmes, with the potential to bring it back to the collective in due course. Some members suggested investing in building synergies with ongoing workstreams and change processes, such as the ERC's Flagship Initiative, the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) and the Secretary-General's agenda on internal displacement. OPAG requested TF4 to maintain working collaboratively on the issue of financing across the HDP Nexus, focusing on identifying potential financing solutions for fragile contexts, welcoming TF4 to take stock and identify collective advocacy messages. Several members welcomed elevating collective advocacy on HDP nexus issues.

The Chief of the IASC secretariat highlighted emerging perennial issues beyond the TF4 priority workstreams, e.g. issues around humanitarian space; negative sentiments in communities which demand more durable solutions; shortcomings around the localisation agenda; the lack of political solutions to protracted crises and how to better engage with political actors on these issues.

In conclusion, the OPAG Co-Chairs linked OPAG work on the HDP Nexus to ongoing Principal discussions on humanitarians providing basic services in concrete country contexts and the Deputies Group discussion on strengthening collaboration with IFIs. They urged OPAG members to support this important workstream beyond the lifespan of the TF.

ACTION POINTS

10. Strengthen linkages between IASC structures (between Task Forces and with EDG, Deputies Group and Principals) on issues relevant to the nexus [**IASC secretariat**]

11. Share outcomes of the IASC Deputies Group discussion on strengthening collaboration with IFIs with Task Force 4 and involve the Task Force in any follow up action. [**IASC secretariat, OPAG members**]

12. Identify opportunities to improve coordination at the global and country levels with development and peace organisations; share the ideas and suggestion with TF4 co-Chairs. [**OPAG members**]

13. Organise a follow up OPAG discussion on the forthcoming deliverables on the role of humanitarians in the provision of basic services drawing on learning from key country contexts in collaboration with country leadership and bringing in the financing aspect. [**IASC secretariat**]

14. Identify how the nexus can be tackled in one or more of the various ongoing processes (Flagship Initiative, IDP Review, JIAF etc). [**Task Force 4**]

15. Capitalize on the GCCG and other IASC structures to operationalize the sector/cluster specific guidance being developed. [**Task Force 4**]

16. The Task Force to de-prioritize the development of an IASC product on conflict sensitivity in 2023 but request the TF to generate spaces to disseminate the work done on conflict sensitivity by OPAG member organisations and others. [**Task Force 4**]

SESSION 3: ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

Ms. Wood and Mr. Mohrhauer, the co-Chairs of Task Force 2 on Accountability to Affected People (AAP) reflected on the opportunities and challenges to deliver a response that is more accountable to the expressed needs of communities. They updated OPAG members on the TF's progress on the three main priority areas, namely, support for more accountable and enhanced leadership, ways to include the voices of affected people in decision-making fora, and engaging donors on collective AAP.

The co-Chairs emphasized that ongoing efforts have helped to enhance the understanding of AAP across the system, and to identify barriers to effective leadership on AAP, thanks to surveys conducted with a range of humanitarian agency country leads. They shared that TF2 has commissioned a report on engaging donors on collective AAP, which will be finalized in April. The insights gained from this report are intended to be presented at the HPNW.

Ms. Wood and Mr. Mohrhauer sought OPAG's guidance on whether setting targets for AAP outcomes and incorporating these into leadership performance reviews at the country level would be realistic across all IASC organizations. They also inquired about successful examples of incorporating the voices of affected people in decision-making processes. They further asked how they could utilize the donor engagement report and leverage donor outreach to facilitate discussions around future directions. Additionally, the presenters requested OPAG's recommendations on convening a high-level IASC donor meeting to discuss the report's findings.

DISCUSSION

Several OPAG members recognized the value of setting targets for HCs and HCTs, notably building on the example of Mark Cutts, DHC in Gaziantep, and his proposed tight targets. However, there were contrasting views on the value of working at the interagency level on AAP. Some members believed that AAP at the collective level is likely to entail significant loss of specificity.

Furthermore, OPAG members debated whether investing in AAP could unintentionally raise expectations beyond what humanitarian actors are capable of providing – while acknowledging that addressing demands should be improved. The issue of humility was brought up, with some members pointing out that AAP requires a humble approach and that placing responsibility on the right individuals and leadership is crucial. Several members recommended for TF2 to delve further into enhancing Community Feedback Mechanisms at the collective level.

Whether AAP at the collective level is more than the sum of its parts was identified as an important and outstanding question. To address this, some members suggested that TF2 should develop a compact to track the efforts of the IASC members.

OPAG members recognized the difficulties of grappling with the inclusion of affected people into decision-making fora. They viewed the issue of representation as particularly thorny, especially when it comes to bringing the voices of affected people into structures above the country level. Some members pointed out that it was easier to deal with representatives from organizations only, as it can be complicated to identify who is effectively representing whom. Others cautioned against politicizing or tokenizing representation, as this has higher chances of occurring when AAP is dealt with in a standalone manner. Members suggested that inviting affected people at the Principals' level could be "totemic" instead of tokenistic, demonstrating that there is no reason to exclude affected people from coordination structures at lower levels. Some believed that involving affected people in local coordination structures was more relevant and important than representation at higher, more global levels. Others highlighted the dichotomy between hearing affected people and delivering on their expressed desires and needs. They emphasized the importance of conducting substantive evaluations to assess alignment between what affected people want and what is being delivered. Furthermore, members highlighted the need to look at AAP in terms of emerging themes and issues related and to determine who is responsible for bringing them to policy mechanisms. They also recommended conducting cross-analysis on what the system needs to be listening to beyond resources and representation.

Members agreed on the importance of bringing local and women-led organizations to the table. Relatedly, they viewed conceptual delineation between localization and AAP as challenging. They questioned whether this could be done better and suggested that it be given further consideration.

OPAG members reached a consensus on the importance of establishing clear links between TF2 and OCHA's Flagship Initiative, as well as with TF5 on Localization and TF4 on HDP, in particular around the delivery of basic services. Additionally, they recommended linking with the Grand Bargain, particularly around an upcoming event between the Eminent Person and the ERC to further elevate AAP.

Similarly, members suggested that TF2 should define and elaborate on the "gold standard" of AAP. This could involve identifying examples of the gold standard being displayed in certain country contexts, with a view to showcasing them as models to be amplified and inspire others.

ACTION POINTS

17. Share lessons on donor engagement (AAP) to link with and inform the ERC's Flagship Initiative. [**Task Force 2**]

18. Assess feasibility of setting recommended targets for community/local representation in local coordination structures (including HCT and Clusters), in collaboration with Task Force 5 on Localization to ensure alignment. [**Task Force 2**]

19. Share and integrate good practices and the 'gold standard' to inform system-wide efforts on AAP. [**Task Force 2, OPAG members**]

20. Deliver on the field-based interagency Complaints and Community Feedback and Response Mechanism. [**Task Force 2**]

SESSION 4: CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

Ms. Castel-Hollingsworth, co-Chair of Task Force 1 on the Centrality of Protection (COP), provided an update on the progress of key deliverables with a view to ascertain support required from the OPAG to move ahead and deliver outcomes in time. The co-Chair invited OPAG members to take stock of the progress made with regards to the Action Plan for the implementation of the Independent Review and agree on next steps towards the finalization and implementation of the Action Plan. Co-Chairs requested OPAG to contribute to high level advocacy to ensure the necessary initiatives continue beyond the tenure of the Protection Champions. They noted that the TF has made considerable progress on its three priority areas of work, including (1) taking forward the recommendations of the Independent Review, (2) developing and field-testing measurable COP indicators to be included in humanitarian responses, and (3) supporting the implementation of recommendations on advancing GBV prevention, risk mitigation, and response as a collective responsibility. Ms. Castel-Hollingsworth informed that the benchmarks for COP are based on discussions and contributions from four HCs (Niger, Yemen, Somalia, and Venezuela), two HCTs (Somalia and Venezuela), as well as consultations with all protection cluster coordinators, NGO forum coordinators, ICCG coordinators, and donors. Three actionable COP benchmarks on the Centrality of Protection have been designed to guide non-expert protection actors, create a common standard, and provide a harmonized basis for practical implementation across sectors.

Ms. Castel-Hollingsworth explained that feedback collected through continuous consultations is currently used to draft the COP Action Plan in response to the Independent Review. The plan is structured around four areas that build on the Independent Review recommendations, including (1) conceptual clarity of COP, (2) robust leadership and accountability, (3) inclusive approaches, and (4) simplification of the protection architecture. The Action Plan is expected to comprise a toolkit, a measurement tool for protection outcomes, and an aide-mémoire.

Ms. Castel-Hollingsworth requested OPAG's advice and suggestions regarding the approval process, as TF1 intends to table the developed Action Plan at the upcoming face-to-face Principals' meeting in May. Additionally, she proposed a presentation to be given by TF1 to OPAG on conceptualizing the Centrality of Protection.

DISCUSSION

OPAG members noted that linkages between TF1's work on COP and the Principals' humanitarian advocacy pilot could be drawn as well as with protection challenges identified by the EDG during their recent Annual Review of Operations. Members suggested to incorporate political insecurity as an additional dimension of the Action Plan's thematic areas. OPAG members agreed to provide electronic feedback on documents shared by the TF to ensure an agile endorsement process, thereby maintaining momentum around the COP. Some members cautioned against expediting the OPAG review process and instead ensuring any products submitted to the Principals are as robust as possible.

ACTION POINTS

21. Share benchmarks with OPAG for red line comments. [**Task Force 1**]

22. Ensure that the ERC communication to the IASC Principals on the benchmarks is shared with their respective representatives at all levels. [**Task Force 1**]

23. Share UNHCR and InterAction co-Champions Action Plan with the OPAG for red line comments. [**Task Force 1**]

24. Schedule a substantive OPAG discussion on taking forward the co-Champions' Action Plan. [**IASC secretariat**]

25. Organize session on centrality of protection with OPAG and EDG to ensure conceptual clarity. [**IASC secretariat**]

26. Encourage Task Force 1 to link work on GBV with the Call to Action to address the funding issue. [**Task Force 1**]

27. Brief the OPAG on the status of the protection cluster review. [**Task Force 1**]

SESSION 5: HUMANITARIAN SPACE - WITH A FOCUS ON COUNTER TERRORISM (COTER) AND BUREAUCRATIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPEDIMENTS (BAI)

Ms. Guarnieri introduced the session by laying out the objectives, namely, to take stock of the progress made by TF3 in mitigating the impacts of COTER and BAI on humanitarian operations, and to discuss how OPAG can support the TF in bringing key priorities to the finish line.

Ms. O'Leary outlined the achievements of TF3, noting the helpful focus on issues which lend themselves to the TF-model of working. There is strong buy-in from both UN agencies and NGOs on the workplan's deliverables. Engagement with the field on the TF's work has also been strong both on COTER/Sanctions and BAI. The most high-profile success the TF was involved in was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2664, granting a broad humanitarian exemption to UN sanctions regimes. The TF progress report shows that many deliverables are at an advanced stage or completed. Mr. Buffler shared that the workplan will need to be revised to factor in UNSCR 2664, which requires refocusing the work onto implementation of resolution, reporting, and integrating it into national legislation.

Ms. O'Leary reflected on areas where improvement and support are needed. Progress has been slower on the development of a joint position on beneficiary screening/vetting, due to conflicting legal requirements among TF members. As shown by the IASC dashboard, which co-Chairs propose be dropped from the work plan, experience indicates that colleagues struggle to input sensitive information into this kind of tool, without a specific target or aim. Ms. O'Leary noted that BAI issues are generally best addressed at the local level, and as such, the TF has been convening context-specific deep dives into challenges faced by colleagues at field level (ex: Myanmar). Mr. Buffler noted the need to revise the BAI part of the workplan to 1) meet the requirements of field colleagues and avoid approaches which are too top down and 2) make sure that level of ambition matches capacity available within TF to conduct this work.

In terms of looking forward beyond the mandate of the current TF, Mr. Buffler highlighted that the issue of COTER/sanctions is likely to remain relevant for the sector. He stressed the value of IASC members continuing to coordinate policy and messaging. Mr. Buffler highlighted the need to engage OPAG more regularly to 1) have substantial discussions on the issues, 2) crystalize policy decisions by IASC members, and 3) to use OPAG to elevate these issues within and outside of the IASC. Capacity constraints among the co-Chairs and within the secretariat will need to be factored into future structures.

The co-Chairs closed their presentation requesting feedback from OPAG members on 1) how the TF can move forward on BAI at a global level, 2) how TFs can better connect with other IASC structures and initiatives, and 3) the proposed workplan revisions.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Guarnieri thanked the co-Chairs for their presentation and for their leadership of the TF. There was broad agreement by OPAG members for dropping the dashboard from the TF workplan. On the beneficiary screening paper, OPAG members suggested that the TF scale down the effort to that of key messages, if a joint position is not feasible due to irreconcilable positions among TF members. On BAI, several NGO members welcomed the context-specific discussions and reminded of the importance of this workstream, as the risk of these is borne more heavily by NGOs than by UN agencies.

OPAG members inquired about the investment and engagement of UN agencies in the work, noting this has lagged in previous years. Co-Chairs shared that this has substantially improved, with buy-in across the UN and NGOs. OPAG members agreed on a need to ensure stronger links between TF3, the EDG and Principals. TF co-Chairs urged OPAG members to ensure their institutions are engaging with Member States on the translation of 2664 into national legal frameworks.

ACTION POINTS

28. Strengthen links (including sharing Task Force analysis) between the Task Forces and other IASC structures, including the Principals and the EDG, potentially providing context-specific analysis and/or recommendations to inform IASC and/or EDG decisions. [**IASC secretariat, OPAG members**]

29. Consider providing targeted country-specific demand-driven support to address BAI (and escalate as appropriate to EDG or Principals) building on the work at the global level. [**Task Force 3**]

30. Share the common positions and strategies being developed by Task Force 3 with the OPAG (including on sanctions) to inform broader advocacy efforts of the OPAG. [**Task Force 3**]

31. Remove the IASC Dashboard work stream from the workplan. [**Task Force 3**]

32. Revise the workplan in order to reflect the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2664, and to re-duce the level of ambition regarding BAI. [**Task Force 3**]

AOB AND CHAIRS' CLOSING REMARKS

Members noted their appreciation of refocusing OPAG discussions on key strategic normative issues while continuing to support IASC TFs to deliver against endorsed priority workstreams but reviewing progress electronically. Members suggested working with the IASC secretariat to shape the Forward Agenda, especially around cross cutting or key strategic issues to which OPAG could contribute. Others suggested further reflecting on how to strengthen OPAG's role vis-à-vis collective advocacy, being clearer to common objectives. Members suggested creating time during in-person meetings to discuss cross-cutting issues, including the ERC's Flagship Initiative, informed by a timeline of reform initiatives.

Several members stressed there was a need for OPAG and the IASC secretariat to support better linking IASC structures and workstreams with the objective to build synergies. Several members noted that the TF model in principle worked well and should be maintained. They noted the strong contribution from members and civil society organisations including local ones. Members requested that TFs should be granted increased capacity support and a higher level of autonomy to organize their work. Some members suggested further discussion on the utility of other, possibly hybrid working options as an alternative to the TF model. Others called for more resources going to local NGOs to enable their participation in the IASC. While others suggested costing the work of TFs to agree a collective support budget to be shared across the IASC.

The Chief of the IASC secretariat recalled linkages with the work of other IASC structures, such as the Deputies Group and called for greater creativity linking with ongoing field initiatives. She thanked members for seconding staff to the IASC secretariat which was important to strengthen its capacity supporting all the technical structures and creating linkages, monitoring implementation of Action Points and supporting priority workstreams. She suggested sharing with OPAG the action points tracking matrix on a regular basis. In conclusion, she invited further discussion on working modalities and the TF model.

OPAG Co-Chairs suggested investing in strengthening linkages between IASC structures and being forward leaning driving normative standards and ambitions. They urged members to revisit the background papers for today's meeting and reflect and share suggestions with the IASC secretariat on what more OPAG can do to strengthen its work on cross-cutting key strategic normative issues beyond the provision of normative guidance in support to field-based colleagues so they can lead effective field programmes and to ensure an effective IASC voice.

The OPAG Co-Chairs closed the meeting by thanking presenters and the OPAG for their substantial and rich engagement during this meeting and thanked UNDP for hosting the meeting. The next OPAG hybrid meeting will be in June 2023.

ACTION POINTS

33. Brief OPAG on the ERC's Flagship Initiative. [**OCHA**]

34. Share draft Action Points from today's meeting for red line comment. [**IASC secretariat**]

IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

OPAG Co-Chairs	Mr. Geir Olav Lisle, Deputy Secretary General, NRC
	Ms. Valerie Guarnieri, Deputy Executive Director, WFP
FAO	Ms. Dunja Dujanovic
ICRC	Ms. Alexandra Boivin
ICVA	Ms. Mirela Shuteriqi
ICVA – NGO Consortium Somalia	Ms. Nimo Hassan
ICVA - Tamdeen Youth Foundation, Yemen	Mr. Jameel Abdo
ICVA – Humanitarian Forum Columbia	Mr. Jose Lois Berreiro Garcia
IFRC	Mr. Frank Mohrhauer
InterAction	Ms. Sarah Fuhrman
InterAction – NRC	Ms. Cecilia Roselli
IOM	Ms. Angela Staiger
OCHA	Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham
OHCHR	Mr. Patrick Rooney
SCHR	Mr. Gareth Price Jones
SCHR - Christian Aid	Mr. Michael Mosselmans
SCHR – Save the Children International	Ms. Leah Finnigan
UNDP	Mr. Peter Batchelor
UNFPA	Mr. Ingo Piegler
UN-HABITAT	Mr. Filiep Decorte
UNHCR	Ms. Annika Sandlund
UNICEF	Ms. Hazel de Wet
UN Women	Ms. Osnat Lubrani
WFP	Mr. Giancarlo Cirri
WHO	Mr. Kevin Ousman
IASC secretariat	Ms. Mervat Shelbaya