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InterAction Humanitarian Policy Update on the IASC December 2014

Completing the work of the [HPC Steering Group](#) and its ad hoc technical group were priorities through the summer and fall, 2014. A full report on activities can be found [here](#).

Key outputs include version 2 of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) reference module, inclusive of a simplified process for Level 3 emergencies, and a set of key messages in support of dissemination and application. In addition the [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#) (HNO), [Strategic Response Plan](#) (SRP) and [periodic response monitoring](#) guidance and templates were revised based on learning from the past year and endorsed by the IASC Working Group. The revised guidance was put to use in the recently released [Global Humanitarian Overview](#), a compilation of the 2015 HNOs and Strategic Response Plans.

The Preliminary Response Plan (PRP), Operational Peer Review (OPR) and MIRA guidance and templates will be revised in 2015. Notably, it was agreed that the MIRA guidance will focus on rapid onset natural disasters with two annexes: one to develop a MIRA in urban settings and the other in conflict affected areas.

Unfortunately endorsement and implementation of the HPC reference module version 2.0 and the revised Cluster Coordination reference module (CCRM) is pending the clarification of language related to coordination architecture and responsibilities. Once UNHCR and OCHA agree on language the documents will be released.

In terms of the implementation of the HPC reference module, Operational Peer Reviews (OPRs)¹ have now been conducted in the [Philippines, CAR and South Sudan](#). InterAction, through its engagement with the [Senior TA Implementation Team \(STAIT\)](#) was heavily involved in the design of the Philippines OPR, was a member of the OPR team in Central African Republic and an InterAction member participated in the South Sudan OPR team. The next OPR will be Iraq, which was declared a Level 3 emergency in August, 2014. That mission will take place in early 2015. InterAction will likely participate on the OPR team. In addition, per the HPC reference module an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of a Level 3 emergency takes place within a year of the declaration. The first IAHE was conducted in May in the Philippines, click [here](#) for the full report. When IAHEs take place in the context of protracted L3 emergencies requires clarification.

The [Senior TA Implementation Team \(STAIT\)](#) met in September to further advance the work plan, including common communication tools, webinars and setting out priority countries for both direct and remote assistance.

The IASC Emergency Directors annual meeting with donors, held December 3-4, focused on the implementation of the Transformative Agenda, the role of donors and the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative in risk sharing and the Refugee Coordination model.

¹ An OPR is an internal, inter-agency management tool which identifies learning as well as areas which may be in need of corrective action, early in an L3 response.

Applying the Level 3 response guidance to protracted crisis, reviewing the utilization of the Level 3 declaration and bridging the relief to development divide were the subject of much discussion at the [87th IASC Working Group meeting](#), which took place October 29-30 in Geneva. The initial findings of a review of the IASC were presented by Sara Pantuliano, HPC/ODI to solicit the perspective of the Working Group. The goal of the review is to examine the role and functioning of the IASC Principals, Working Group, Emergency Directors and subsidiary bodies. The final paper was presented at the [IASC Principals meeting](#) on December 9 in Geneva.

The review's findings were not unexpected. UN agencies noted the need to recommit to collective action and more ownership of the group itself. NGOs and the Red Cross have been more consistently involved at the Principal level than many UN agencies. Various models, including a proposal to merge, were discussed in terms of synergies between the Working Group and Emergency Directors Group. While the way forward requires further consideration it was clear that agencies want more global efforts and less micro-management of country operations.

In January 2014, OCHA released a call for applicants to the Humanitarian Coordinator Pool. There were over 120 applicants, twice as many as for the last call in 2012. Of the 120+ candidates, 35 were accepted including five NGO candidates, one of whom was InterAction's Senior Director for Humanitarian Policy Patty McIlreavy. For the latest on recent HC deployments and transitions please [click here](#).

Priority Areas

The IASC priority areas and its Subsidiary Bodies were reviewed in 2013, and the resultant Task Teams continue to work towards alignment with WG priorities. There are five task teams: Preparedness & Resilience; Humanitarian Financing; Accountability to Affected People & Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Revitalizing Humanitarian Principles; and Protection in Humanitarian Crises.

The Task Team on [Preparedness and Resilience](#) finalized the technical guidance on Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP), which aims to address shortcomings in IASC Contingency Planning guidance (2007). Key messages on preparedness were developed to influence various global fora, including the informal consultations on the post 2015 Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. The roll out of the Common Framework on Preparedness (CFP) has been delayed due to competing implementation priorities of the operational agencies and to allow for harmonization with the HPC reference module. The CFP, endorsed by the IASC in December 2013, aims to address coherence and predictability within the context of preparedness capacity building. Priorities for 2015 include the roll out of both the ERP and CFP, continuing donor engagement on preparedness and finalizing the guidance on humanitarian contribution to resilience.

The Task Team on [Humanitarian Financing](#), co-led by ICVA and OCHA focuses on three key issues: adequate, accessible financing for humanitarian action, identifying and reducing donor conditions and narrowing the humanitarian/development divide. To some extent much of the work of the Task Team has been accomplished through smaller activity groups focused on tasks such as improving engagement on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), donor conditionality and identifying replicable, good practices in the NGO-UN relationship in the CERF. The Task Team will hold a full retreat in January 2015 to review system-wide humanitarian finance initiatives, consider how the task team could be complimentary and prioritize the task team's work accordingly. The retreat will kick off IASC preparations for the next Good Humanitarian Donorship meeting, co-chaired by the US and Canada, scheduled for March 2015.

The task team on [Accountability to Affected Populations and Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation](#) spent much of 2014 focused on how best to ensure that the collective working in large scale responses are

accountable to affected populations, how to institutionalize collective accountability. To that end in September InterAction compiled a short update to the IASC Principals outlining the achievements and challenges members have faced in integrating and operationalizing accountability approaches in humanitarian response, available upon request. It was recently agreed that Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA) will have a dedicated workstream within the task team.

The **Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action (PHA)** Task Team has four work streams: counter-terrorism conditionality; Civil-Military relations; risk management; and UN integration. The task team held a retreat in Geneva on 18 November. During the retreat, the Task Team i) reviewed the four workstreams' 2014 workplans, ii) identified any challenges that arose throughout the year, and iii) produced updated workplans for 2015 in light of these challenges and existing resources. The four workstreams agreed not to add additional tasks to their workplans until existing obligations were met.

The **UN integration workstream** (co-led by OCHA and InterAction) is supporting the IASC survey, titled "Survey to review the impact of UN Integration on humanitarian action", to be launched in mid-December. The survey originates from the IASC Principals' request in December 2013 that the IASC Working Group and PHA Task Team undertake a review of the impact of UN integration on humanitarian action. The survey will record observations and experiences regarding the positive and negative implications of UN integration arrangements that have been in place since April 2013, when the UN's Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) Policy was adopted. Observations and direct experience recorded through the survey will serve as a basis for concrete and actionable recommendations for consideration by the IASC Principals, as well as to inform the forthcoming IAP Policy review in 2015.

The **counter-terrorism workstream** is focusing its efforts on the development of a "Toolkit on Counter-terrorism and principled humanitarian action" which will serve as a guide assess and deal with risks encountered in relation to counter-terrorism restrictions. An Advisory Group consisting of UN agencies and NGOs, including one InterAction staff and three InterAction members, has been convened to guide this toolkit development. The toolkit will be finalized and launched by mid-2015

The Task Team on **Protection in Humanitarian Crisis**, is focused on the whole-of-system review which emerged from the November 2012 report of the Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka. In September, a team of consultants was contracted and began the **independent whole-of-system review of protection in humanitarian crises**, which is projected to be completed at the end of March 2015. Thus far, the consultants have focused on developing a detailed methodology for the review, designing an online survey, and carrying out initial interviews. Four countries have been selected for field missions (to be conducted in early 2015) namely, the DRC, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Syria.

TA Protocol update

The Humanitarian Programme Cycle reference module version 2.0 and the revised Cluster Coordination reference module remain outstanding Transformative Agenda protocols. The expectation is that they will be finalized by the end of 2014.

The recently endorsed TA protocols are:

- [2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview guidance](#) (HPC reference module companion document)
- [2015 Strategic Response Plan guidance](#) (HPC reference module companion document)
- [Humanitarian Response Monitoring guidance](#) (HPC reference module companion document)

Getting Involved/ Upcoming Meetings

If you would like to get involved with the subsidiary bodies, please contact the focal points as per the below:

- Preparedness and Resilience: Leyri Segura Gomez (seguragomez@un.org)
- Humanitarian Financing: Nico Rost (rostn@un.org)
- Accountability to Affected Populations: Maria Kiani (AAP/PSEA-TT@unhcr.org)
- Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action: Aurelien Buffler (buffler@un.org)
- Protection in Humanitarian Crisis: Jenny McAvoy (jmcavoy@interaction.org) and Rachel Rico (rrico@ohchr.org)

The next IASC Working Group meeting is scheduled for March 10-11, 2015. The next IASC Principals meeting will be May 21, 2015.