INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
PRINCIPALS MEETING

**Strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator's System:
What is our goal and how do we get there?**

24 April 2006
Hosted by OCHA
Palais des Nations
Geneva

I   Background

Building on discussions and decisions made at the IASC in 1994, in 1997, at the IASC Principals Meeting in April 2005, and at the IASC Working Group Retreat in September 2005, the IASC Principals, at their meeting of 12 December 2005, tasked the IASC Working Group with the development of a long-term strategy to ensure that the humanitarian community, as represented by the IASC, is able, collectively, to identify, mentor, select, train, appoint and hold accountable, individuals that can effectively deliver the most effective leadership in humanitarian emergencies.

Furthermore, as briefed by Ms. Kathleen Cravero at the 63rd IASC Working Group, the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee established at its retreat of 15 July 2005, a Special ASG Task Force[1] in order to improve the quality of RC[2] candidates, and address concerns over the capacities of incumbent RCs and RC/HCs to fulfil an increasingly complex set of tasks. The mandate of the Task Force was to find ways to identify, select and retain top quality individuals as RC, and enable them to have greater impact on the work of the UN at country level. At the same time, with the Executive Committee agreement to give RCs enhanced authority over their contribution to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, there was a need to make sure that their work is assessed, so that they can be rewarded and held accountable for their performance.

The Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit has further increased the urgency to move forward in this area:

*"We support stronger system-wide coherence by implementing [...] current reforms aimed at a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence with **a strengthened role for the senior resident official, whether special representative, resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator, including appropriate authority, resources and accountability,** and a common management, programming and monitoring framework". A/RES/60/1 para 169 (2005 World Summit Outcome).*

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[1]   The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator was invited to join the Task Force in order to ensure adequate coverage of issues related to humanitarian coordination.

[2]   The Task Force report used the term RC to mean RC/HC.

The Special ASG Task Force came up with a series of recommendations, and the Resident Coordinators' Issues Group of the UNDG is currently reviewing the division of labor amongst the different UN agencies in implementing them.

The proposals contained in this document are consistent and complementary to those put forward by the ASG Special Task Force.

II   Strategic Goal

> *A Humanitarian Coordinator's System that identifies, selects, and trains the most effective individuals so that Country Teams are provided with high-quality leadership and coordination in humanitarian emergencies.*

III   Outcomes and actions

Outcome No 1.   Strengthened commitment to coordination at the field level by all humanitarian partners.

Action 1.1   The IASC Working Group to discuss and agree on proposals for broad-based humanitarian country teams. (July 2006)

Action 1.2   Plans for the establishment of appropriate humanitarian country teams developed by all RC/HCs and country teams in place. (July 2006 and November 2006).

Outcome No. 2 Greater inclusiveness, transparency, and ownership in the appointment of Humanitarian Coordinators

Action 2.1   The IASC Working Group to agree on a Pool of Humanitarian Coordinators inclusive of non-UN IASC partners for possible short-term and/or immediate deployment to replace or join existing RCs, and Humanitarian Coordinators for long-term assignments as RC/HCs to be eventually integrated into the RC Pool. (March 2006)

Action 2.2   OCHA to maintain the pool for a year and regularly update it. (2006)

Action 2.3   The IASC Working Group to agree on Procedures for the use of the Pool. (March 2006)

Action 2.4   The ERC, in consultation with the IASC, to review the use and effectiveness of the Pool of Humanitarian Coordinators. (March 2007)

Action 2.5   The IASC Working Group to agree on an "improved" version of the Humanitarian Coordinator's Pool or to identify an alternative mechanism to effectively input into the IAAP selection of RC/HCs. (May 2007)

Action 2.6   OCHA, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group, to review and, if appropriate, amend the RC Competencies to reflect competencies specific to the Humanitarian Coordinator. (May 2006)

Action 2.7   The IASC Working Group to agree on a Profile for Humanitarian Coordinators to reflect the ability to be inclusive, make swift decisions, be assertive of

humanitarian principles and human rights as well as managing humanitarian emergencies and being able to build consensus. (May 2006)

Action 2.8   The IASC Working Group to produce and update on a regular basis a list of countries where the RC should have strong humanitarian experience and the ERC to inform the UNDP Administrator accordingly. (on-going)

Action 2.9   The IASC Working Group to agree and recommend to the ERC a clear and transparent process for the appointment of HCs in those cases where an existing RC may need to be joined by an HC. (Second half of 2006)

Action 2.10   The IASC Working Group to discuss and agree, for recommendation to the ERC, on the circumstances under which a separate appointment of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators would be advisable. OCHA to produce a paper to form the basis for the IASC WG discussion. (Second half of 2006).

Outcome No. 3 Clearer accountability of Humanitarian Coordinators to the humanitarian community

Action 3.1   The IASC Working Group, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group, to propose specific elements covering the unique responsibilities of the Humanitarian Coordinator for the integrated RC/HC "score card" which is currently under development.

Action 3.2   The IASC Working group to discuss and agree whether specific benchmarks or indicators should be used to review accountability to beneficiaries, and adherence to humanitarian principles and propose ways in which these benchmarks could be integrated into the framework of broad-based humanitarian teams.

Outcome No. 4 Appropriate training and induction is in place to prepare and support Humanitarian Coordinators to take over their functions.

Action 4.1   OCHA, in consultation with the IASC WG, to review and compile relevant current training opportunities available across the system for potential and serving HCs. (2006)

Action 4.2   OCHA, in consultation with non-UN IASC partners, to identify specific training and/or induction needs for the integration of non-UN staff in HC positions. (2006)

Action 4.3   OCHA, in consultation with the IASC WG, to design a comprehensive and modular training package based on the training assessment in Action 4.1 to address major gaps.

Action 4.4   The IASC Working Group, through a small dedicated group, to develop a proposal for an orientation programme for incoming HCs, based on all IASC partners mandates, and tailored to allow him/her to learn about mandates and priorities of all members of the IASC.

Action 4.5   The IASC Working Group to consider the adoption of an "accreditation system" to keep track over the years of the development of potential or serving HCs based on available training opportunities (see in Action 4.1 and 4.2). (2007)

Outcome No. 5 Humanitarian Coordinators are adequately supported in their work

Action 5.1   The IASC Working Group to propose functions and services that should be covered by the office of the RC/HC during both emergencies and transitions.

IV   The IASC Principals

1.   Endorsed the draft Action Plan on "Strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator's System: what is our goal and how do we get there", and committed to provide support and resources to the strategy.

IASC Principals, Geneva, 24 April 2006