INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism (IARRM)

10 December 2013

In the context of the IASC Transformative Agenda, the IASC Principals agreed that there must be sufficient capacity amongst operational humanitarian organisations to rapidly deploy within 72 hours of the onset of a crisis the immediate components necessary to address the inter-agency coordination functions required for a Level 3 (L3) system-wide or other large scale response as determined by the IASC Principals

The IASC agencies commit to maintain a roster of senior, experienced and trained L3 capable and deployable staff, in accordance with their individual coordination expertise; that they are able to deploy this effectively and in a timely manner; and that such capacity will work to support the HCT in defining and implementing the humanitarian response. This commitment will be referred to as the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism (IARRM[1]). As such, the IARRM represents a composite of the individual rapid response capacities of agencies, rather than constituting a stand-alone integrated team. The activation of the IARRM will not necessarily trigger the emergency rapid response mechanisms of individual agencies for programmatic or operational delivery, but all agencies agree to immediately put these on alert.

IARRM deployees work under their individual organisations and through them under the direction of the HC, to support the HCT towards the goal of an effective and collective international response that meets the actual needs of the affected population within the overall framework of the national response.

I   Key capacities of IARRM Responders

In support of a collective response, expertise within the IARRM is required for:

- Dedicated support for the Office of the RC/HC;
- Technical expertise and sector/cluster/AOR leadership skills at both the national and sub-national level;
- NGO leadership to support the mobilization of civil society and mechanisms for meaningful representation or contribution of I/LNGOs in relevant coordination fora;
- Technical expertise in the areas of needs assessment, information management, strategic planning, project design and communications.
- Senior humanitarian security experience in L3 emergencies, including UNDSS security expertise when needed.

From the vantage point of their sectoral and technical expertise, staff members deployed through the IARRM have the immediate responsibility to undertake the following collective actions:

- Advise the HCT on the strategic priorities of the response, based on information available on immediate needs;
- Support the HCT in the development of the Strategic Statement and subsequent Strategic Response Plan;

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[1] Clarification on the IARRM's relationship to other response mechanisms such as UNDAC and INSARAG is the subject of a separate note prepared by OCHA.

- Advise the HCT on the appropriate coordination architecture, including at the sub-national level and taking into consideration preparedness measures, nationally and locally-led structures and need for inter-cluster requirements.
- Support the HCT to implement the individual actions of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC), in line with the HPC reference module.
- Discharge their duties as technical specialists in line with the various agreed protocols and guidance, including those developed as part of the Transformative Agenda.

II   Activation process and functions

As per the Transformative Agenda System-Wide Level 3 Activation Protocol, the IASC Principals are required to meet within 48 hours of the onset of a possible L3 crisis. Within that timeframe, the IASC Emergency Directors will meet to establish a set of shared recommendations. All IASC members undertake to place all emergency roster members on standby at the announcement of the planned Principal meeting.

The recommendation to the Principals will include the composition of the IARRM deployments, which takes into consideration the context of the response including rapid/slow onset and protracted situations; existing capacity on the ground; and logistical/access considerations. The recommendation will be aimed at finding the most practical deployment solution for the response requirements based on information available at the time.

In anticipation of logistical, security, or other constraints, Emergency Directors should consider possible contingencies that allow for integrated approaches to coordination. These constraints may also require deployments to be undertaken through staging areas in close proximity to the crisis, from where remote management might be possible.

Adjustments will be made based on a review of the response by the Principals after 7-10 days and taking into account feedback from the HC/HCT and IARRM members already deployed. Regular reviews by the HC/HCT will continue within the remaining three month period, after which the IARRM will be deactivated, if not already or unless otherwise determined by the Principals. Deployment of the necessary staff will be up to three months to either augment or fill core coordination functions, taking into account existing capacity already on the ground.

Activation of the IARRM does not imply activation of all or any of the clusters; rather this capacity will be used to advise the HCT on existing coordination capacity in that sector and whether there is a need for cluster activation. The final responsibility for activation of the clusters rests with the RC/HC in consultation with the HCT.

III   Preparedness and Training

IASC agencies will maintain the capacity, readiness and skills of their respective emergency rosters or other staff used to meet commitments under the IARRM, and should ensure that both roster and field staff are trained and familiar with the Transformative Agenda protocols, the IARRM mechanism and its implications for country and regional operations. Agencies also agree to engage in regular inter-agency simulation exercises to test and revise the L3 protocols.