

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

**Accelerating the Integration of Gender Issues in  
Humanitarian Action**

**UNFPA and the IASC Task Force on Gender and  
Humanitarian Assistance**

**2007 Work Plan**

15-17 November, 2006

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New York

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## **Introduction**

During the IASC Principals' meeting in April 2006 the importance of mainstreaming crosscutting issues such as gender into the IASC Cluster Approach was stressed by UNFPA and others. UNFPA offered to develop a concrete proposal to ensure gender mainstreaming into the Cluster Approach. This effort was in line with the IASC Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance's own efforts to develop a strategic approach to accelerating and strengthening gender issues in humanitarian action and in particular in the Cluster Approach. In addition both UNFPA and the Task Force suggested a transformation of the IASC Gender Task Force into a Sub-Working Group so as to give greater attention to and commitment by the IASC to the promotion of gender equality in humanitarian action. Keeping in mind the IASC Gender TF has been extended for the last seven years, it has *de facto* been fulfilling the obligations of a Sub-Working Group, and therefore, the proposed transformation is in line with the IASC's commitment to mainstreaming gender in humanitarian action.

This paper therefore provides:

1. A brief overview of the gender strategy "Five Ways to Strengthen Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action".
2. The rationale and terms of reference for the creation of a Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action
3. A 2007 work plan for the Sub-Working Group in line with the gender strategy and UNFPA's strategic plans.

## **I IASC Gender Strategy – Five Ways to Strengthen Gender in Humanitarian Action**

For more than a decade, the international community has recognized that an effective humanitarian response must address the needs and concerns of women, girls, boys and men equally. Recent humanitarian evaluations (Tsunami, Pakistan Earthquake and Darfur) have determined that gender equality issues were neglected, to the detriment of the recovery effort. While individual humanitarian actors have made major strides on policy development and operational strategies on gender equality, a coordinated inter-agency effort has been limited. Therefore a cohesive strategic plan to strengthen gender mainstreaming and improved advocacy is important in emergencies was developed under the auspice of the IASC Gender Task Force. The plan is a result of comprehensive review of what exists and the gaps that remain. Five interwoven and complementary initiatives are proposed for action. These are:

1. Developing gender equality standards in a field-friendly handbook.
2. Ensuring gender expertise in emergencies by developing a gender roster.
3. Building capacity of humanitarian actors on gender issues.
4. Getting the right data – using sex and age disaggregated data for decision-making.
5. Building partnerships for increased and more predictable gender equality programming in crises.

In October 2006 the ERC launched a Proposal for Action to implement the 5 Ways Gender Strategy, which is a complement to the *Appeal for Improving Humanitarian Response Capacity (The Cluster Appeal)* issued earlier this year. The appeal proposal has been posted on the CAP website.

## **II Creation of an IASC Sub-working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action**

### ***2.1 Background to the IASC Gender Task Force.***

The IASC established the Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance in 1999 in order to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the IASC system. For the last seven years the Gender Task Force has been a forum for operational partners and gender specialists in the humanitarian community to discuss gender issues and work together based on annual work plans. It has produced a policy, developed normative guidance and acted as a forum for sharing information on what IASC members are doing to mainstream gender issues and work specifically on programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

The Task Force meets on a monthly or bi-monthly basis via tele or video conferencing, linking Geneva, New York, Atlanta (CARE) Oxford (Oxfam), Washington DC (InterAction) and Rome (WFP, FAO). It met on a face-to-face basis for the first time in 2006. OCHA and WHO co-chair the Task Force.

### ***2.2 Rationale for establishing an IASC Gender SWG***

Since 2005, the Gender Task Force has steadily expanded its functions and working methods. Ongoing Humanitarian Reform efforts and the ensuing Cluster Approach aimed at addressing identified gaps in response and enhance the quality of humanitarian action, requiring the IASC

to pay particular attention to priority cross-cutting issues (e.g. age, diversity, environment, gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights), demand in the years to come an even greater strategic support to gender mainstreaming which goes beyond that of a Task Force as defined by the IASC. While formulation of interagency guidelines and tools remain a key task, institutionalisation of gender analysis, monitoring of progress in gender mainstreaming through an agreed upon set of indicators, support to inter-agency technical capacity building, strengthening GBV programming, enhancing coordination and greater support to field operations argues well for gender issues being a standing feature of the IASC. Building partnerships particularly with NGOs at the global and national level will also be part of the main strategy of strengthening gender in humanitarian action.

Keeping in mind humanitarian actors have still not fully mainstreamed gender issues into emergency response and that more concentrated effort is needed to achieve this end, it is therefore proposed to convert the Gender Task Force to a Sub-Working Group of the IASC. This proposal is based on the Gender Task Force's own analysis and UNFPA's proposal to scale up gender in humanitarian action as well as on the results of a number of inter-agency evaluations which brought to the fore that gender issues still fell between the cracks.

### **2.3 Strategic Goal of the Sub-Working Group**

To ensure gender programming in the Cluster Approach and into all aspects of humanitarian action, through the establishment of interagency mechanisms, building collective capacity, and providing guidance and tools for field-based humanitarian actors to adequately analyse the differential impact of a crisis on women, girls, boys and men, and subsequently put into place appropriate responses to address their needs and contributions in humanitarian action. The SWG will strive to reinforce coordinated gender strategies (including gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, gender balance and targeted actions for women and girls) in all aspects of humanitarian planning, implementation and evaluation.

### **2.4 List of members**

CARE, FAO, INEE, ICRC, IFRC, IMC, IOM, IRC, NRC, OCHA, OHCHR, Office RSG/IDPs, OSAGI, OXFAM, UNDAW, UNDESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNMAS, WFP, WHO, and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. Attempts will be made to broaden partnerships and expand membership

### **2.5 Co-Chairs:**

UNFPA and WHO

### **2.6 Key objectives**

Working in close coordination with other IASC subsidiary bodies, Cluster Working Groups, Humanitarian Country Teams and relevant entities, the IASC Gender and Humanitarian Action Sub-Working Group will:

1. Finalize and use common interagency gender standards and norms for humanitarian action.
2. Support, build capacity, develop practical tools and build partnerships for increased predictability on gender mainstreaming into:
  - (a) Contingency planning, preparedness and early warning.

- (b) Humanitarian needs assessments.
  - (c) Humanitarian information systems.
  - (d) CAP, CHAP, Flash Appeals and CERF submissions.
3. Improve monitoring and assessment of gender mainstreaming as part of routine humanitarian reporting, including in inter-agency evaluations, based on gender handbook indicators and routine collection, analysis and reporting of sex and age disaggregated data.
  4. Strengthen gender expertise, including women and men, at field level through the establishment of gender roster pools for rapid deployment of gender expertise in emergency response and early recovery.
  5. Strengthen capacity building of humanitarian actors to enhance their effectiveness to understand and respond to gender issues including by identify processes, opportunities and training events into which gender issues can be integrated
  6. Support all actions to strengthen programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and ensure that gender mainstreaming and GBV interventions are seen as two parts of the same ultimate goal striving toward gender equality.
  7. Enhance partnerships, including the establishment of Gender Networks, in emergencies and support them as appropriate to provide guidance to the Humanitarian Country Teams, and urge sector/cluster agencies to identify/deploy gender advisers/ focal points within their respective organizations to work collectively to ensure gender mainstreaming, GBV programming etc.
  8. Document best practices and lessons learned on the most effective ways to mainstream gender and share these lessons with field-based actors.
  9. Strengthen accountability on gender mainstreaming and share experiences.
  10. Keep up-to-date a dedicated IASC gender website and ensure wide dissemination of the SWG's products and guidance tools.

## 2.7 *Timeframe*

Ongoing

## **III Proposed actions by the IASC Working Group:**

1. Endorse the establishment of a Sub Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action.
2. Provide greater commitment to the integration of gender as a cross-cutting issue into the Cluster Approach and other elements of the humanitarian action.

## IV Work Plan for 2007

Objectives	Activities	Focal point(s)	Timeframe	Status / Update
1. Finalise and roll out gender norms and standards in a field-friendly handbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Edit, desktop publish, translate into Arabic, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, and in other languages funding permitting, and print the Gender Handbook.</li> <li>▪ Dissemination plan developed and implemented using inter-agency routes and trainings events</li> </ul>	OCHA and the SWG	Jan-June 2007	
2. Finalise the field-testing and revision, republishing of the IASC Guidelines on Gender-based violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Field-test in 6 countries including training.</li> <li>▪ Collect and analysis field-test results</li> <li>▪ Reissue the GBV Guidelines as appropriate</li> </ul>	UNFPA and the SWG	Jan-Dec 2007	
3. Ensuring gender expertise in emergencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish gender pool/rosters of gender advisers, including women and men.</li> <li>▪ Develop a 7-day training/orientation on gender issues in humanitarian emergencies for the pool.</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement an evaluation framework for the gender experts' pilot.</li> <li>▪ Implement gender experts' pilot and deployment of gender experts with good documentation of lessons learned</li> </ul>	NRC with UNFPA coordinating the training and the SWG	Jan – Dec 2007	

<p>4. Building capacity of humanitarian actors on gender issues and strengthening accountability systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate gender equality elements into 10 key training initiatives for humanitarian actors. This will be based on a full review of the various training activities undertaken for humanitarian workers, including training of cluster groups.</li> <li>▪ Develop an interactive training course on Gender in Humanitarian Action and ensure that it is agreed upon by all IASC so that it will be used by all.</li> </ul>	<p>InterAction with SWG</p>	<p>On-going</p>	
<p>5. Getting the right data – using sex and age disaggregated data (SADA) for decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct a review of recent emergency operations to determine the level to which SADA from different sectors was used to make decisions and to assess to what extent SADA analysis is being done on the impact of interventions.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a comprehensive review of available methodologies on SADA.</li> <li>▪ Conduct key informants interviews with senior decision makers to determine barriers to collecting and reporting on SADA.</li> <li>▪ Host an expert conference to review the finding of the project, which will culminate in the drafting of a series of recommendations for the humanitarian community as a whole, and for UN Humanitarian Coordinators specifically.</li> <li>▪ Provide advice to the HCs in their training meeting in early 2007 on findings, and seek their inputs on moving forward so that data disaggregated by sex and by age becomes routinely analysed and used.</li> </ul>	<p>SWG with Columbia University</p>	<p>Jan – June 2007</p>	

<p>6. Building partnerships for increased and more predictable gender equality programming in crises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report on the effectiveness of current humanitarian response operations in mainstreaming gender equality into programming response;</li> <li>▪ Hold consultations with UN and non UN stakeholders and donors (Good Humanitarian Donorship, CERF; CAP) at all levels, including at least two consultations in current humanitarian crisis contexts;</li> <li>▪ Develop recommendations for reforms to incentive and accountability systems;</li> <li>▪ Draft templates for assessments, programming, funding and monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p>SWG with UNIFEM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>7. Revise the 1999 IASC policy on “gender” which clearly articulates the issues of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, targeted programme for women and gender balance issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold consultations on revising the policy</li> <li>▪ Conduct joint field assessment missions to review progress in implementing gender mainstreaming as a basis for developing the new Policy.</li> </ul>	<p>SWG</p>	<p>June 2007</p>	<p>➤</p>

This 2007 Work Plan is derived from the 5 Ways to Strengthen Gender Mainstreaming in Humanitarian Action: A Proposal for Action which represents a coordinated and cohesive strategic plan to strengthen gender mainstreaming in emergencies by key humanitarian actors under the auspice of the IASC Gender Equality SWG. The proposal describes the reason why these five initiatives were chosen, how they build one upon the other and should be implemented at the same time. It also lays out the objectives, expected outputs, timelines, partnerships and budgets for each initiative.

Prepared by: IASC TF on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance – November 2006.