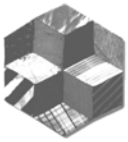

CENTER ON
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION

External Review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Commissioned by the
United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

With support from the following agencies:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees
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UN Children's Fund
UN Food and Agriculture Organization
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International Council of Voluntary Agencies and the
Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response

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Dr. Bruce Jones & Abby Stoddard
Center on International Cooperation
New York University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In interpretation of the mandate provided by General Assembly Resolution 46/182 and subsequent, related resolutions, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has set for itself the following core objectives:

- To allocate responsibilities among agencies in humanitarian programmes;
- To identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist;
- To resolve disputes or disagreement about and between humanitarian agencies on system-wide humanitarian issues.
- To advocate common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC;
- To develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies; and
- To develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities.

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary, former Emergency Relief Coordinator Kenzo Oshima called for an independent review of its performance.

Fulfilling this request, this External Review of the IASC was tasked with assessing: the effectiveness with which the IASC has met its objectives over the past decade; its continuing relevance to its members; the value-added it brings to an arena crowded with coordination mechanisms; and the sustainability of the solutions it provides.

Structure of the Report

In **Section I**, we assess the processes and activities through which the IASC has pursued its objectives, identifying the major strengths and weaknesses exhibited over a decade of effort. In **Section II** we explore the mechanisms through which these processes have been led forward: the IASC Secretariat; OCHA; and agency contributions, highlighting the refinements, small or large, that have been made to the current procedures and processes. Then, in **Section III**, we turn our attention to issues of membership, representation and the IASC's interaction with a series of outside actors, including donors; individual NGOs; UN political and peacekeeping actors; UN agencies not represented in the IASC; and private sector actors. In each case, we assess the IASC's current mode of relationship to these actors and in some cases recommend changes. In **Section IV** we address what we believe are a series of core management problems that the IASC must address, and – more speculatively – some emerging substantive problems that may find themselves on the IASC's agenda.) **Section V** summarizes our findings, and **Section VI** outlines recommendations for consideration by the IASC membership and its partners.

Key Findings on Past Performance

Allocation of Responsibility in Humanitarian Programmes. The IASC has made considerable progress in meeting this first objective, especially through the development of field-based or field-oriented systems such as the Humanitarian Coordinator system, the CAP/CHAP process, contingency planning and inter-agency missions. These tools are significantly more developed than they were five years ago. There is evidence that field level coordination has improved, at least among the UN system of agencies and with a sub-set of the major international NGOs. The IASC has clearly contributed to this improvement. The IASC's efforts in this realm were part of a broader trend towards greater acceptance of the concept and spirit of coordination to which donors, the UN Secretary-General, ECHA, UNDG, and NGOs have come to value. Though much work remains,

and even the best elements of the IASC's efforts in this domain are still a 'work in progress', we conclude that much that is underway should remain on course, and be deepened.

Mandate Gaps, Capacity Gaps, and Resolving System-Wide Disputes. By contrast, we found much less evidence of progress on solving perennial problems of mandate gaps, capacity gaps, or system-wide problems. In handling such issues as the 'transition from relief-to-development', IDPs, the military-humanitarian interface, etc, the IASC has tended to produce outputs that skirt the real issues and avoid hard trade-offs. Further, examining the mechanisms, we find that the very structure of the IASC makes it unlikely that it will be successful in tackling this kind of objective. Rather, we contend, tackling such issues is likely to require creative approaches involving outside actors and structured participation of the IASC. The ongoing Humanitarian Financing Work Programme group may constitute a partial model for how to approach some of these objectives.

Advocacy, Policy and Ethics. The record of accomplishment on policy, advocacy, principles and ethics is mixed. There are important examples of success in this terrain, including some of the IASC's most important outputs. There are sporadic, but instructive, cases of IASC policy outputs being used in the field, and of the field using the IASC structure to advocate for country-specific or policy outputs. There have also been numerous examples of poor or under-used outputs. Moreover, there is little or no effort to monitor implementation or evaluate common performance. However, here we see important room for progress, particularly on matters that fall within the purview of the membership (as distinct from addressing the policies and actions of outside actors.) We note that the impact of the IASC is greatly enhanced through structured collaboration with outside actors (especially activist member states.)

Promoting Inter-Agency Operational Capacity and Common Services. Recently, the IASC has promoted a series of efforts to establish common services at field level or at the regional level. It is too early to assess whether these efforts will be sustained, but member's perceptions to date suggest that this represents an important new terrain for the IASC, one with the promise to enhance operational coordination at field level.

Enhancing the Coordination Environment. Finally, we believe that some of the most important outcomes of the IASC over the past decade, including: the creation of informal networks among key decision-makers; an improved attitude among humanitarian agencies of the UN about the nature and role of international NGOs; and, overall, an enhanced spirit of coordination.

Findings on Mechanisms to Support the IASC

The IASC Secretariat has made considerable progress in fulfilling the membership's demand for greater predictability and transparency. For this reason, we hesitate before recording a growing demand among the membership for flexibility and executive decision-making. We make recommendations for a small course correction in the Secretariat's approach, and the implementation of some prior decisions, especially concerning *ad hoc* meetings of the IASC Working Group to tackle breaking crises.

Regarding the relationship between the IASC Secretariat and *OCHA*, the issues are more complicated, and connect to broader questions of the visibility of the IASC, especially in the field. We take note of the recent trend of the IASC Secretariat toward distancing itself from OCHA, as a means of ensuring the impartiality of the Secretariat. Though there are counter-arguments, we believe that this is the wrong direction for OCHA and the IASC to take. In our view, the impartial Secretariat referred to in 46/182 is OCHA itself. Partially for this reason, but more substantively to address the deep confusion we found in the field about the relationships between OCHA, the IASC, the ERC, and Humanitarian Coordinators, we believe that there should be a course reversal here, and

that there should be a number of steps taken to link the identities of OCHA and the IASC, and that it is this joint or linked identity that should be promoted by all members, especially OCHA.

Finally, we take note of the contributions of *agencies* to the IASC process, both through participation in meetings but more importantly through leadership of various sub-processes (sub-working groups, reference groups, etc.)

Findings on Membership, Representation and Relationships to Outside Actors

The second aspect of our terms of reference was to explore the ways in which the IASC relates to a series of other coordination mechanisms and external actors, and make recommendations for changes, where necessary; including through exploration of the IASC's presence in the field.

Though the IASC's performance is limited by its exclusion of a number of important actors that shape responses to humanitarian crises, the number and scope of those actors is so large that the IASC risks being overwhelmed if it opens the door to further sets of actors. The strongest case is for the inclusion of additional consortia of NGOs, particularly those representing national NGOs. However, the obstacles to identifying an appropriate subset of these, and to their effective participation, are prodigious. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that their inclusion at the headquarters level will enhance coordination at the field level. Both with respect to national NGOs and other key actors, such as donors, UN political and peacekeeping actors, private sector actors, and regional organizations, we suggest a two-prong approach: at headquarters level, the creation of outreach mechanisms for dialogue with the respective communities, especially on policy issues; and at field-level, a flexible approach driven by country teams and Humanitarian Coordinators, to the inclusion of various sets of these actors in in-country coordination mechanisms as appropriate to the context. We believe the identities of the IASC, the ERC, OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators need to be more directly linked and jointly promoted. Additionally, we see the case for some use of the regional IASC concept, but believe it to be a tool with limited applicability.

Core Challenges

Looking ahead, we believe that the IASC is facing a series of core management challenges, best described as a series of tensions. These are:

- A tension between predictability and flexibility/adaptability;
- A tension between 'deepening and broadening' – i.e. between wider membership and deeper interaction between members;
- A tension between inclusiveness in consultative process, and decisiveness in decision-making in response to crises;
- A tension between a focus on headquarters-based policy work addressing global issues, and field-based operational work focusing on country-specific issues.

The membership is divided about how to address these tensions, and at the Working Group level many voice the sentiment that "we need to do it all." A central challenge for the IASC will be to find a clear vision for its approach to these tensions. We make recommendations in this direction, but recognize that active leadership by the Emergency Relief Coordinator will be required to find a common vision to lead the IASC forward in the coming period.

On substance, we believe that two sets of issues should or will find themselves on the IASC's agenda in the coming period: core issues of humanitarian responsibility, particularly with respect to IDPs and

to accountability of Humanitarian Coordinators; and political/policy issues relating to the definition and delineation of humanitarian action.

Conclusions

Effectiveness. The IASC had made considerable progress in establishing field-based and field-oriented mechanisms for allocating responsibilities in humanitarian responses, and in the generation of informal mechanisms for problem-solving (a key achievement). It has not been successful in tackling issues of mandate gap and even less so on issues of capacity gap, and its performance in resolving system-wide policies has been weak. It's performance on issues of policy, advocacy and ethics showed no consistent track record of accomplishment, but moments of important success and considerable potential. Thus, its effectiveness in meeting its objectives over time has been moderate. However, the trend line is clearly on an upwards slope, with a sharply rising rate of outputs and with several of the most important accomplishments taking root over the past 2-3 years or more recently (e.g. the improved CAP/CHAP process, contingency planning), and with the launch of important new directions, such as the recent emphasis on common services.

Relevance. Is the IASC relevant to its members? Yes, within limits. The most oft repeated phrase of this Review was 'if the IASC didn't exist, we'd have to invent it' – an important indicator of relevance. Its relevance is grounded in its broader-than-UN membership, and in particular by the inclusion of the NGOs. It is also a more creative instrument for tackling inter-agency issues than exists elsewhere in the system. Its relevance is limited by a series of factors. First, while its membership is broad by UN standards, it actually represents a minority of humanitarian stakeholders, excluding as it does national NGOs, donors, regional organizations, various international NGOs not represented through the Consortia, and national governments from countries or regions in crisis or that have experienced crisis. Second, it is limited by virtue of its exclusion of UN political and peacekeeping actors, relevant especially given the proliferation of SRSGs and integrated missions and their attendant coordination mechanisms. Third, it is limited by the limited applicability of humanitarian assistance itself to the kinds of deep structural crises to which IASC members are increasingly called on to respond.

Value-Added. Does the IASC add value to its members operations and actions? Yes, again within limits. First, there is an inherent added value, difficult to measure, in the avoidance of overlap, replication, duplication, and gaps that an effective field-based coordination structure can address. Second, it brings to the UN family of agencies a more fluid mechanism through which to relate to key donors and other actors than exists through other coordination fora. However, its value-added is limited, most particularly by the absence of clear boundaries of delineation of its work from that of other coordination mechanisms, both formal and informal. The problem of proliferating, overlapping coordination mechanisms is a major one in the UN (though in a sense, a 'victim of its own success' phenomenon) and urgently needs tackling by the office of the Deputy-Secretary-General.

Sustainability. Some important IASC processes – work on HCs, the CAP, contingency planning, etc – have proved to be sustainable in a positive sense, in that they have made continual, tenacious progress forward notwithstanding early skepticism from parts of the membership. Other IASC processes – reference groups on gender, human rights, etc – have proved 'sustainable' in a negative sense, i.e. they linger irrespective of levels of output (or arguably in reverse correlation.) The most important indicator of sustainability comes at the level of its outputs. IASC outputs which take the form of a field-based process, or field-based mechanism do appear to have the necessary level of buy-in, relevance and value-added to be sustainable over time; IASC policy documents, guidelines, etc., have more questionable sustainability, partially because they are not backed up by effective

methods to make them visible, promote their distribution to the wider community, promote their adoption at field level, and monitor their implementation.

Thus, our broad conclusions about the IASC's past performance are as follows. Though at times glacially slow, we do see evidence of steady, constant progress towards a set of important goals, and, arguably the beginning of a rise in the rate of progress (over half of the IASC's self described "key outputs" were produced since 1999), as the IASC reaches an important point of maturity – a point from which further, real, sustained progress is made possible, given political will. We were impressed by the consistency of effort to achieve this progress; by the dedication and energy of those most responsible for the ongoing effort. Most of all, we were impressed by our repeated encounters with situations in which a small number of committed individuals were able to use the IASC to generate broader change.

Overview of Recommendations

We make a number of recommendations for how the IASC can move forward in fulfilling its objectives. Broadly, we believe that the IASC should:

- Continue its work on developing field-based systems for allocating responsibility;
- Recognize that it cannot, acting alone, solve mandate or capacity gaps or resolve system-wide problems, and therefore seek to identify creative partnerships between the IASC and key outside actors for tackling such issues;
- Implement some changes to its method for tackling policy and advocacy issues, including by culling its current agenda, and developing more effective systems for monitoring implementation;
- Continue to develop common services at field level;
- Use the regularly scheduled meeting of the IASC Working Group to tackle policy issues, coordination questions at country level, and in-country challenges to the application of policy;
- Implement previous agreements to have *ad hoc* meetings of the IASC Working Group in response to breaking crises, sometimes involving outside actors;
- Develop outreach mechanisms for broader dialogue, especially with national NGOs;
- Fully implement the Terms of Reference of the Humanitarian Coordinator;
- Flexibly replicate itself in the field, but with a view to (a) not fixing mechanisms where they are not broken and (b) bearing in mind the need for a strategic dialogue with key state actors, including donors, at field level;
- Reverse course in the way it manages the question of visibility, including in relationship to OCHA.

Finally, we recognize that forward movement, irrespective of our recommendations, will require leadership from the ERC and his office; from the agencies; and from outside partners, particularly donors.

PREFACE

This document, commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, Oxfam (for the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), provides the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and their partners with (i) an external review of its performance over the past decade (with an agreed emphasis on the more recent past), (ii) an analysis of its relevance, effectiveness, value-added and sustainability; (iii) an analysis of the principal challenges facing the IASC; and (iv) recommendations on how to strengthen the mechanism, both at headquarters and at field level.

The study was conducted independently, in consultation with a Review Management Group (RMG) consisting of representatives of the above-listed organizations. Interviews were conducted with representatives of members and standing invitees, including international NGOs represented through the various consortia; with representatives of the major western donor governments; and with regional organizations. The study draws on earlier assessments and evaluations of coordination mechanisms, including previous assessments of the IASC. It is additionally informed by the academic literature on the coordination of complex organizational systems, particularly in the international sphere, and by the Study Team's experience in the management of such systems both within and beyond the UN.

Nevertheless, the study is best understood as a facilitated self-assessment. Though we bring external perspectives to bear, the Review's primary source of new information was gained from documents provided by and interviews with IASC members and core partners at headquarters and during two field visits.

The Review is limited in scope. By agreement, we focused our analysis on response to complex emergencies, while aware of the fact that aspects of natural disasters also fall within the scope of the IASC mechanism. And in selecting country issues for focused analysis, we largely restricted ourselves to Africa – site of a majority of complex emergencies and therefore most representative of the IASC's work. Of course, recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq form part of the picture, and we were asked to pay some attention to the IASC's effort to prepare for the Iraq crisis of 2003.

We would like to thank the commissioning agencies for their guidance and support in the conduct of this study; their donors (appropriately, we have no idea who they are) for the financial support to the agencies to conduct this review; and to our correspondents for their time and willingness to participate. Thanks go especially to UNHCR's and WFP's evaluation branches, which provided additional funding to enable field visits. A particular thanks also to the people who helped us take on the fight against the UN's Kafkaesque administrative mechanisms, and make our work possible: our Danielle Rolloson, Kim Mahoney, Helen Masibo, Phyllis Jiri, and Wendy Senekal. An additional thanks to the OCHA teams in New York, Johannesburg, and Nairobi for their support, and to the long-suffering OCHA team in Abidjan for their patience with the trying logistics of our trice failed travel.

INTRODUCTION

This external review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) study proceeds as follows:

- This **Introduction** sets out a framework and briefly discusses the context for the IASC's activity over the past decade;
- **Section I** reviews the main activities of the IASC over the past decade, as per the IASC's stated objectives, and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of those activities;
- **Section II** reviews the mechanisms that support/lead the IASC, including OCHA, the ERC, the IASC Secretariat, and agencies' support mechanisms;
- **Section III** discusses a series of other issues raised by the ToR, relating to the membership, structure and ongoing performance of the IASC;
- **Section IV** it provides an analysis of some of the major challenges facing the IASC, both in management and substantive terms;
- **Section V** draws overall conclusions about the effectiveness, relevance, value-added, and sustainability of the IASC, and its performance over time against the mandate set out in 46/182;
- **Section VI** sets out a series of recommendations to members [and partners] for strengthening the mechanism at both headquarters and field level.

A Brief Note on Framework

What are we analyzing? A meeting? A structure? A process? A spirit of coordination, as some have emphasized? The Review addresses all of the above aspects of the IASC, where relevant. We have focused on the workings of the IASC Working Group: the systems it has promoted for enhanced field coordination; its subsidiary bodies; its interaction with the field; and the meeting itself. We also sought perspectives on the interaction between IASC members at field level, whether or not these interactions occur as part of a formal IASC mechanism. As agreed with the Review Management Group, we spent less time focused on the plenary level IASC – the actual Committee itself – though the question of the principals' engagement was one that recurred throughout our review.

Unless we specify one of these mechanisms, a reference to the IASC should be taken to refer to the collective set of structures. We will specify Working Group, or Plenary, etc, when we wish to make a specific reference to one of those bodies.

By what standard did we assess? Early in the review process we were confronted with the perspective that IASC performance should measured by an improvement in the lives of beneficiaries. This, we reject as an unreasonable standard of assessment for such a body. Rather, we believe that the standard of performance of the IASC mechanism should be its fulfillment of its terms of reference and its utility to its members and partners. In our understanding, it is not the role of the IASC to define the agencies' mandates or to oversee their operations on the ground, or even to improve the performance of individual agencies within their given mandates. Its mandated function is to improve the performance of the *system* of agencies involved in humanitarian response, as specified by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (hereafter, 46/182): "The United Nations system needs to be adapted and strengthened to meet present and future challenges in an effective and coherent manner.". Thus, an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, valued-added, and sustainability of the IASC must locate itself at this level of analysis: its performance in improving systemic issues, not issues that fall within the purview of individual agencies.

For this reason, this Review must necessarily assess only part of the sets of factors that impact on beneficiaries. A far wider set of factors than can be assessed during this study may impact on outcomes from the perspective of beneficiaries. Thus, for instance, extremely good performance of the IASC could be undermined by a more general decline in resources available for food distribution, say, or a shift in the law pertaining to refugee protection – factors that would undermine the overall level of service provided to beneficiaries, but not ones that would represent a failure of the IASC. Agencies' own performance within this sphere must, in the context of this study, be taken largely as a given – though, we note that the IASC has as one of its objectives identifying gaps in capacity, which in theory relates not only to capacity gaps between agencies but within them.

Our Terms of Reference call for us to assess the relevance, effectiveness, value-added and sustainability of the IASC. Keeping in mind the above issues, we defined these terms as follows:

> *Effectiveness* – effectiveness is measured by the extent to which the stated mandate was fulfilled and original objectives achieved. Broadly conceived, the IASC was designed to improve the collective performance of the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations together with NGOs, so that as a humanitarian system they would function more effectively and rationally to meet the needs of affected populations, and individually would incur fewer obstacles to their work. Simply, does the IASC achieve the objectives set out for it?
>
> *Relevance* – The term relevance is defined in the ToR as the "extent to which objectives are consistent with beneficiaries requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partners' and donors' policies." This is very broad ranging, and requires further specification. The key question is to establish: relevant to whom? (Or, at what level of analysis is relevance being assessed?) A practical definition of relevance for the purposes of this External Review would entail the extent to which IASC objectives and activities are consistent with the needs of the member agencies and the system as a performing whole. The key questions for this review regarding relevance, therefore, are: (a) do IASC activities/decision have an impact on what agencies do, and which agencies do them? (b) Are the issues being addressed by the IASC those which are of most concern to the members? And there is a second measure of relevance: does the membership of the IASC constitute a sufficient 'quorum' of the major humanitarian actors such that its outputs, however effective, impact on a wide enough range of actors to constitute something approaching the overall humanitarian system?
>
> *Value-added* – Members should find that participation in the IASC reduces transaction costs, and offers additional benefits and opportunities not available in other fora or without a similar forum. Such opportunities might be in the creation of new relations, the forging of networks, the capacity to address system-wide issues, etc. This question is especially pertinent in light of the expanding composition of the UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), and the strengthening of the UN Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS). Additionally, value-added should be assessed in relation to the major donors, given their important role in the humanitarian sphere.
>
> *Sustainability* – The concept of sustainability also suggests a field level perception that doesn't square easily with an intra-organizational bureaucratic mechanism such as the IASC. In this context it can be taken to signify a measure of resilience to unilateral actions, on the part of a single agency of powerful donor, say. It also relates to the sticking power of policy decisions (i.e. do members find that decisions need to be taken again and again on certain issues, in the absence of major changes in conditions, or do policy decisions endure?) We also look at the capacity of IASC mechanisms to sustain themselves in practical terms.

A final point on framework. We were asked to identify the key successes and failures of the IASC over the past decade. We attempted to fulfill this task, but then abandoned it as unhelpful. In reviewing the material, we reached the conclusion that few IASC activities can be classified as outright successes or outright failures. Moreover, some of the best results occurred because of factors beyond the IASC's control, as did some of the most important "failures." We found it more compelling (and less demoralizing) to account for both the positive and negative elements in any given set of IASC activities, and believe this also leads more correctly to the stated goal of identifying what the IASC does well and what it does less well, with a view to helping its members strengthen the forum.

Obstacles to the Review

There were obstacles to the Review team's ability to conduct as full a study as would have been ideal. We had limited time and given the structure of travel arrangements, necessarily met with fewer correspondents than we would have preferred. A couple of key individuals were not available for interviews during periods when the Review team was in relevant cities. Most important, we were unable for a variety of unfortunate logistical reasons (involving, *inter alia*, the decision of a Sierra Leonean consular official to go on holiday with one of the consultant's passport in his briefcase), to fulfill an important request that we travel to West Africa as part of the study, something we ourselves had lobbied to do. Plans to replace travel with a series of telephone interviews were in turn disrupted by the tragedy in Baghdad. We did travel to Southern Africa and to Nairobi and found valuable field perspectives there. We appreciate the time spent with us by the UN's field staff in Johannesburg, Harare, and Nairobi.

A Brief Note on Context

The establishment of the IASC in 1991 was a central element in a larger effort to revamp the United Nations humanitarian machinery in response to a widely perceived crisis in coordination among the operational humanitarian actors. Resolution 46/182, which created the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) revolving fund mechanism, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (later OCHA) and the position of Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), as well as the IASC, was intended to "strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community, particularly the UN system, in providing humanitarian assistance", especially in light of the magnitude of humanitarian crises and a plethora of aid providers. (A/RES/46/182, 19 December 1991). Later, Resolution 48/57, adopted on 14 December 1993, clarified the IASC's mandate under the to serve as the "primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination" under the ERC's leadership, to act in an "action-oriented manner on policy issues related to humanitarian assistance," and to formulate a coherent and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies." In essence, it sought to provide a degree of manageability to what had become a crowded and complex system for the provision of humanitarian relief, characterized by counter-productive inter-action between actors leading to inefficiencies, gaps, and duplication of efforts.

The context in which the IASC has evolved over the past decade plus is well laid out in **Study 4's** first chapter. Randolph Kent *et al* concisely set out key themes in the evolution of the UN' humanitarian activity during the post-Cold War period. Particularly important is Study 4's depiction of the evolution of the 'market' system for humanitarian operations. Others have written comprehensively about the evolution of the structures and mechanisms for humanitarian financing, division of labor, and the evolution of key concepts.[2]

In the context of this ten-year review, it is relevant to address one additional aspect of the context within which the IASC operates, namely the nature of the evolution of the UN's overall role within the past decade and a half, since the end of the Cold War. Much has been written about the removal

during this period of key political restrictions constraints – in the form of Cold War deadlock in the Security Council – on the UN's peace and security activity. The explosion of UN peace operations in the early 1990s has been well documented, as has its increased willingness to intervene in civil conflicts and their attendant humanitarian crises (see Durch 1998, Zacarias 1999, Mayall & Berdal 1996). The change had important implications for the humanitarian system (see Minear and Weiss 1995.)[3]

Critically, concerns about geo-political stability within the bipolar context receded, giving space to humanitarian imperatives. The international communities' response to wars during the 1990s was, more frequently than not, driven by the politics of multilaterally minded European states (the major donors) and by the humanitarian community, as much as or more than by the interests of great powers. In particular, the relative passivity of the United States as an international actor during the 1990s created a space – some would argue a vacuum – wherein the UN community and the humanitarian community could act with far less constraint than had been evident during the Cold War era (see Menkhaus 1998, Natsios 1997, Forman & Patrick 2000.) Though there were of course important episodes of political interference or political indifference that shaped some of the worst tragedies of the 1990s, there was also throughout the decade a remarkable political consensus that emerged among the western actors that dominate the humanitarian community and agenda around such concepts as the protection of civilians, the concept that humanitarian crisis could pose a threat to international peace and security, the responsibility to protect, etc.

In this context, the sets of inter-locking communities involved in response to civil wars were operating on the same basic principles for intervention. Rarely did one of the main institutional actors of the 1990s intervene in an internal war on behalf of one of the parties; most intervened on behalf of the search for peace, or at least conflict containment and the reduction of human suffering. Though political actors periodically sought to bend humanitarian aid to political objectives, and the tactics of negotiations and relief sometimes clashed, the strategic objectives of both sets of actors were typically aligned, or at least not wholly discordant. Widely shared strategic goals enabled a degree of tactical interaction, coordination, and even integration among the major institutional actors (see Jones 2002). This framework underlay much of the work done within the UN and the IASC context on such issues as: increased interaction between humanitarian actors and the Security Council; the concept of protection of civilians; links between humanitarian and military actors, the relief-to-development debate, the integration of UN operations, and links between Humanitarian Coordinators and Special Representatives.

These factors also enabled a degree of humanitarian 'mandate creep' – i.e. the expansion of humanitarian actors into the broader terrain of developmental activities, reconciliation and justice activities, efforts to address the structural roots of crisis, etc.

Why does this matter for the IASC now? Because it may be changing. The defining feature of the expansion of UN and humanitarian roles in the post-Cold War era was the relative inactivity of the world's superpower, the United States. Although the U.S. even in fairly passive mode weighed heavily on decisions of the Security Council and in important other ways shaped international responses to conflict, it clearly did so less than it could have or might have, were it not entangled in cross-party debates between the Congress and the Administration.

The geo-strategic policy vacuum that allowed humanitarian intervention to explode in the post-Cold War period arguably came to an end with the emergence of a new U.S. security framework based on a post-9/11 perception of threats posed by a presumed nexus of global terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction materials, and failed or 'rogue' states. Post 11 September, the U.S. has forcefully re-engaged the international environment, and its policies are already having a tectonic impact on other states, regional organizations, and multilateral organizations. Bilaterally, the U.S. has

engaged diplomatically or military in several states where internal conflicts are ongoing, usually as part of what it conceives as the global war on terrorism. In some cases, this is creating a context in which the nature and objectives of the intervention of one set of actors – specifically, the U.S., including in its aid mode, and potentially its allies – differ substantially from those which have motivated other sets of actors during the past decade. In such contexts as Colombia, the Palestinian Territory, Chechnya, and northern Uganda – to say nothing of Afghanistan and Iraq – we may find growing divergence between the political objectives of the various sets of actors involved in response. This may limit the space available to the UN and along with it to the community of humanitarian actors. This and other changes in the international environment may pose a series of challenge to the IASC, challenges that we take up in Section IV.

But it was in a very different world context, and a more benign one for the UN and for humanitarians, that the IASC undertook its activity over the past 11 years. It is to the performance of this activity that we now turn, and which forms the central analysis of this review.

I. PERFORMANCE OF THE IASC OVER A DECADE: PROGRESS AND SHORTCOMINGS

The Review Team was asked to explore the performance of the IASC over the 11 years of its existence, with an agreed emphasis on its recent past. The Team was asked to identify its major successes and failures and reach conclusions about the relevance, value-added, effectiveness, and sustainability of the IASC as a mechanism.

As noted above, our standard of measurement is not – as some colleagues suggested – the improvement of the lives and livelihood of beneficiaries. That key objective is influenced by a far wider set of factors than the IASC's performance. Full evaluation of that set of factors would require, in addition to a study along the lines of this review: simultaneous internal evaluations of members' performance over time; evaluation of donor performance; and time-series data about livelihoods in crises contexts. This Review addresses a more limited set of issues, related to the IASC's role in improving the performance, not of any given agency, but of the *system* of agencies involved in humanitarian response, by improving their interaction – as specified by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (hereafter 46/182).

In setting out its interpretation of its mandate, the IASC set itself six core objectives, which are:

- To allocate responsibilities among agencies in humanitarian programmes;
- To identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist;
- To resolve disputes or disagreement about and between humanitarian agencies on system-wide humanitarian issues;
- To advocate common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC;
- To develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies; and
- To develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities.

If *fully* implemented, this set of objectives would constitute an important contribution to the purposes of the IASC as established by 46/182. We assessed IASC performance against these standards by reviewing: the functioning of the IASC Working Group; the Plenary; the subsidiary bodies; the impact of IASC decisions and outcomes at field level; the nature of interaction between IASC members at field level (whether or not formally through an IASC mechanism); the nature of interaction between the IASC and core partners (especially donors, and the wider set of NGOs) and

outside actors, especially UN political and peacekeeping presences, at both headquarters and field level.

In part (A) of this section we examine activities related to the first objective, "to allocate responsibilities among agencies in humanitarian programmes". In part (B) we explore IASC action regarding the second and third objectives together, i.e. the identification of gaps in mandates and capacity and the effort to resolve disputes or disagreements about system-wide issues. In part (C) we consider together the last three objectives, relating to advocacy, principles, ethics, and system-wide policy. We also review in (D) a series of IASC activities that are not evidently directly linked to the fulfillment of the IASC's stated objectives, but related to enhancing IASC' members' operational coordination.[5] Finally, we argue in (E) that the IASC has undertaken set of activities, which we define as contributing to an environment for enhanced coordination.

[We note the difficulty arising from the absence of an agreed upon, but also practical and realistic, definition of coordination functions. Having attempted to group various IASC activities under headings derived from the IASC's own definition of coordination, we abandoned this effort, finding it clearer to work instead with the IASC's stated objectives.[6]]

I (A) Allocation of Responsibility

The IASC Working Group meeting itself at times plays a role, or seeks to do so, in determining the allocation of responsibilities for a given country response. We tackle the question of country discussions in the WG in Section II. More important, in terms of meeting the first objective of allocating responsibility among agencies, has been the IASC's effort to promote a series of field-oriented or field-based structures or processes (specifically, the Humanitarian Coordinator system, the CAP, the CHAP, contingency planning and inter-agency mission.)

A.1 – The Humanitarian Coordinator System.

At the heart of the IASC's effort to manage the allocation of responsibilities has been the emphasis it has placed, especially over the past five years, on the role of Humanitarian Coordinator (HCs). Considerable work has been done to articulate the responsibilities of HCs (though as of the time of this writing the Terms of Reference for HCs remained unapproved[7]) and to enhance the process of their selection. (The IASC's work in this arena overlaps very extensively with work undertaken by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Afairs (ECHA) and the UN Development Group (UNDG), as well as the Office of the Secretary-General.)

This has clearly been an area of some progress.[8] There has been a consistent effort, led by OCHA and UNDG but supported by key agencies, to push forward on more predictable HC mechanisms. Important agreements representing significant compromises have been reached with the UNDG Office and the Office of the UNDP Administrator concerning the process for nominating, testing, and selecting Resident Coordinators who may serve as HCs. In this arena, stick-to-it-ness has been an important determinant of progress made.

Efforts to regularize the appointment of HCs proceeded in parallel with efforts by the Secretary-General's office and the to promote the concept of the UN Country Team, led by the Resident Coordinator. Indeed, the strengthening of the role of the UN in-country coordinator probably owes at least as much, and arguably more, to the Country Team concept as to the IASC's efforts. However, they have overlapped, and now the role of the RC – both in normal development contexts and in humanitarian contexts – has become wholly integrated into the norm of UN country operations. (In this connection we should mention also the 'thematic group' approach. Used initially primarily in development contexts, the notion is of a series of sub-coordination mechanisms led by

sectoral specialists – heads of relevant agencies or NGOs – as part of an overall in-country coordination process. The thematic group method can be, and sometimes is, used to handle humanitarian operations when they constitute a limited portion of the portfolio of in-country actors.)

What arose from the interaction between these two processes amounts to a two-part bargain: on the one hand, acceptance by the ERC that the function of HC would normally be assigned to the individual already serving as RC; and acceptance by the UNDG Administrator that when RCs are not well qualified to serve in humanitarian contexts, they will be recalled and replaced. To the extent that this two-part bargain functions, it represents a creative effort to manage one of the most difficult tensions in humanitarian coordination in the 1990s: between the operational realities of strategic coordination mechanisms, which have pushed towards a single coordination model; and the need, in some political contexts, to safeguard a "neutral humanitarian space" independent of governments and militaries, which would tend to push towards separation of the RC and HC structures. The RC/HC system as the normal coordination mechanism, based on this two part bargain, represents (in normal UN fashion) a procedural answer to a substantive dispute: whether humanitarian neutrality and impartiality (specified by 46/182) should outweigh the UN's relationship to its member governments and their role to 'consent' to humanitarian operations (also provided by 46/182), or vice versa.

The question thus emerges as to whether the bargain is being implemented, and to best effect. Here, the evidence is mixed. On the negative side, despite consistent admonishments of prior evaluations (Minear et al, 1992, Donini 1996, Lautze/Jones/Duffield 1998, Reindorp & Wiles 2001) there is still no systematic decision-making process for assessing the best type of field coordination structure for specific cases. There remains an active critique that the system has gone too far in treating the single RC/HC structure as the norm; that there remains a significant number of cases where by all accounts the Resident Coordinator is unqualified (or unwilling) to take on the real functions of a Humanitarian Coordinator; where they are appointed as HC nevertheless; that too few RC/HCs are held to account for their performance on humanitarian issues (particularly as relates to their relationship with governments); and that it is rare that the Emergency Relief Coordinator, or his staff, will act to have removed an RC who is not performing.

Furthermore, as an accomplishment of the IASC, the RC/HC system is one that has produced a great deal of concern within the membership, with NGOs in particular voicing growing discomfort. Many of our correspondents expressed unease or even dismay that the merger of the RC and HC functions had become regularized. In this, evidently, the leadership of the IASC has done less than necessary to bring the full membership of the IASC with it in its negotiations with the UNDG over the RC/HC system. Moreover, inter-agency consultation in the identification and appointment of RC/HCs has been uneven, at best. NGOs in particular feel excluded from the process. This diminishes the sense of system-wide ownership of the HC, which is integral to the concept. At the same time, UNDP has noted with concern that it now sometimes finds itself in the position of having its field offices headed by people with no UNDP or even development experience.

Among the most pertinent problems with the system is that there are still, by common account, a number of RCs in countries experiencing conflict that are less than fully trained or experienced in humanitarian action. Further, many within the IASC are concerned about cases where the RC may be strong within the development arena, but is not addressing vital humanitarian issues, particularly IDPs. This is in part a reflection of discomfort within the wider humanitarian community with UNDP's normal relationship with host governments, seeing in these relationships inadequate distance for humanitarian issues to be raised.

Encouragingly, there is growing evidence that humanitarian qualifications are being taken into account in the selection and appointment of RCs (and therefore HCs.) The most effective HCs

possess humanitarian experience, development experience, experience of headquarters coordination mechanisms, and a reputation of integrity. Although interviewees often put the issue down to 'personality' (a good HC makes the system work, a bad one makes it work badly), there is far more to establishing effective leadership than that. Getting the right people into the right jobs is the key function of personnel and management systems. The quality of Humanitarian Coordinator's appears to be improving not simply by the accident of personalities, but as a function of consistent efforts by OCHA, UNDP and the IASC to work through the mechanisms of selecting Resident Coordinators (now usually jointly appointed as HCs) and by virtue of the fact that, a decade into the kinds of operations that dominated the terrain in the 1990s, there is a growing body of expertise at senior levels within the UN system, meaning that there is a wider pool of qualified persons to take up the challenge of humanitarian coordination at field level.

Where high quality individuals are in place they have been able to demonstrate the limits of the argument (a central critique of the RC/HC system) that RCs will necessarily be too close to the government by virtue of being accredited to governments. The argument that rebel groups will see the RC as biased to the government because of his/her accreditation is unconvincing: diplomatic accreditation is a fairly arcane process, important in terms of the application of privileges and immunities, but hardly influential in parties' perception of UN officials compared to their actions and statements. The main concern is not the process of accreditation, but the policy implications of the RCs positions vis-à-vis government policy when that policy violates humanitarian norms. As noted, qualified individuals of strong character can stand up to governments on such issues. However, it bears reminding that there are important differences in member governments, and that standing up to the government of Sierra Leone, Burundi, or Liberia, has very different ramifications than standing up to the government of Sudan or Uganda (to say nothing of Russia on Chechnya or the United States on Iraq.)

The system allows for the ERC to remove RCs if they are not adequately qualified to coordinate in a humanitarian environment or if they are not performing up to standard (though the standard remains somewhat elusive.) UNDP deserves a great deal of credit for opening up the Resident Coordinator system to qualified non-UNDP staff; OCHA and the IASC also deserve credit for the diligence with which they have worked through a numbingly complex and bureaucratic structure to start getting good outcomes. Yet here too there are difficulties. It is clear that OCHA/ERC has not exercised this potential power to wide effect. More importantly, when it has, the system has not yet worked smoothly.

Box 1: The example of Cote d'Ivoire

When crisis broke out in Cote d'Ivoire, the first response related to the HC was the recommendation that the OCHA staff on the ground move into the office of the Resident Coordinator. This did not occur for reasons we have not yet determined. After disagreements between the RC and part of the humanitarian community about the scale of the humanitarian crisis, and concerns that key humanitarian actors were not being fully engaged, the decision was taken to recall the RC and appoint an official with greater humanitarian coordination experience. UNDP officials in New York may not have fully agreed with the assessment, but complied with their end of the bargain and withdrew the RC in early 2003.

Unfortunately, trouble arose when the OCHA did not immediately name an acting Humanitarian Coordinator, as would be the norm, in part because they believed they had already identified a replacement. However, as other actors became involved, including the SRSG for Cote d'Ivoire, opposition to the proposed replacement quickly gelled, and the name was dropped. OCHA then consulted with agencies in the search for an additional name, which was found only by July/August. Even then, however, the system did not work as planned. The Secretary-General's office announced the appointment of a new RC/HC without full consultation with OCHA. Further, the SRSG appointed a senior humanitarian advisor. The upshot was that Cote d'Ivoire was left with no official humanitarian coordinator for three months at the peak of the crisis; the official with most responsibility was left to lead humanitarian coordination efforts without adequate authority or standing; and the system ended up both with an HC that had not received the buy-in of the IASC, and a second senior humanitarian voice in the country – precisely the situation the RC/HC system was designed to avoid.

The episode illustrates two key facts: first, that OCHA and UNDP, as prime executors of the two-part bargain that shapes the RC/HC relationship, are capable of living up to their responsibilities under this bargain; and second, that the systems for making this bargain work smoothly are far from adequate.

Finally, we note that an additional element of the Humanitarian Coordinator system is the deployment of a senior official as a temporary humanitarian coordinator or representative of the Secretary-General for humanitarian issues. The deployment of a senior and seasoned official to start up coordination (as in East Timor, Liberia, and Macedonia, for example) can be used to great advantage, especially for responding to fast-breaking crises. IASC consultation on such deployments is perhaps too sporadic, especially when the Secretary-General's office is involved; but that may be in part a consequence of rapid action. While an important tool at the disposal of the IASC, we note that personnel and political realities dictate that it be used sparingly, and mostly with respect to crises that generate high levels of political attention.

A.2 – The Common Appeal Process and Common Humanitarian Action Plan.

A second major effort in the realm of advocating responsibility relates to the CAP, and more recently the CHAP. Together, these tools are widely seen by the membership and by partners as one of the major accomplishments of the IASC (although many in the field do not know that the CAP is an IASC-based mechanism). Apart from simple information sharing, the CAP/CHAP has emerged as the principal instrument that drives constructive interaction between UN humanitarian agencies, UN specialized agencies, and to a lesser extent donors and NGOs, on the ground. We found few who did not share the view that the CAP had made significant progress from its early days as a simple stapling together of agency programs, and even the most skeptical observers of inter-agency coordination allowed that, under the CAP process, agencies were "compelled" to work together.

At its best, the CAP is being used by agencies to help shape their operational plans – not so much because they use the CAP process to drive their own planning, but because repeated interaction with partners throughout the process, and over time, shapes their own thinking about need and priority. The best CAPs and CHAPs provide a coherent picture of the humanitarian situation and a picture of priority need. The increased emphasis on the CHAP process is welcome among much of the membership, and its importance is reflected in the recent effort to undertake so-called 'CHAPs in non-CAP countries'.

Of course, the CAP is far from being a perfect process or a perfect document; even its strongest supporters readily point out its limitations. At its worst, it remains little more than a common catalogue of projects. In several cases it has had weak buy-in from NGOs, who complain that the timing does not conform to their shorter funding cycles or that it has proved little use in attracting funding. But the number of good or moderately good CAPs appears to increasingly outweigh the number of weak ones. Moreover, the CAP provides an important link between headquarters policy decisions and outputs of the IASC and field programming. The CAP sessions are an important vehicle in which policy guidance from the IASC is discussed between agencies, sometimes resulting in changes in programming or priorities.

The CAP has also impacted on the relationship between IASC members and donors. The CAP as a coordination mechanism has been criticized in the past for allowing donors to "cherry-pick" among projects or bypass the process altogether (Reindorp & Wiles, 2000, IASC/Bassiouni, 2001), but interviews reveal some interesting, sub-processes occurring that contribute to coordination. Our interviews in Washington and in the field revealed that donors, even those who often fund outside the CAP such as USAID and ECHO, are increasingly using the CAP to inform their own spending patterns. In some regions at least, they participate in the CAP process and claim that that participation influences their own decisions as to financing or their recommendations to headquarters for financing decisions. This stands as further evidence of how, as a recent external review of the CAP observed, "the process of putting together a CAP can play an important role on fostering coordination." (Porter 2002) As this review was being concluded, the IASC was considering the first set of outputs from a series of humanitarian financing studies. The fact that the agencies' were able to participate in this process, provide data to the external consultants, and make coherent arguments to donors about the impact of donor financing on coordination (or its absence) is a positive reflection of the growing coherence of agency funding appeals and the rising confidence of many donors in the CAP process.

We should note as an important element of the CAP's success the sheer diligence of the most active members of the CAP Sub-Working Group. Tenacity and repetition are contributors to increases in the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms over time.[9] Once again, stick-to-it-ness proved critical. We take note that the activism of the CAP SWG has survived some important changes in personnel.

Finally, but importantly, the CAP seems more effective as a mechanism in longer-running emergencies than it does as a tool for managing new responses. In fast-breaking crises there is no existing CAP process through which to coordinate, and agencies responses' must be developed long before any sort of CAP mechanisms can be put in place. This, however, brings us to the issue of contingency planning.

A.3 – Contingency Planning

Contingency planning is a potentially important tool for the allocation of responsibilities, and the subject of growing effort and emphasis within the IASC. It has been a part of humanitarian operations for many years, and accompanied some of the earliest major humanitarian crises (e.g. Eastern Zaire 1996.) Many agencies and NGOs routinely undertake a variety of forms of

contingency planning for their operations. The IASC has begun to contribute a cross-agency and even cross-community process that, if improved, could constitute the primary tool for allocating responsibilities in breaking emergencies.

This is important in the first instance because tools like the HC system and the CAP appear to be most effective over time, i.e. when systems and individuals are in place over two or more years within a given emergency context. Secondly, it is important because the ability of the HC system or the CAP mechanism to help in the allocation of responsibilities in breaking crises is limited, and contingency planning should be able to move this forward. Moreover, in developing cross-agency systems, and systems that also include donors, the IASC approach to contingency planning has the capacity to tackle questions of allocation of responsibility that are not available to systems wherein each actor does their own planning.

How developed is contingency planning in the IASC?[10] When we examined the IASC's contingency planning mechanisms - the work of the sub-working group on contingency planning; and to actual, in-country contingency planning efforts - what we found was good work in good progress. Country-specific contingency planning has become a routine task, in part because it is now built into the terms of reference of the RC, whereas it was, in the past, more sporadically undertaken. In humanitarian contexts, many country teams are using – and welcoming – the guidance provided by the IASC SWG on contingency planning, guidance which appears solidly grounded in both a sophisticated reading of the existing literature on contingency planning systems and a solid tactical approach to how to strengthen UN mechanisms over time. Much credit here goes to the individuals most closely involved in pushing this mechanism forward, and to their agencies (UNICEF, WFP and increasingly also UNHCR) for encouraging and supporting their ongoing efforts. UNICEF's very sophisticated method for appraising in-country risk to their programmes has helpfully informed this effort.

By consent of all of those involved, however, contingency planning efforts either in specific countries or at the regional level remain limited to what is perhaps more properly called scenario planning – i.e. the identification of possible alternative scenarios in the humanitarian environment. These scenario plans are not being translated into operational plans for response, and our correspondents note that when a crisis does break, few reach for the plans developed in joint contingency planning exercises. On the other hand, many of those involved in various scenario planning exercises find them to be useful tools for developing a common strategic vision, especially when they include donors (who are sometimes privy to relevant information not widely known among humanitarian agencies.)

We also take note of the value of the regional approach to contingency planning, as exemplified in the Great Lakes Region. The Great Lakes Region constitutes what CIC Senior Fellow Barnett Rubin calls a 'regional conflict formation', which involves not only important trans-boundary issues and spillover effects, but where conflict dynamics are actually grounded in trans-boundary political, economic, and ethnic relationships and structures – meaning that effective scenario planning *must* take into account developments in each connecting node of the conflict formation.

A regional approach was also taken to potential developments in Iraq – an episode to which we were asked to devote some attention. Indeed, there are several features of the Iraq planning process that highlight what is required for an effective process of contingency planning. The effort, led by the SWG, began when it became evident, in fall 2002, that there was a high likelihood of war between the United States and Iraq. At a moment when the political divisions in the Security Council and among the wider membership posed serious obstacles to UN planning in New York, the IASC SWG filled an important vacuum by discretely undertaking a real contingency planning exercise, involving in-country and regional offices.

Much was done right, and done well. The SWG's main facilitators devoted considerable time and energy, including through field travel, to generating a meaningful process. The planning process usefully included staff in the region, including NGOs. (Some among the NGO complained they were excluded. Efforts to keep them informed would have been worthwhile, but inclusion of operational NGO staff was in fact more important to the substance of the process.)[11] Donors were not involved, but this was unsurprising given the highly complicated member state politics surrounding the Iraq issue. When the planning process did leak, it was not disowned by the Secretary-General (as might have been done some years earlier) but embraced, with the S-G noting that the UN had a responsibility to plan for various contingencies, and that the process of doing so in no way constituted support for one course of action or another.[12]

Most importantly, the process pushed past the normal level of scenario planning and moved into real operational planning. It identified areas of responsibility, assigned lead roles, made estimates about levels and numbers, and identified requirements corresponding with those numbers. This was translated into pre-operational capacity enhancing measures including the deployment of additional personnel to the region, in the lead up to the war, and most importantly through the establishment of a Joint Logistics Center in Cyprus, to service the sub-region. The process certainly constitutes the most sophisticated inter-agency planning process undertaken to date within the UN or the IASC, and provides important lessons for moving forward.

Even this process, however, contained some problems, reflecting some of the ongoing limitations of the IASC. First, we took note when discussing the process with various agency interviewees that there was an important difference in how the process was perceived. Among those most involved in various IASC processes (emergency directors, external relations unit staff) the process was well regarded, with UNICEF and WFP's role being praised for the leadership they exhibited. Among staff of the geographical branches, however, such perspectives were less widespread; at the extreme, some staff accused UNICEF and WFP of playing the lead for turf reasons, i.e. to be able to take for themselves a larger share of the Iraq-response pie. We found no evidence to support this claim, but note the perspective.

More substantively, the process encountered a number of bumps relating to Geneva-New York interaction. This was described by some as "moving out of the realm of the IASC, and into the realm of the political" – an important perspective on the New York-Geneva split, as seen from Geneva. Notwithstanding OCHA's involvement at both ends, there was some discontinuity in the shift from the SWG playing the lead to the growing involvement of the Deputy-Secretary-General, who was tasked in January 2003 with leading planning efforts to the UN's overall response. While the DSG-led effort focused on the UN's political response, it also tackled the humanitarian aspects. A further disjuncture occurred when the IASC was not consulted on a senior OCHA staff's appointment to a leadership role in the coordination process (though most IASC members welcomed the appointment. Moreover, the appointment resulted in the activation of an inter-agency dialogue, including a regular conference call on operational planning that many found extremely valuable. It also provided a link to the ongoing planning process among the US military, which was vital for the salience of the UN's planning.)

Throughout, a particularly vexed question was that of responsibility for potential Iraqi IDPs. The Review team was initially told that responsibility for IDPs had been assigned to IOM and UNOPS without UNHCR's agreement. We then learned that UNHCR was present in the room when this agreement was made and posed no objection. We subsequently were informed that the decision to allocate responsibility to these two agencies came at the decision of the HC, framed in terms of the HCs ongoing responsibility for coordinating a response to IDP issues, and building on existing roles being played by UNOPS in northern Iraq. We later found evidence, but not firm evidence, that suggested that OCHA, at the leadership level, had pushed forward the idea of using IOM as a major

actor. To date, we do not know the full story behind this controversial assignment, nor do we even have sufficient evidence to hazard a comment.

The above episode illustrates the continuing confusion on the overall IDP issue (which we address in mode depth below) and underscores that if the existing approach to IDPs is to be sustainable, it requires broader application of effective contingency planning processes – for otherwise, there is no predictability of response.

A.4 – Inter-Agency Missions

Inter-agency missions, sometimes also including donors and NGOs, have emerged in recent years as an important part of the IASC's toolkit for allocating responsibility in humanitarian programmes. Rare as recently as five years ago, they are now common practice. Deployed at the decision of an IASG WG or ECHA meeting, or sometimes through more informal coordination among IASC members, the missions are often structured to include a co-lead role (e.g. OCHA and one of the major operational agencies), but sometimes are led by a specialist or by the most relevant agency. They have proven a flexible and inclusive means for tackling in-country problems, clarifying responsibilities, or to explore alternative arrangements at a moment when situational conditions are changing in a country or a region.[13]

There are of course some problems with this tool. As with other IASC mechanisms, the missions are often over-burdened by high levels of participation - a double-edge sword that provides inclusion and buy-in but creates complexities both in terms of logistics and dynamics. Missions involving 15 or more persons are not uncommon. The workload this places on field staff is not to be underestimated. This factor is exacerbated by the proliferation of such missions, not just among the IASC but also involving other parts of the UN system, other coordination bodies, the Security Council, donor evaluations, and the like. There is no mechanism in place for regulating the frequency or timing of such missions and in places like Sierra Leone and currently in Cote d'Ivoire there is a major problem of mission overload that the IASC has done nothing to minimize and has itself contributed to.

A – Concluding Note

There is both documentary and anecdotal evidence that field level coordination has improved over the past five years, or at the very least, that inter-agency tensions and turf wars have diminished among the UN system of agencies. Further, many of our correspondents noted a "maturing" of agencies and NGOs in respect of their acceptance of the need to participate in coordination mechanism. The IASC has clearly helped facilitate this through its informal networks for problem solving. (It should be noted, though, that the IASC was far from alone in this: its efforts were part of a broader trend towards greater acceptance of the concept and spirit of coordination to which donors, the UN Secretary-General, ECHA, UNDG, and NGOs through a variety of channels and mechanisms, as well as academics and think-tanks, have all contributed.)

In sum, one can reasonably argue that the IASC has made considerable progress, and been moderately effective, in developing field-based or field-oriented systems for the allocation of responsibility within humanitarian programmes. These mechanisms appear to be most salient in longer-running emergencies, having limited application in response to newly breaking crises. Though much work remains, our general conclusion on this topic was that much that is underway should remain on course, and be deepened. We address some specific suggestions for enhancing these processes in our recommendations.

I (B) Mandate Gaps, Capacity Gaps and System-Wide Issues

By contrast, the second and third objectives set out by the IASC – to identify gaps in mandate and gaps in capacity, and resolve differences between agencies on system-wide issues – have seen less progress. These challenges have been tackled largely through reference groups or task force approaches to policy/division of labor questions, such as the relief-to-development transition and IDP response. In this arena, there is as much to say about what the IASC has not done and the limits on what it has done, than on accomplishments to date.

B.1 – Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Arguably the most important instance of an IASC effort to fulfill these objectives relates to the question of IDPs. Because a separate evaluation of the IDP Unit was being planned during this review, we decided at the outset not to focus in depth on the issue of IDPs. Nevertheless, the issue came up repeatedly in interviews and elicited such strong opinions we would be remiss if we did not report our findings. They are limited, and should be taken only as a reflection of the views we heard in the interview process, but they offer a perspective on the IASC's capacity to handle this kind of challenge.

The IDP issue had been on the agenda of the IASC for much of the 1990s, but members had avoided the naming of a single responsible agency, as per the original proposition of Special Representative Francis Deng.[15] The issue was elevated in 1999-2000 when US Ambassador Holbrooke made public criticisms of the UN's response to IDPs in Angola, and renewed calls for a single mandated agency to assume primary responsibility for the internally displaced. Whatever the merits of Holbrooke's observations at the time, his emphasis heightened the issue within the IASC. The multi-part response involved: the creation of a Senior Advisor on IDPs; the creation of a Senior Network on IDPs; the creation of an multi-agency IDP Unit to be housed in OCHA and to support the senior advisor; and the adoption of the so-called collaborative approach.[16]

In our discussions with correspondents at headquarters, views of this response fell into two broad categories. Many donors reported support for the concept of the collaborative approach and a willingness to follow the IASC's lead on this issue, though some believed that the collaborative approach would have to be reviewed. Agency staff, much more frequently, reported the following perspective: "my agency is totally committed to the collaborative approach; but personally, I think it's been a total failure and that the responsibility should be given to one agency - probably UNHCR." (An infrequent variant on this was, "it's been a total failure, and responsibility should go to my organization.")

The arguments in support of the collaborative approach are that no one agency has the capacity or the mandate to tackle IDPs as a whole; that there is such great variation in the actual status and nature of IDPs that there is more that separates different case loads than connects them; and – most persuasively – that the political realities are such that no single agency could be provided with a suitable mandate for dealing with IDPs, given governmental sensitivities. The arguments of those who believe the collaborative approach have failed are: that in practice, a collaborative approach means that no one has primary responsibility for IDPs, and no one is accountable; that it has allowed continued spotty coverage and inequitable service delivery to IDPs in emergencies; that limited progress has been made by the IDP Unit or the Senior Network in actually allocating collaborative responsibilities; and – most persuasively – that even at its best, the collaborative approach cannot achieve the central goal of *predictability* of response. In the one case we examined in a modest degree of detail (that of Iraq), the IDP issue was the most complicated and the least well managed of the overall contingency planning effort (on which, see above), characterized as it was by confusion, misinterpretation, inter-agency accusations and last-minute maneuvering for lead roles. Also, in Cote d'Ivoire, an important disagreement between, on the one hand, the Government and the Resident

Coordinator and, on the other, much of the humanitarian community about the size of the IDP caseload revealed the still-sharp limits on the system's ability to generate credible information in real-time, such as is necessary to shape an adequate response.

This Review's information and expertise on this issue is limited. However, in terms of IASC performance, two things are clear: first, that actors external to the IASC have been critically important in terms of pushing this agenda item forward; second, that the response to date certainly has not convinced the membership. The Iraq contingency planning episode lends more succor to the skeptics than the optimists.

B.2 – Transitions, Gaps, and Linkages

The issues of relief-development transition in post-conflict scenarios, and aid programming in cases of prolonged crisis, represent a second major IASC effort to address issues of a "gap" – whether of mandate or capacity is still debated. This has been a topic of sustained interest throughout the 1990s, and episodic IASC engagement.[17]

Complicating the issue, virtually every UN agency has become part of the transitions debate, with the IASC, ECHA and the UNDG all tackling the topic. For its part the IASC has produced or endorsed several policy papers on the topic; and has addressed the issue as part of the CAP. Little of this work has had sustained impact. This is evident even within the IASC's own policy efforts. For example, IASC policy documents listed from 1995 and 1997 had very little to do with its work done in 1999 on the same question, and we note that there is yet another reference group on the issue; and that much work besides has been tackled in such informal groups and processes as the Brookings process, the CPR Network, and recently the '4R' process. There is little evidence that these processes have given the community (a) clear concepts about where humanitarianism ends and development begins, (b) clear guidelines as to when which set of actors should lead in country situations, though there may be the beginnings of some greater clarity on some of the financing questions.[18]

The transitions issue is clearly far too large for the IASC, by itself, to make a major contribution towards solving. Actors with major roles include donors, the international financial institutions, UN developmental agencies, UN political and peacekeeping missions, the Security Council, individual NGOs, governments that have undergone crisis, and outside experts. To date, no mechanism has been identified in or outside the UN that effectively links these actors in a coherent process.

A related point is that the reference group mechanisms on such questions, working as they do by consensus, are not adequate to the task of identifying gaps in mandate and capacity. An example is provided by the 1999-2000 effort by the IASC to devise a division of labor – or at least guidance to in-country coordinators about capacity – about DDR. Inputs about agency capacity were provided by agencies' themselves. In some cases these were self-aware; in most cases they were a litany of agencies' and department's mandates without any serious analysis or self-critical reflection of real capacity. The polite politics of IASC interaction sharply limited the scope for any kind of critical reflection on materials provided by external evaluations, or similar inputs. The result was a banal document specifying, in effect, that everyone was capable of doing everything, and giving little guidance of substance as to where capacity lay, and where the gaps were.[19]

B.3 – Humanitarian-Military Interface

Another system-wide problem that has confronted IASC members is that of relations with military actors performing relief tasks – the so-called 'humanitarian-military interface'. At various points in the past decade the IASC has considered this issue and sought to develop principles or guidelines to manage the interaction. Indeed, on the IASC's list of key outputs four such sets of guidelines are listed, two from 1995, one from 2001 (the 'Non-Binding Guidelines') and a more recent document

from 2003.[20] The mere fact that the guidelines have been revisited on four separate occasions speaks volumes about their salience and sustainability.

It is striking that there was no major IASC effort to tackle this issue between 1995 and 2001 – a period characterized by high levels of attention to the issue among the humanitarian community writ large, and by repeated instances of complicated interactions in such locations as Goma, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo. (Some important studies of the issue include: Brady & Daws 1994, Donini 1996, Stockton 1997, Weiss 1999, Whitman & Pocock 1996.) There is no evidence whatsoever that the 1995 IASC guidelines were effectively distributed or incorporated into agencies' own operational guidelines. Indeed, in literally dozens of studies, documents, non-official sets of guidelines, etc, one finds scare reference to the IASC guidelines (or, notably, to the IASC itself.)

This experience gives rise to concern about the likely utility of a more recent exercise and tackling this problem. This most recent process was started outside the IASC with the involvement of the MCDU and some key donors concerned about the issue. Progress towards a draft produced through this process began to generate concern among IASC members, particularly UNHCR, UNICEF, and the ICRC. Of particular concern was the substantial role being played by donors in shaping the draft guidelines, and what they perceived as a lack of sensitivity on the part of MCDU (a unit whose expertise has in the past been largely restricted to response to national disasters). A decision was taken by the IASC that the current process should not be allowed to continue before the IASC took a common policy position on the issues. This much is held out, understandably, as an important achievement of the IASC – stopping the setting of policy that lacks adequate humanitarian input. From that point on, an IASC working group produced its own draft guidelines, which were then endorsed by the IASC Plenary and recently launched at the 2003 ECOSOC meeting.

However, in discussions with IASC members we met with widespread skepticism that the guidelines would be adopted in any meaningful way, and several correspondents described them as a bland, negotiated outcome ("coordination by pablum") that sought to produce a veneer of agreement between people who disagreed and who had no intention of shifting their policies on the basis of others. It is of course too early for this review to assess whether these most recent guidelines will in fact make a difference.

B.4 – Monitoring of Follow-up and Implementation

It is also true that the IASC will have no way of knowing whether the newest guidelines are being used. For the IASC has not managed to put in place any kind of robust system for monitoring the follow-up on decisions within agencies or the implementation of decisions at field level. Indeed, if we were to pick one issue on which the IASC's performance has been weakest, it would be the monitoring of implementation. The onus for follow-up is on members themselves, but they are frankly not in the position of reporting to the IASC on their performance, nor subject to external monitoring. There is no systematic reporting from the field about implementation of IASC decisions – nor could there be, since the field is not fully informed about those decisions (see below.) Overall, this stands as a major area of concern.

B.5 – Common Evaluation and Lessons Learning

It is exacerbated by the absence of established IASC procedures, or even the existence of a routine or habit, for undertaking common evaluations and/or lessons learning studies of field-based activities. Evaluation and lessons learning among members is still largely done on an agency-by-agency basis, or when done by an external actor such as a donor, rarely in any form of coordination with the IASC. Contrary to this overall trend, there have been a growing number of joint evaluations by 2-3 agencies over the past couple of years. And sporadically, the IASC will collectively commission a study or an evaluation, such as on coordination in the Great Lakes in 1997. But by and large, evaluation and

lessons learning is something that the IASC has yet to tackle in a serious way. This limits the IASC's efforts to identify gaps or solve system-wide problems, for obvious reasons.

(Of course, we are saying this in a document that constitutes, precisely, an IASC-wide study. We note this, and are encouraged to be part of this process. The long absence of a senior official charged with studies and evaluations in OCHA's Policy unit has been part of the cause of the IASC's weakness in this arena, now happily rectified.)

B – Concluding Note

In short, the IASC's performance on identifying mandate gaps and particularly capacity gaps, and on solving system-wide problems, has been pretty slim. As we will argue in more depth in Section IV, the very structure of the IASC (seen from a management perspective) makes it highly unlikely that it will be successful in tackling this kind of objective. Rather, we contend, tackling such issues is likely to require creative approaches involving outside actors (probably in the lead), and structured participation of the IASC. The ongoing Humanitarian Financing Work Programme group constitutes part of a model for how to approach some of these objectives.

I (C) Advocacy, Policy, and Ethics

The final three objectives of the IASC all relate to issues of principle: to advocate common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC; to develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies; and to develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities. Activities in the policy and advocacy realm are examined under this grouping. This has been the arena of a substantial body of work, and some accomplishment. But accomplishment in this arena has been spotty.

C.1 – Advocacy

In his 10th anniversary remarks, the ERC held out the collective statements/advocacy positions vis-à-vis governments in conflict (the Buyoya regime in Burundi and the Taliban in Afghanistan) as major successes of the IASC.[21] While not discounting these two achievements, we do not find them representative. Many of our correspondents argued that the area of advocacy was the single greatest failure of the IASC. In our view, the advocacy issue is both more varied in terms of outcomes and more complex in terms of what can be expected from the IASC structures, and warrants more nuanced consideration.

There are at least four ways the IASC can engage in humanitarian advocacy: forging a unified stance vis-à-vis governments in conflict or crisis (such as the Burundi and Afghanistan examples); promoting policy options vis-à-vis powerful governments or inter-governmental machinery (such as the IASC's support for work on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, whose target was the UN Security Council); efforts to lobby for more concerted political action on a given country; and educational/advocacy efforts within the humanitarian community to raise the profile of an issue or a country (e.g. the effort by Save the Children U.K. to highlight the Southern Africa food crisis in March 2002, and ongoing efforts to raise the level of attention to the situation in Northern Uganda). The IASC also operates as a forum in which NGOs can lobby the UN for a shift in their policy stance towards a given country.

Criticisms of the IASC's advocacy efforts tend to focus on the limited number of public statements made by the ERC or the IASC criticizing external actors, particularly governments, for their actions or inactions: e.g. failure to criticize the government of Uganda for its actions in the north; failure to adequately or robustly criticize the Zimbabwe government for its policies; failure to robustly oppose

the US war in Iraq, etc. This criticism, though understandable in the frustration underlying it, is somewhat off the mark. First, it fails to recognize the delicate balance that the ERC must strike between his or her roles as humanitarian coordinator and advocate, i.e. the potential tradeoff between the ability of an ERC to operate as a trusted interlocutor of powerful governments (e.g. in the UN Security Council) and the frequency, volubility and sharpness of his/her critical statements. Second, it presumes that statements by the IASC or the ERC necessarily impact positively on the behavior and policy of armed groups – evidence for which is at best decidedly mixed. While more effort could be made at crafting common IASC stances and strategies on critical issues – and there is no doubt that the broader humanitarian community expects the UN and the ERC to play this role, there are limits on what can be expected of the IASC or the ERC in terms of the effectiveness of public condemnatory statements.

Another important form of lobbying is the effort to get the Security Council or other powerful actors to adopt a shift in policy approach towards humanitarian issues. Here, there has been some progress in terms of the interactions, though arguably less is being done within the IASC context than outside it. Individual members are active in informal interaction with the UN Security Council; and executive heads of agencies interact with Council members far more frequently than they did ten years ago. Most importantly, the ERC now routinely briefs the Council on humanitarian issues. Thus, the humanitarian voice is heard far more loudly within the UN than it was ten or even five years ago. However, this progress can be attributed as much to efforts of the Secretary-General and certain governments in the Security Council than to IASC advocacy. Moreover, the interaction between humanitarian actors and political actors at the UN is still largely disaggregated, and comes out of each individual agency/NGO sense of priorities. Little is done within the IASC context to set common priorities for lobbying efforts.

In this realm, several correspondents raised the example of protection of civilians in armed conflict as a significant success story in terms of advocacy. We agree, but with three caveats. First, we note that the principal coordination forum through which this issue was managed was ECHA, not IASC – though at various points in time IASC lent support and inputs to the process. This is an issue with broader salience: if the target of lobbying activity is enhanced political action by responsible actors, there will be a tendency to work through those structures (such as ECPS and ECHA) which involve the Departments of Peacekeeping and Political Affairs, which have more sustained and more structured knowledge of the Security Council and the nature of possible political action. Second, we note the extremely important point that UN Secretariat/agency/NGO efforts on this issue were in fact led by the governments of Canada and Norway, whose leadership on this issue in the Security Council created the space in which humanitarian actors, particularly OCHA and UNHCR, could operate. We also note the very important contribution made to the discussions by the International Peace Academy, which hosted discussion fora bringing together a wider set of actors (including local NGOs) than occurred within either the political or humanitarian fora inside the UN, and contributed substantively as well (see Chesterman 2001.) Indeed, not just in this case, effective interaction between an energetic and resourceful government, an independent think-tank or academic body, and a UN agency/department or NGO appears to be a significant factor in the forging of good outcomes in the realm of policy and advocacy formulation. Third, and most important, there has yet to be any systematic evaluation of whether the work done by in the Security Council on protection of civilians has in fact led to increased protection.

Advocacy in an IASC context should also be viewed in terms of the opportunity it affords for one member to generate collective attention and/or priority-setting to a given situation. The most significant example that we know of this kind of function is the case of the Save the Children U.K. raising an early red flag about the looming food crises in Southern Africa. There is a debate about whether or not the WFP had already begun to respond to this crisis or whether it was prodded into action by Save's initiative. Regardless, it is clear that Save's intervention raised the profile of the

potential emergency in the inter-agency context, which in turn led to the crafting of a unified advocacy approach to raise awareness with governments and the public at large. The IASC thus afforded an opportunity for actors, especially smaller actors, to contribute to the management of the crisis and even to shape the conceptualization of the response, e.g. by emphasizing early the importance of non-food items and of HIV/AIDS as a significant dimension of food insecurity in the Southern Africa context. An additional example: we were present in Nairobi when the OCHA Regional office organized a meeting to consider the situation in Northern Uganda which, by the next day, had resulted in at least three actors – including one powerful donor – sending messages to their headquarters suggesting that the issue of Northern Uganda be raised in a series of Security Council briefings, executive visits, and lobby efforts. This culminated in the recent visit of the ERC to Uganda, widely perceived as an important advocacy step.

Thus, the record on advocacy is more mixed than either its detractors or champions would have. Moreover, it is important to be clear about the various forms of advocacy – both internal and external, and directed both at governments in conflict and governments with power (or the structures through which they interact.)

C. 2 – Policy Setting

Much of the work of the IASC and its subsidiary bodies is directed to the production of global policy guidelines, statements of principle, or manuals of best practice humanitarian issues. Examples include guidelines on the interaction between humanitarian action and human rights (*Growing the Sheltering Tree* 2002), the Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance (1999), the IDP guidelines, work on transitions, humanitarian-military relations, the protection of humanitarian space. Annual reports to the Humanitarian Segment of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) also constitute an important arena of policy work and policy development in the IASC.

The Review found a great deal of concern, at headquarters level, about the mechanics through which policy documents are produced (part of a broader concern about the management of the reference group), along with a certain amount of skepticism about the value of the effort. They are skeptical about the field-level applicability of much of what they produce – though we found evidence at field level to moderate this judgment. Virtually all members of the IASC WG believe that the policy agenda of the body is over-crowded and that some items should be cut. (We tackle the mechanics of policy setting in Section II.A.)

There is total disagreement about *what* should be cut. One of the striking aspects of this sphere of IASC activity is that virtually every policy it tackles has, at headquarters level, two to three champions and several detractors. But it is a strength of the IASC that it is a forum in which two or three actors with a commitment to an issue can push it through and create an important output. At field level, it only takes one or two committed individuals to be familiar with IASC policy outputs for those outputs to be incorporated into field guidelines or field practice. We found several instances of individuals within agencies using IASC policy outputs to drive in-country policy discussions. Other participants in those processes were often unaware that their discussions were being shaped by IASC outputs (an issue of visibility that we tackle in Section III.B.6); but this fact does not detract from their usefulness. For example, the OCHA team dealing with Somalia had used the "Sheltering Tree" publication on the interaction between human rights and humanitarian law in shaping a country team document on the issue. Some other involved in the effort did not know that the inputs originated in an IASC document; but that is a separate issue. Of course, there are grounds for skepticism about the value of some IASC policy outputs and the *extent* to which they shape agency and field practice.

But there is clearly potential in this realm. An important example is provided by the *IDP Guidelines*. Although produced outside of the IASC, the body endorsed the guidelines and the office of the

RSG/IDPs confirms that endorsement and adoption of the guidelines by the IASC plenary helpfully increased both the distribution of the guidelines and, more importantly, enhanced the authority with which they were received. The guidelines are widely viewed as authoritative, even by critics of the collaborative approach and IDP Unit. The fact that the Guidelines have been adopted by some government's judicial systems (Colombia) or parliaments (Angola) constitutes a significant normative achievement for the system. Members report that the guidelines influenced their programming in contexts as diverse as Burundi and Sri Lanka.

The IDP Guidelines have benefited greatly by the web of partnerships between the IASC, the Representative of the Secretary-General for IDPs, and the Brookings Institution, which provides financial and staffing support to the RSG's office, housed within OHCHR. In this, we see again the pattern that contributed to relative success on the protection of civilians: a UN agency (or NGO), perhaps with support from one or two other agencies works in collaboration with an independent think-tank and with strong support from key western governments (in this case, among others Norway and the UK).

There is enough evidence of field use of IASC outputs to make it clear that there is substantial potential in this arena. However, the examples we found were rather sporadic. It is clear that there is no systematic way for the IASC to monitor the extent to which its guidelines or policy decisions are being incorporated into field activities, or to encourage this happening. The questions of follow-up, monitoring and evaluation are of course among the major question marks surrounding the IASC – something we tackle separately. It should be noted, additionally, that OCHA offices in the field, if well informed about IASC decisions (which they are not always) can play an important role in introducing IASC outputs into in-country discussions and inter-agency processes; and that one of the most important fora where this does occur, albeit sporadically, is in the CAP/CHAP process – and while there is room for substantial skepticism that this fact itself influences agency or NGO programming it is a tool for familiarization of agency/NGO staff with IASC policy outputs.

A further problem is that UN staffers tend to be more aware of IASC policy outputs than are their non-UN counterparts. NGOs by and large are not well informed about IASC policy outputs, relying more on think tanks and other NGOs for their policy inputs. A case where these problems did not occur was the recent effort to develop guidelines on protection of beneficiaries against *sexual exploitation*.

In developing the terms of reference for the review, we were encouraged to look at the IASC's role in developing guidelines against sexual exploitation, as an exemplar of its normative policy-setting role. These guidelines were developed following a scandal that broke out in West Africa, involving alleged instances of aid workers using their position and resources to sexually exploit women and children in refugee camps. After some hesitation to bring the issue to the IASC (some agencies were initially inclined to deal with it internally), the issue was placed on the agenda of the IASC in March 2002, and at that meeting a Task Force established to rapidly develop guidelines for agency staff on the issue.[22]

From the time the IASC took hold of the issue, a number of things were done well:

- Two senior and experienced humanitarian officials were assigned to co-chair a task force with a specific and time-bound terms of reference for developing an interagency response;
- The Task Force worked quickly, producing the Plan of Action and six core principles for IASC adoption within three months;
- In developing the materials, the reference group consulted with donors;
- The principles were rapidly adopted by agencies and worked into internal agency charters and codes of conduct;

- The principles were incorporated into UN administrative guidelines for staff, giving them authority within the UN system;
- The Plan of Action was widely distributed in the field;
- NGOs as well as UN agencies have adopted and incorporated the Plan's six core principles;
- Many agencies and NGOs have required that sub-contractors adopt the principles, creating a magnifying effect;
- Donors and agencies have conducted some follow-up monitoring of compliance.

The episode, it is thus argued, demonstrates the potential for the IASC to develop global policy guidelines that enhance the standard of performance of the humanitarian community writ large -- Yes and no. While this is an accurate depiction of this episode, there were two conditioning factors that limit the extent to which this episode represents the actual potential of the IASC in the policy realm: first, the crisis in question was a crisis for the agencies themselves, as distinct from a crisis facing beneficiaries/victims; second, and most important, there was a great deal of pressure being placed on agencies and NGOs by donors (spurred in part by media attention), including a review of humanitarian funding in the U.S. congress, new conditions placed on funding by key donors, etc.

The pressure from donors was evidently central to the width and breadth of adoption of the Plan of Action and the six principles. Agencies and NGOs responded because their own position was under threat. Moreover, the humanitarian community as a whole faced a credibility crisis, and coordination was suffering from the inter-agency finger-pointing that had begun in the wake of the scandal.

There is no evidence to suggest that the level of distribution of these guidelines would be replicated in contexts in which this level of political pressure on the agencies is absent. After initial adoption of the Plan of Action, the pressure abated considerably. Partly as a result of this lost momentum, as well as arguably unrealistic objective setting, the task force has fallen behind the dates it set for itself on several items on its implementation matrix, and postponed its original June 2003 closeout date.

Thus, while the episode in one sense illustrates the potential, it also illustrates limits – or, more positively, the kind of partnerships required to make progress. The critical role that can be played by donors when they are fully engaged on an issue, and the potential for the IASC to achieve outcomes beyond the normal when an authoritative mechanism (the Secretary-General's office) or a powerful mechanism (the US government) is involved in shaping the response, is highlighted by this episode.

A final, important point on policy products: We found more evidence of use of policy outputs by agencies, especially in the field, when those guidelines related to subject matters that were *internal* to the membership of the IASC – i.e. on topics that fell within the purview of the members' own activities, or related directly to the question of interaction between elements of the membership. We have already commented on the lesser degree of success the IASC has had in tackling system-wide issues, i.e. issues that pertain to actors outside the IASC as well as inside. This is unsurprising: the IASC's perceived authority within the membership is modest; outside, the body, if it is visible at all, is certainly not perceived as authoritative.

C.3 – Lack of common definition or conceptualization of humanitarian action.

Returning to the question of policy, principles and ethics, one of the striking facts of the IASC is that is shares no common definition of humanitarianism or of what constitutes humanitarian action. In part, this reflects the difference in the membership: between protection agencies and operational ones; between development agencies involved in response to crisis and traditionally more focused humanitarian actors; and between US and European NGOs who tend towards different approaches. It also reflects the absence from the IASC of some of the most important humanitarian actors, including national NGOs and the key donors. The lack of shared definition or even an agreed delineation complicates the work of the IASC in important ways. It makes it difficult to draw

boundaries around its work, and means that there are no criteria for membership or participation. We will return to this issue in the final section.

C.4 – Standards

Finally, in addressing questions of advocacy, principles and ethics, a critical issue is that of standards, and the monitoring thereof. This is central, but thoroughly discussed in some of the ongoing, parallel studies commissioned by the Humanitarian Finance Work Programme core group. To avoid duplication, we make no additional points to those already made in those good studies.

C – Concluding Notes

The record of accomplishment on policy, advocacy, principles and ethics is decidedly mixed. However, unlike in the realm of tackling gaps in mandates and capacity, we do not believe that the mixed record here is a function of structural impediments. In other words, whereas we believe it unlikely that the IASC will be able to improve its performance on mandate/capacity gap questions, we do see important room for progress in the realm of advocacy, policy and ethics – particularly on matters that fall *within* the purview of the membership, as distinct from addressing the policies and actions of outside actors. We address the question of how to progress in our recommendations.

I (D) Promoting Inter-Agency Operational Capacity

Moving past the IASC's own stated objectives, it is important to note that the IASC, particularly in recent years, has devoted some energy, created some space and facilitated some processes designed to enhance members operational capacity on the ground. We refer to two specific topics:

D.1 – Staff Security.

The IASC has had staff security on its agenda for a long time, especially since the Rwanda operation. Task forces have been mandated and guidelines produced, in cooperation with UNSECCORD and others. Most recently, new guidelines have been produced on one of the major gaps in field-based security arrangements, namely the UN-NGO interface.[23] The recent effort to produce an agreement on UN-NGO Security arrangements provides an important example of how the IASC works well in solving practical challenges relating to interaction among members. It was an issue on which InterAction took a strong interest and thus a how strong role in shaping the negotiating process. The topic was limited in scope and focus, and was worked on by a small team of people who cared about it and put real energy into it (revealing once again one of the most important strengths of the IASC: its capacity to serve as a forum through which a small team of committed people can produce wider change.) It took advantage of the structural features of the IASC (i.e. NGO participation) to forge a field-based policy that could not have been done (at least not readily) through alternative mechanisms. The IASC members involved consulted with the appropriate non-IASC members, especially UNSECCORD. It resulted in policy changes that (a) capture some of the maturing responses of NGOs in the field, (b) solidify the more full stature accorded to NGOs within the IASC than in counterpart UN mechanism, and (c) most importantly, provide concrete and positive changes to field staff.

D.2 – Common Services.

A further, also recent element in this arena has been the effort, led in part by the World Food Program, to enhance the provision of common logistical services to agencies at field level. Efforts to enhance joint use of telecommunications, centralized information systems, logistics capacity, air transport and supply stand out for the rapidity with which they have contributed to the efficiency of field operations; their practical value and impact on the day-to-day working of field operations; and their continued potential to breakthrough what to date has been the real barrier in terms of inter-agency cooperation: moving past information sharing and joint planning to actual joint or inter-

linked operations. The agreement to establish Joint Logistics Centers (at the November 2002 Working Group meeting[24]) represents an important step forward, and where implemented to date (i.e. Cyprus) has already evidently demonstrated its capacity to enhance response.

D – Concluding Notes

It is too early to say whether recent efforts at common services will be as successful across the board as they already have been in some cases. But all indications from those involved in both the UN-NGO security agreement and the work on common services suggests that this area of work constitutes an important new dimension of the IASC's workload. In our view, it also demonstrates the importance of allowing agencies or individuals who excel at a particular task, or are committed to a particular issue, to lead on those issues. The IASC creates an important arena through which they can do so, and in the doing potentially produce important change. Further, the work done in this arena reinforces a conclusion that the IASC functions best when it focuses on issues directly related to the process of interaction between its members – as distinct from issues that involve, in real terms, wider sets of actors, or issues beyond the IASC's direct competence.

I (E) The Coordination Environment

Finally, we believe that an assessment of the IASC's achievements should include the informal arena, i.e. work the IASC has done (intentionally or not) to enhance the 'coordination environment'.

E.1 – An Enhanced Spirit of Coordination

It is often said that the IASC is a process, not a meeting ("which is good," remarked one interviewee, "since some of the meetings are dreadful.") Arguably the IASC's greatest contributions to humanitarian coordination have happened between meetings, in informal settings. The IASC has been instrumental in creating new space for coordination among humanitarian actors, facilitating the growth of interrelationships, and fostering an atmosphere of collegiality. When compared to the IASC review of Great Lakes Regional coordination six years ago, this study finds a sea change in attitudes toward coordination among the various actors, a development for which the IASC is not solely responsible, but can certainly take partial credit.

E.2 – Creation of Informal Networks

The network of relationships among emergency directors and inter-agency personnel among UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and OCHA, as well as with a slightly broader set of actors, has clearly improved over the past several years. Inter-agency problems are often solved in pre-IASC Working Group meetings sessions, or in the margins of meetings; in phone calls between agency heads or emergency directors; and in a variety of other informal ways. This is reflected at field level, where all of our correspondents agreed that the spirit of inter-agency collaboration was far stronger, and turf war far less pronounced, than it had been five years earlier. Field-level problems that cannot be sorted out among field representative (see below) are now often solved through a series of phone calls between the Humanitarian Coordinator and members of this informal network of IASC Working Group members.

Interestingly, the fact that the informal, rather than the formal structures, are used for problem solving is seen by some as a *failure* of the IASC. Informal mechanisms tend to privilege the biggest actors over the smaller, whereas in its formal mechanisms the IASC actually enhances the relative weight of the smaller actors. However, we believe that the creation of informal problem-solving networks is central to the success of any organization or organizational mechanism. In no sphere of organizational life are formal mechanisms the only mechanisms for problem solving, nor are they commonly the best. Rather, formal mechanism are effective if they provide venues for interaction among relevant officials; ratify decisions already made through informal networks; and only when

necessary – i.e. when the informal mechanisms have failed – take active decisions. This is as true of the UN Security Council (where the real work is done in the informal sessions) as it is of national governments (where informal sessions among Cabinet ministers and senior officials are often used to pre-negotiate deals that are then taken to Cabinet for endorsement).

That being said, if the creation of informal networks among inter-agency staff and emergency directors of the UN agencies has been one of the most important successes of the IASC, one of the major weaknesses we found is the lack of parallel networks among geographical bureaus or divisions of those agencies, at headquarters level. We found that a significant number of mid-level management staff in regional bureau (e.g. Africa directors or deputy directors) had never or very rarely met their colleagues in sister agencies.

E.3 – Interaction with International NGOs.

Although the IASC may not have attained the goal of being fully representative of the broader humanitarian community – it remains intrinsically a body in and of the United Nations, has no national NGO representation, has no state representation or donor representation, and is dominated by western-based agencies and perspectives – one of the most common perspectives we heard in our review was that the unique and central contribution of the IASC mechanisms was to create opportunities for extensive interaction with international NGOs. We will have more to say about the nature of the interaction with the NGO consortia; the ways in which this translates into field relationships; and other aspects of the relationship to NGOs. But it does appear to be the case that the simple fact of the existence of a formal, mandated structure in which NGOs participate on an equal footing with international organizations (initially designated as ad hoc participants, the NGO consortia are now deemed standing invitees along with the ICRC, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and others, and all members are agreed that there is virtually no practical difference between the interaction of standing invitees and full members) has helped to create conditions for improved relations between the UN agencies and the NGOs, including at field level. It has legitimated increased NGO interaction with the Secretary-General and the Security Council, and strengthens the ERC's hands in his own interaction with those actors.

Many NGOs have evolved from being implementing partners of UN agencies to being full operating partners (and sometimes direct competitors) of those agencies; this shift has at least partially registered inside the IASC, where NGOs are treated as serious actors with whom the UN must maintain an active relationship. By comparison, NGOs enjoy far less strong relationships with those parts of the UN system that are not exposed to recurrent interaction with them through any formal mechanism. Here again, the IASC is far from solely responsible for this evolution: donor pressure; the maturation of NGOs; repeated field experience of interaction; the relationship between NGOs and the academic community – all of these factors are involved in the evolution of the UN-NGO relationship in the humanitarian field. But the IASC has provided a critical forum for structuring that evolution, and remains – by all accounts – the single most important structural contribution of the IASC. (On the evolution on UN-NGO relations, see *inter alia* Natsios 1997.)

E – Concluding Notes

It should be noted that the IASC is not solely responsible for this phenomenon of creating informal networks. Rather, the consistency of donor pressure for coordination, combined with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's emphasis (underscored by UN Deputy Secretary General Louise Frechette) on the integration of UN field presences into UN Country Teams – a process strongly underpinned by the UN Development Group – share at least equal credit in generating a growing tendency towards interaction and coordination in place of turf warfare and isolation. This pattern is repeated throughout our findings: the IASC is *one* of a series of processes and mechanisms that have contributed to enhanced inter-agency cooperation. However, at least among the key humanitarian

agencies, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the frequency and nature of interaction among officials within an IASC context has played a substantive role in forging closer ties.

F – Conclusions: What worked, what did not?

In brief, what appears to have worked best within the IASC context are two things: tenacious efforts at the WG and SWG levels to promote field-based or field-oriented processes for allocating responsibilities within humanitarian programmes; and, more recently, efforts to enhance the interaction between members, especially through common services. Moreover, the informal interactions that occur among members have made an important contribution to enhancing the coordination environment – this may indeed be *the* major contribution the IASC has made.

In the arena of advocacy, policy and ethics, there are important achievements dotted along the way, but no consistent track record of improvements. The oft-cited 'legitimacy' of IASC policy and advocacy positions, and its presumed resultant authority, is in fact sharply constrained. Moreover, the visibility of its work is very limited.

What does not appear to work well in the IASC context are efforts to identify mandate gaps and capacity gaps, and to fill them. Nor have IASC efforts to resolve system-wide problems been particularly successful. There is limited evidence that a consensus-based mechanism such as the IASC can in fact reasonably tackle such issues. And where IASC processes have had some traction, it is often because of the role played by more authoritative actors, such as the Secretary-General, Deputy-Secretary-General, or a key donor. The absence of managerial authority in most IASC mechanisms constitutes an important structural limitation on the body's potential.

Further, in the absence of a common definition of humanitarianism, there has been limited effort to define common standards or a common set of ethics for response. And the absence of any effective system for the monitoring of follow-up and implementation, or for common evaluation, has weakened the IASC's potential capacity to fulfill its objectives.

At the 'big picture' level, we are left with two, schizophrenic images of the IASC and its work over the past decade. On the one hand, it was impossible at times to avoid a sense of near despair at the glacial pace of reform in the UN (not just within the IASC, but shaping it); at the resiliency of obstacles to mandate and capacity gaps; at the UN's Kafkaesque administrative mechanisms, particularly in the Secretariat; and most importantly, at the dizzying breadth, depth and complexity of the problems that the IASC is attempting to tackle – problems which would challenge the most effective response mechanisms. The pace of progress in the UN is slow.

On the other hand, we see a picture of steady, constant progress towards a set of important goals, and, arguably, the beginning of a rise in the rate of progress (over half of the IASC's self described "key outputs" were produced since 1999), as the IASC reaches an important point of maturity – a point from which further, real, sustained progress is made possible, given political will. We were impressed by the consistency of effort to achieve this progress; by the dedication and energy of those most responsible for the ongoing effort. Most of all, we were impressed by our repeated encounters with situations in which a small number of committed individuals were able to use the IASC to agitate for broader change.

But before drawing final conclusions, we turn to other aspects of the Terms of Reference and of the IASC's work.

II. SUPPORT TO THE IASC

The IASC functions through the support of OCHA; through the work of the IASC Secretariat; and through the support of member agencies. Some elements of this support warrant comment.

II. (A) OCHA: Vision, Strategy and Ownership

Unsurprisingly, many of the issues that arose in the review relate to OCHA and the nature of its interaction with the IASC. Several individual OCHA staff members, both in the field and at headquarters, received considerable praise for their efforts related to the IASC, either in a specific task force or more generally. Overall, however, the relationship between OCHA and the IASC is one of the more confused that we encountered.

General perceptions of the relationship between OCHA and the IASC vary across a spectrum: OCHA is a function of the IASC; OCHA supports IASC but much else beside; OCHA should service the IASC and everything else it does should be seen in that light; OCHA is just one member of the IASC, separate from the IASC Secretariat. This variation of views exists among agencies, within OCHA, and in the field.

Unsurprisingly, the variation is sharpest when placed on a Geneva-New York axis. In Geneva, OCHA staff tend to have a more positive view of the IASC, though there are important limits (in our view, unsustainable limits) on the extent to which OCHA geographical staff are involved in IASC work, reflect its outputs to their field counterparts or, most problematically, wish to bring discussions of coordination arrangements into the IASC Working Group. In New York, where staff are in far closer contact with their DPA and DPKO counterparts than their operational agency counterparts, the perspective tends to differ, with ECHA looming larger in terms of fora for inter-agency coordination. This reflects back into agency perspectives on the IASC: among the staff of operational agencies in Geneva there is tendency to view a shift of leadership in discussion on a given issue from Geneva to New York as meaning that it has shifted out of the IASC and moved into the political realm.

This variation in internal OCHA viewpoint is reflected back into the IASC in the form of the absence of any clear strategic vision within the OCHA leadership about the IASC. This has had three elements: (a) a fuzzy delineation between ECHA and IASC either in technical terms (which issue should be tackled where, etc.), or in tactical terms (in which forum would the best result be achieved); (b) no clear strategic sense of how to use the IASC to reinforce the potential leadership role of the ERC within the humanitarian community; (c) a general tendency to prefer the expansion of IASC's field presence but no clear strategy for this or even a strong picture of the situation; and (d) no common view on the relationship between OCHA and the IASC either at headquarters or more importantly at field level.

This of course relates directly to the question of the relationship between OCHA field presences and any potential IASC presence. In some country contexts OCHA's field team has been visibly removed from the office of the RC/HC – it has a separate logo, the staff are physically separated from the UNDP staff that service the RC function, OCHA sits at the table as an agency in the Country Team meeting, etc. This is defended by (a) the fact that OCHA staff perform functions that the HC himself does not perform and (b) that OCHA needs visibility in order to raise funds for staff. In other contexts, OCHA works as an integral part of the RC/HC office. In still further contexts, there are OCHA offices where there is no HC (e.g. the regional office in Nairobi, the IRIN functions, etc.) In Uganda, the OCHA office is constituted as a separate agency and is located in a separate physical space from the RC despite the fact that he is also the HC.

While we accept the need for flexibility on this issue, and believe that OCHA should retain the authority to establish separate field offices, it should be recognized that there is an important cost to having a separate OCHA identity in the field, namely that it actually diminishes the authority of IASC – because there is no perceived relationship between the IASC and the field structures that undertake coordination functions. It is also inconsistent with the Terms of Reference, which make clear that the HC "serves as the direct representative of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (and therefore of [OCHA])"[25] and that OCHA offices are designed to serve the functions of the HC.

By and large, OCHA field staff members express discomfort with the closer integration of the OCHA offices into the office of the RC/HC. First, there is a perception (supported by our interactions) that among NGOs (from whom many OCHA field staff are drawn) OCHA has a good reputation for humanitarian work, advocacy, information sharing, etc, whereas UNDP does not – and so were OCHA to be fused into 'the UNDP office' it would not only loose identity but loose support among NGOs, a key constituency. Second, there is a reticence to be seen simply as the staff of an individual rather than part of an agency/system. Third, there is the funding-visibility issue. We believe, however, that this is an unsustainable policy approach and recommend changes below.

It also relates to a further issue which goes beyond our terms of reference, but which is important – namely the limited extent to which OCHA headquarters staff, and even field staff, have professional training, education or experience directly related to what should be OCHA's specific expertise – namely coordination.

II. (B) IASC Secretariat: The Mechanics of the IASC

In expressing a strong sense of continued improvement to the IASC over the recent period, informants overwhelmingly credited the energy, commitment, and skill of the leadership and staff of the IASC Secretariat. The performance of these individuals gives credence to the increasingly accepted notion that coordination within the humanitarian system as it currently stands requires more than agency willingness, which may or may not be forthcoming. Rather, coordination must be "recognized as a full-time task requiring particular skills and competencies."[26] In light of this, a valid concern has been raised regarding the downgrading of the secretariat post in New York and the modest level of resources that OCHA has applied to IASC administration.

B.1 – Recent reforms.

In 2002 the Secretariat led an internal process of reform to strengthen the effectiveness of the IASC.[27] After consultations with members, the resulting plan of action addressed many of the procedural critiques that had been raised over the years, and only partially addressed in the reforms of two years prior. Chief among theses were overcrowded agendas, lack of clarity and consultation in the agenda setting process, and the general sense that the IASC Working Group had become simply a talk shop rather than a coordinating body, it's outcomes having little operational relevance to humanitarian action in the field. Most important, there was the sense that the agenda was not predictable. A more transparent process for agenda setting has now been instituted whereby (a) at the beginning of the year, the IASC Plenary agrees on a year-long work plan and (b) for specific meetings, agencies' inputs are solicited, an internal matrix is prepared to determine the items of majority interest, a preliminary agenda is compiled and sent out for comment. Items proposed by the field will carry the most weight, and occasionally items proposed by members will get bumped, if the agenda is too full. Moreover, the action plan called for agenda items to be formulated with the decisional objectives, to be focused on concrete operational issues or problems for resolution, and less of a reporting or informational exercise. In our interaction with members, we found a great deal

of evidence that this program of action has been well implemented. The issue of predictability has been solidly addressed.

(We thus hesitate to note that we heard from the members a concern that the agenda setting process has become perhaps *too* predictable, and thus not flexible enough. A few informants complained that the system becoming overly "professionalized" or mechanized to the point where creativity and innovation may be lost in the process.)

Some portion of the lingering concerns about mechanics may be attributed to the newness of the reforms, which some participants have not completely caught up to, yet overall, there is satisfaction with the current mechanics. As one participant stated, "The procedural changes in the Working Group are excellent. They don't need to be changed – just followed." Nonetheless, in conducting the review we found some procedural areas that could be further developed or enhanced, and we address these in our recommendations.

Despite the decision of the IASC review process to emphasize decision-oriented discussion items, considerable time is still spent on informational items such as the standing item on IDPs and the in-depth country profile was seen as an inefficient use of time. Equally, the standing Sub-Working Groups need not report to the IASC Working Group as an agenda item, unless there is a specific topic on which they need approval; progress reports can be circulated in writing. As there are many other informational fora available to members, and because in order for the Working Group to be an effective operational decision maker it must be assumed that the operational agencies present already have a grasp of the situation, it would seem that some of these standing items could be discontinued.

Informants also noted that there is no direct link between the weekly meetings in New York and Geneva and the quarterly Working Group meetings (though this was addressed in the 2002 action plan). If these weekly meetings are to be useful, there needs to be a channel for referring issues upward as necessary.

B.2 – Country Issues at the IASC WG

Another issue raised by informants was that of the country discussions in the WG meeting. There was satisfaction among a majority of informants that there was now more country discussion, but it was felt still somewhat abstract. Some field staff complained that background papers and policy language they prepared based on hard won consensus forged at the country level, was subsequently watered down and rendered meaningless by the time it reached the form of an IASC output. Indeed, as noted elsewhere, many field staff were hesitant to put forward an issue for the IASC. Moreover, many participants believed that the country discussions were too broad, and not adequately focused on real issues.

We found considerable support for a proposal from UNHCR to limit country discussions to contexts where there were questions relating to coordination arrangements. We found some resistance to this idea, notably in parts of OCHA ('we don't want to have to bring coordination issues to the IASC') – which we found disturbing. We tend to support UNHCR's proposal in principle, but it intersects with the issue of representation, and given the current representation we believe that there is also a case for country discussions that focus on the application of existing policy frameworks within difficult country contexts (e.g. how might the guidelines on humanitarian use of military assets be adapted to the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan?)

Moreover, and going to the issue of flexibility or responsiveness, members continue to find it problematic that the IASC rarely meets to discuss breaking crises. During the period in which we were drafting the review, it was notable that there was no IASC activity, meeting, statement, etc, on the breaking crisis in Liberia, which occupied world attention. The IASC has previously addressed

this issue and agreed that there should be ad hoc meetings of the IASC membership to review breaking crises. This must be implemented. We address some specifics of how we believe this should function in our recommendations.

B.3 – Transmitting the Outputs

On the topic of IASC mechanics, there is also the question of how outputs are transmitted. Right now the mechanism is from the IASC Secretariat to members, plus HCs; members are relied upon to further distribute to the field. While this is appropriate, it is happening less consistently that would be ideal, and there is particular concern about the transmission from NGO consortia to members HQs, and from there to the field. While this is appropriate, it is happening less consistently that would be ideal, and there is particular concern about the transmission from NGO consortia to their members (which are often themselves consortia of national members), from there to the national members, and from the national members to the field.

Included in the above concept is the idea that OCHA is relied upon to transmit IASC decisions to OCHA field offices. We found that this was not happening reliably. OCHA offices do get copies of IASC decisions that relate to their geographical area, but they do not reliably get other outputs of the IASC, including policy statements, guidelines, etc. In our view, OCHA should be the most active representative of the IASC concept in the field, and thus it is extremely important that both HCs and OCHA field staff are fully informed about IASC decision making. It's a minor point, but we believe it important that the IASC Secretariat itself directly copy OCHA field offices on IASC outputs. (Though the continued involvement of DRB and ERB on country discussions, and in communication with the field on those discussions, is important.)

B.4 – The Management of Subsidiary Bodies

The management of subsidiary bodies was an area where the membership was widely dissatisfied. The chief complaints we heard from members about these bodies were: that there were too many, making tracking their work of offering meaningful participation overly labor-intensive; that they were too crowded, with agencies and individuals participating more out of agency interest than for the particular expertise they had to offer; that they were allowed to continue for too long, either open-ended or repeatedly extending their mandate; and that they un-integrated with each other or with an overall strategic framework for the IASC.

Regarding close-out dates, the IASC agreed in 2000 with the recommendation of the internal review that the Working Group must establish "sunset clauses" for each of the subsidiary bodies, but many have since been extended as new tasks were added to their terms of reference. It was suggested by at least one informant that the IASC follow UNDG's example with subsidiary bodies, and close them out automatically at the end of the year. While this does not seem appropriate, especially given the complex and evolving nature of some of the issues on the IASC's agenda, it is necessary to reaffirm the task oriented and temporary-ness of these bodies, to avoid unnecessary make-work and institutionalization.

The issue of participation seemed particularly important. It is a strength of the subsidiary bodies that they possess the flexibility to bring in any number of relevant actors from inside and outside the UN system (including donors, think tanks, NGOs, (even private sector actors, though there is little evidence of this in practice.) This strength is offset, however, by the tendency for some groups to attract large numbers of participants from various IASC members and other UN agencies, making the management process cumbersome and generating a tendency to coordination by consensus (or, worse, coordination by lowest common denominator) rather than coordination by expertise. The Review found that some of the most effective reference groups were composed of a small number (less than 10) of experts on the issue, whose common expertise allowed them to focus in on the task

at hand unencumbered (to the extent possible) by inter-agency politics. Contingency Planning was offered several times as an example of productive technical collaboration in this vein.

We should note that in an effort to break down the "stovepipes," the IASC Secretariat in Geneva has begun bringing the Reference Group chairs together in informal meetings to discuss and perhaps devise ways to synthesize their work, a positive development.

As a final note, the subsidiary bodies are seen by some to depend overmuch on the energy and commitment of the agencies/individuals chairing them. Certain agencies likewise feel unfairly burdened by the staff and financial resources they have contributed to reference groups that has not been matched by other members. We take a positive view of the correlation of agency commitment to success of the group, and would suggest that a lack of action and investment at the top be taken as a signal that it is time to open the group for a new chair, or to conclude business.

B.5 – The Plenary

The plenary meeting of the IASC – the actual committee itself – is widely considered less effective than the Working Group. Partly for this reason, it was agreed at the outset that this Review would not focus on the Plenary. Nevertheless, the dysfunction of the Plenary – or, more important, the variable strength/weakness of relationships between the principals – is a matter of concern to members. When the Plenary has worked best, it has focused on major policy questions and architectural issues, and has been facilitated by informal interaction – i.e. principals' only dinners prior the meeting, etc.; where it was worked least, it has been unstructured, too large, and generated dissatisfaction from the principals who feel like they are merely rubber-stamping their staff's work.

As a matter of perspective, it can certainly be counted as one of the strengths of the IASC, and an important indicator of its sustainability, that so much of the work is done at the working level and senior working level – a rarity in the UN system. However, for the senior working level in particular to continue to devote time and resources to the IASC, they must have the buy-in of the principals.

II. (C). Agency Participation and Support to the IASC

One of the most important indicators of success of the IASC is the level and nature of support provided to it by members. We sought, but have yet to receive, data on the costs to each agency of chairing reference groups, participating in IASC processes, etc. Even without that data, however, there is clear evidence of success: compared to five years ago, the level of resources put into the IASC by the major agencies has significantly increased.

In this realm, clearly, UNICEF stands out in terms of the level of corporate support that it has provided to the IASC over the years. This comes in the form of the decision to appoint their director of emergency operations as IASC focal point; from his deep, personal involvement in every aspect of the IASC's work; from their decision to second a senior staff member to the IASC Secretariat; and from the participation of UNICEF staff both at headquarters and the field in all sorts of IASC activities. UNICEF has continued to provide exemplary support, for example in the level of engagement in the SWGs on the CAP and particularly on Contingency Planning.

Further, we note as an important indicator of success of the IASC in establishing itself as an important and useful vehicle, the rise in the degree of participation of both UNHCR and WFP, historically two of the more reluctant members. This we see in the form of the their active participation in a number of reference groups and sub-working groups, and in the nature of their involvement and representation at the Working Group. In the case of WFP, their leadership on

common services is to be noted. (It is unfortunate, however, that WFP's representation to the IASC WG is now separate from their operational decision-making structure.) In the case of UNHCR, we take note of the increased frequency with which it is represented at the WG by the Director of Emergency Operations or his staff, in addition to the Director of External Relations and his staff. We also note their active participation in reference groups and sub-working groups.

We also recognize the important contribution of UNDP/UNDG. In some senses a competitor to OCHA/IASC, it has nevertheless been the case that UNDP/UNDG have played active roles in moving forward a number of IASC issues and processes. The question of the overall relationship between UNDGO and the IASC Secretariat is one to be addressed in more depth.

We take note of Study 4's important suggestion that the IASC place senior officers in the office of the ERC. There is no need for us to comment further other than to say that we support the principle behind the suggestion and believe that it, or some variant thereof, should be considered seriously by the IASC.

III. OTHER MAJOR ISSUES RAISED BY THE REVIEW

A series of other issues were raised in the process of the Review, some in our Terms of Reference, other by interviewees, and others still simply from our analysis. We group these here as relating to 'management' issues (the role of Principals, the question of a 'Core Group'); issues relating to the interaction between the IASC and other parts of the overall system (donors, UN political actors, and the question of 'visibility' or 'branding'); issues relating to membership and representation at the IASC; and issues pertaining to the IASC at field level. These issues form an important part of the backdrop to any set of recommendations for how to move forward with strengthening the IASC. We also address herein the question of the IASC's relationship with other coordination fora.

III (A) Management Issues

A.1 – Lack of engagement of IASC principals.

Most of our correspondents were agreed that little had been done over time to ensure the engagement in the IASC process of the principals themselves. IASC plenary meetings are widely seen as dull, overly bureaucratic, formulaic meetings in which the principals come together simply to formalize agreements already forged by the Working Group.

Although the real work of the IASC is done by the Working Group, its sub-reference groups, and by the field, the will of the principals is important in two respects. First, if principals are not at least somewhat engaged by the IASC, their willingness to allow their staff to spend significant time on Working Group processes, and their willingness to devote organizational resources to Task Forces or reference groups, will be limited, and this will weaken the IASC at its various levels. Second, because outputs from the Working Group are more likely to have effect in the field if they are transmitted to member's field presences from the principal themselves. At present, this happens sporadically, diminishing the consistency of the application of IASC decisions to field level.

The factors that shape the engagements and interaction of principals are at least four. First, it will depend very heavily on the ERC: the emphasis s/he places on the IASC, or not; his/her personal relations with the other principals (though these can be cultivated); and his/her style. Second, it will depend on the messages they get from within their organization: if emergency directors, deputies, heads of external relations, etc consistently report that the IASC is a valuable forum, they will tend to

participate whether personally engaged or not. Third, it will depend on messages received from 'above' – i.e. from the Secretary-General and the Deputy-Secretary-General: their emphasis or not on the mechanism (through, for example, periodic participation in the meeting by the DSG) will signal its relative important. Finally, messages from donors will confirm or not the value of the IASC.

Additionally, there are intangible/mechanical issues related to how to engage principals in such a forum – we tackle these in a later section.

A.2 – Core Group

One issue that arises again and again is that of the creation of a core group of IASC member agencies to serve as a kind of steering committee. The idea has been to create a core group of IASC members that could act on behalf of the larger group when an urgent response is needed. The Secretary-General has in principle endorsed the creation of such a core group, (to including WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, and OCHA – and possibly one of the three NGO consortia on a rotating basis, plus possibly with one of the two Red Cross actors.) has been endorsed in principle by the Secretary-General. However, a recent effort to create such a forum was voted down.

The case for a core group, in theory, is the ability of the IASC to act rapidly in fast-breaking crisis situations. When a rapid onset emergency occurs, or if there is a sudden deterioration in a country situation, the ERC should be able to react immediately, but ideally with in consultation with IASC members. Given the potential tension between consultation and speed, the idea is that s/he should be empowered to consult only with a small group before acting. The case against a core group has been that it would diminish the sense of inclusiveness that the IASC has built up, and that actors that are not part of the core group would feel more marginalized now than they do even vis-à-vis informal decision-making among the bigger agencies.

We see a second case against a core group: namely, that it would actually bureaucratize and slow down something that already occurs, namely informal decision-making among the *de facto* core. When rapid action is needed, the ERC can (and often does) consult informally with the key actors and then act under his/her own authority, knowing that the key agencies will back the decision. The advantages of doing this informally are: flexibility as to which set of actors constitute the core (which may vary from situation to situation); the absence of formal mechanism for which, presumably, minutes would have to be kept, decisions processes and distributed, etc.; and speed. During her stint as acting Emergency Relief Coordinator, Carolyn McAskie managed her interaction with the IASC principals along these lines, and the period is still recalled by many IASC members in very positive terms – widely seen as the period during which IASC principals were most engaged and during which there was best cooperation among IASC principals.

Any formalization of a core group mechanism will inexorably lead to new processes surrounding it and a slowing down of the actual response. Here, other organization's experience can be brought to bear. A clear patterns exists in organizational experience (whether one is looking at the private sector or at mechanisms such as the Security Council bodies) that when informal processes are formalized, what happens is simply that new informal processes tend to spring up to provide the flexibility that the original informal mechanism provided, but with the disadvantage of leaving behind a new formal structure. For example, pressure on the Security Council to be more transparent in its discussions has led to a higher incidence of the contents of Council 'informals' being circulated to the press, etc. In other words, 'informals' have become more and more like formal sessions. The unsurprising result is that more and more work of the Council is done over coffee breaks; in private sessions; in lunches with the Secretary-General; and generally away from even the 'informal' body. We fear that the same would occur with the creation of a core group: it would work for a brief period, then get mechanized,

and then there would then be yet another formal coordination body, but much of the real work would still get done in informal processes.

III (B) Relationship to Outside Actors

B.1 – Relationship to Donors.

The question of the IASC's relationship to donors at both headquarters and field level is arguably the most vitally important topic with which we dealt, as well as one of the most sensitive – at least at headquarters. [28]

At the field level, the issue is obviously related to the question of IASC field presence. But just taken as things stand the field level has no formal IASC mechanism per se, we can nevertheless ask the question whether there is effective interaction between IASC members and donors; and whether donors in the field are aware of and supportive of IASC mechanisms and outputs. Here, we find more good news than bad.

Relations between UN agencies, donors and NGOs are perhaps best developed in Nairobi – a city from which programs in Southern Sudan, Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region are directed. In other words, a city that covers a region where roughly half of the world's humanitarian activity occurs. Because of the longstanding nature of the Somalia and Sudan emergencies, they have evolved their own structures for aid management, Operation Lifeline Sudan and the Somalia Aid Coordination Body. For the Great Lakes, the OCHA Regional Office for East and Central Africa plays an important role in brokering and maintaining UN-donor-NGO relations, and is beginning to do so as well for the Horn. There are, thus, in the region at least three and arguably four sets of relations between these three groups.

Donors play the most prominent role in the SACB, a structure similar to the Afghanistan Support Group (a donor body that oversaw the Strategic Framework approach in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and up to the end of the US war with the Taliban) and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Assistance to the Palestinian People (that managed aid following the Oslo process in the Middle East.) The strong role of donors has a major advantage in creating direct political links between the UN and the donors, in ensuring deep donor engagement, and in creating fora for real coordination among donors themselves. The donors' role in chairing the SACB and directing much of the work of the sectoral committees has however raised some concerns among UN agencies, in particular on the question of the appropriateness of the UN being 'directed' by a handful of member states. On the other hand, the SACB structure is clearly structured around a recognition of a centrally important concept – that 'donors' are not simply funders of other actors. Rather, they are critically important actors in their own right who use funding as but one part of a set of tools for achieving specific objectives.

Operation Lifeline Sudan is structured slightly differently with donors outside the mechanisms but closely involved in it, and weighing in frequently with the Sudanese authorities to pressure them on behalf of the humanitarian concerns agencies for access, etc. OLS has been well documented, and needs no further elaboration here.

For the Great Lakes Region, the structures are more informal: a 'Steering Committee' of donors and agencies meets monthly; an information sharing meeting on a weekly basis brings donors, UN, and NGOs together; and there are other additional interactions besides – e.g. when the team was in Nairobi, such as an *ad hoc* meeting of the Team in Nairobi to discuss the situation in Northern Uganda. Importantly, for the GLR, donors, UN agencies and NGOs all participate, at various levels, in the Regional CAP, CHAP and contingency planning processes. Notwithstanding the fact that

these are fairly labor-intensive processes, they have the strong support of all aid actors in the region and provide an important forum for strategic interaction. Donors were strongly supportive of the CAP process and emphasized that the CAP and CHAP discussions informed and influenced either their decision-making (USAID) or their recommendations to headquarters (ECHO, others). The major donors routinely participated in the contingency planning process as an important forum to share both information and strategic analysis. (Additionally, it is worth reporting that some donors and NGOs noted that a major source of information for them was IRIN – another form of interaction.)

Most importantly, the UN agencies and the donors meet monthly to review strategy. This is an informal meeting, with no notes taken or distributed. But according to both agencies and donor participants it affords an important opportunity for the UN to share strategic ideas and political intelligence with donors in ways that shaped both sets of actors' perceptions and responses. Here again, importantly, the structure treats donors as political and humanitarian actors, not just as potential funders of the UN's work.

Of course, this kind of interaction is vulnerable to the UN being accused of work at the behest of a small group of states, rather than on behalf of member states. However, comparative experience suggests that this kind of accusation will only hold if the objectives of the states with which the UN is cooperating differs substantially from the objectives set out for the UN (either in CAPs or more generally in Secretary-General statements and the like.) Where 'donors' objectives are aligned to the general purposes of the humanitarian community, strategic interaction of the kind above can only benefit the collective effort. It is worth noting, as well, that the states that are involved – or could be involved – in such efforts need not be limited to the western donors; in the Middle East and in Sudan, for example, the Arab League and relevant Arab states have been incorporated into dialogue structures along with the traditional western actors.

Some additional points should be made about the interaction with specific donors: USAID; and ECHO (and to a lesser extent DfID.) These donors take a very hands-on and bilateral approach to their grantmaking, and have increasingly come to function as what we term 'operational donors,' complete with case-specific objectives, material and logistical infrastructures, and technical staff capable of directing field operations. They are often among the first on the ground performing needs assessments, and take an increasingly active role in the design of aid projects with some of their fundees. While these donors are a minority and represent only one end of the spectrum, the size of their combined funding to humanitarian operations means that this issue warrants special consideration.

At the moment, very little interaction between IASC members and donors occurs within the IASC *per se*. Nevertheless, from a field perspective, there is much occurring at the level of interaction with donors. What the field has *de facto* recognized and structured is that donors are not just donors – they are aid actors in their own right, with their own policies and strategies, their own access (sometimes much better than the UN's) and are thus actors with whom dialogue is necessary not just for funding reasons but in order to ensure that the overall aid community is acting more or less in harmony vis-à-vis a given set of local authorities or issues.[29] The informality and variation in relations between UN agencies, NGOs and donors is in our analysis a source of strength, not a weakness. Some adaptation of these structures may be required – surely an important topic for the IASC – but overall our approach would be "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

At headquarters, this issue is more complicated. Here too there is some good news in that donors in Geneva report a growing level of satisfaction about the briefings they get from the IASC Secretariat and from Ross Mountain. But there are more fundamental issues. At the level of Geneva and New York, the key donors can no longer be treated as core members of the aid community – they are one

sub-section of the larger Economic and Social Council membership, and as such not 'entitled' to a higher degree of interaction with the UN agencies than the rest of ECOSOC. Too close interaction between the agencies and the donors would serve only to reinforce the G77's concerns about the western nature of the humanitarian enterprise.

On the other hand, of course, the lack of sustained, strategic interaction with donors at a policy level produces important disconnects. Donors have complained of being left in the dark more than once on certain initiatives until they suddenly appeared as items for decisions on IASC agenda, prompting the question, as one donor representative put it, "well, who do they think is going to pay for it?". Earlier engagement of donors in these instances could perhaps have elicited buy-in and enhanced the practical implementation of the final product. Here we must note that several of the IASC's subsidiary bodies - Reference Groups and Task Forces – have taken advantage of flexible participation to bring in donors and other outside organizations. The donor representatives we spoke to whose organization took part were overwhelmingly favorable in their assessment of the process and its outcomes. IASC members would do well to expand this practice wherever possible

B.2 – The IASC and the World Bank

At this juncture, it is worth making a brief comment on the relationship with the World Bank. The Bank's participation in the IASC has been a rather negative experience, seen from both perspectives. Bank's participation and feedback to IASC products has been episodic; and from the Bank perspective, much of the information flow from the IASC has been of marginal interest. The obvious reason for this is that the Bank is not a humanitarian agency and is only rarely directly involved with the relief phase of a crisis. The point of intersection was on transition issues. However, even here, the Bank's engagement with IASC discussions on these issues was never as robust as other engagements with the UN it has pursued either on specific country issues or through various bilateral discussions.

The fact that the Bank has recently joined ECPS, putting it in direct link with the UN's political process, constitutes an important step forward in the overall relationship. A strategic relationship on a given country between the UN's political presence and the Bank's reconstruction team is potentially a very strong coordination tool for overarching strategy towards reconstruction. But it is unlikely to address the issues most of concerns to humanitarians, namely early recovery efforts and the relationship between developmental activities and humanitarian activities in long-running crises. To the extent that the Bank and the UN relate to one another on those issues, it is most likely through UNDP and UNDG that these interactions will occur.

The IASC should probably thus cede the Bank relationship to other parts of the UN. Agencies have raised the question of whether the Bank should be asked to leave the IASC. We address this in recommendation 36. But it is important to be clear: the mutual failure to find a relationship of substance with the Bank and the IASC, and the ceding of this relationship to other parts of the system will clearly constrain the IASC from having a serious voice on transitional issues (if it continues to pursue this subject area).

B.3 – Relations with UN Political and Peacekeeping Operations

The question of the relationship between the IASC and the UN's political and peacekeeping departments and operations arises at a variety of levels. It is highly relevant to the question of IASC field presences, given the proliferation of UN SRSGs charged with overall UN coordination. It is relevant in terms of the IASC's mandate to promote humanitarian principles among outside actors involved in the response to humanitarian crises. And it is relevant in terms of the IASC's value-added. (References include Macrae & Leader 2000, Jones 1999.)

There is of course an extremely high level of interaction between DPA, DPKO and OCHA, as well as with other humanitarian agencies, often through their New York liaison offices. The UN's IASC members all participate in ECHA where DPA and DPKO sit, so that interaction is both regular and formalized. This interaction has without question improved inter-department coordination within the UN system and has without question given rise to improved arrangements for overall UN coordination in the field in contexts where UN political or peacekeeping missions are present jointly with humanitarian agencies. Some of this has been codified in such policy documents as the Note on Guidance on Relations between SRSGs and RCs/HCs.

But this has had little to do with the IASC. Precisely because of the existence of ECHA, the IASC has been peripheral to this discussion. In preparation of the Note of Guidance, which encapsulated much of this discussion at an early stage, the IASC was involved at a late stage, once much progress had been made within ECHA; an IASC meeting, together with the Deputy Secretary General, was convened for the purpose of generating IASC buy-in to the framework. But the IASC was neither in the lead on the issue nor did it make particularly substantive inputs.

The IASC had even less to do with the subsequent emergence and proliferation of the concept of integrated missions. As adopted in Sierra Leone, the D.R. Congo, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq, these missions have benefited from robust exchanges between DPA/DPKO and the humanitarian agencies, and from the hiring of experienced humanitarian officials into positions from which they perform humanitarian coordination functions. Sometimes, these individuals have been in place or already nominated as RC/HC, and so it can be said that the IASC has been involved in putting humanitarian officials into integrated missions. But this is far from routine. More often, to date, these officials have been selected by the SG's office in consultation with the SRSG and the managing department, which may in turn consult with OCHA or the major agencies – but sporadically, and certainly not through the IASC.

Two points are important to make here. First, in comparing the performance of the IASC on the HC system, etc, it compares unfavorably with the rapidity with which DPA & DPKO have made progress on implementing the system for SRSG-led coordination, where they are appointed. They key difference is the authority of the Secretary-General behind SRSGs, both in the appointment and in practice. (Although RCs are also appointed by the SG, in practice this is more a nominal than an actual fact, and the weight of RCs is that of the UNDP Administrator. The SG not only takes the lead on identifying SRSGs, he is frequently closely involved on a personal basis in their selection and takes seriously the idea that they serve as his representatives.) Second, one of the consequences of the simultaneous operation of ECHA and the IASC, and of their different membership, is that there remains in the UN a more skeptical attitude towards NGOs in DPA and DPKO than prevails in OCHA or in the major operational agencies.

B.4 – Link to Other Coordination Bodies

The relevance of the IASC is limited by (a) the proliferation of SRSG-based coordination mechanisms in the field, and thus the increased role of the SG's office and of ECPS-actors in setting coordination structures, (b) the lack of an agreed mechanisms for division of labor or interaction between IASC and ECHA/ECPS, and (c) the limited effectiveness with which the IASC has, in the recent period, interacted with the SG's office as it plays an increasingly direct role in shaping in-country coordination arrangements.

There is of course an extremely high level of interaction between DPA, DPKO and OCHA, as well as with other humanitarian agencies, often through their New York liaison offices. The UN's IASC members all participate in ECHA where DPA and DPKO sit, so that interaction is both regular and

formalized. This interaction has without question improved inter-department coordination within the UN system and has also given rise to more structured arrangements for overall UN coordination in peacekeeping contexts.

But this has had little to do with the IASC. ECHA and ECPS have played more active roles on these issues, as has the SG and his office. Although the IASC initially helped shape the UN reform agenda, it has not kept pace with recent changes in terms of the proliferation of SRSGs and of integrated mission structures. The IASC has also lost ground on the appointment of humanitarian officials into positions in integrated missions or the staff of SRSGs. Partly for this reason, the SRSG-based coordination arrangements (which have been proliferating) are starting to generate some degree of 'blow-back', in particular from NGOs.

In addition, the IASC's value-added and effectiveness is diminished by lack of division of labor with UNDG. The mechanisms overlap in two important areas: on the question of transitions, and on the management of the RC system (which implicates the effectiveness of the HC system.)

B.5 – Relationship to ECOSOC

An important and underdeveloped function of the IASC is the interaction with members states, particularly the G-77 nations who are not represented on the HLWG, and promoting support of humanitarian agendas. The ECOSOC Humanitarian segment is currently the primary channel for doing so, and Study 4 found that it "serves a most useful role in raising issues of general interest and concern not only to the UN system but to the wider humanitarian community as well" (Kent et al, p.58). However there is a general sense that so-called 'beneficiary nations' (an odd designation) are largely left out of the IASC equation, prompting discussion around including Southern NGO consortia and other possibilities. The review team believes the most effective participation by indigenous NGOs will continue to be accomplished at the field level, and should be actively solicited under the coordination structures set up by the RC/HC. More could and should be done to at the IASC-WG and reference group level to identify and include participants from G-77 nations on an issue-by issue basis. Additionally, the effort at periodic briefings for the G-77, which has been undertaken more frequently in recent years, is an important and positive development.

B.6 – Visibility of the IASC

At the headquarters level, the IASC is highly visible among the obvious set of people: the staff within member agencies that are most involved in its work, and the staff of missions to the UN who are responsible for humanitarian work. In capitals, it is visible – in that people know of its existence and some of its work – in the aid sections of foreign ministries and/or the humanitarian sections of development ministries. Even here, however, there is confusion between the IASC and the myriad other coordination bodies, especially ECHA. We repeatedly heard even actual members of the Working Group refer to a problem or a success of the IASC that was actually something undertaken by ECHA, or vice versa.

It is visible, but many of its outputs are not. Many IASC policy documents are not known beyond the innermost circle of members and partners, and certainly not in the broader community of policy officials, NGO staff, advocates, and academics who involve themselves in humanitarian issues. And certainly decisions of the IASC relating to country arrangements are thoroughly opaque, even sometimes to parts of the membership.

Moreover, once one moves past the departments of external relations or the offices of emergency directors into the geographical branches of even the largest operational agencies, the visibility of the IASC rapidly recedes. Desk officers and geographical branch heads will encounter the IASC if/when their area of focus becomes a topic of major attention and they are called upon to prepare briefs for

Working Group consumption, or to present at information-sharing sessions. But of the decisions of the IASC, its policy frameworks and guidelines, etc, they are only partially aware.

In the field, the IASC is all but invisible outside the staff of the UN. During the review process, we encountered innumerable instances in the field where agency staff, NGO staff, donors, even OCHA staff, were aware of a specific decision or policy guidance but had no idea that it emanated from the IASC. To the extent that they are known, many IASC products or processes are identified more with OCHA than with the IASC.

Furthermore, IASC outputs on policy and standards are often invisible beyond the UN membership. IASC policy decisions and statements may be transmitted to members, and members may onward transmit to field staff, but these are getting to field staff at best sporadically. This is particularly, but not exclusively, true of NGO staff. (Though it may be that IASC policy decisions are being incorporated into NGO policy frameworks at the headquarters level, and then being transmitted as such to the field.)

We also found on occasion that OCHA in the field were not fully informed about IASC policy outputs and decisions, except where they related directly to their country of operation – an issue that was a source of embarrassment and more importantly lost opportunity for some OCHA teams. UNICEF staff were often the best informed about IASC statements, policy decisions, etc.

Moreover, what was very apparent is that few people outside the UN system recognize a connection between four seemingly separate entities: the IASC; the ERC; OCHA; and Humanitarian Coordinators. Even people close to the system who are aware of the IASC nevertheless identify Resident Coordinators (as everyone calls them, not 'humanitarian coordinators') with UNDP. OCHA is seen (either positively or negatively) as a separate agency; it is not well understood that Humanitarian Coordinators report to and represent the ERC; nor is the position of the ERC (as distinct from the head of OCHA) well recognized. The confusion is exacerbated by the way in which OCHA field offices interact with the office of the RC/HC – see above.

III (C) Representation & Membership

C.1 – Nature of Members' Representation at the IASC Working Group

The nature of the forum is reflected in the nature of the type of agency representation to it. Originally intended to be a meeting comprised of emergency directors, the Working Group is now comprised of a mix of those plus more heads of now includes senior external relations staff as well. Some agency representatives insist that the country discussions are not ones that require decisions and thus are not ones that require the participation of their emergency directors. This begs the chicken-and-egg question of whether harmonization of representation might engender more practical Working Group country discussions that lead to concrete decisions, or whether the practice should simply be discarded as an unnecessary, informational exercise. There are some positive signs: e.g. UNHCR's emergency director and team attend more frequently than in the past, though the focal point remains with the head of external relations.

C.2 – Nature of NGO membership

One of the central questions for the review was that of the NGO membership and representation in the IASC. This is an issue both at field level (where we tackle the question under the heading of IASC field presence) and at headquarters level. Several UN members raised with us the prospect of adding additional NGO consortia membership to the IASC to enhance the voice of NGOs in the forum. There is also the issue of the representation of NGOs from the south.

The question of NGO interaction with the IASC we tackled above in the section related to IASC field presence. Let us look then at the headquarters level and at broader questions of inclusion. The backdrop is a near total consensus that the IASC's primary utility is the opportunity it affords UN agencies to interact with NGOs. As noted above, the IASC can claim some (though not exclusive) credit for an overall improvement in the level of respectful interchange between the major international NGOs and the UN agencies. Although this has largely been at the level of policy and advocacy interface, there has also been NGO participation in IASC joint missions and joint assessments. NGO consortia representatives report that they field increasingly like de facto full members of the IASC; there is no discriminatory or second-class-citizen treatment of NGOs anymore within the IASC. Moreover, the efforts undertaken by the CAP sub-working group to push forward on inclusion of NGOs constitutes an important normative contribution, though has as yet found only modest realization in the field.

Fundamentally, the contribution of the IASC so far has been to begin to break down a rather archaic UN mindset of seeing NGOs as either antagonistic lobby groups or implementing partners of agency programs. (One of our UN headquarters interviewees said of NGOs: "They're the enemy." But this viewpoint belongs to a receding minority.) Broadly, within the IASC community there is a growing realization that NGOs are in effect operating partners of the UN; in many cases larger players than any single UN agency.

However, the UN members of the IASC have cause to question whether, by interacting with these consortia, they are really interacting with NGOs. (The query is similar to ones that NGOs have when interacting with OCHA: is this the same as really interacting with the UN agencies?) If OCHA is the friendly face of the UN to many NGOs, then arguably the consortia are the friendly faces of the NGO community to the UN. Certainly, some field interactions between UN officials and NGOs are less friendly, less respectful and – most importantly – less grounded in shared goals than those that occur within the IASC headquarters mechanisms. (It should be noted that the individuals who most frequently represent the consortia in IASC processes are widely praised for the manner in which they do so.) Because staffing patterns in the NGO world are very separate from those in the UN (with OCHA being a partial exception in that several former NGO staff now work in OCHA, either in the field or in HQ), it is also the case that there are few personal relations between NGO staff in the field and UN staff at HQ. In short, NGO consortia participation in the IASC at headquarters level is not yet creating the kinds of informal networks that link agencies' operational arms, as has occurred within the UN.

On policy issues, this is of limited concern. The NGO consortia have well developed mechanisms for consultation within their membership prior to preparing consortia positions or inputs to the IASC, and just as agency representation by policy/external relations officials is less problematic on policy issues than on country issues, so it with the NGO consortia. When the IASC tackles country issues, however, there are not the regular interchanges with NGO emergency directors and the like to create the informal networks that count. Although the consortia representatives could be used to contact the relevant emergency directors, in crisis situations, no-one likes to work through middle men: immediate contact with decision-makers is the *sine qua non* of good interaction.

It is far from clear however how adding additional consortia would address this problem. We will return to this dynamic.

A second issue is whether the group of NGOs represented in the IASC is in fact representative. The argument here is that on the ground, a vast amount of the world's humanitarian labor is done, under-recognized, by local NGOs. Should these not have greater representation in a forum that claims to represent the humanitarian community? (NB: ICVA membership does include a subset of local

NGOs). This relates directly to what we see as being the core dilemma/tension facing the IASC: between deepening existing interaction between its members, and broadening its membership.

Two additional points should be tackled: First, a specific proposal was raised with us to add VOICE, a consortia of European members. While the concerns we address above about whether more consortia membership equates to greater interaction with real NGO staff holds, there is a distinct point about VOICE as a consortia representing several of the key European NGOs not represented in SCHR. Given the issue of 'Anglo-Gallic' and 'Wilsonian-Dunantist' divides among the NGOs,[30] and given the growing strategic importance for the UN of a deepened relationship with ECHO (principal funder of many of the VOICE members), it is worth considering whether inviting VOICE to join might not create a vehicle for an intensified dialogue with Europe. Second, when the question of national NGOs was raised, those who raised it did so in the context of potential regional membership. An alternative might be taken by addressing different faith-based consortia. For example, what is the interaction with Islamic NGOs? But there are numerous problems with any proposal to add some of these groups to the membership of the IASC. Outreach to these groups is vital for the IASC to have a more representative dialogue with the real humanitarian community; but inviting some small sub-set to join the IASC does not seem likely to make a real breakthrough on these issues.

Rather, we propose that the IASC seek alternative outreach mechanisms for interacting with these groups, both at headquarters and in the field.

C.3 – Other potential members

Quite apart from other NGO consortia, there are a series of other actors that are playing important roles in the provision of humanitarian relief, or in cognate activities, and could be considered for membership in the IASC. There are also UN agencies lobbying for membership. A short list of actors who could conceivably make a case for membership in the IASC, or who are lobbying for participation, include UNAIDS; UNESCO; ILO; human rights NGOs; regional organizations that have humanitarian arms, such as SADC, the AU, IGAD, ECHO, etc.; private sector firms involved in humanitarian operations; and foundations supporting aspects of relief operations, e.g. the Gates Foundation. Just enumerating the list makes clear the potential Pandora's box created by further opening up the membership of the IASC. In short order, the IASC could come to resemble ECOSOC – a fate to be avoided!

We reviewed the case for and against membership of each of these actors, and conclude that no new members should be admitted to the IASC at this time. However, there is a case for outreach, as with the national NGO movement. In our view, the priority should be to build up the interaction with regional organizations that have humanitarian arms – a task that should be done in cooperation with a coalition of key governments and with UNDP. In addition, the interaction with UNAIDS should be strengthened on relevant issues, including through participation by invitation in reference groups and relevant meetings of the Working Group, but not through membership – as most of the members of UNAIDS are already members of IASC.

III (D) IASC at Field Level

A question that quickly emerged as central to the review was that of the replication of the IASC at field level versus the realities of UN-IO-NGO interaction at field level. Although, as stressed in the earlier, we do not believe the appropriate level of analysis is that of the beneficiary, we do believe that the IASC should be able to demonstrate an impact on inter-agency behavior and interaction at field

level. Whether or not this requires a replication of IASC structures either at country or regional level is a second question.

The perceived disconnect between the IASC's headquarters-based processes and the work of its members in the field has been raised repeatedly in previous evaluations and remains an issue of concern. The perception lingers that "…the IASC proper is hardly ever consulted on the establishment of coordination structures at the field level, and in contrast, the field appears to have little impact on IASC decisions."[31] We noted above that while field staff makes substantial use of the policy outputs of the IASC, particularly as relates to good practice guidance, the relationship of the IASC - particularly the Working Group level - to operational field coordination issues is far less developed. This is partially a function of the management of the agenda of the IASC WG and the IASC plenary – on which we comment separately. But the issue is more profound, and more important. We have two broad observations.

First, when problems cannot be solved at field level, there is no direct channel for referring them to the IASC. Rather, they tend flow up through each agencies' regional bureau or regional offices. Faced with an inter-agency problem at field level that cannot be solved locally, an agency head in the field will typically refer the issue to his/her headquarters geographic branch (which may, in the decentralized agencies, be situated at regional level.) Those regional staff members are generally not aware of or involved in IASC mechanisms, and more importantly, informal problem-solving networks are poorly developed among these staff members. If the issue is very important, it may be referred upwards to the inter-agency mechanism. But there is a very important gap in the mechanisms (formal and informal) for problem-solving at this level. Second, as a result, the issues placed on the agenda of the Working Group reflect a top-down selection process rather than field-driven priorities for problem-solving. The unidirectional management flow from the IASC to the field results in the impression of many field staff interviewed that the IASC is unhelpful to actual field coordination, creating work for field staff with missions and requests for information rather than tackling problems raised in the field. This is addressed in more detail below.

The end result is that the IASC WG meeting itself has limited effect on the real-time management of in-country coordination mechanisms, and is only partially able to contribute to problem-solving at country level. Far more important are the field-based processes it has pushed forward, and the informal mechanisms to which it has given rise.

D.1 – IASC Field Presences

One of the potential means for addressing the issue is the replication of the IASC at field level. This issue has been addressed by Study 4, but some additional points may be relevant.

The first point is that variations on the idea of an IASC field presence are already emerging, either formally or informally. In Indonesia, the RC/HC has formed an Indonesia IASC meeting involving the full members and standing invitees; three NGO participants are selected from within an existing NGO coordination mechanism to represent the community. The second point is that in places like Sudan, Somalia and Nairobi, existing structures create forums for the interaction between agencies, donors and NGOs; some members argue that the IASC should proceed cautiously with replacing such structures if they appear to be adding value. In sum, the central principle of the IASC, i.e. coordination not only of UN agencies but also of the key humanitarian actors in the field, should be manifested at the field level, without necessarily setting up new "field-IASC" structures.

Finally, and most importantly, the question touches on two of the most important topics this review addressed: the relative autonomy given to HCs within the IASC/ERC structure, and the philosophic or attitudinal basis of the relationship to NGOs.

D.3 – Regional IASC Offices

Related to the question of IASC field presences is that of IASC regional offices. The backdrop in part is the analysis of the establishment of RIACSO as part of the response to the southern Africa crisis. One of the issues on the agenda as we began our review was whether RIACSO provides a model for regional humanitarian coordination that should be replicated.

In our view, this is a limited agenda. Looking at the universe for humanitarian operations one can make a case for a regional approach in five regions: southern Africa; West Africa (though arguably two sub-regions, the Manu River Union and francophone West Africa); the Great Lakes Region; and the Middle East (including Iraq). These can briefly be examined in turn.

There is an existing regional structure for the Great Lakes Region, which appears to providing important services to agencies, NGOs and donors. There is no physical integration, nor is any feasible given the size of various agencies' operations in Nairobi. It would, however, be worth considering co-locating the various OCHA and UNDP offices currently dotted around Nairobi.

Discussion of a regional structure for West Africa is underway, but is correctly being discussed in the context of potential emergent regional peacekeeping and political structures; in all likelihood, the focus for this discussion will be ECHA, not the IASC, though IASC members could certainly support OCHA in respect of ensuring that any regional structures have NGO representation.

Regional structures to provide common services for the Middle East were created (in the form of the Cyprus Joint Logistics Center) in 2003. Regional contingency planning occurred during 2002 and 2003, in the lead up to the war in Iraq. It is difficult to conceive of co-location given the scale of operations in the Palestinian Territory and in Iraq. It would however be sensible to consider an ongoing regional contingency planning function, though this need not be located in the region.

All of the above are conditioned by a major factor that we encountered during the review, namely the fact that over the past half decade, many operational UN agencies and many NGOs have substantially decentralized (or in the case of UNHCR, re-centralized) their operations. This was done agency-by-agency, with no interaction with one another, and resulted in widely different geographical management configurations. Arguably this was an important missed opportunity, the kind of technical issue that the IASC could have tackled, but did not. The result of separate agency processes of decentralization is that there are now very different regional structures for decision making located in different cities within regions, making the business of co-location in most regions difficult if not impossible at this stage.

IV. CHALLENGES FACING THE IASC

In conducting the review, we encountered a number of issues that either should be on the IASC's agenda, or should not be on the agenda but are likely to get there, or that are beyond the purview of the IASC but will likely shape its terrain. These constitute some of the future challenges for the IASC. They relate to (a) unresolved issues among the membership, (b) areas where the IASC could and show take a leadership role, and (c) the changing international political context. There are both issues of substance, and issues relating to the future directions of the IASC.

IV. (A) Substantive and Political Issues.

Speculatively, we raise here substantive policy and political issues that we believe will confront the IASC in the coming period.

A.1 – Back to Basics Humanitarianism.

We address first the ethical or philosophical issues. Although there are many dimensions of this, in brief the issue is whether, especially in the face of a more complex political environment after 9-11, there should be a "return to basics" among humanitarian agencies. This is actively sought by some members in a growing backlash against the "coherence" or "integration" agenda of the 1990s that sought to bring humanitarian issues and operations into broader approaches to the management of internal conflict.

This issue takes shape around a variety of themes. First, there is significant unease with the extent to which the US government has defined humanitarian operations as vital to its strategic goals within the Global War on Terror, and has placed increasing pressure on its grantees to serve in information-gathering and "public relations" roles. Second, there is unrest within the membership, especially but not exclusively among the NGOs, about the ever-more frequent integration of HCs into SRSG-led missions. Third, relatedly, there is concern about the fact of the RC/HC becoming routine without the IASC really having signed off on its being so, and also about the extent of overlap between the IASC and the UNDG, and a sense of need for greater clarity about the respective boundaries of the two structures. Fourth, there is the perennial tension around the role of food aid in emergencies, recently exacerbated by the levels of US funding and contributions in kind to WFP and to the major food NGOs.

These are united by a sense of (a) lack of clear definitions within the IASC about what constitutes humanitarian action, (b) a growing concern that intensified interactions with non-humanitarian actors threatens the impartiality of humanitarian action, and (c) a recognition in some quarters that even without broader threats to impartiality that the impartiality of humanitarian action is inherently compromised by the lack of adequate capacity to measure need and the perceived tendency to equate need with supply – issues raised compellingly in the study by Macrae et al.

There is also a growing concern about humanitarian 'mandate creep' – i.e. a concern that the humanitarian community has bitten off far more than it can chew and is now engaged in response to broad structural crises, particularly as concerns both ongoing food insecurity in southern Africa, the AIDS crisis and – in some contexts – structural poverty arising from failed governance or ongoing political crisis (usually alongside actual humanitarian crises) – issues arising*, inter alia*, from the relief-to-development transition debate.

The IASC will be confronted with a growing need to sort itself out on this issue. To use a well-tested UN method of substituting procedural discussion for substantive policy debate, it may be that the issue can be addressed in part by a cleaner division of labor between the IASC and UNDG – an issue we address elsewhere.

A.2 – Issues of Humanitarian Responsibility

Second, there are a series of issues related to the core mandate of the IASC, namely the responsibility to assign roles to agencies and ensure no gap in mandate. Chief among these is the question of IDPs, which we feel strongly will not go away, but will be forced back onto the IASC agenda in the near future. Also in this category of issues of responsibility is that of the proliferation witnessed over the past half decade of conflict response units or field programmes for conflict situations among primarily developmental or technical agencies. The proliferation of response actors has certainly strained existing mechanisms and is arguably a drain on resources. We continue to believe that the approach taken by HCHR to concentrate their efforts in units within the Office of the RC is appropriate. But simply imagining the IASC discussion on this (how would this proceed?) again says something about the limits not only of the IASC but of the overall mechanisms in place for managing the allocation of multilateral responsibilities.

A.3 – Other Issues

A few other issues will we believe find their way onto the agenda of the IASC. Most important is the question of interaction with the private sector. Several agencies have begun to develop modes of relationship with the private sector, both in terms of fundraising and more often in terms of partnerships of a variety of forms. Most advanced in this are UNDP's Bureau for Strategic Partnerships and WFP's mechanism for outreach to the private sector. The IASC may have to consider whether there are issues of principle involved, and if so whether to try to shape policy around this issue; or whether there are advantages in a common outreach.

Second, the question of how humanitarian operational agencies will interact in crisis situations with those charged with managing the response to WMD attacks, arguably requires exploration. The experience of dealing with VEREX, OPCW and the IAEA in preparation for Iraq perhaps serves as an important opening; UNSECCORD's performance in response was less than inspiring, and should be wholly rethought prior to any potential new crisis involving use of WMD. The IASC may be required to develop protocols and to train for responses – not just in terms of ensuring staff safety, but in terms of how to provide essential relief to a population affected by a WMD attack. It is to be hoped with the utmost fervor that neither of these situations arise: but as the famous saying goes, hope is not a policy. Work in this arena should probably be left to the SWG on contingency planning.

IV. (B) Core Management Challenges

More immediate than either the substantive or the political challenges, however, are a series of core management challenges that the IASC faces, and which permeate its effort. Like all multilateral mechanisms with equal voting rights, the IASC serves primarily to strengthen the voice of the smaller actors vis-à-vis the larger. As such it is caught in a tension between inclusiveness and efficiency, subject to periodic pressures from its largest members to enhance its efficiency and from its weaker members to widen the membership (thereby increasing the relative weight of the voice of the smaller members.)

Given its membership and rules of procedure, it is highly unlikely that even a strengthened IASC could morph into a mechanism for managing rapid response to emergencies or emergent crises. Where the IASC has done moderately well in such contexts it is where (a) it has had significant (and unusual) advance warning about a crisis, (b) external pressures, and (c) the involvement of a more weighty management mechanism in the UN system, namely the SG or the DSG.

Rather, what we should expect is that as a consensus based mechanism it operates more effectively in the realm of norm setting, the development of policy guidance, and the identification of opportunities for joint technical action. Within the scope of realistic expectations for the IASC, four such challenges stand out, the effective management of which will shape its effectiveness, relevance, and value-added both at headquarters level and in the field. They are:

A tension between predictability and adaptability. There are internal and external pressures on the IASC to increase the predictability of its functions; on OCHA to increase the predictability of its support mechanisms; on the members to increase the predictability of their participation in various IASC instruments and processes. However, field level analysis suggests putting a premium on flexibility and adaptability in response to the various realities of different field situations. This tension plays out in terms of such issues as the appointment of Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs); the relationship between OCHA field offices and HC offices; the management of the CAP in relation to other funding and planning instruments, particularly in transitional contexts; and the relationship, in the

field, to non IASC members, particularly donors. It plays out also in the mechanics of managing the IASC, notably in terms of the management of the agenda and the scheduling of meetings.

A tension between 'deepening and broadening' – i.e. between wider membership and deeper interaction between members. A central question in the analysis of the IASC is that of whether its membership (including its standing invitees) represents the humanitarian community as it actually operates at field level. Two sets of actors play significant roles in humanitarian operations in the field are not represented: donors, particularly those that are 'operational' (see below); and local NGOs; while the representation of international NGOs through the consortia has yet to truly bring full NGO participation at field level. Thus, there is both a case for and a demand for broadening the membership of the IASC to increase the participation of these key actors. Simultaneously, there is a case for limiting the expansion of the IASC and focusing attention on still deeper and more effective interaction between existing members. There are tensions and trade-offs here, as an ever-larger body requires ever more energy spent on the mechanics and has questionable impact on the vitality of field-based mechanisms. On the other hand, lack of participation of key actors weakens those same mechanisms.

A tension between inclusiveness and decisiveness. All organizations face a tension between the need to build a sense of morale and ownership through consultative processes and a need for the capacity to be able to take decisions and act decisively. Organizations that emphasize decisiveness and top-down decision making risk losing staff/member buy-in to their core objectives. Organizations that always work through consultative mechanisms risk missing opportunities or being too slow to respond to breaking demands. Successful organizations balance this tension through leadership: leadership that recognizes when (a) the requirement for speed and decisiveness outweighs the need for inclusion, or (b) when the nature of issues and time requirements enable a consultative process, or (c) when – irrespective of time constraints – the importance of an issue requires full buy-in from all those who will be implicated in a decision. The IASC faces precisely this challenge.

A tension between headquarters/policy work and field/operational work. There is unanimity within the membership and among partners that the work of the IASC has been somewhat removed from real field operations. The IASC's involvement in actual operational matters, including the establishment and review of in-country coordination mechanisms, is questionable. The tension is: should the IASC play to its potential strengths and focus its energies on global policy issues; or address its weaknesses and enhance its capacity to steer strategic and operational coordination at field level? This issue was the one with most widely divergent views among correspondents of the review. Some key members argued vigorously and compellingly that unless the IASC WG meeting strongly enhanced its relevance to real-time field coordination questions, bringing the real operational decision-makers around the table, it would fade into irrelevance; others argued with equal vehemence and clarity that to do so would be to play against the IASC's advantages, and that the only viable strategy was to play to its strengths, namely (in their perception) policy work at the global level. However, in the workshop which reviewed a draft of this report, a majority believed that a balance must be struck between policy and field issues.

V. CONCLUSIONS: PERFORMANCE VS. TERMS OF REFERENCE

A central part of the Terms of Reference was to assess the IASC against four criteria: relevance; value-added; effectiveness; and sustainability (defined above.) Based on the material above, extended review of documents including previous studies, etc, our conclusions are as follows:

During its first ten years of existence, the IASC has demonstrated relevance, value-added and a certain degree of effectiveness over time in three core areas: (i) the promotion of field-based or field-oriented coordination systems (such as the Common Appeal process (CAP), the Humanitarian Coordinator system, contingency planning, and inter-agency missions); (ii) the creation of informal networks among key UN actors; and (iii) helping to generate a shift in institutional culture towards more equal partnership between the UN and non-UN actors, especially the Red Cross movement, the IOM, and the major international NGOs. All of these areas have shown marked improvements over time, but require continued effort. (They are also issues to which other bodies and actors – principally the donors, the Secretary-General, the UNDG, and the NGO community – have made important contributions.)

The IASC has also shown *potential* and sporadic effectiveness in the articulation and promotion of policy and guidelines relating to the activities of members. There have been important achievements, but there is no mechanism to ensure consistency. The IASC's effectiveness in advocating principles to other actors involved in the humanitarian response – particularly donors – has been limited. The IASC has demonstrated inadequate capacity to identify or resolve mandate and capacity gaps and to tackle 'system-wide problems'. Its performance on advocacy issues has been modest, though at times the IASC has served as a useful mechanism to raise the profile of a specific country crisis, or to reach common positions vis-à-vis weak governments (rarely vis-à-vis strong ones). The IASC operates without a common definition of humanitarianism or humanitarian action, which limits its capacity to delineate its work, but reflects the breadth and variation of its membership.

The IASC appears to be more relevant in emergencies where its members dominate the international response (Southern Africa, Sudan, Somalia, Great Lakes, etc), as distinct from contexts where the response is wider and incorporates significant peacekeeping/political presences (West Africa, Afghanistan, Kosovo). This is exacerbated by the absence of a well-understood division of labor between the IASC, ECHA and ECPS, and ineffective interaction between these bodies; and by sometimes weak relations between the IASC and the Secretary-General's office. This weakness is increasingly problematic for the IASC given the proliferation of SRSG-based coordination mechanisms. The lack of a clear delineation between the work of the IASC and UNDG also burdens both mechanisms.

Key strengths of the IASC are: its inclusion of non-UN members and the increasing equality of 'rights' among all members; its flexibility (by UN standards); the creation of informal networks for problem-solving (though not yet among geographical staff); its utility as a forum for consensus-building; the ability of a small group of committed staff to push important ideas through the bureaucracy; its steady – albeit slow – progress towards improved field-based coordination mechanisms; its potential to serve as a platform for system-wide policy on issues of ethics and principle; and the opportunity it affords smaller members and NGOs to shape UN attention to specific country and regional issues, or to specific features of a crises within a given country or region.

Key weaknesses of the IASC are: its limited membership, relative to the full breadth of the humanitarian community; the limited effectiveness of its interaction with donors as *strategic* actors, and lack of consensus about the nature of relations with donors; its limited direct interaction with national NGOs and the limited or inconsistent representation of operational actors in international NGOs, as distinct from consortia representatives; partly as a result of these features, a sharply limited capacity to solve mandate/capacity gaps and system-wide problems; the continuing distance between the IASC Working Group – the core of the mechanism – and country issues; the lack of informal networks across agencies' geographical staff; and the recent weakness of the ERC-EOSG link, especially as it relates to the establishment of field coordination mechanisms (increasingly through

SRSGs). There has been inconsistent leadership by the ERCs, a fact exacerbated by their frequent turnover.

Because the IASC has largely skirted the issue of capacity and mandate gaps (identifying but not solving the later, and avoiding the former), it has fallen short of the purposes set out in 46/182. (Given the nature of decision-making within the IASC, and within the international community, it is unlikely that the IASC as presently structured will be able to fully meet those purposes. This calls for a change to the terms of reference of the IASC. The Review team recognizes that this approach leaves an important accountability gap, one recognized and addressed in Study IV.) Rather, through actions related to a more limited set of objectives, the IASC has had a positive impact in terms of improving the performance of the *system* of humanitarian agencies and shown potential for further progress.

The IASC's value-added comes in two forms: in the emphasis on humanitarian issues and responsibilities that it infuses into the UN country team process and the RC/HC function; and the inclusion, inconsistently but importantly, of international NGOs in coordination structures. Moreover, it brings to the UN family of agencies a more fluid mechanism through which to relate to key donors and other actors than exists through other coordination fora. One could hardly imagine, for example, a working group of a small set of member states interacting with ECPS to shape peacekeeping financing, the way we have seen such approaches to humanitarian financing. The IASC creates opportunities for partnerships that would otherwise not arise.

The IASC mechanism itself has proved sustainable in the basic sense of survival, despite the intrusion of overlapping bodies such as ECHA. Indeed, its salience has clearly grown over time, particularly in the past 3-5 years. Some important IASC processes – work on the CAP, contingency planning, etc – have proved to be sustainable in that they have made continual, tenacious progress.

Looking forward, there is full consensus that the relevance and value-added of the IASC is grounded in its wider-than-UN membership. However, although the IASC stands out as the most representative humanitarian forum yet established – certainly in a UN context – it nevertheless cannot claim to truly represent the full spectrum of actors critical to the humanitarian response, as it was designed by 46/182 to do. Enhancing the effectiveness of its interaction with donors, and ensuring a more consistent – though flexible – replication of IASC structures or the IASC spirit at field level, are central challenges.

The membership has a strong sense of the importance of continuing to improve the IASC mechanism. However, while some members felt strongly that the IASC Working Group should be strengthened by focusing more on policy, ethics and issues of principle, others expressed an equally strong preference for a renewed effort to increase its relevance on country issues. Still others, including a majority of those present at the Review workshop, insisted that both sets of functions be maintained and improved. Accordingly, a strategy for strengthening the IASC must be based on three main elements:

- Enhanced work at the *policy level* both by (i) increasing the involvement of donors, NGOs and some others, not through membership but through flexible outreach mechanisms; and (ii) improving the mechanisms for policy articulation and distribution by use of selection criteria, membership guidelines, sunset clauses and similar tools;

- Enhanced work on *country coordination* in terms of (i) further use of telecommunications to facilitate timely communication during crises, (ii) use of *ad hoc* meetings on new crises to enhance the relevance of the IASC WG on country issues, (iii) flexibly enhancing the IASC presence at field level,

especially through an improved HC system, and (iv) continued efforts to develop field-based coordination mechanisms and common services;

- Implementation of a more strategic vision of the division of labor and interaction between ECHA, IASC and UNDG; improved interaction between the ERC, IASC principals, and the office of the Secretary-General.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IASC

The following recommendations were presented in draft for consideration by a special working session of the IASC WG in September 2003 at the conclusion of the review process. They were then modified to reflect the input of the workshop participants. While we retained the right to make recommendations not accepted by the group, we recognize the limited utility of doing so and will strive to reach consensus (along with Study IV) on how to move forward.

Strengthening Performance Against Core Objectives

1. Continue efforts to develop field-based or field-oriented coordination mechanisms, principally through the sub-working groups on the CAP and Contingency Planning; The Working Group should recognize the importance of moving contingency planning past the stage of scenario planning and into real operational planning, and provide the necessary support to the SWG on Contingency Planning;

2. Renew efforts to improve the Humanitarian Coordinator system – in particular:
   a. Implement the agreement that NGOs should forward names for RC assessment;
   b. Ensure that temporary HCs are named immediately when RCs are recalled;
   c. Call for ERC intervention with the SG's office when required;
   d. Approve and fully implement the HC Terms of Reference;
   e. Identify appropriate mechanisms for accountability, e.g. for RCs designated HCs, RC Reports should contain a section on the implementation of the HC Terms of Reference;
   f. In discussion with UNDG, identify ways – perhaps through prior consultation through OCHA - to involve NGOs in RC selection.

3. Additionally enhance mechanisms to support and hold accountable Humanitarian Coordinators, including:
   a. New ERC should communicate to all HCs, at an early stage, that among his top priorities will be HC performance; that he will ensure that OCHA provides adequate support; and that he will hold HCs accountable for implementation of their Terms of Reference;
   b. Creation of a peer support/peer review mechanism (e.g. roving team of 2-3 former HCs or field directors, to meet with HCs and country teams and provide suggestions for application of policy, improvement of coordination mechanisms with NGOs and donors, etc., and where necessary for review of, HCs; - could also be used to provide 'surge capacity' at HC level when departure or removal of RC/HC creates vacuum);

4. Recognize that the IASC – acting on its own – is not a capable mechanism for managing system-wide issues; and therefore:

a. When tackling a new policy issue, if it relates to outside actors, make the first task to identify a mechanism for interaction with those actors – either through a co-chaired group, interaction with an existing body such as the HLWG, use of the ECOSOC report, or similar;
b. If no such group is available or willing to take on the given problem in cooperation with the IASC, the IASC should not tackle it on its own, as this will in all likelihood constitute a waste of energy;

5. Revise IASC ToR so that it reads: identify and solve mandate and capacity gaps, acting in concert with relevant outside actors.

6. Following completion of the review of the IDP unit, and also referring to inputs from this study and Study IV, IASC Plenary discussion should be held on IDP issues, including: how to move it to the next stage, and what is the appropriate forum for interaction with donors and member states to make progress.

7. In the field of **advocacy**, emphasis should be placed on (a) common priority setting in terms of country response, and (b) focused interaction with outside, responsible actors such as the Security Council, where the IASC's relative authority is recognized;

8. IASC follow-up to recommendations from Study III and Study IV on standards.

9. Continued use of inter-agency missions to tackle field-based problems, but a refinement of the process, largely by limiting the number of participants where possible, and by giving HCs a stronger role in shaping the timing of missions;

Improving the IASC Mechanisms

10. The IASC Secretariat and management should refine the mechanisms for managing the subsidiary body process as it relates to policy issues, by:

a. Following 'Selection' Criteria:
   i. For a new policy issue to be introduced to the IASC's agenda it should receive the support of at least 2/3rds of the membership;
   ii. It should relate specifically to issues of humanitarian performance;
   iii. It should be focused on interaction between humanitarian agencies – i.e. an area of the IASC's competence – and in particular on interaction between different types of members;
   iv. It should not require major inputs from political actors or development actors;

b. Culling the existing agenda by: closing down, with immediate effect, the reference groups on training and gender, and set a deadline for work on sanctions; and identify an alternative mechanism to ensure gender mainstreaming remains central to the work of the IASC.

c. Managing agenda overload by adopting the following rules:
   i. New reference groups/task forces could be given a maximum deadline of 1 year to meet a set of clearly defined objectives, with a 1 month deadline for production of terms of reference;
   ii. If at the end of a year a reference group/task force has not concluded its work, it should be continued only with the active vote of 2/3rds of the members;

d. Following 'Guidelines' for subsidiary bodies:
   i. New reference groups/task forces should be composed of: (a) a chair from the introducing agency, and possibly a co-chair (ideally, but not necessarily, from a different 'category' of member – i.e. 1 UN plus 1 standing invitee);
   ii. Members should join these bodies only where they have specific expertise to contribute;
   iii. Field staff of members should be included where they have specific expertise;
   iv. Where possible, an influential think-tank, university, etc. engaged on the issue in question should be involved in the effort either formally or informally;
   v. The first task of the reference group/task force should be to identify an appropriate mechanism through which it would engage non-IASC humanitarian actors, especially donors;

e. Experiment with alternative procedures, i.e.
   i. Expert Groups (small number (4-8) experts drawn from members HQ and field offices, plus outside experts if necessary, produce drafts for consideration by the WG),
   ii. Policy retreats, i.e. weeklong sessions with policy staffs to work through a series of issues in intensive fashion (rather than through iterated email exchanges and brief meetings).

f. Modify all of the above on the basis of common sense, as appropriate.

11. Enhance the distribution, application and review of policy application at field level, by:
   a. Requiring any new subsidiary body to include in its plan of action (i) identification of 1-2 countries of particular salience for the policy issue, (ii) a distribution plan, including possible inclusion of the policy outcome in the CAP, and harmonized with field planning and training time frames; and (iii) a follow-up mechanism, either through country reporting, independent assessment, etc.;
   b. Making more consistent use of OCHA field teams as an instrument for the distribution and in-country application of policy instruments; and more consistent use of the CAP workshop as a mechanism through which to introduce policy outputs;
   c. As a specific test, OCHA should seek additional resources for PDSB to systematically track the application of the MCDA guidelines in a variety of existing contexts, and breaking crises, over the next 18 months, with a view to refining the guidelines if necessary and with a view to learning how better to monitor the application of agreed policy.

12. Use the regularly scheduled Working Group meetings to review the application of policy issues to specific country contexts;

13. Make greater use of common lessons learned and common evaluation studies, including through IASC discussion of the major findings of individual agencies' evaluations, where relevant.

14. Implementation of the agreement to have ad hoc meetings of the IASC Working Group to consider coordination arrangements in breaking (or concluding) crises, in addition to use of teleconferences – a shift which should aid the goal of increasing the participation of emergency directors;
   a. Hold these meetings together with the relevant ECHA members when dealing with countries where there is a UN political or peacekeeping presence;
   b. In such meetings, NGO consortia representatives should ideally be represented by operational actors from within their membership;
   c. Consideration of Study 4's proposals for IASC representatives being appointed to the ERC's office, or some variant

15. At regularly scheduled IASC Working Group meetings, limit country discussions to those requiring a review of coordination mechanisms;

16. Where regularly scheduled IASC Working Group meetings are occurring simultaneously with breaking crisis, put that crisis on the agenda at the ERC or WG Chair's discretion; To this end, reduce by 2 the number of planned agenda items at each meeting, leaving spaces for timely country additions at the Chair's discretion

17. Continued efforts in new but potentially fruitful areas involving enhanced mechanisms for technical and operational coordination on the ground, i.e. common security, joint logistics, etc.;

18. Enhance efforts towards increasing the visibility of the IASC, especially in relationship to the HC and OCHA offices: this requires a course reversal in terms of the concept of the autonomous IASC Secretariat – the Secretariat should be embedded in OCHA and the agencies, not the other way around;

- Set a prominent link to the IASC website from ALL members' websites, including OCHA and ReliefWeb;
- Use IRIN to distribute IASC outputs.

19. The Plenary session of the IASC should be used to:

a. Set the agenda of the IASC WG;
b. Shape IASC collective inputs into broader discussions;
c. Tackle "architectural" questions – e.g. harmonization of decentralization;
d. Review core policy issues;
e. Specifically, upcoming Plenary meetings might consider three core issues, which are related: a renewed effort to tackle the issue of predictable responses to IDPs in breaking crises; renewed efforts to strengthen the selection, appointment, rapid deployment, and when necessary removal and replacement of HCs; and the flexible replication of IASC presences at field level; and in all of this, the appropriate relationship to donors.

20. The ERC should use the occasion of Plenary sessions to create venues for informal, principals' only interaction;

21. ERC intervention with office of the SG when necessary, especially related to appointment of HCs and senior humanitarian advisors to SRSGs;

22. ERC should prioritize briefings to the Security Council, and should on occasion hold IASC consultations prior to briefings, to enhance the sense of ownership and participation, as well as for the value of the inputs.

23. All members should further invest in their own capacities for participating in and supporting the IASC.

24. No Core Group of the IASC should be created

25. The ERC should implement a routine teleconference with an informal 'core group', but periodically include additional members as relevant to issues of the moment – especially non-UN members, to build sense of ownership.

26. In final discussions on the HC Terms of Reference, strengthen the language related to field IASC presences to stress that HCs are expected to identify coordination mechanisms for dealing with

the standing invitees as full partners; and that HCs should identify an appropriate mechanism for strategic engagement with key states (i.e. donors, relevant neighbors, etc.).

a. Ensure that the language leaves room for flexibility as to the precise mechanisms through which this is achieved – i.e. stress intent over mechanics;
b. In late 2004, systematically review HC performance on this issue.

27. Clarify the relationship between OCHA field offices and HCs, along the lines specified in the ToR, i.e. that OCHA offices should normally be in the office of the HC;

28. Establish separate OCHA offices – at the discretion of the ERC, but acting with at least informal support from a core of the IASC – when (a) RC does not have confidence of IASC but cannot be removed for various reasons, (b) political conditions suggest that humanitarian access and coordination would improve from being de-linked from the RC; but:

a. In those conditions, the RC should ideally not be designated HC, nor a separate HC appointed;
b. A separate OCHA office should normally be headed at least by a Senior Humanitarian Advisor;
c. Treat this approach as 'all else failed' option.

29. Use regional offices or regional processes where they add value;

a. Continue efforts to identify an appropriate regional structure for West Africa, in consultation with DPA and DPKO;
b. Continue to use regional joint logistics and contingency planning in the Middle East;
c. Continue to use the OCHA Regional Office in Nairobi;
d. Extend RIACSO past the existing deadline, with timely shift to UNDG.

Enhancing Representation

30. UN agencies that are seeking entrance to the IASC should be invited to contribute, where they have real expertise, to the working of IASC subsidiary bodies and, where relevant, to contribute to in-country coordination mechanisms – the IASC should be prepared to review the question of new UN members at the end of 2004 on the basis of substantive contribution;

31. The IASC should invite VOICE to join, principally in order to enhance the IASC's policy dialogue with European policy makers, including in ECHO;

32. Apart from VOICE, do not at this time add additional NGO consortia.

33. Create an outreach mechanism for enhanced dialogue with NGO consortia, specifically, an annual conference (on the margins of ECOSOC?) with representatives of a selection of such consortia in which members could (a) discuss key policy issues relating to humanitarian principles, standards, etc.; (b) introduce a wider audience to key mechanisms such as the HC system and the CHAP; and (c) listen to the concerns of these actors about members' performance and policies;

34. Consider the creation of a common mechanism for outreach to the private sector (not for funding, but in terms of such issues as codes of conduct, etc), perhaps in collaboration with UNDP's Bureau for Strategic Partnerships, the Global Compact, and others;

35. Allow the World Bank, which has now joined ECPS, to formally withdraw from the IASC. Stipulate that members who miss three consecutive meetings will be considered to have discontinued their participation.

Clarifying Relationships to Other UN Actors and Coordination Mechanisms

36. The ERC should develop a strategic vision of the utility of IASC and ECHA, based on (a) the non-UN membership of the IACS and (b) the political membership of ECHA.

37. No policy issue should be simultaneously on the agenda of more than one of ECHA, the IASC, ECPS and UNDG, unless it is determined through agenda consultation that the different bodies can add value on delineated aspects of the issue, or, when desirable and practical, through a joint effort (e.g. IASC/ECHA joint reference group);

38. Issues requiring substantial input from political (or peacekeeping) actors – e.g. Terms of Engagement with Armed Groups – should be tackled in ECHA or ECPS – as per the 2000 Recommendations for Strengthening the IASC; or, if they are to be tackled within IASC for identifiable reasons, then relevant outside actors (such as DPA and DPKO) should be asked to provide inputs;

39. Issues relating to the UN aspects of 'transitions' should usually fall to ECHA, UNDG or ECPS;

40. Issues relating to linkages between relief and development actors within long-running crises should be tackled by IASC, possibly with UNDG, and with participation of others (see above);

41. The IASC Secretariat, the ECPS Secretariat, and the UNDGO should identify a mechanism to coordinate field missions, in consultation with RC/HCs;

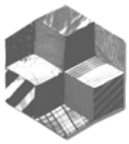
42. Joint IASC/ECHA meetings on breaking crises where there is an SRSG (see above).

43. The IASC should ask the ERC to raise to the attention of the DSG the broader question of reform of the various coordination fora, given the now heavily overlapping memberships and agendas, requesting an overall review.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAP Consolidated Appeal Process
CERF Central Emergency Revolving Fund
CHAP Common Humanitarian Action Plan
DDR Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID Department for International Development
DHA Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPA Department of Political Affairs
DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC Democratic Republic of Congo
DSRSG Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
EC European Commission
ECHA Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC Economic and Social Council
ECPS Executive Committee on Peace and Security
ERC Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU European Union
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
HC Humanitarian Coordinator
HCIC Humanitarian Community Information Center
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDPs Internally Displaced People
IPA International Peace Academy
IFRC International Federation of the Red Cross
IOM International Organization for Migration
IRIN Integrated Regional Information Network
MONUC United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MSF Médicins Sans Frontières
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI Overseas Development Institute
OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFDA Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RC Resident Coordinator
RR Resident Representative
SACB Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SCF Save the Children Fund
SCHR Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SG Secretary-General
SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRSG Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ToR Terms of Reference
UN United Nations
UNDAC United Nations Disaster Assessment team
UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

UNDG United Nations Development Group
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNDRC United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNDRO Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNJLC United Nations Joint Logistics Center
UNMIK United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo
UNOSOM United Nations Operation in Somalia (I)
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East
UNSC United Nations Security Council
UNSECOORD United Nations Security Coordinator
USAID United States Agency for International Development
USG Under-Secretary-General
WFP World Food Programme
WHO World Health Organization



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END NOTES

[1] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee and Working Group Concise Terms of Reference & Action Procedures, Revised and Abridged February 1998, Geneva: IASC & IASC-WG Secretariat

[2] Some landmark studies on humanitarian operations and financing include Borton 1996, Kent 1987, Macrae & Zwi 1994, Stockton 1998 & 2002, Forman and Parhad 1997.

[3] One frequently encounters the perspective that 'the nature of conflicts changed' after the Cold War, with a rise in the number of internal conflicts and a rise in the percentage of civilian deaths within those wars. This is an inaccurate depiction. Trend data on wars show that internal conflicts rose throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all wars, then began to decline in the mid-to-late 1990s. Moreover, the suggestion that the percentage of civilian deaths has risen (the common citation is 5% during World War I and 90% during the Somalia war) is based on a skewed data sample; percentages of civilians deaths have fluctuated significantly between wars at the beginning, middle and end of this century. For elaboration see Andrew Mack (2002) "Civil War: Academic Research and the Policy Community" *Journal of Peace Research* 39(5); and Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, Jack A. Goldstone and Barbara Harff, "Internal Wars and Failure of Governance: State Failure Data Set" Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), University of Maryland, Available online at http://projects.sipri.se/conflictstudy/ConflictDataSets.html.

[4] Broadly, these objectives relate to the functions of *strategic* coordination, as defined by IASC documents, and previous studies including Lautze & Jones w Duffield, Stockton Afghanistan study.

[5] Relating to the functions of *operational* coordination, see above.

[6] Nicholas Stockton observed that the commonly cited definitions framed by Minear et al and the IASC do not in fact define coordination as it actually occurs but rather provide a wish list, or best-practice guide. (Stockton N. (2002) "Strategic Coordination in Afghanistan", Issue Papers Series, AREU, UNHCR, August 2002, 10.) The IASC's own definition can be found in Sue Lautze and Bruce Jones, with Mark Duffield, *Strategic Humanitarian Coordination in the Great Lakes Region* (OCHA: 1998), which revises the definition and tackles aspects of its weakness as a categorization. Additionally, the oft-cited definition of humanitarian coordination put forward in L. Minear, U. B. P. Chelliah, Jeff Crisp, John Mackinlay, and Thomas G. Weiss, "United Nations Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis," Occasional Paper #13:3, (Providence: The Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute of International Studies, Brown University is as follows: "the systematic utilization of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include: (1) strategic planning; (2) gathering data and managing information; (3) mobilizing resources and assuring accountability; (4) orchestrating a functional division of labour in the field; (5) negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities; and (6) providing leadership. Sensibly and sensitively employed, such instruments inject an element of discipline without unduly constraining action."

[7] The IASC-WG originally planned to finalize the revised ToR for HCs at the November 2002 Working Group meeting. (Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group 50th meeting, UN Secretariat, New York, "Summary Record and Action Points")

[8] See personal accounts of experiences serving in the HC role by David Bassiouni, Kathleen Cravero, and Antonio Donini in "Chapter 6: The Evolving Nature of Coordination" of the forthcoming edited volume on OCHA and the history of UN humanitarian coordination (OCHA: forthcoming)

[9] IASC, "A Review of the Consolidated Appeal Process and Plan of Action for Strengthening the CAP," Submitted to IASC by David S. Bassiouni, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF Geneva (12 November 2001)]

[10] We note of course that real contingency planning is partially dependent on effective early warning. The UN's early warning efforts have arguably improved somewhat over the past five years, but continue to require important refinements.)

[11] Iraq Contingency Plan, IASC/UNICEF.

[12] Statement of the UN Secretary-General, date, etc.

[13] See for a recent example, "Report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa", July 2003.

[15] "Comprehensive study prepared by Mr. Francis M. Deng, Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights issues related to internally displaced persons, pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/73" (E/CN.4/1993/35, 21 January 1993, Annex)

[16] IASC, "Protection of Internally Displaced Persons" Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper, New York, December 1999

[17] Landmark studies include: Ball & Halevy 1996, Cholmondeley 1997, Collier 2003, Cousens & Kumar 2001, Forman & Patrick 2000, Macrae 2001, Maxwell & Buchanan-Smith 1994, Kreimer et al 1998, Kumar 1998, UNDP Rwanda 1998, Zartman 1995; first-rate reviews of the literature include Carbonnier 1998, Woodward 2002.

[18] (An ongoing UNDG-ECHA process is tackling precisely these questions, and recent innovations in some donor capitals – e.g. the creation of a 'transitions' budget line in the NORAD – provide some grounds for minor optimism; for a further examination, see Forman & Patrick 2000, Fahlen 1998.)

[19] The Reference Group on DDR was perhaps one of the least inspiring that the IASC has undertaken, and should not stand as the final word about the capacity of reference groups to contribute to this kind of issue. But much of what marred that group was relevant more broadly: namely, that a consensual mechanism based on equal membership is highly unlikely to be able to do a forthright job in identifying capacity gaps.

[20] IASC, "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets To Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies" (March 2003)

[21] "Opening remarks to the 50th IASC Working Group Meeting by Kenzo Oshima, ERC and USG for Humanitarian Affairs," 50th IASC-Working Group Meeting, 18-19 September 2002, New York

[22] IASC, "Report of the Task Force on Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises" and "Plan of Action" (13 June 2002)

[23] IASC-WG, "Recommendations to the IASC-WG From the IASC-WG Staff Security Task Force", 18 January 2002

[24] IASC-WG 51st Meeting, 25-26 November 2002, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, "Summary Record and Action Points" Final as of 19 December 2002)]

[25] "Terms of Reference of the Humanitarian Coordinator [As approved by the Committee in its IASC Xth Meeting on 9 December 1994]"

[26] Reindorp and Wiles (2001) *Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience, iv* June 2001

[27] IASC Working Group "Recommendations for Strengthening of the IASC Mechanism and Process" Inter-Agency Standing Committee XXIIIrd Meeting, 5 April 2000 (Agenda Item 4: Strengthening the IASC)

[28] The report examining donor behavior for the Humanitarian Financing Study found the overall donor-implementer relationship to be characterized by pervasive mistrust, lack of transparency, and "reciprocal antipathy" between donors and their UN and NGO partners. (Smillie, Ian and Larry Minear, *The Quality of Money: Donor Behavior in Humanitarian Financing* (April 2003) Humanitarianism and War Project, Tufts University, p.5.)

[29] See Macrae et al, (2002) *Uncertain Power: The Changing Role of Official Donors in Humanitarian Action;* Smillie and Minear *The Quality of Money: Donor Behavior in Humanitarian Financing* (April 2003)

[30] For elaboration on the historical traditions and crosscutting alliances differentiating the humanitarian NGOs, see Stoddard, "Humanitarian NGOs: Challenges and Trends" in Macre and Harmer, *Humanitarian Action and the 'Global War on Terror': A Review of Trends and Issues*, HPG Report 14 (London: ODI, 2003)

[31] UNHCR 2004 Working Paper, p.89