

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
BI-ANNUAL MEETING**

SUMMARY RECORD AND ACTION POINTS

17 June 2025, 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. GVA

Opening remarks

Mr. Tom Fletcher, Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and Chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), opened the meeting by highlighting the gravity of the current challenge facing the humanitarian community and the multilateral system. The ERC requested the IASC to come together in solidarity, with a sense of community and behind collective action taking tough decisions to defend humanitarian work, humanitarian space and the principles and values underpinning humanitarian action. The ERC acknowledged the high expectations placed on Principals to lead, at a time when the system was faced with crippling funding cuts resulting in wide-spread lay-offs.

Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary General, IFRC, extended a warm welcome to participants, reiterating the ERC's point on high expectations placed on the IASC. He called for the IASC to assume control over the narrative and continue to defend humanitarian principles and values.

HUMANITARIAN RESET: AGREE A COLLECTIVE VISION AND ACTIONS

Mr. Tom Fletcher emphasized the need to take bold decisions with a high level of ambition and then collaborate to make it work practically. This was necessary to ensure the system moves forward with clarity and bold, yet practical action, at a time when the humanitarian sector feels under deliberate attack – both in terms of values and funding, is forced to reduce significant capacity due to funding pressures, and is facing increasing transactional pressures globally. He called on Principals to remain confident in the humanitarian mission and the collective determination to reach as many people with lifesaving support as possible, and move from rhetoric to action. He highlighted actions already taken during the first phase of the Humanitarian Reset in terms of regrouping and reforming towards a humanitarian response that is locally led and globally supported:

- A hyper-prioritized Global Humanitarian Overview with the objective of saving as many lives as possible with the available resources. This does not mean the needs are shrinking.
- Agreement on efficiency strategies, reducing duplication and bureaucracy and investing in common services.
- Accelerating transition planning.
- Empowering local leadership through devolving power and resources, including through pooled funds, in support of locally defined priorities.
- Streamlining of cluster coordination

The ERC called on members to work together to stay ahead of change, display ambition and confidence as a collective, bringing clarity, ambition and rigor to the next phase of the Humanitarian Reset, and lead the narrative, connecting to a global humanitarian movement.

Key elements of the next phase would include:

Define, continue prioritization of lifesaving humanitarian response for those in greatest need.

Deliver,

- Coordinated, principled humanitarian action, with gender equality and the empowerment and protection of women and girls at the heart of the reset. We must ensure the new system is accountable to crisis-affected women and girls in the face of the global pushback on gender equality and exploding levels of Gender-Based Violence. This includes increasing funding to women-led organisations and for gender equality, including through flexible support and bolder targets for Country Based Pooled Funds.
- Shared services by default.
- Ruthlessly simplified planning.
- Accelerated transitioning out of humanitarian action and greater emphasis on addressing root causes of crises in partnership with development actors and International Financial Institutions.
- Bringing in new partners and sources of finance.

Devolve power and resources to local actors, empower in-country leaders, enable context-specific coordination models, invest around half of humanitarian funding in pooled funds.

Defend humanitarian principles and the consistent application of International Humanitarian Law.

In conclusion, he highlighted that further work was required around strengthening the use of multi-purpose cash, climate proofing humanitarian action, and better use of technologies and innovation.

Mr. Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, WFP, updated Principals on the UN80 process, as a member of the Taskforce, stressing that the Humanitarian Reset was to inform the UN Secretary-General's reform process as well as reform ambitiously. Mr. Tom Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer, InterAction, updated Principals on conversations with the US administration. The ERC also briefed on his recent mission to DC.

Discussion

Principals agreed that the current crisis required solidarity and called for urgent action in support of responding to those in greatest need, identifying solutions and safeguarding the core of the humanitarian system across humanitarian constituencies to that it can be build back. They broadly supported the overall vision and direction of the Humanitarian Reset and encouraged the ERC to outline nuances and an ambitious way forward to execute recommendations with a sense of urgency.

Members supported the prioritization exercise and a focus on those in greatest need, while also calling for saving lives in dignity. They stressed a need for supporting accelerated transitions and building greater synergies with development and peace actors.

There was broad agreement on cluster simplification, allowing for context-specific nuance and calling for greater ambition. Principals supported streamlining coordination in mixed refugee settings. There were calls for reducing duplication of roles and mandates, separating the roles of normative and operational actors, and avoiding competition, while the norm and standard setting role and provision of shared services of UN agencies were deemed critical.

Maintaining gender and GBV expertise at global, country and local levels was deemed essential.

There was a recognition that transformative change required devolution of power, as well as broad agreement for devolving power to those with the greatest impact and empowering Humanitarian Country Teams and local leadership without overburdening the Humanitarian Coordinator function. There were strong calls to move from rhetoric to genuine inclusion and empowerment of local actors, investing in local capacity, and ensuring integration of national and local actors in decision making influencing policy and operational design, coordination and funding systems. It was noted that Humanitarian Coordinators should be assessed on whether they ensure inclusivity, bring out the voices of local people, and whether affected communities and their most marginalized members reported improved outcomes.

There was a recognition of the need to pool resources, and the role of pooled funds was deemed important, and members supported their strengthening, while some expressed concern with overly prescriptive or ambitious targets. At the same time there were calls for maintaining diversity of funding systems.

Members highlighted a need for humanitarians to reclaim the narrative, build trust, counter mis- and dis-information, and speak out about the barriers to effective humanitarian action and the need for an enabling political environment and greater political will to identify and work towards solutions.

Follow-up actions:

1. Provide a Chair's Summary of the headlines and next steps **[ERC]**.
2. Develop clear delivery plan across all Humanitarian Reset recommendations, with designated focal points, deadlines, and practical outputs **[ERC and IASC Principals]**.
3. Strengthen collective communication, to connect with and build trust of the public beyond humanitarian sector **[IASC Principals]**.
4. Strengthen humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy through a clear, coordinated, and collective approach – particularly in engaging with the U.S. and other key actors (including G77) **[ERC and Principals]**.
5. Lead a strategic reflection on how innovation and data can support renewal of the humanitarian sector **[ERC]**.
6. Continue to align the humanitarian reset with UN80 discussions **[ERC in collaboration with selected Principals]**.
7. Streamline the refugee coordination model **[UNHCR and OCHA]**.
8. Develop practical proposals on protecting and strengthening the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and anticipatory action **[ERC]**.
9. Ensure IASC is supported by robust, inclusive secretariat **[ERC]**.

CRISIS CONTEXTS

Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)

Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President, ICRC, updated Principals on developments in OPT, noting the horrendous conditions and absence of any morale standards, including the emerging instrumentalisation of aid for political aim, the unprecedented levels of suffering, with no significant access to humanitarian work, and providing examples on the destruction of the health sector. She called for the IASC's insistence for delivering impartial humanitarian aid and advocacy for political solution. Members discussed the impact of this crisis on other crisis contexts and concluded to work together on advocacy/diplomacy, while recognizing the challenges ahead.

Sudan

Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary General, IFRC, and Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR updated members on developments in Sudan, the largest displacement crisis globally. He highlighted the key role of local responders to the humanitarian response. Members stressed the need for maintaining Sudan high on the international agenda and for a political solution to the crisis. Members also agreed on transition planning.

Afghanistan

Mr. James Munn, Executive Director, ICVA, updated members on developments in Afghanistan, highlighting the key role of local humanitarian responders, the impact of the crisis in particular on women and girls, as well as the significant effect of the funding cuts to the humanitarian response. Mr. Munn also shared thought on developments in Syria.

Follow-up actions:

1. Strengthen collective advocacy, speaking out robustly against impunity for the abuse of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law and the erosion of humanitarian principles [**ERC and IASC Principals**].
2. Urgent collective support for the transition in Syria [**IASC Principals**].
3. Maintain Sudan on the international agenda and call for greater political action [**IASC Principals**].
4. Strengthen engagement and advocacy on Afghanistan [**IASC Principals**].
5. Schedule dialogue with the World Bank on a future IASC agenda [**IASC secretariat**].

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, WFP, in her capacity as IASC Champion for PSEA and sexual harassment underlined the importance of maintaining the commitment to PSEAH, as a core part of the cost of doing business. PSEAH is not only about preventing harm; it is

essential to operational effectiveness, credibility, and ultimately, our collective ability to deliver impact. Protection from sexual misconduct cannot be paused when budgets tighten. She noted the need to reduce duplication, seek opportunities to enhance alignment, pool resources, and burden-share to improve efficiencies and maximize impact. Pooling resources to fund PSEA Coordinator positions at the country level is already delivering results in several high-risk contexts and leads to clear, costed PSEA country action plans and accountable leadership through the RC/HC.

Ms. McCain emphasised the IASC championship model as a critical means to set the tone from the top and to establish leadership-driven accountability. The establishment of a PSEAH Global Advisory Group with leaders of women-led and community-based organisations from 13 high risk countries is one of the key outcomes of the championship. Ms. McCain highlighted the importance of sustaining engagement to improve assistance to victims and survivors, a critical commitment in the IASC PSEAH Vision and Strategy. Before opening the floor for discussion, the ERC underlined that progress on the 2022-26 IASC PSEAH Strategy has been slow and uneven.

Discussion:

Principals confirmed that funding reductions have affected their PSEAH personnel and activities. Some had to make difficult choices, reducing headquarters capacity to maintain field personnel. The cuts also affected victims' support functions. Principals emphasized their continued commitment to PSEAH, both within their organizations as well as system-wide through the IASC PSEAH strategy. Acknowledging the importance of leadership accountability, they recognized the urgency to accelerate progress towards certain targets across all three strategic commitments of (1) victim/survivor-centred approach, (2) organisational culture change and (3) PSEA capacity at country level. To prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), it is equally important to apply a victim-centred approach to investigations and to engage partners in humanitarian response to raise awareness about prohibited conduct. To be effective, a comprehensive approach towards PSEAH is needed, one that prioritises local capacity and focuses on supporting women and girls.

Principals agreed to share the burden and pool resources, building on and enhancing models that have proven their effectiveness. These include the IASC PSEA Capacity project (PSEACap), managed by OCHA in partnership with NORCAP, and the PSEA community Outreach Fund (UNHCR and ICVA). To deliver on certain targets, such as the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme for reference checking, Principals recommended developing collective messaging on the investments needed. Securing commitment from all IASC members for collective resourcing is critical to the IASC Strategy. Principals emphasized collaboration on system-wide PSEAH structures and measures are the litmus test for effective humanitarian response.

In conclusion, WFP as IASC Champion welcomed continued strong commitment to the Strategy, to drive implementation, mobilise resources, and reinforcing accountability. Principals called for sustaining investment in PSEAH through pooled resourcing models such as the PSEACap and shared funding approaches. The next global IASC Champion on PSEAH will have a critical role as the stakes are high: failure can be weaponized and threaten the integrity of the entire humanitarian community.

Follow-up actions:

1. Accelerate tangible progress on IASC Strategy on PSEAH targets and take stock of progress at the February 2026 Principals meeting [**IASC Principals**].

2. Instruct Country Directors in high-risk operations to pool resources and burden-share to maintain dedicated PSEA capacity, including through system-wide coordination models under the overall accountability of the RC/HC [**IASC Principals**].
3. Engage with IASC Principals to identify an IASC PSEAH Champion for 2026 [**ERC**].

AOB/Closing

The ERC highlighted the World Bank's initiative around Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans, noting the IASC secretariat's engagement on behalf of the IASC, which was endorsed by Principals.

The ERC closed by thanking IFRC for generously hosting IASC Principals. He welcomed UNICEF's offer to host the next in-person meeting in New York.

The ERC thanked Dr. Mike Ryan for his invaluable contribution to the humanitarian cause and to the IASC.

The ERC stressed the critical role of the IASC in guiding the humanitarian system at the present time.

List of Participants

1. Mr. Tom Fletcher, Chair and **Emergency Relief Coordinator**
2. Ms. Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, **FAO**
3. Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President, **ICRC**
4. Ms. Nimo Hassan, MBE, Chair of **ICVA, (Somalia NGO Consortium)**
5. Mr. James Munn, Executive Director, **ICVA**
6. Ms. Anne Reitsema, Chief Executive Officer, **Medair (ICVA)**
7. Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary General, **IFRC**
8. Mr. Tom Hart, President and Chief Executive Officer, **InterAction**
9. Ms. Janti Soeripto, President and CEO, **Save the Children US (InterAction)**
10. Ms. Tjada D'Oyen McKenna, Chief Executive Officer, **Mercy Corps (InterAction)**
11. Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, **IOM**
12. Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, **OHCHR**
13. Ms. Abby Maxman, Chair of **SCHR (President and CEO, Oxfam America)**
14. Mr. Alistair Dutton, Vice Chair of **SCHR (President and SG, Caritas Internationalis)**
15. Mr. Gareth Price-Jones, Executive Secretary, **SCHR**
16. Ms. Shoko Noda, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Crisis Bureau Director, **UNDP**
17. Mr. Andrew Saberton, Deputy Executive Director for Management, **UNFPA**
18. Ms. Anacláudia Roszbach, Executive Director, **UN-HABITAT**
19. Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees, **UNHCR**
20. Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, **WFP**
21. Dr. Mike Ryan, Executive Director, Health Emergencies Programme, **WHO**
22. Mr. Justin Brady, Chief, **IASC secretariat**