

## New Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) structure and working methods

In January 2019, the IASC<sup>i</sup> Principles unveiled a new structure, which is encapsulated in the document 'IASC Structure and Working Method'<sup>ii</sup>. It was endorsed by the IASC Principles who are the heads of the IASC's full members (namely, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, FAO, WHO, UN-HABITAT, OCHA, IOM), and IASC Standing Invitees (namely, ICRC, IFRC, OHCHR, UNFPA, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, and the World Bank). The NGO consortia ICVA, InterAction and SCHR which are also invited on a permanent basis to attend. The Chair of the IASC may also invite, on an ad hoc basis, representatives of other specialized organizations. The note also mentions that each NGO Consortium may be joined at the table by one other NGO representing itself. A third NGO representative can join as a 'plus 1'. NGO representatives can rotate seats on an as needed basis<sup>iii</sup>.

The composition of the IASC membership remains as per established in 2008, well before the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain Commitments. It seems inappropriate to continue with structures which are outdated and reflect unequal power dynamics and do not reflect the current commitments to localisation. Although both ICVA and InterAction has local and national NGOs as members, there are increased calls by local and national actors for inclusion in international policy discussions and decision making processes. The new structure does not take note of the commitments that are made on localisation and does not formally recognise local and national actors on equitable basis.

In the present structure, the Operations, Policy and Advocacy Group(OPAG) serves as a forum supporting the normative and strategic policy work of the IASC, including on system-wide policy matters with a direct bearing on humanitarian operations. It is responsible for overseeing the work of the Results Groups on behalf of the IASC. This group is chaired by WFP and NRC, there is no representation from local/national actors in this very important group that could have impact on local and national actors.

The results groups operational response, accountability and inclusion, collective advocacy, humanitarian-development collaboration, and humanitarian financing are all crucial issues to localisation. The result groups are chaired by a UN agency and INGO or NGO networks based in the North and dominated by INGO members. Although each results group is expected to reach out to concerned stakeholders, there is no formal recognised role for local or National NGO Networks. This risks perpetuating the problems of current imbalance of power. We note that results group have been given very tight timeframe to come up with priorities for the Results Group for 2019/20 to present at the first IASC OPAG meeting on 11 April. This does not facilitate in-depth consultation and reaching out to broader stakeholder, the responsibility placed on the co-chairs of the results groups and perpetuates the lack of participation of national and local actors.

The International Convening Committee of Alliance for Equitable Partnerships call for Local/ National networks to be invited as an IASC standing Invitee on permanent basis. This will proactively demonstrate the seriousness of the localisation commitments and give recognition to the important role they play nationally and globally. We urge that at least two result group should have a local/ national/regional NGOs network as co-chairs and that local and national NGO network should play an active role in setting the results. The time frame for feedback and participation should be appropriate so broad consultation can take place.

### International Conveners of Alliance 4 Empowering Partnerships



<sup>i</sup> The IASC was established following the adoption of UN General Assembly 46/ 182 in 1991. Additionally, UN General Assembly resolution 48/57 of December 1993 notes that "... the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, should serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination, meet more frequently and act therefore in an action-oriented manner on policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and for formulating a coherent and timely United Nations response to major and complex emergencies[.]"

<sup>ii</sup> [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/iasc\\_structure-and-working-method\\_2019-2020\\_web.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/iasc_structure-and-working-method_2019-2020_web.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., p4.