

Concept Paper on Humanitarian Coordinator Learning and Briefing System

I Background

The Ad Hoc IASC Working Group on strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System in February 2006¹ proposed that a professional and comprehensive training project for Humanitarian Coordinators needed to be developed under OCHA's leadership. Key areas that could be covered in this briefing package were identified and a recommendation was made to use mixed methodology and a continued learning process including distance learning and on-site learning. It was further suggested that the learning programme should use existing trainings, and that HC could undergo "on-the-job" learning through a few months' placement in major humanitarian agencies. A system of mentoring by experienced HCs and an accreditation system were raised. The need for a comprehensive training package was further reflected into the Action Plan on Strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator's System (Actions 4.1 through 4.4), endorsed by the IASC Principals on 24 April 2006.

Several meetings were convened by the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Margareta Wahlström, in April and May 2006 and IASC agencies with interest and capacity in the HC system were invited to jointly plan the way forward. As a result an informal contact group focusing on training issues and including, amongst others, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, IFRC, and ICVA has been set up. Based on a request by the Deputy ERC, WHO has offered the technical services of its staff² to work on the HC briefing system and to act as focal person for this initiative. Other agencies have committed to nominate staff to be part of the training Core Group. The training Core Group is an integral part of the IASC HC Group.

This draft concept paper attempts to encapsulate discussions held in the training core group so far and proposes a possible framework to develop, deliver and assess a system of briefing and learning for the global pool of HC coordinators with the ultimate objective of contributing towards the international humanitarian community's response to emergencies. The paper is meant as a draft and a starting point for discussion by all partners to this initiative.

II Approach and Key Principles to HC briefing system

- Ownership by all IASC members
- Direct participation and contribution from agencies with interest and capacity
- Based on the ToRs for HCs and the Profile for HCs (under development)

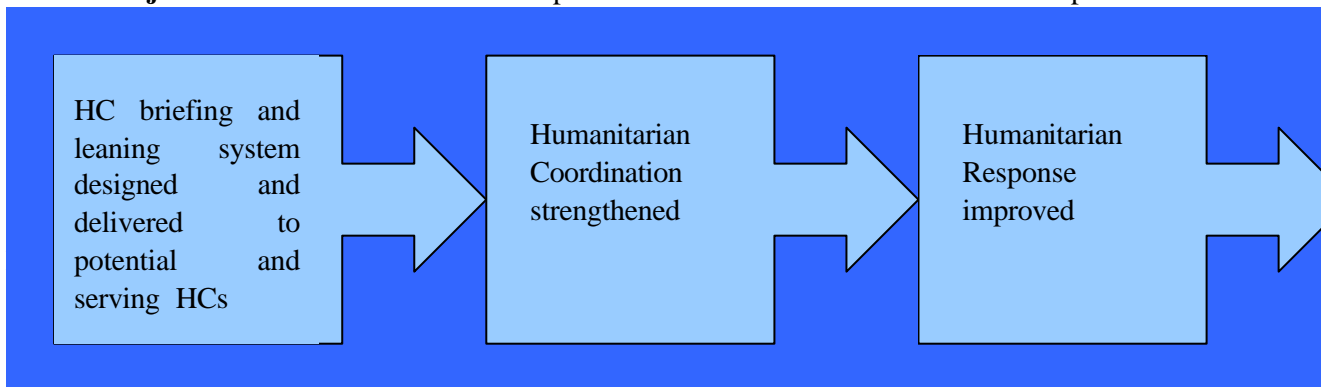
¹ Summary Record of IASC Working Group *Ad Hoc* Meeting on Strengthening HC System, held in Geneva, 7th February 2006

² Dr Gaya Gambhewage, Technical officer/Capacity Development for Health Action in Crises, supported by Ms Hyo Jeong Kim, Training Support Officer

- Linking up with and building on existing IASC and other learning(training programmes and courses)
- Linked to a system of performance assessment
- Focus on attitudes, competencies and practical skills
- Use of an optimal mixed methodology of learning and briefing
- Staggered and individualized learning system
- Practice in agencies and in the field
- Concurrent codification of learning
- Possible linkage to an "accreditation" system
- Target the HC candidates in the HC pool in the initial stage and explore how this can be adapted to further strengthen the skills and competencies of existing HCs.

III Objectives and expected results

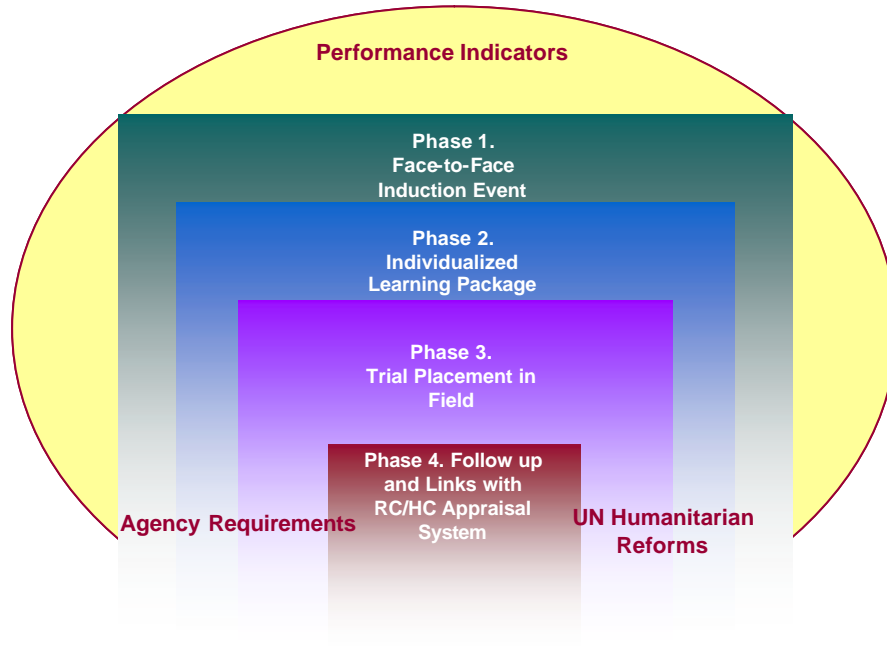
Overall Objective: To contribute towards improvement in international humanitarian response



IV Target Audience

The target audience for the initial Induction Briefing will be the Pool of Humanitarian Coordinators and newly appointed Humanitarian Coordinators. The system will later be reviewed and updated to include Humanitarian Coordinators already in the field.

V Conceptual Framework



Phase 1. Face-to-Face Induction Event

Activities

- Delivery of Induction Briefing on common knowledge and skills during a 2-3 day workshop
- Identification of individualized learning paths (ILPs)

Objectives

- Ensure that all participants understand the HC ToRs
- Provide a minimum core set of knowledge, competencies and skills for HCs
- Establish networking and the creation of a peer group amongst the members of the pool
- Introduce HC pool members to a process of staggered learning, mentoring, field placements and identify individualized learning paths for each of them
- Establish the learning needs of each participant to be addressed through individualized learning programmes

Note: Application of **Phases 2 and 3** are part of the modular approach and as such not all participants will undergo them in the same way. The best possible selection of activities and approaches will be selected, when needed, in order to further enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies of individual candidates and HCs.

Phase 2. : Individualized learning package: Trial placement in agencies, staggered leaning and mentoring

Activities

- Mapping, facilitation and tracking progress of individual learning paths
- Establishment of distance learning, face-to-face events and placements in agencies
- Mentoring system
- Linking to a system of accreditation

Objective

- Ensure that each participant embarks on the most affective learning paths to address gaps in knowledge, experience and exposure, competencies and skills using learning methods suited to their individual learning styles and capacities.
- Continued tracking of improvements, progress and suitability for deployment
- New HCs benefit from the guidance of experienced HCs and other experienced staff

Phase 3: Trial Placement in Field

Activities

- Placement of each candidate into a field office
- Planning and delivery of a number of learning programmes according to the needs and skills of each candidate throughout the trial period
- Provision of individualized mentoring by a senior official or colleague

Objective

- Allow each candidate to experience the work at the field level and engage in managing and problem solving in a supported environment under the guidance of a HC
- Allow each candidate and the management to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate
- Develop individualized skills and competencies necessary for a Humanitarian Coordinator through on-the-job training as well as pre-arranged training programmes
- Allow participants to gain experience in the areas studied and coordination in the field

Phase 4. Follow-up and Links with RC/HC Appraisal system

Note 1: Some of these phases, especially staggered learning, mentoring and field placements, can occur concurrently or in a different order.

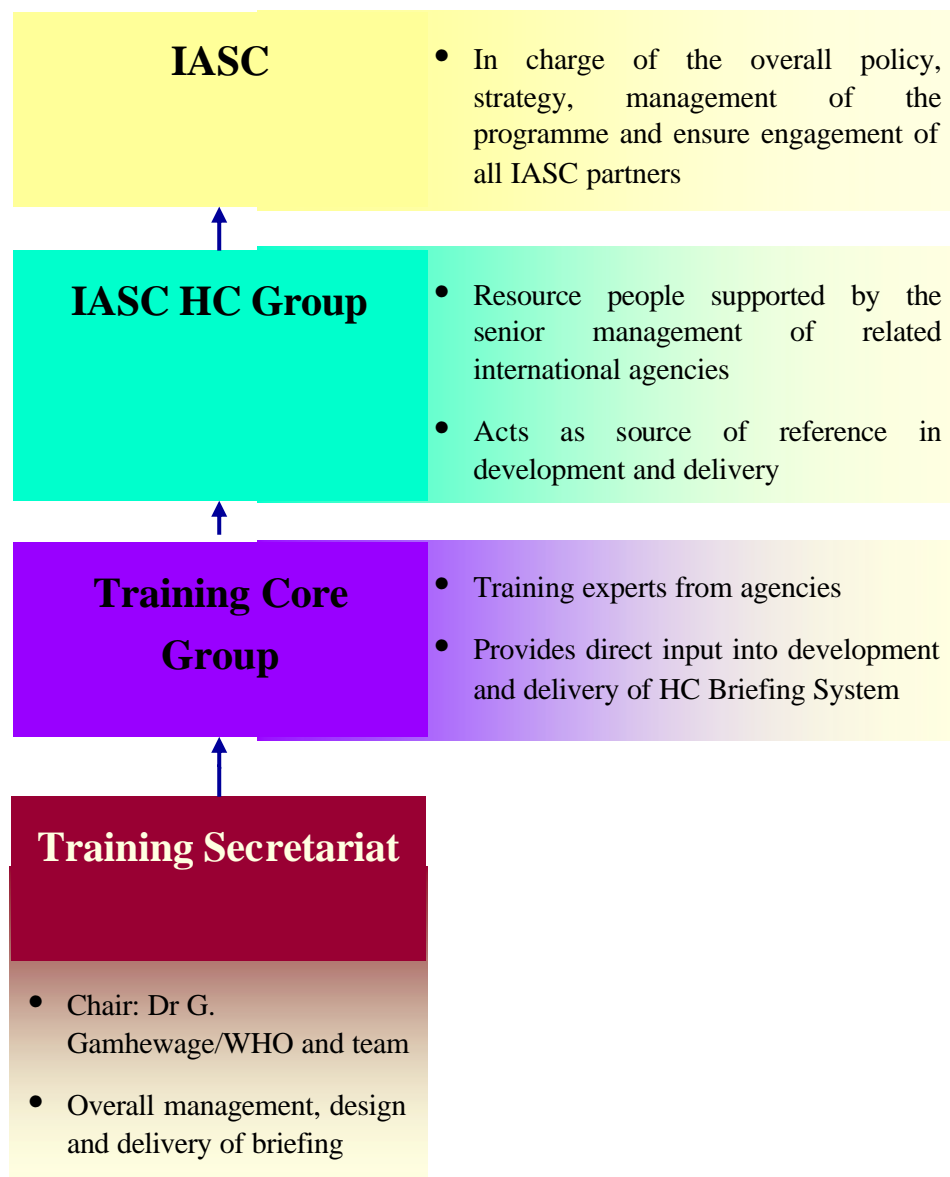
Note 2: The mentoring would be provided by seasoned HC/RCs or others with experience of senior level field coordination in emergencies who would be matched with a candidate at the end of Phase 1.

Note 3: Each of these phases will need to be elaborated. A proposal for the Face-to-face Induction and an outline for the staggered learning process are elaborated further in Annex 1B

Note 4: Trial placements in the field may not apply to all candidates. It will depend on financial resources, organizational demand and support, and the needs of the candidate. Again, this section will need to be elaborated and further developed.

VI Management

The overall management of the HC learning and briefing system will be by OCHA under the overall responsibility of the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator. A Training Core Group (TCG) has been set up to inform and manage this process. A Training Coordinator will act as chair of this Training Core Group reporting through the Deputy ERC, to the IASC HC Group, and will be responsible for the execution of the HC Briefing and Learning System and will provide training expertise and training coordination functions. OCHA will provide administrative support for the system. There will be close linkages with the OCHA Humanitarian Reform Implementation Unit and the HC Secretariat. A proper planning exercise needs to be undertaken to identify the resources, human, financial and technical required for the implementation of the programme.



VII Timeline

The proposed breakdown of the timeline by phase is as follows:

- *Phase 1. Face-to-Face Induction Event:* This event will be a *three day* induction briefing that will bring all participants together.
- *Phase 2. Individual learning path.* This would vary for each candidate
- *Phase 3. Trial Placement in Field:* After the induction briefing, participants will be enrolled, as appropriate, in a mentorship programme and/or placed in the field to shadow a senior HC. During this process, participants will receive individualized training based on their needs.
- *Phase 4. Appointment:* Once the participants have completed the first three phases, as appropriate, they will be appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator.
- In between each phase, participants will undergo a performance monitoring.

The first induction event for HCs, especially targeted for individuals in the HC Pool, is expected to be delivered in September 2006.

VIII Evaluation

Assessment of Participants and of learning programme:

Participants will also receive mentoring from a senior official who will be involved in the assessment process.

Evaluation tools will be developed for each phase of the system.

IX Next steps

- June 14: Circulation of draft concept note to the IASC HC Group
- June 19: discussion of proposal with IASC HC Group
- Last week of June/first week of July: meeting of TCG
- July 6: discussion at the IASC WG
- July: Curriculum development workshop
- August: Curriculum development and codification
- September: Delivery of first Induction Briefing (three days) and review of training
- September onwards: staggered and individual learning phase

Proposed ZERO Draft Agenda for HC Induction Briefing

Session	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
1: 8.30-10.00am	Introduction of participants, Workshop objectives, agenda and methods of working Introduction to HC Briefing System	CERF Clusters Broad based Humanitarian country teams	Communication and dealing with partners and the media
2: 10.30 - 12.00pm	Current Humanitarian Context and evolution Humanitarian reforms	Joint planning and joint action	Simulation exercise. Country coordination meeting
3: 1.00 - 2.30pm	ToRs of HC: Roles, responsibilities and accountability	Resource Mobilization and management	Debriefing and learning back
4: 3.00 - 4.30pm	Introduction to Suitability assessment Learning styles and learning needs	"Agency session": focussing on improved coordination at field level	Mentoring and trial placement
5. 4.30- 6.00pm	Update and Practical Issues in: Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, Protection and Transition Issues	Open session for key topic identified by HCs	Developing individual learning paths Conclusion
7: Evening/overnight assignment	Individual interviews and group assignments	Individual interviews and group assignments	

DRAFT PROFILE FOR HUMANITARIAN COORDINATORS

Education:

Advanced University Degree preferably in:
Political or social science,
International studies,
Public administration,
Economics,
Technical area (e.g. engineering, earth sciences, etc.)
or other relevant field;
or the equivalent combination of education and experience in a related area.

Work Experience :

Minimum of Fifteen (15) years of cumulative and progressively responsible professional experience, including coordination and management experience in:
humanitarian affairs,
emergency preparedness,
crisis/emergency relief management,
recovery and development,
humanitarian advocacy,
humanitarian policy or other related area,

Work experience should also include at least 5 years of experience at the international level. Experience in complex emergencies and/or natural disasters, including humanitarian emergency efforts at the field level, is essential.

Additional Skills:

Representational and negotiation skills developed through proven representational experience in advocacy campaigns and international fora.
Experience in dealing with the media.
Knowledge of the United Nations, or other multilateral system, and of the humanitarian aid community.
Experience in leading inter-agency consultations and coordination.

Competencies:

Professionalism:

Authoritative knowledge and wide exposure to the full range of humanitarian and emergency relief assistance and related human rights issues, as well as recovery and development issues;
Ability to advise senior management and other senior officials on approaches and techniques to address highly complex/sensitive issues;
Experience in the humanitarian field with demonstrated capacity for intellectual leadership;
Conceptual and strategic analytical capacity and ability to thoroughly analyze and evaluate critical matters pertaining to a broad spectrum of humanitarian and emergency relief issues/problems;
Demonstrated original and creative thinking, independent judgment and discretion in advising on and handling major policy, project and other issues/problems;
Strong negotiating skills and ability to influence others to reach agreement on difficult issues;
Ability to work under extreme pressure, on occasion in a highly stressful environment (e.g. civil strife, natural disasters and human misery);
Excellent knowledge of institutional mandates of UN and non-UN humanitarian actors, policies and guidelines related to humanitarian affairs and seasoned knowledge of the institutions of the UN system.

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Willingness to keep abreast of new developments in the field.

Communications

Excellent communication (spoken and written) skills, including the ability to present and defend difficult positions to senior officials.

Planning and Organizing

Ability to effectively develop unit work program, direct others in the execution of the total program and ensure timely delivery of results.

Technology Awareness - Fully proficient computer skills and use of relevant software and other applications, e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, internal databases, Internet, etc.

Teamwork

Excellent interpersonal skills, including ability to operate effectively across organizational boundaries;

Ability to establish and maintain effective partnerships, including with non-UN partners, and working relations in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

Languages

Fluency in oral and written English or French is essential;

Knowledge of a second official UN language an advantage and sometimes a requirement. (specific languages may be required depending on the country of assignment).