

## **POST – WHS NGO DISCUSSION: ICVA MEETING SUMMARY**

**14<sup>th</sup> June, 2016**

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Below is a summary of key discussion points from POST- WHS NGO DISCUSSION: ICVA MEETING Summary held on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

### **Update from last week's IASC Principals meeting**

- Highlighted a productive Principals meeting – acknowledging that: business as usual cannot continue; the **impetus to for the IASC to be more inclusive, strategic and closer to field realities**; the necessity to find better ways of collaborating in different protracted crises; the need to better unpack and collaborate on the humanitarian and development nexus;

### **Update of the Grand Bargain**

- A total of 51 commitments in 10 key work streams were presented in the final GB document. One of the key ingredients for successes of the grand bargain was peer pressure from the many actors; and the incentive to have a concrete outcome.

- **Next steps remain currently uncertain, with regards to what and how GB will be implemented and monitored.** Who would it sit with? How would the 10 work streams be taken forward? Which commitments require collective action.

### **General NGO reflections, concerns and propositions**

#### **Commitments/monitoring & tracking:**

- Various INGOs shared their **plans to create internal monitoring and change processes**. These are at early stages, and aim to also identify the implications of these changes (e.g. In line with the Charter4Change or the GB) for themselves internally and their partners.

- Regarding commitments, we **must hold ourselves to account on the commitments** we have ourselves proposed

#### **Overall observations:**

- Discussions acknowledged the **reality and scale of conflicts and protracted crises as being the majority of humanitarian interventions**. The system therefore needs to be fit for purpose for this reality.

- The WHS process saw strong **engagement with NGOs throughout the consultation phase. This engagement reduced quite dramatically in the final lead up to the Summit**, with various

MS not comfortable with the process and strong engagement of civil society. There is a **recognised fear of a backlash by MS to limit the level of engagement of civil society in future global or regional processes** – linking to the reality of a shrinking space for civil society.

- Comments highlighted how the **UN is struggling with its own mechanism/system** as it stands – let along in creating any evident change within the system.
- Discussions acknowledged a recent, **unofficial paper developed by a prominent UN agency, which included propositions in merging humanitarian and development objectives and especially within the UN system**. The need for change is clear – however discussions highlighted we must be aware of the **implications of 'one centralised system'**, which does not necessarily retain humanitarian space and acknowledge the reality of a diverse ecosystem.
- The GB contained 10 strong work streams, but **missed a key focus on risk transfer** – which is increasingly placed on local/national actors.

#### **Reaffirmed during the WHS:**

The focus on disability inclusion; education in emergencies; the importance of local actors and the shift towards localisation of aid; the acknowledgement of the diverse ecosystem. Building from this momentum, the challenge is how to ensure these are transferred into concrete actions – at an individual organisational, and collective level.

#### **Limited progress at the WHS:**

Very little progress was gained in relation to IHL and Humanitarian Principles.

#### **Joint network Statement:**

- Led by Coordination SUD, ICVA, together with other consortia including InterAction; NEAR; VENRO and VOICE are finalising a joint statement – directed towards UN and MS. **Key messages directed towards the UN** focus on ensuring NGO engagement in implementing outcomes; the need for a critical analysis of UN to transcend institutional self-interest; and increased NGO participation in decision making. Key messages directed towards MS focused on increased efforts to end conflicts; strengthen adherence to IHL and HP; stopping use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and safeguard the space for civil society.

#### **Implications & considerations moving forward:**

- Following the Summit, there remains unclarity on **the implications for national actors?** What has or will be changed?

- Further, what are the **implications for the IASC at the regional level?** How can local/national/regional actors better engage with the IASC at the regional level?
- **The WHS process has created significant momentum. How can we now leverage this momentum** to create concrete and positive changes?
- Discussions centred around **where should NGOs invest their energy moving forward?** Should we continue to position ourselves in reference to the UN system? Or rather, drive forward our own priorities with donors and individual UN agencies – knowing that all changes according to the context. We need to focus where the power is held (donors) – and leverage efforts collectively (where feasible)
- The full list of **commitments still needs to be reviewed and shared by the WHSs/UN in the lead up to ECOSOC.** This collation of commitments will include a limited level of analysis. The SG's report to the General Assembly – to be released in July may hopefully propose some substantive changes. There could be opportunities here for input and advocacy following the release of this report.
- Discussions agreed on the need to smart and strategic of collective advocacy – being more joint letters/statements. **Suggestions included to leverage individual organisation advocacy with collective efforts – whilst amplifying each others' efforts.**

### General next steps

- The meeting was first to gauge reflections and perspectives of NGOs involved in the WHS process.
- Moving forward, participants agreed to continue dialogue, especially as the full list of commitments are released and following any developments at ECOSOC HAS.
- As further information comes to light, NGOs agreed to identify & prioritise key issues for individual agency focus and – potentially joint advocacy efforts. Please therefore share concrete initiatives your agencies will be taking up moving forward; and/or propose potential initiatives which could be strengthened by collective efforts.

### Attendees

Mercy Malaysia; Medecine Du Monde; COAR; Action Contre la Faim; Concern; Netherlands Humanitarian Summit; Christian Aid; Plan; Oxfam; AIDMI; NRC; Care; AIRD; World Vision; Jesuit Refugee Service; SCHR; HERE-Geneva; NEAR network; Handicap; IFRC; ICVA.

Best regards to all

James

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