

Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

14 April 2022

This statement affirms the commitment of the IASC to ensure that Accountability to Affected People (AAP) is central to principled humanitarian action. It also pledges to support Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs), Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), clusters and individual agencies to prioritize the implementation of this commitment in all humanitarian operations.

An accountable humanitarian system, where decision-making power is in the hands of those affected by crisis, is central to humanitarian action. We are committed to ensuring that humanitarian action protects and restores human dignity, remains relevant and effective, leaves no one behind, and upholds humanitarian principles.

As humanitarians, our primary responsibility is to people affected by crisis. They are the sole reason our institutions and programmes exist. How communities experience and perceive our work is the most relevant measure of our performance. Hence, our accountability to them is paramount and must be acted upon. It is non-negotiable, at all times.

We must be instructed by affected people to guide our actions and to measure how well we provide protection and assistance against their diverse needs, feedback and perceptions, throughout the humanitarian response.

Over the last decade, individual agencies, and the humanitarian sector as a whole, have made significant progress in becoming more accountable to people affected by crisis¹. However, communities continue to report that we, the humanitarian community, need to better engage them in decision-making and, fundamentally, act on their feedback and needs to deliver community-led, relevant, dignified and timely responses.

¹ [The IASC Policy, Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, November 2017](#) and the [Grand Bargain Participation Revolution](#)

We need the collaboration of governments and local and national authorities to achieve this, as the primary responsibility to meet the needs and fulfil the rights of affected people is theirs. We stand ready to support affected governments to effectively exercise their primary role in accountability to affected people. We also need the commitment of donors to put in place the required incentives for the system to be more engaging and responsive to the needs of affected people. We need donors to scale up the provision of quality, flexible and multi-year funding so that the system can adapt and respond quickly and efficiently based on people's needs, vulnerabilities and feedback. Fundamentally, we need to work with affected communities, governments and donors, to address the asymmetry of power that currently defines the relationship between humanitarian agencies and affected people.

As IASC Principals, we:

- **Acknowledge that affected people, in all their diversity, are always the first responders in a crisis and are active agents in their own relief and recovery.** We must commit to empower affected people, including women, girls and young people, to continuously and effectively shape humanitarian decision-making. We must recognize, support and engage them, and the organizations that represent them, as equal partners.
- **Acknowledge our collective responsibility and our accountability as leaders of the international humanitarian system to deliver on this historic commitment.** In our roles as agency leads and members of the IASC, we commit to driving the required shifts to ensure that we are collectively more accountable to the people we serve. This includes ensuring that HCs, HCT members prioritize their collective accountability to people affected by crisis, and that AAP becomes a key metric for their performance.
- **Recall our commitment to support HCs and HCTs to develop, implement and monitor collective AAP, including through country-level action plans.** These plans require greater commitment from HCs, HCT members, Cluster lead agencies (and equivalent structures) to collectively promote more meaningful engagement of affected people in every aspect of the humanitarian response, including by strengthening collective feedback mechanisms and enabling timely collective action and course correction based on people's needs and regular feedback.

- **Commit to bring affected people’s views and perspectives on the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and protection to the IASC, HCTs and other coordination structures on a regular basis to inform decision-making, including on course correction.** This includes reporting annually on the perceptions of affected people to inform global and country-level actions to strengthen the humanitarian system’s accountability to affected people.
- **Reaffirm our commitment to increase our participation in, and support of, locally led coordination platforms and local leadership, including women and young people. We also commit to ensure greater gender balance and representation of local leadership and local voices, including women-led and youth-led organizations, in all their diversity, at every level of humanitarian decision-making, including the HCT and other coordination forums.** This requires greater effort and willingness from us all. By ensuring representation of affected people and the organizations that represent them in these forums, affected people will have greater agency and power over their lives.
- **Call upon the donor community to support predictable, multi-year and flexible funding to enable the system to provide timely response to affected people, informed by their engagement in decision-making and the feedback that they provide.** Donors play a critical role in providing the necessary incentives for the system to be more engaging, responsive and accountable to affected people.

Signatories

- Mr. Martin Griffiths, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**)
- Mr. Sean Callahan, President and Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Relief Services (**CRS**)
- Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**)
- Mr. Peter Maurer, President, International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**)
- Ms. Jane Backhurst, Chair of International Council of Voluntary Agencies (**ICVA**) Board, (Christian Aid)
- Mr. Ignacio Packer, Executive Director, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (**ICVA**)
- Mr. Samuel Worthington, Chief Executive Officer, **InterAction**

- Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross (**IFRC**)
- Mr. António Vitorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration (**IOM**)
- Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**)
- Mr. Andrew Morley, Chair of Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (**SCHR**), (World Vision International)
- Ms. Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Vice Chair of Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (**SCHR**), (CARE International)
- Mr. Gareth Price-Jones, Executive Secretary, Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (**SCHR**)
- Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (**SR on HR of IDPs**)
- Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**)
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**)
- Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (**UN-Habitat**)
- Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**)
- Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**)
- Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director, World Food Programme (**WFP**)
- Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (**WHO**)