

Terms of Reference Somalia Humanitarian Communications Group (HCG)

Updated February 2016

BACKGROUND: The United Nations and non-governmental organizations Humanitarian Public Information Group (later renamed Humanitarian Communications Group) was created in June 2011, with the aim of providing communications and media support to the ongoing humanitarian response to the crisis in Somalia. The group initially included development partners and donor communications focal points. In mid-2013, it was decided that the focus of the group would be primarily humanitarian, which would be reflected in the membership.

PURPOSE: The group aims to strengthen information sharing on the humanitarian situation in Somalia¹ to ensure a common understanding of operational activities and challenges for humanitarian actors, donors and others; highlights overarching concerns relating to humanitarian policy, security, funding and other issues in order to guide humanitarian advocacy. It also aims to improve common humanitarian messaging. Coordination among humanitarian organizations is essential especially in view of the UN integration and the consequent increased need to disseminate clear information about humanitarian activities and principles within Somalia. This group will support and advise the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on communication issues.

CORE ACTIVITIES:

- Facilitate two-way communication and information sharing between humanitarian UN agencies and NGOs;
- Develop and disseminate common humanitarian messaging on key issues of concern and keep the humanitarian situation in Somalia on the global agenda by enhancing interaction with various media (international and local) in order to contribute to an informed and better nuanced analysis and reporting of humanitarian issues within Somalia
- Consult, plan and implement dynamic public information activities and products on all aspects of the humanitarian community's work in Somalia
- Undertake collaborative communication actions and campaigns to enhance visibility of the UN/NGO humanitarian work when relevant and of added benefit
- Increase understanding of humanitarian principles and action amongst the Somali public through local media (both print and electronic)
- Flag issues of concern vis-à-vis public messaging to humanitarian agencies and to the HCT in a timely manner
- Find and explore new and creative ways to share information with all stakeholders, duty bearers and beneficiaries/persons of concern
- Update humanitarian organizations on relevant media stories and trends

FUNCTIONING:

The group will be jointly chaired by a representative from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and a representative from NGOs. The co-chairs will coordinate the group's activities including coordination of the agenda, drafting and dissemination of minutes, and leading the implementation of agreed activities.

¹ For the purpose of this group, use of Somalia covers: Puntland, South-central as well as Somaliland



- The group will meet monthly. Bi-weekly meetings can be called on an *ad hoc* basis;
- Location – rotating (specific room shall be communicated by OCHA or NGO lead before each meeting).

Relevant subgroups or taskforces will also be formed as when necessary and membership to these will be voluntary and agenda focussed.

COMPOSITION: The group comprises representatives from UN organizations, NGOs and IOs coordinating or delivering humanitarian activities in Somalia.

The group will closely coordinate with the HCT making sure it effectively links to key issues and develops messages accordingly. UN organizations and NGOs will have an equal voice in identifying key media messages.

REVISION OF TORs: These ToRs will be revised after a period of one year

If a need is identified to strengthen common advocacy, these terms of reference, the link to the HCT and decision making modalities will be revisited.