

Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) Retreat

8-9 June 2015

New York

Report

Overview and background

Led by the UN's Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) and organised by the ICT4Peace Foundation, the 2014 Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) meeting was held on 8th and 9th June in New York. Representatives from OICT, OCHA, UNOCC, ICTD/DFS, UN Global Pulse, UNHCR, DPKO-DFS, UNDP, UNHCHR, UNOSAT, UNICEF, WFP, EOSG, UNDP and DPA participated along with, on the second day, representatives from the DataPop Alliance, Nethope, the Digital Humanitarian Network, World Bank, MapAction, Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and What3Words. Ambassador Per Thöresson, Sweden, ASG UN CITO Ms. Atefeh Riazi, Dr. David Nabarro, former UN Special Envoy on Ebola and UNMEER SRSG Peter Graaff also participated by video-conference in the workshop.

On 12 January 2010, a devastating earthquake struck Haiti. An estimated 3 million people were affected by the quake. Death toll estimates range from 100,000 to about 160,000. On 25 April this year, an earthquake that hit Nepal and neighbouring regions killed more than 7,000 people and injured more than twice as many. Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless with entire villages flattened, across many districts of Nepal. Sudden onset disasters will continue to occur, highlighting the enduring need for disaster risk reduction, community resilience and enhanced collaboration and coordination amongst multiple agencies. Five years after the earthquake in Haiti, much has changed in the world of humanitarian response. From participants involved in search and rescue operations to what is today an emphasis on communications – and its fullest restoration – as an essential part of vital post-disaster needs, humanitarian relief and response is today very different to what it was just a few years ago, a change brought about largely by the advent, adoption and adaptation of web, Internet and mobile technologies by the UN family as well as a larger, global commons.

Nowhere was this change more evident in the UN than in its institutional response to Ebola. UNMEER was set up as a temporary measure to meet immediate needs related to the unprecedented fight against Ebola on 19 September 2014, after the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/1, and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2177 (2014) on the Ebola outbreak. Colleagues in the UN, involved with UNMEER, have noted how the response dissolved boundaries between UN member states, UN agencies and departments, INGOs and the larger crisis-mapping communities. What were default and deeply ingrained modes of thinking and institutional response five years ago, during the Haiti earthquake relief efforts, have dramatically changed in a relatively short span of time. No longer is information hoarding, an unwillingness to collaborate, a resistance around coordination and the citation of technological impediments to more effective and efficient response mechanisms valid arguments or excuses for national governments, the UN system and civil society. First responders, often from the affected communities themselves, have the power to locate, inform, record, archive and disseminate information critical to humanitarian response, forging new ways for the UN to harvest actionable intelligence from the glut of information, from the hyper-local to the national, after a large scale disaster.

Enduring questions over the capacity of the UN to more fully embrace, and help progressively inform, what is today a new humanitarian and emergency response landscape. Accordingly, this year's Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) meeting focussed on,

1. Review of progress in implementing the UN SG CiMS; Discussion of special concerns and proposals by CiMAG members.
2. An introspection of the UNMEER / UB Ebola response, e.g. the use of HXL and the principles of CiM
3. A retrospection of CiM efforts of the UN since Haiti 5 years ago, ending with UNMEER, to understand what's changed and what remain key challenges.
4. Moving forward, how geospatial assets within the UN (including for example new UAV imagery) can be better leveraged within the UN system writ large

As the group deliberated these issues, the following questions were used for guidance and focus,

1. What are the most significant changes around aid delivery and response since Haiti, five years ago, with a focus on technology?
2. What are the potential opportunities of embracing these technologies more fully, and what are the pitfalls and challenges?
3. The rhetoric of saving lives masks enduring and deep-seated challenges around coordination and collaboration. What real progress has been made, if any, around information management during crises – and what technologies, if any, have helped?
4. Going from institutional resistance a few years ago, a more progressive culture has infused the UN family with a new outlook around how best to react and respond more efficiently and effectively to crises. However, rapid iteration and failing fast, though desirable over ossified architectures and responses, also brings with it institutional and reputational costs. How can the UN embrace innovation, which is inherently in flux, and at the same time institutionalise, for more systemic adoption, scalability and sustainability, agile, responsive mechanisms and technologies?
5. The UN SG's Rights Up Front initiative aims to drive and deliver a comprehensive rights based approach to the early detection of and effective, institutional responses to complex political emergencies. The information sharing and collaboration required mirrors CiMAG's discussions on humanitarian emergencies. What can be done to ensure IM responds, to the fullest extent possible, the needs of all actors in the UN system, as well as beyond?

Overall observations

1. Retreat was well attended and allowed for frank discussion among key UN offices/agencies involved in crisis information. As in previous years, the retreat provided a unique opportunity for those present to connect, share and learn from those working on same and similar issues.
2. By end of retreat, many colleagues (in particular DPKO, DFS, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP) informally agreed on the need to meet more frequently to jointly explore how we tackle similar challenges and opportunities in the crisis information space.
3. Areas of collaboration noted during course of retreat included: responsible data policy, situational analysis, risk analysis, contacts management, sharing information and data systems, benefiting from and leveraging comparative advantages (e.g. idea of UNDP providing common IM services as part of its standard services in country); idea of humanitarian information services being scaled up for use by others (e.g. HDX, HXL), development of digital technology services (i.e. how do we avoid duplicating work, leveraging solutions, linking them up).
4. The priorities of the Crisis Information Management Strategy (CIMS) endorsed by the Secretary-General (ref. A/65/491) in 2010 were re-validated: 1. Data Architecture and Governance; 2. Technology Development; 3. Stakeholder Management; and Capacity Building.
5. The UN system has made notable progress in two of the CIMS goals: Data Architecture; and Technology Development. The implementation of Common Operational Data Sets, the Humanitarian Data Exchange and other architectures and tools has led to better management of data and information in the sudden onset of a crisis. More progress is needed in order to reach a harmonized data system.

6. Yet, this progress is at risk of being undermined by the absence of effective, UN system wide governance regarding information. Clear links between chains of command, definition of information collection and analysis roles and accountabilities, and rules for sharing and distributing data are key for the provision of actionable, timely and reliable data. Close integration with operations will be key to capitalise on state of the art technology.
7. Improved engagement with stakeholders including governments, international organisations and other key responders will be fundamental to enabling more coordinated responses. These relationships cannot be shaped in times of crisis but need be developed on a year-round basis.
8. There is a severe shortage of staff with the required technical and analytical skills, institutional expertise and experience in crisis response. Current recruiting and deployment mechanisms are insufficient. Effective usage of data requires improved data literacy amongst non-information management staff.
9. Important shortfalls were recognized in two of the other goals: Stakeholder Management; and, Capacity Building. It was specifically noted that there was not a common understanding of the Information Management (IM) analytical skillset nor, human resource profiles, and that training for a crisis response fell short of the needs during the Ebola Response. It was identified that ongoing year-round engagement of Stakeholders was needed to make greater progress.
10. The increasing interest and support of the Secretariat and Member States to CiMS was noted (ref. Report of the Secretary-General on Information and communications technology in the United Nations, A/69/517). Participants also recognized the critical role that the CiMAG plays as a lever to implement the Strategy, and recognized the need for informal CiMAG working groups, at headquarters level (and in the field?), between the annual retreats, to advance common objectives.

Day 1 (8th June 2015) notes

In the framing of the CiMAG retreat, ASG and UN CITO Ms. Atefeh Riazi flagged the importance of looking at computer (silicon) viruses in addition to pandemics and biological viruses like Ebola. She spoke about the enduring challenges as well as opportunities for the UN to respond to complex issues like cybersecurity and Ebola. She also repeatedly underscored the importance of moving from crisis response to prevention, and went as far as to ask if the UN was relevant today as an actor in addressing complex, systemic challenges. This was understood by many as an institutional challenge around how to refashion the UN to better address these challenges, especially by embracing innovation and technology. She asked the participants to address existing challenges around information sharing and working together, and linked to this, how to reach out – as the UN – to those addressing the same and similar challenges but were not in the room.

As in the year before, the Chairman of the ICT4Peace Foundation, Daniel Stauffacher, outlined key drivers of the CiMS process and the evolution of CiMAG, noting both how much had changed in a few years as well as the enduring challenges around timely, effective and efficient information sharing across the UN system and beyond.

In his submission over Skype video, Dr. David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Ebola, noted, *inter alia*,

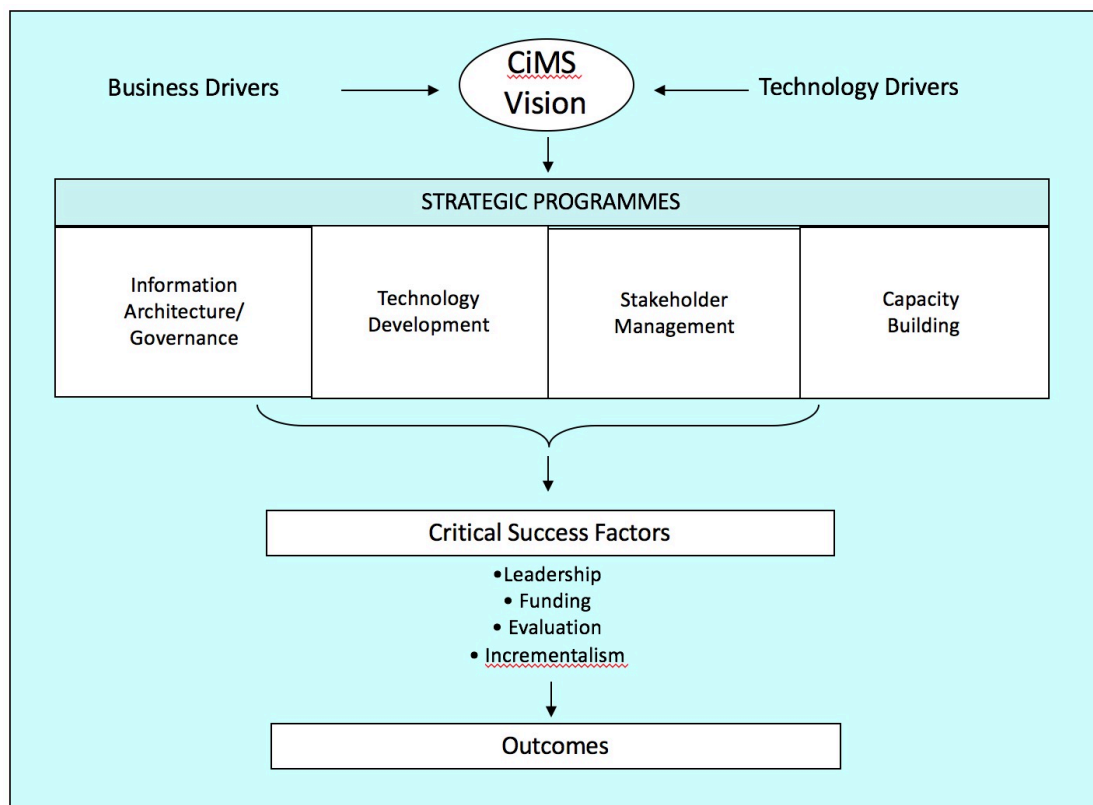
- That though pandemics may originate as communicable diseases and ergo, the primary domain and concern of the health community - they shift quickly from a crisis in one sector to one that crosses whole of government, to then multiple governments and a global community. What starts local can very quickly go global.
- That one of the first things done in the response was to create a conceptual framework around what data was needed for the Ebola response. The framework included what the the UN system, government and other stakeholders needed in order to respond of Ebola, recognising that data was going to be a central pillar upon which the response was going to be built on. This data included how quickly could infected patients could get to medical care and how many people who died were being buried in a safe and dignified manner?
- UNMEER, Dr. Nabarro noted, was the UN's first health keeping mission and it, having good quality, reliable data was key.

- Sharing early can help, he noted, a group of experts (e.g. a brains trust) within the UN to act as a sounding board around emergent threats and challenges. This network or group would be a brain trust for the UN, using their combined analytical power towards early warning, vector identification, threat detection, deal with black swan events and other purposes.
- Data collection during the Ebola response was a challenge – UNMEER was overloaded with those who wanted to help and brought with them some form of app or platform, with their own protocols. There was no vetting process or a system for app checking and testing.
- Access real time data on crises is critical. While interoperability of disparate information systems is getting better, this information has to be analysed, shared and disseminated.
- People need to see datasets for which interoperability is key. At the same time, institutions, agencies and departments want to retain control over what is seen by whom, which undermines interoperability.
- Access real time data on crisis varies. There is a need to increase sharing within and between stakeholders and also create the necessary protocols. One cannot get people to work together around common datasets if they can't see the datasets.

Several of Dr. Nabarro's points were underscored by UNMEER SRSG Peter Jan Graaff. "Data brings light to the equation" noted SRSG Graaff, who went on to say that the objective of data generation needs to be tailored to the problem at hand. Often, contextual, real time information for fact based decision making was more valuable than more comprehensive collection of data for longer term analysis. SRSG Graaff repeatedly underscored the important of good, reliable, timely data during crisis response.

The ignite (ten minute) presentations focussed, as in previous years, around what each agency, department or stakeholder was doing around crisis information management. In a significant change from previous years, those from outside the UN family were also asked to sit in on the first day's discussions with the UN family. This was reflective of and wished to support the inextricably entwined nature of responses to complex challenges today, with the UN and UNMEER treating those outside the UN family as actors integral to the success of the larger effort.

Throughout the day, the presentations were anchored to the UN CiM framework as first drafted in 2009 and the enduring relevance of which was underscored by those present.



UN Global Pulse flagged the 'data exhaust' – how data from for example mobile phone companies could help with understanding and modelling population movements - where, how, how quickly, from where to where. This in turn could help in the modelling of how disease spread.

Global Pulse encouraged CiMAG to move away from lab to actual fieldwork. The presentation by Data Pop Alliance dovetailed into many of the issues raised by Global Pulse and resulted in some of the most pointed questions of the day around issues of data security, privacy, the validity of informed consent and 'acceptable risk' around the use of big data for crisis response.

UNICEF flagged, amongst other issues, that end users of technology (including those affected by crises) were often not in the conversations around the ethics of using technology for crisis response, and a rights based discourse around the implementation of ICTs around humanitarian aid. UNICEF championed the vital importance of purposeful and specific data collection and data sharing so as to minimise the sharing of personal data.

In contradistinction to Global Pulse and also OCHA's recent experience in engaging actors in Silicon Valley, UNDP said that it's experience suggested that there was often an over estimation of what the private sector could meaningfully do and deliver during a crisis.

Leitmotifs across the ignite talks and the discussions that ensued were IM job profiles are completely out of touch with current realities were linked to the need to strengthen interoperability, the need to look at training (including mapping out existing training and harmonising curricula), the need to focus on data literacy and what informed consent around data sharing means today, moving from open data to also open analysis (required platforms for data analysis to be democratised) as well as using technology to strengthen the UN's responsibility to share and serve critical information.

Day 2 (9th June 2015) notes

In the encapsulation of key points arising out of the group discussions on Day 2 of the CiMAG retreat, ICT4Peace has relied extensively on the notes kindly provided by the moderators. Any omissions or errors, however, are the responsibility of the ICT4Peace Foundation.

The first group discussion, moderated by Mark Dalton from OCHA focussed on, *inter alia*, the DHN and crisis-mappers communities, which are now mature, 24/7 operations relied upon by sections of the UN. What has this progress resulted in? Is it more chaotic today as a consequence of these actors or is the aid and response landscape that much easier to engage with as a consequence of these large groups and platforms at play? What is the future of UN, crisis-mappers and corporate entity collaboration and coordination? Controversially perhaps, has the UN ceded some of its mandate in terms of first response to a more diverse, global as well as hyper-local set of actors, bound together by their use of technology? What is the future of collaboration around disasters?

Key points from this discussion included,

Data Architecture

- The need to promote standards and/or build in incentives to share information and data remains key. Standards remain hard, although HXL initiative - and the simplicity of the solution proposed - is seen as a possible way to make datasets easier to share and compare.
- Outcome: CDC and OCHA are following up to exchange details on HXL, as CDC has identified a use case where they would like to test out HXL.

Technology Development

- Agencies are rapidly digitizing their information and data systems, and while some of these are being designed to be inter-operable - one does wonder how much duplication and redundancy there might be (e.g. there are multiple and similar systems being built for beneficiary registration, needs assessments, project and programme monitoring in the humanitarian sector).
- A mapping of these various projects might uncover options for joint-initiatives, rather than solo endeavours. UNICEF and OCHA are engaged to look carefully at how our respective information and data services can complement each other and be inter-operable.
- Recognition that there are limitations on how fast UN can innovate and roll out new solutions. The UN Secretariat is particularly challenging place to develop new digital solutions. Recognition that we need to look at how to partner more effectively with partners (digital technology companies, academics, philanthropic foundations, venture capital groups, public and private sector) to obtain better results more quickly. Scope for UN convened forums and groups, innovation/solutions marketplace.

Stakeholder Management

- For CIMAG, it was noted that we were working all working on the crisis information spectrum and facing similar challenges and opportunities. The Ebola crisis was significant as the crisis transcended respective disciplines (humanitarian, peace-keeping, health, political, economic) and demonstrated how ill-prepared the UN crisis information system is to effectively work together and address this type of crisis.
 - Recommendation to Senior Leadership was that the best way to prepare the system for a similar (pan-discipline) threat in future would be to organise a simulation exercise. This need not be a costly exercise - it could be office-based and focused on ensuring that crisis information systems and services can work together in an optimal way to deliver situational analysis for operational and strategic decision-making. Ebola also highlighted the importance of building on existing networks and processes. UNMEER had its own vertical information flows that needed to be established, however the horizontal information sharing networks and systems (e.g. humanitarian cluster system) were equally important. Many partners commented that the absence of of usual humanitarian information sharing systems did not help the response.

Capacity building

- The issue of evolving skill sets to work in the crisis information and data space was broadly acknowledged by all actors. The lack of general data literacy was noted as were specific skills gaps (data literates, data scientists, political and humanitarian analysts). UN Secretariat especially difficult to have HR practices keep up with the evolving skills demand. For example, generic job descriptions were not aligned with actual job requirements.
- Challenge of building up internal skills and bringing in external skills to work in this new digital and data reality.

Key outcomes / follow-ups for OCHA

- OCHA interested in more frequent, practical and informal dialogue with counterparts in this group. Challenge is to do this without creating lots of meetings or an amorphous COP. For info, we plan to follow up with DPKO/DFS on situational analysis, UNDP on common IM services, UNICEF on how respective platforms work and responsible data policy, CDC on HXL.
- Simulation exercises recommended as best way to explore how UN can handle an Ebola-like response in future. The exercise needs to be a real-time office exercise that is focused on optimising our respective information services/systems and business processes.
- As mentioned, a strategic priority for OCHA is to improve our situational analysis in a crisis / disaster. We have a detailed action plan on what we are doing to improve this internally - and are very interested in engaging with other partners around this issue.

The second group discussion, moderated by Kimberly Roberson from UNHCR, focussed on what's on the horizon – i.e. what was at present embryonic but had the potential to revolutionize humanitarian aid and information management as well as the rapid evolution of existing platforms, services and initiatives, within and outside the UN. The discussion was anchored to commitments and tangible outcomes to push forward CIM strategy, linked to, *inter alia* UNMEER the 'Performance Peacekeeping' report by DFS/DPKO, UNOCC's on-going work, Open and Big Data, data science, digital humanitarians/V&TC community engagement, the development of HXL, mapping and verification.

The discussion on the future focused considerably on the use of volunteer communities as information sources, as well as how much meaning could be made of big data in anticipating and responding to crisis. It was observed that the need to adapt responses in crisis often evolves faster than the UN community is able to react, including adapting its own information gathering and sharing practices. This is particularly true as most crisis are both political and humanitarian in nature, and the information needs and analysis practices of these two branches of UN response are quite different in their outlooks and experiences. While in the past, some of the major hurdles to information sharing were linked to technological concerns, the dramatic changes in technology has shifted the focus of information sharing challenges away from technology to the processes and definitions which are used to organize and process information. Technology is no longer the barrier to information sharing, as information in both text and structured formats can be easily transferred across platforms. What remains an impediment to rapid and informative sharing is more linked to the information architecture and capacity among stakeholders. Information architectures need to be conceived of in more system agnostic ways so that information can be more easily compared and compiled into analytical results, and that allow different providers and users of information to build upon the efforts of an increasingly diverse set of actors. Tools such as HXL and HDX were cited as revolutionary, not only because they allow free flow of information across different technology platforms, but also as their continued use and development can spur increased consistency in information architecture by focusing the wider community's attention on actually sharable and shared data and information, and not on the institutional and technical barriers.

Another area requiring attention moving forward was increasing analytical capacity among those who would need the results of the analysis. It was felt that information could be put to much more effective use in a crisis if the analytical capacity was close to the decision makers. This means that information management specialists with a particular expertise or orientation were more effective in assisting good decision making when they are considered as part of a decision maker's team, rather than some common or generic pool of analysis. Hence, while increased data sharing and shared use of common data was essential, analysis resources were better specialized, focused on the specific products needed by the respective decision makers.

In addition, with an It was also noted that the humanitarian community was at an advantage over the political arm of the UN as OCHA plays a unique role in procuring humanitarian information and data, and disseminating. No such entity exists for the political and military branch, often resulting in multiple and at times conflicting information being presented for synthesis in a crisis. The UNOCC mentioned the case of Burundi, a complex humanitarian and political crisis with a variety of actors on the ground reporting information from which it was difficult to shift out a coherent picture of the evolving situation.

Volunteer communities are likely to continue to play an even greater role in crisis situations, as technology increases their ability to report on events. More frequently members of the volunteer community are in the crisis zones, even where the UN is not present, and appropriate understanding of the accuracy of this information and how to better incorporate and support these groups will be needed. Many communities that the UN is seeking to assist and protect could become the key source of crisis information, not as providers of supplementary information, but as primary and trusted providers of structured and organized information regarding a crisis. UN organisations such as DPKO and UNOCC are becoming experts in following certain social media channels to enhance situational analysis, crisis monitoring and potential predictors of some types of events. Tools, information flows, and experiences in this area should be shared widely across UN partners.

The third and final group discussion was led by Christina Goodness with key inputs by Lynette Larsen, outgoing Chief Information Management Officer, UNMEER. The session was anchored to the following questions:

- What are the key learnings from the discussions over two days, and what are the key points that must be communicated to senior UN leadership?

- What are the drivers of change that can be called upon to accelerate the support by senior UN leadership of efforts already underway to re-imagine aid delivery and design?
- How can the benefits of the strategic adoption and adaptation of technology be communicated to senior leadership – including cost-benefit analysis?

Recommendations and next steps

1. CiMAG members to establish a working group in order to develop and recommend templates for CiM data governance structures for several potential crisis scenarios: e.g. Peace-keeping, peace-building, humanitarian missions (Nepal), Ebola-type, Hybrid type (Peace-keeping and humanitarian);
2. CiMAG members to develop guidelines for sharing and distributing data in crisis situations within the UN, with partner organisations and governments
3. CiMAG members to carry out (online and in person) CiM Training Simulation exercises including the first steps in the design phase i.e. determining the appropriate for CiM tools and structures;
4. CiMAG members to establish an online working group on coordination of CiM Training activities, to (1) Exchange and compare content (curricula, modules) of CiM training courses; (2) Inform about ongoing training activities; (3) Help build a roster of CiM trainers; (4) Identify those due to go on an IM assignment in a mission as potential participant for training courses;
5. CiMAG members to review and make recommendations on the human resource options and profiles available to rapidly staff IM capacities during crisis;
6. CiMAG's 2008 UN stock-taking report will be updated by CiMAG with the support of ICT4Peace;
7. CiMAG Members to hold a mid-term session in January 2016 to review progress regarding the above recommendations. The next CiMAG Retreat is planned for June 2016 in New York.
8. CiMAG to include operational, non-information management, non-information technology staff in the working group to optimise the provision of actionable insights

Sanjana Hattotuwa, ICT4Peace
Daniel Stauffacher, ICT4Peace
13 July 2015

Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) Retreat

New York, 8 - 9 June 2015

Agenda

Venue:

One UN New York,

Diplomat Ballroom

One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Agenda

8th June, Monday

08.00 – 08.30 Breakfast

08.30 – 09.00

- Opening, Welcome and comments by Mr. Daniel Stauffacher, President, ICT4Peace Foundation
- Welcome by Ambassador Per Thöresson (Sweden)
- Welcome and Keynote by ASG UN CITO Ms. Atefeh Riazi

09.00 - 09.45 Keynote by Dr. David Nabarro, Q&A

09.45 – 11.00 Ten-minute 'ignite' presentations on progress around the CiM strategy and strategic emergency and humanitarian responses by UN actors, in particular on recent Ebola response activities, if relevant. (Moderated by Sanjana Hattotuwa, ICT4Peace Foundation)

- WHO
- OCHA
- DFS
- UNICEF
- UNDP
- OICT
- DPKO
- UNHCR
- UNOCC
- UNOSAT / UNITAR
- UN OHCHR
- Global Pulse
- DPI

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee break

11.15 – 12.45 Comments and outcome oriented responses to presentations and updates by UN CiMAG members, including specific issues and projects not covered in presentations. (Moderated by Sanjana Hattotuwa, ICT4Peace Foundation)

12.45 – 13.45 Lunch break

13.45 – 15.45 Special Remarks by ASG Peter Jan Graaff, (on behalf of UN Chef de Cabinet, Ebola Crisis Manager for Liberia).

Ten-minute 'ignite' presentations on progress around the CiM strategy and strategic emergency and humanitarian responses by,

- DataPop Alliance
- NetHope
- World Bank
- MapAction
- CDC
- What3Words
- MapAction

15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.00 Comments and outcome oriented responses to presentations, including specific issues and projects not covered in presentations. (Moderated by Sanjana Hattotuwa, ICT4Peace Foundation)

17.00 – 17.15 Concluding remarks by OICT & ICT4Peace Foundation

17.30 - Cocktail Invitation (location to be determined)

9th June, Tuesday

08.00 – 08.30 Breakfast

08.30 – 08.45 Welcome and comments by ICT4Peace Foundation followed by topline presentation of first day's discussions and challenges

08.45 – 10.30

Group discussion: It's been five years since the earthquake in Haiti, and actors outside the UN including but not limited to the Digital Humanitarian Network, Crisismappers and even Facebook, Google and other large web companies are part of a complex web of institutional response to crises. Interestingly, the apps, services and platforms of leading Internet, web and mobile chat companies are used by communities themselves to ascertain needs, find loved ones and exchange vital information. In Nepal, we have seen the likes of Facebook and Apple donating millions of dollars of aid, and leveraging the millions of registered users on their respective platforms to support aid efforts. Companies like Google now set up their own people finder platforms. The UAViators network brings together many disparate groups and individuals flying UAVs in support of aid, as well as disaster journalism. The DHN and crismappers are now mature, 24/7 operations relied upon by sections of the UN. What has this progress resulted in? Is it more chaotic today as a consequence of these actors or is the aid and response landscape that much easier to engage with as a consequence of these large groups and platforms at play? What is the future of UN, crisis-mappers and corporate entity collaboration and coordination? Controversially perhaps, has the UN ceded some of its mandate in terms of first response to a more diverse, global as well as hyper-local set of actors, bound together by their use of technology? What is the future of collaboration around disasters?

Moderator Mark Dalton, OCHA

10.30 – 10.45 Coffee break

10.45 – 12.30

Group discussion: What's on the horizon? Commitments and tangible outcomes to push forward CIM strategy, anchored to, *inter alia* UNMEER the 'Performance Peacekeeping' report by DFS/DPKO, UNOCC's ongoing work, Open and Big Data, data science, digital humanitarians/V&TC community engagement, the development of HXL, mapping and verification.

Discussion led by Kim Roberson, UNHCR

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch break

13.30 – 15.00

Group discussion: What are the key learnings from the discussions over two days, and what are the key points that must be communicated to senior UN leadership? What are the drivers of change that can be called upon to accelerate the support by senior UN leadership of efforts already underway to re-imagine aid delivery and design? How can the benefits of the strategic adoption and adaptation of technology be communicated to senior leadership – including cost-benefit analysis? This session will focus on key questions, include small group discussions and conclude by aiming at a short list of possible lessons that could be drawn from participants.

Moderated by Christina Goodness, UN, with key inputs by Lynette Larsen, outgoing Chief Information Management Officer, UNMEER

15.30 – 15.45 Coffee break

15.45 – 17.00 Concluding remarks by UN ASG CITO Ms. Atefeh Riazi and organisers (Moderated by Sanjana Hattotuwa, ICT4Peace Foundation)

- *Suggested attire: Informal*
- *All discussions and presentations, amongst all participants, on all the days, whether in-session or informal, will be under Chatham House Rule, unless otherwise explicitly noted.*
- **Coordinators**
Content, conceptualisation and structure: Mr. Sanjana Hattotuwa (sanjanahattotuwa@ict4peace.org) / Logistics: Ms. Mildred Ochoa, OICT (mildred.ochoa@un.org)

Background Information on CiMS and CiMAG

The 2010 Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/491) on the Status of implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations Secretariat, prominently underscores the Crisis Information Management (CiM) Strategy, Under the section 'United Nations system-wide harmonization efforts', the report notes (Pg. 38):

“Crisis information management strategy. The Crisis Information Management Strategy is based on the recognition that the United Nations, its Member States, constituent agencies and non-governmental organizations need to improve such information management capacity in the identification, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery of all types of crises, natural as well as man-made. The strategy will leverage and enhance this capacity and provide mechanisms to integrate and share information across the United Nations system. The Office of Information and Communications Technology, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, has worked closely with United Nations organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WFP and other entities such as the ICT for Peace Foundation in developing and implementing this strategy. It is envisaged that membership will be expanded to include other United Nations organizations in the near future.”

In December 2014, the UN General Assembly approved the update of the UN Secretary-General’s Strategy, to better exploit the enormous potential of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for decision-making and delivery capacity of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian operations and development, human rights and international law. The strategy is contained in the SG’s report of 10 October 2014 on Information and Communication Technology in the United Nations (A/69/517). The report mentions: “The (UN) Office of Information and Communications Technology will explore opportunities to develop capacity in analytics and potential means of collaboration with other United Nations entities throughout the global ICT community on the development of analytics solutions to allow for operational flexibility in support of the delivery of their mandates. Analytics could assist in crisis management efforts and the Office would seek to work with the Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) to seek to explore this further.”

Subsequently, the General Assembly in its resolution dated 26 December 2014 (A/C.5/69/L.26*) welcomed the new Information and Communications Technology Strategy in the United Nations, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General, and requested him to provide, in 2015, detailed information on the implementation of all the elements of the proposed new strategy.

Members of CiMAG include *inter alia*: UN CITO, Office of SG, OCHA, DPKO, DFS, DPA, UNHCR, WFP, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, DSS, UNFPA, PBSO, ICT4Peace.

Reports on the CiMAG Retreats of previous years are to be found below:

- Report of Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) Retreat 2014, <http://ict4peace.org/crisis-information-management-advisory-group-cimag-retreat/>
- Report of Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) Retreat 2013, <http://ict4peace.org/report-of-crisis-information-management-advisory-group-cimag-retreat-2013/>
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