

# IASC

Inter-Agency  
Standing Committee

Annual Report for **2008**



**IASC**



**IASC** Inter-Agency  
Standing Committee

Annual Report **2008**

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# IASC Organizations

## Full members



Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT)



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



World Food Programme (WFP)



World Health Organization (WHO)

## Standing Invitees



International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)



International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)



American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction)



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons (RSG on HR on IDPs)



Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)



World Bank (World Bank)

### THE IASC ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Prepared by the **IASC Secretariat**

with acknowledgment to **UNICEF** for their financial support

## Foreword by the Emergency Relief Coordinator



Dear Colleagues,

Since the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was created by General Assembly Resolution 46/182 in 1991, great progress has been made in improving humanitarian action, response capacity and coordination and policy development. The IASC has established itself as the primary humanitarian policy making body for the international humanitarian community. However, its work is not always well known or understood beyond those most closely involved. This is the first IASC Annual Report developed for a wider audience, and I hope it will go some way towards improving the visibility of our work.

With the current round of humanitarian reform initiatives already in their fourth year, I am glad to see that these are now regarded as 'business as usual'. This said, there is much more to be done to improve humanitarian coordination, financing and standards and I am determined to keep the improvement of the quality of humanitarian preparedness and response at the heart of the business of the IASC.

This report highlights the development of new and revised IASC products from the IASC Subsidiary Bodies and informal groups on which the IASC relies for its normative and practical guidance. In 2008, these included guidance on the implementation of Priority Five of the Hyogo Framework on disaster preparedness; a review of the Flash Appeal process; guidance on humanitarian action and older persons; and a policy statement on gender equality in humanitarian action. The IASC also agreed to establish a new subsidiary body, the IASC Task Force on Information Management.

In 2008, the IASC devoted considerable attention to the complex and related challenges of climate change, rising food and fuel prices, and the effects on our donors and beneficiaries of the economic downturn. OCHA and IFRC led an IASC delegation to the climate change negotiations in Poznan, to draw the humanitarian consequences of climate change to the attention of member state negotiators. Important progress was also made on emerging climate-related migration and displacement issues.

The IASC Principals, decided to establish a dialogue in which UN and non-UN actors within the IASC can debate and learn lessons around staff safety and security. The Principals also agreed to develop further the relationship between the work of humanitarian actors and UN integrated missions, in light of the many factors now undermining humanitarian space.

The IASC Working Group, which is the workhorse of the IASC, discussed early recovery and transition, and agreed that further progress needs to be made, including mainstreaming of early recovery into the work of all the Clusters. The Working Group also began an important initiative on harmonizing needs assessments, an area where the humanitarian community has made limited progress in the past, but which is crucial to the design and implementation of an accurate, appropriate and effective humanitarian response model in the future.

In 2008, the IASC broadened the participation at its meetings, with UN-HABITAT joining the IASC as a member, and NGO representation being extended by a decision to include an additional three NGO agency representatives at the Working Group and Principals meetings, alongside the NGO Consortia. This broader participation has already enriched the IASC debates.

Finally, let me congratulate my fellow Principals, colleagues in the Working Group, and those working in all the subsidiary bodies of the IASC, for their tireless work to help those affected by humanitarian crises around the world.

John Holmes  
Chair of the IASC

## THE IASC SECRETARIAT GENEVA

**Phone:** +41 22 917 1438  
**Fax:** +41 22 917 0020

**Mr. Simon Lawry-White**  
Chief  
**E-mail:** [lawrywhite@un.org](mailto:lawrywhite@un.org)

**Ms. Darla M. Silva**  
Humanitarian Affairs  
Officer  
**E-mail:** [silva12@un.org](mailto:silva12@un.org)

**Ms. Yukiko Yoshida**  
Humanitarian Affairs  
Officer  
**E-mail:** [yoshiday@un.org](mailto:yoshiday@un.org)

**Ms. Mirlinda Pasoma**  
Assistant to the Chief  
and Website Editor  
**E-mail:** [pasoma@un.org](mailto:pasoma@un.org)

## THE IASC/ECHA SECRETARIAT NEW YORK

**Phone:** +1 212 963 5582  
**Fax:** +1 212 963 1312

**Ms. Letizia Rossano**  
Humanitarian Affairs  
Officer  
**E-mail:** [rossano@un.org](mailto:rossano@un.org)

**Ms. Natasha Kindergan**  
Humanitarian Affairs  
Officer  
**E-mail:** [kindergan@un.org](mailto:kindergan@un.org)

**Ms. Caroline Kern**  
Associate Humanitarian  
Affairs Officer  
**E-mail:** [kern@un.org](mailto:kern@un.org)

**Ms. Maria Teresa Smith**  
Meeting Services Assistant  
**E-mail:** [dimalanta@un.org](mailto:dimalanta@un.org)

## About the IASC

**THE INTER-AGENCY  
STANDING COMMITTEE**  
consists of 21 humanitarian  
organisations and is the  
primary humanitarian forum  
for facilitating coordination,  
policy development and  
decision-making in  
response to complex  
emergencies and natural  
disasters.

**For more information see:**  
[www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/)

**THE IASC PRINCIPALS**  
are the heads of all IASC  
organisations. Chaired by  
the Emergency Relief  
Coordinator (ERC),  
Mr. John Holmes, the  
Principals convene twice a  
year in New York or  
Geneva. The responsibilities  
of the Principals include  
making strategic, policy  
and major operational  
decisions; advocating  
common humanitarian  
principles; and bringing  
humanitarian issues to the  
attention of the Secretary-  
General and the Security  
Council through the ERC.

**Mr. John Holmes**  
Chair, IASC Principals  
**E-mail:** [holmes@un.org](mailto:holmes@un.org)

**THE IASC WORKING  
GROUP** is composed of  
Director level staff of IASC  
organisations. Chaired by  
the Director of OCHA  
Geneva,  
Mr. Kasidis Rochanakorn,  
the Working Group meets  
at least three times a year  
normally in Geneva, New  
York and Rome. The  
Working Group is  
responsible for making  
strategic policy and  
operational decisions;  
preparing  
recommendations for the  
Principals; establishing  
IASC Subsidiary Bodies;  
and monitoring and  
following-up on progress  
and implementation of  
the IASC guidelines.

**Mr. Kasidis Rochanakorn**  
Chair, IASC Working Group  
**E-mail:** [rochanakorn@un.org](mailto:rochanakorn@un.org)

**THE IASC WEEKLY  
MEETINGS** are held in  
Geneva and New York

and facilitate  
communication and  
information sharing  
among humanitarian  
partners by providing  
updates and briefings on  
issues of current and  
potential humanitarian  
concern.

**THE IASC SUBSIDIARY  
BODIES** assist in  
developing policy and  
operational guidelines  
and include:  
(i) Sub-Working Groups  
and Contact Groups, with  
unlimited duration,  
dedicated to long and  
medium-term policy  
issues; (ii) time limited Task  
Forces, with specific  
mandates, including  
facilitating inter-agency  
coordination and  
providing guidance for  
large-scale emergencies;  
and (iii) Reference  
Groups, which play an  
advisory role to the  
Working Group and may  
also work to produce  
IASC products.



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses the IASC Principals



# New Members, Expanded Expertise, and a New Chief

**In 2008, the IASC expanded its membership to include UN-HABITAT as well as 3 additional NGO representatives. This expansion had a very positive impact by bringing more direct field input through the NGOs, as well as additional expertise from UN-HABITAT on emerging issues such as urbanisation.**

Throughout 2008, the IASC benefited from the participation of guest speakers on particular topics. In March, Peter Walker of the Feinstein Center at Tufts University; Salvano Briceno of the ISDR Secretariat; and Zamba Batjargal of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) participated in a session on the humanitarian impact of climate change. In April, the IASC Principals invited

Alex Evans, a non-resident fellow at the Center for International Cooperation at NYU and Martin Parry of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to address the multiple and interrelated challenges facing the humanitarian community. In June, Randolph Kent of the Humanitarian Futures Program participated in a

session on how the IASC can be more creative and innovative in its approach to preparedness and response. In November, David Nabarro outlined plans for implementing the comprehensive framework on food security. The new Chief of the Secretariat, Simon Lawry-White, began his tenure in November.



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## Key IASC Products in 2008

- Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response - Guidance and Indicator Package for Implementing Priority Five of the Hyogo Framework;
- Flash Appeal Overhaul;
- Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Lead Sectors and OCHA in Information Management;
- Terms of Reference (TOR) of Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs);
- IASC Advocacy Paper on Humanitarian Action and Older Persons: An essential brief for humanitarian actors;
- IASC Policy Statement Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action
- A "Matrix on Agency Roles and Responsibilities for Ensuring the Development of a Coordinated, Multi-Sectoral Fuel Strategy",
- Decision Tree Diagrams on Factors Affecting the Choice of Fuel Strategy in Humanitarian Settings"
- Endorsement of a concept note to establish an IASC Task Force on Information Management.

**To access these documents please go to the IASC Website:**

[www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc)

## GLOBAL CLUSTER FOCAL POINTS

### AGRICULTURE

Mr. Laurent Thomas  
FAO  
Email: [Laurent.Thomas@fao.org](mailto:Laurent.Thomas@fao.org)

### CAMP COORDINATION & CAMP MANAGEMENT

Ms. Kim Roberson  
UNHCR  
Email: [roberson@unhcr.org](mailto:roberson@unhcr.org)

Ms. Lea Matheson  
IOM  
E-mail: [matheson@iom.int](mailto:matheson@iom.int)

### EARLY RECOVERY

Ms. Jennifer Worrell  
UNDP  
E-mail: [Jennifer.worrell@undp.org](mailto:Jennifer.worrell@undp.org)

### EDUCATION

Ms. Susan Nicolai  
Save the Children  
E-mail: [susan@savethechildren.ch](mailto:susan@savethechildren.ch)

Mr. Roger Wright  
UNICEF  
E-mail: [rwright@unicef.org](mailto:rwright@unicef.org)

### EMERGENCY SHELTER

Mr. Graham Saunders  
IFRC  
E-mail: [graham.saunders@ifrc.org](mailto:graham.saunders@ifrc.org)

Mr. Sajjad Malik  
UNHCR  
E-mail: [malik@unhcr.org](mailto:malik@unhcr.org)

### EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Chérif Ghaly  
OCHA  
E-mail: [ghaly@un.org](mailto:ghaly@un.org)

Mr. Hani Shannak  
UNICEF  
E-mail: [hshannak@unicef.org](mailto:hshannak@unicef.org)

Mr. Robert Kasca  
WFP  
E-mail: [Robert.Kasca@wfp.org](mailto:Robert.Kasca@wfp.org)

# “Humanitarian Reform – no longer a trend, but the way we work”

The IASC has made consistent progress in implementing humanitarian reforms since 2005. In 2008, the IASC continued to make clusters, humanitarian coordination and humanitarian financing a priority. The early part of the year provided an opportunity to reflect on the findings of the Phase I Cluster Evaluation and to address collectively many of its recommendations. With the leadership of OCHA and the Global Cluster Leads, a cluster evaluation management response matrix was finalised and a monitoring plan was initiated.

In the spring, a Steering Group led by OCHA and composed of donors, (Belgium, Canada, EU, UK, and Norway) NGOs (Save the Children, Action Against Hunger UK, and Norwegian Refugee Council) and UN agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) was established to develop the terms of reference for the Phase II Cluster Evaluation. With the help of a consultant, the Steering Group developed a framework and in early 2009 reached agreement on a way forward. The evaluation is expected to begin in May 2009 and be conducted in six countries.

The IASC continued to clarify its operational guidance on use of the cluster approach. In July,

following extensive consultation, the Working Group endorsed the Operational Guidance on the Concept of “Provider of Last Resort”, setting out the specific responsibilities of cluster leads in the field. In 2009, the IASC will continue to develop policy guidance on working with national authorities and transition strategies and there will be further reflection on cluster accountability.

In 2008, the Strengthening of the Humanitarian Coordination (HC) System made significant progress. At its November meeting, the IASC agreed to continue the HC Pool for a further three years and created an IASC Humanitarian Coordination Assessment Panel (HCAP) to undertake the selection of HC candidates. The HC Pool will consist of up to 30 members drawn from candidates nominated by IASC agencies. Twice a year the HACP will suggest potential matches of HC Pool members for the ERC’s consideration for upcoming RC/HC vacancies, HC vacancies, and RC vacancies in disaster-prone countries. In 2009, the IASC will operationalise these initiatives, working closely with the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO).

The Central Emergency Relief Fund Secretariat kept the IASC updated

throughout 2008 on the use and management of the fund, including allocations for rapid response and for under-funded emergencies, and the strategy for responding to the food crisis. The CERF Partnership Task Force was created to continue to look at issues raised by NGOs regarding the timeliness and predictability of CERF disbursements. In June, the Working Group asked the CERF inter-agency group to develop a comprehensive document, outlining NGO partnership frameworks and related various sub-agreements, approval criteria and disbursement processes of UN agencies/IOM. This document was distributed to IASC organisations at the November meeting and will be made available at CERF training sessions.

At its November meeting, the Working Group agreed on the importance of maintaining diverse humanitarian funding channels, while avoiding competition for resources. In 2009, the IASC will work together with the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative to develop a road map for joint action and to improve communication with IASC organisations. The dialogue between the members of the GHD and the IASC will continue in meetings in March and July of 2009.

Photo credit: IRIN





## Bringing the Humanitarian Face of Climate Change to the UNFCCC Negotiations



Photo credit: Save the Children

In 2008, the IASC worked to systematically engage in the broader climate change debate. Through the leadership of IFRC, IASC organisations developed a written submission to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat outlining Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies, including climate change adaptation. This submission was prepared in consultation with the ISDR system and was used in the UNFCCC consultations in Poznan to raise the profile of the humanitarian implications of climate change. Under the

leadership of IOM, UNHCR the RSG on Human Rights of IDPs, OCHA, and others, an informal IASC group developed a working paper entitled, "Climate Change Migration and Displacement: Who will be affected?" This paper conceptualised the effects of climate change on human mobility and identified the legal frameworks that may apply to each of the types of mobility caused by environmental degradation, which was the subject of an official side event. In addition to the two side events in Poznan, the IASC organised

a reception, a press conference and several bilateral meetings with key government delegations. In 2009, the IASC will continue its focus on climate change culminating in the UNFCCC conference in Copenhagen in December. This work will be coordinated with ISDR and led by IFRC through the informal Task Force.

**Ms. Jette Michelsen**  
Coordinator, IASC Climate Change Informal TF  
E-mail: [jette.michelsen@ifrc.org](mailto:jette.michelsen@ifrc.org)

## Hearing from the World Bank, UN DOCO and the Early Recovery Cluster on Recovery and Transition

In 2008, the IASC heard different perspectives on recovery and transition from IASC organisations and from the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO). In June, the World Bank outlined multilateral initiatives for integrated planning of peace and state building to the Working Group and summarised recent World Bank reform efforts to strengthen its engagement in fragile and conflict situations through closer partnerships. The World Bank cited key challenges including: 1) the funding gap due to separate

planning, budget and funding instruments and the "slow" delivery of development funds; 2) the non-linear nature of post-conflict recovery, where humanitarian and development needs continue to exist in parallel resulting in multiple processes and competition for limited resources; and 3) the perpetuation of parallel structures for delivery of aid, which undermines the ability of governments to account for funds and took away opportunities for building the capacity of the state. In an effort to harmonise the early recovery and transition

mechanisms at the global level, the IASC invited UN DOCO to its November 2008 meeting. In an effort to harmonise the early recovery and transition mechanisms at the global level and build on the World Bank discussion, the IASC invited representatives from the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery and UN DOCO to participate in its November meeting. The IASC Working Group agreed to engage in relevant reports and mechanisms, especially the report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Early Recovery.

### GLOBAL CLUSTER FOCAL POINTS

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Eric Laroche**  
WHO  
E-mail: [larochee@who.int](mailto:larochee@who.int)

#### LOGISTICS

**Mr. Amer Daoudi**  
WFP  
E-mail: [amer.daoudi@wfp.org](mailto:amer.daoudi@wfp.org)

#### NUTRITION

**Ms. Leah Richardson**  
UNICEF  
E-mail: [lrichardson@unicef.org](mailto:lrichardson@unicef.org)

#### PROTECTION

**Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela**  
UNHCR  
E-mail: [menikdiw@unhcr.org](mailto:menikdiw@unhcr.org)

#### WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

**Ms. Jean McCluskey**  
UNICEF  
E-mail: [jmcccluskey@unicef.org](mailto:jmcccluskey@unicef.org)



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## IASC FOCAL POINTS 2009

### FAO

**Ms. Laura Sciannimonaco**  
Rehabilitation Programme  
Officer, Rehabilitation and  
Humanitarian Policy Unit,  
Emergency Division  
**Email:**  
[Laura.Sciannimonaco@fao.org](mailto:Laura.Sciannimonaco@fao.org)

### ICRC

**Ms. Cristina Pellandini**  
Diplomatic Advisor,  
Humanitarian Diplomacy Unit  
**Email:** [cpellandini.gva@icrc.org](mailto:cpellandini.gva@icrc.org)

### ICVA

**Ms. Manisha Thomas**  
Policy Officer  
**Email:** [secretariat@icva.ch](mailto:secretariat@icva.ch)

### IFRC

**Mr. Robert Mister**  
Coordinator, Inter-Agency  
Cooperation  
External Relations and  
Communications  
Department  
**Email:** [Robert.mister@ifrc.org](mailto:Robert.mister@ifrc.org)

### InterAction

**Mr. James K. Bishop**  
Vice President, Director for  
Humanitarian Policy &  
Practice  
**E-mail:** [jbishop@interaction.org](mailto:jbishop@interaction.org)

### IOM

**Ms. Lea Matheson**  
IDP Adviser, Emergency &  
Post Crisis Division,  
Operations Support  
Department  
**Email:** [lmatheson@iom.int](mailto:lmatheson@iom.int)

### OCHA

**Ms. Marina Throne-Holst**  
Special Assistant to the  
Director of OCHA Geneva  
**Email:** [throne-holst@un.org](mailto:throne-holst@un.org)

### OHCHR

**Ms. Kazumi Ogawa**  
Human Rights Officer,  
Capacity Building and Field  
Operations Branch, OHCHR  
**Email:** [kogawa@ohchr.org](mailto:kogawa@ohchr.org)

### RSG on HR of IDPs

**Mr. Patrick Egloff**  
Adviser  
**Email:** [egloffp@un.org](mailto:egloffp@un.org)

## Discussions on Humanitarian Space with DPKO

Throughout 2008 at various levels, the IASC discussed issues related to humanitarian space. In March, UNHCR presented a background document on behalf of an informal group of IASC agencies. The document acknowledged that while there was no one definition of "humanitarian space", it was evident that humanitarian space was shrinking and new factors were complicating humanitarian work. The IASC continued its dialogue with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in its March meeting where the "Capstone Doctrine", which is the overarching policy document for UN peacekeeping operations, was presented by DPKO. In April, the IASC Principals narrowed the scope of the humanitarian space discussion to the reassertion of humanitarian principles, integrated missions and cooperation with international criminal tribunals. The IASC Principals tasked the Working Group with

discussing modalities to define how and to whom humanitarian principles should be asserted. The Principals also discussed the situation in Afghanistan with its many challenges related to protection, access and civil-military relations. They agreed to the development of a common humanitarian action plan led by OCHA in consultation with humanitarian organisations working in Afghanistan. In June, OCHA agreed to consult a few humanitarian country teams on the specific challenges faced when advocating for humanitarian space. The results of the field consultations in Sudan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, oPt, and Colombia were presented in November along with proposals on how to engage in a broader discussion with external stakeholders. The Working Group agreed OCHA and UNHCR would convene a core group to develop an action plan for two initial workshops. The

Working Group further agreed to continue discussions on integrated missions with the inclusion of DPKO, Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to identify more clearly their impact on humanitarian actors and to strengthen the planning process. In December, the IASC Principals agreed that while greater coherence among UN actors in the field was both mandated and desirable, integration processes should not jeopardise humanitarian space or the independence of humanitarian action. The Principals agreed that in 2009, the ERC would lead consultations with DPKO, DPA and other relevant actors to establish a mechanism to ensure engagement of the broader humanitarian community in planning processes for UN political and peacekeeping missions in areas affected by humanitarian crises.

## Staff Safety and Security

The issue of staff security was carried over from discussions in 2007, where the IASC Principals engaged in a dialogue with UNDSS to develop innovative solutions for delivering humanitarian action in high risk areas and for a more effective risk management. At the IASC Working Group in March 2008, participants highlighted the growing militarization of humanitarian aid, noting the proliferation of humanitarian and development activities in the mandates of national and regional military organisations, which had

implications for staff security. The Working Group suggested that security be included in the agenda of the 16 December 2008 IASC Principals meeting following the outcome of the Brahimi Panel. At the December Principals meeting, the ERC provided an update on the UN system's response to the Report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of UN Personnel and Premises Worldwide which had been commissioned following the attacks in Algiers in 2007. The Principals recognized the importance of better

coordination on security issues among different humanitarian actors. Priorities noted in the December meeting included: victim and family support. The importance of host governments' responsibility in providing the best protection possible, and the management at the preventions of humanitarian actors. In 2009, UNICEF will convene a Steering Group to find ways to the humanitarian community to better cooperation on security issues.

## Forward Looking Initiatives – Humanitarian Futures, Food Security and a More Relevant IASC

Professor Randolph Kent, Director of the Humanitarian Futures Program at King's College, (UK) briefed the IASC in June on this project and suggested innovative ways for the IASC to approach prevention, preparedness and response. The Working Group agreed that an informal group led by UNICEF should discuss these issues further and make a proposal on how to practically move forward, taking into account existing tools and adopting a more outward looking perspective. Over the fall, the IASC developed a document entitled, "Towards a More Strategic and Relevant IASC" the aim of which was to ensure a strategic shift of the IASC over the next few years. As agreed in the meeting, the five proposed strategies/actions included: (a) to respond to policy gaps an challenges identified in the field, such as humanitarian space and HC strengthening; (b) to engage with external policy networks and other expert entities; (c) to examine current tools and instruments for coordination to reflect longer-term strategies to address future vulnerabilities, risks and

threats; (d) to collaborate more systematically with partners that address preparedness, transition, recovery and development; and (e) to reinforce regional strategies including partnership with regional organisations. In developing the IASC priorities for 2009, the IASC used this document as a guide and will work harder to capture the insight of field colleagues on particular topics; look beyond the IASC for expertise on issues of humanitarian concern and build better relationships with national actors. Another global issue discussed in 2008 was the dramatic increase in food prices. This increase at the beginning of 2008 was an unexpected challenge for the humanitarian community, which required a collective response. The IASC Working Group at its June 2008 meeting was briefed by Richard China on behalf of the Food Policy Support Team of the Secretary-General's High Level Task Force. Mr. China highlighted the long-standing declining investment in agriculture, noting that small farmers constituted the majority of the humanitarian

population. The IASC agreed to focus on the outcomes outlined in the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) to improve access to food and take immediate steps to increase food availability – specifically to ensure better access of the vulnerable to emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and other safety nets and improved assessment and monitoring systems. In November, David Nabarro, the Coordinator of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis noted that even with commodity prices dropping, there was evidence that malnutrition and agriculture production were worsening, with already almost 1 billion people suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The IASC welcomed Mr. Nabarro's commitment for the HLTF and its network to engage more systematically with humanitarian actors, including civil society/NGOs, and to work more closely with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food to address both chronic and acute food security issues. Future global challenges will remain high on the IASC's agenda in 2009. The IASC will examine the humanitarian consequences of urbanisation with the leadership of UN-HABITAT. A concept note outlining urbanisation trends and what it means for humanitarians will be discussed in the IASC in March 2009 which may lead to an IASC strategy and action plan in November 2009.



Photo credit: IRIN

### IASC FOCAL POINTS 2009

#### SCHR

**Ms. Eva von Oelreich**  
Executive Secretary  
Email: [schr@ifrc.org](mailto:schr@ifrc.org)

#### UNDP

**Mr. Tullio Santini**  
Senior Advisor (Directorate),  
Bureau for Crisis Prevention  
and Recovery  
Email: [tullio.santini@undp.org](mailto:tullio.santini@undp.org)

#### UNFPA

**Ms. Nina Sreenivasan**  
Humanitarian Liaison Officer  
Email: [sreenivasan@unfpa.org](mailto:sreenivasan@unfpa.org)

#### UN-HABITAT

**Mr. Esteban Leon**  
Disaster Management  
Specialist, Disaster Reduction  
and Recovery, Humanitarian  
Affairs Office  
Email: [leon.unhabitat@unog.ch](mailto:leon.unhabitat@unog.ch)

#### UNHCR

**Mr. Bernard Doyle**  
Head, Inter-Agency Section  
Email: [doyle@unhcr.org](mailto:doyle@unhcr.org)

#### UNICEF

**Mr. Quoc Nguyen**  
Project Officer  
Office of Emergency  
Programmes (EMOPS)  
Email: [qnguyen@unicef.org](mailto:qnguyen@unicef.org)

#### WFP

**Ms. Evelyn Chung**  
External Relations Officer,  
Policy and External Affairs  
Department, External  
Relations Division  
Email: [evelyn.chung@wfp.org](mailto:evelyn.chung@wfp.org)

#### WHO

**Ms. Tanja Sleeuwenhoek**  
Technical Officer, Health  
Action in Crises  
Alliances & Partnerships  
Email: [sleeuwenhoek@who.int](mailto:sleeuwenhoek@who.int)

#### World Bank

**Mr. Patrick Reichenmiller**  
Policy Officer  
Email:  
[preichenmiller@worldbank.org](mailto:preichenmiller@worldbank.org)



## SUBSIDIARY BODIES

### Sub-Working Group on the Consolidated Appeals Process

**Mr. Robert Smith**  
Chief, Consolidated Appeals Process Section, OCHA  
Email: [smith50@un.org](mailto:smith50@un.org)

### Sub-Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications

**Mr. Cherif Ghaly**  
Chief, Information and Communications Technology Section, OCHA  
Email: [ghaly@un.org](mailto:ghaly@un.org)

### Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action

**Dr. Henia Dakkak**  
Technical Specialist, UNFPA  
Email: [dakkak@unfpa.org](mailto:dakkak@unfpa.org)

**Dr. Claudia Garcia Moreno**  
Coordinator, Dept. of Gender and Women's Health, WHO  
Email: [garciamorenoc@who.int](mailto:garciamorenoc@who.int)

### Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning

**Mr. Everett Ressler**  
UNICEF  
(until October 2008)

**Mr. Michel Le Pechoux**  
Emergency Office of Emergency Programs, UNICEF  
Email: [fspielberg@unicef.org](mailto:fspielberg@unicef.org)

**Mr. Carlos Veloso**  
Chief, Emergency, Preparedness and Response Branch, WFP  
Email: [carlos.veloso@wfp.org](mailto:carlos.veloso@wfp.org)

### Contact Group on Good Humanitarian Donorship

**Ms. Magda Ninaber**  
OCHA  
(until end August 2008)

**Mr. Robert Smith**  
Chief, Consolidated Appeals Process Section, OCHA  
Email: [smith50@un.org](mailto:smith50@un.org)

## Subsidiary Bodies in 2008

In 2008, nine subsidiary bodies supported the work of the IASC, covering the following policy and operational topics: the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), Emergency Telecommunications, Gender and Humanitarian Action, Preparedness and Contingency Planning, Good Humanitarian Donorship, HIV in Emergency Settings, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, and Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings.

### CAP

In 2008, the Sub-Working Group (SWG) on CAP facilitated the publication of 13 Consolidated Appeals, 12 Flash Appeals and 13 other appeals. The facilitation support provided by the SWG included follow up by sharing information on humanitarian funding and updating funding requirements via the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). In addition, the SWG adapted the appeal process in light of the cluster approach and other aspects of humanitarian reform. The Flash Appeal overhaul document was finalised in 2008 to reflect the use of the cluster approach, the CERF, the revised IASC contingency planning guidelines and developments in needs assessment.

### EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Sub-Working Group (SWG) on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) continued its work in developing and implementing standards for communication equipments and procedures, including review of INMARSAT Mini-M system. A draft "minimum requirements" document for the new UHF/VHF platform was developed. The SWG also worked to develop mechanisms to facilitate inter-operability of emergency telecommunication tools with those used by international partners. To this extent, the partnership was developed with Nethope consortium.

### GENDER AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action in 2008 focused on rolling out of the IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action and the Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings. Three inter-agency regional workshops on the Gender Handbook were undertaken. The GBV Guidelines were translated into multiple languages. The SWG also undertook capacity building on GBV- the draft E-Learning course was developed, and the GBV intensive training course was held. With respect to policy development, the SWG reviewed the IASC Policy Statement on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and developed "the IASC Policy Statement: Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action" which was presented at the ECOSOC 2008. In addition, the SWG is in the final stage of producing the report on sex and age aggregated data.

### PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The SWG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning continued to support the inter-agency contingency planning process, through finalising inter-agency contingency planning training/simulation modules. The SWG was instrumental in producing three global Early Warning

and Early Action (EWEA) reports in 2008, which were discussed at the global level at the Directors' Emergency meetings. The SWG continued to enhance HewsWeb, an website that provides systematic early warning information and the latest forecasts. The SWG also undertook two inter-agency contingency planning missions to Nepal and to DRC.

### GOOD HUMANITARIAN DONORSHIP

As in previous years, the IASC Contact Group on Good Humanitarian Donorship's (CG-GHD) activities were closely linked to the work of the donors' GHD Implementation Group (GHDIG). The main objective of the CG-GHD in 2008 was to follow up on donor commitments to GHD's workplan, including allocation of resources according to needs, and increased knowledge of severity indices in decision-making. One of the highlights was the joint GHD/IASC meeting in July 2008, where the Humanitarian Financing study and the Indirect Support Costs study were presented and discussed.

### HIV IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Most of the efforts undertaken by the IASC Task Force (TF) on HIV in Emergency Settings in 2008 focused on finalising the revised IASC Guidelines on HIV in Emergency Settings. Following the assessment of



## Subsidiary Bodies in 2008

the implementation of 2005 IASC Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings, the TF developed a draft revised version which went through extensive field and global review. The TF also undertook development of related tools, such as a guidance package for HIV needs assessment and an induction manual for humanitarian workers in integrating HIV/AIDS in Humanitarian Action.

### SAFE ACCESS TO FIREWOOD AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY (SAFE)

The Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings started its work in 2007. The Task Force arose from the recognition that the issue of collection, supply and use of cooking fuel is a multi-sectoral issue that needed to be effectively addressed. The main objective of the TF was to provide practice guidance for the development of a coordinated fuel strategy in humanitarian settings. To

this end, the TF in 2008 completed: (a) a Matrix on Agency Roles and Responsibilities for Ensuring a Coordinated, Multi-Sectoral Fuel Strategy in Humanitarian Settings, and (b) Decision Tree Diagrams on Factors Affecting the Choice of Fuel Strategy in Humanitarian Settings. Having completed the products as outlined in the ToR, the TF was closed at the end of 2008.

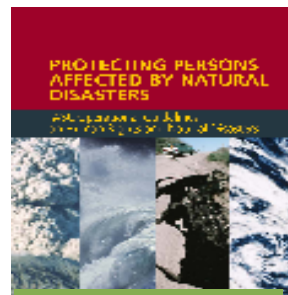
### HUMAN RIGHTS

The Reference Group (RG) on Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance continued its work to mainstreaming human rights as a cross cutting issue in all clusters/sectors. Following a round of consultation, the RG finalised the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the group in mid-2008. The RG decided to focus on: (a) Normative support that will contribute to developing standards and methods on integrating human rights in humanitarian action, (b) Operational support to the field in integrating human rights in humanitarian

action, and (c) information support to increase awareness and information sharing on human rights.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO SOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

The Reference Group on (RG) MHPSS focused on two tasks in 2008: (a) dissemination and implementation of the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support in emergency settings, and (b) systematic interface with the cluster system to integrate MHPSS into relevant clusters. The copies of the Guidelines increased substantially to 30,000 copies, and the Guidelines were translated into French, Arabic, Spanish, and unofficially into Indonesian, Farsi, Tamil, Slovakian, Japanese and Chinese. The TF produced field version of the Guidelines (checklist), and orientations on use of the Guidelines were undertaken in various countries such as Colombia, Jordan and Peru.



## SUBSIDIARY BODIES

### Task Force on HIV in Humanitarian Situations

**Dr. Karl L. Dehne**  
AIDS, Security & Humanitarian Response Unit, Country and Regional Support Department, UNAIDS  
**Email:** [dehnek@unaids.org](mailto:dehnek@unaids.org)

**Dr. Mukesh Kapila**  
SRSG for HIV at IFRC, IFRC  
**Email:** [mukesh.kapila@ifrc.org](mailto:mukesh.kapila@ifrc.org)

### Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings (closed Dec 2008)

**Mr. Nicholas Crawford**  
Chief, Emergencies and Transition Unit, WFP  
**Email:** [nicholas.crawford@wfp.org](mailto:nicholas.crawford@wfp.org)

**Mr. Brian Gorlick**  
Senior Policy Adviser, UNHCR  
**Email:** [gorlick@unhcr.org](mailto:gorlick@unhcr.org)

**Ms. Sandra Krause**  
Director, Reproductive Health Program, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children  
**Email:** [sandra@womenscommission.org](mailto:sandra@womenscommission.org)

### Reference Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action

**Ms. Kazumi Ogawa**  
Human Rights Officer, Capacity Building and Field Operations Branch, OHCHR  
**Email:** [kogawa@ohchr.org](mailto:kogawa@ohchr.org)

### Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings

**Ms Amanda Melville**  
Child Protection Specialist, Psychosocial Support, UNICEF  
**Email:** [amelville@unicef.org](mailto:amelville@unicef.org)

**Ms. Sabine Rakotamalala**  
Resource Person Psychosocial Support, Terre des hommes  
**Email:** [sra@tdh.ch](mailto:sra@tdh.ch)

**Ms. Alison Schafer**  
Country Program Coordinator, Psychosocial and Mental Health WG Coordinator, World Vision  
**Email:** [alison.schafer@worldvision.com.au](mailto:alison.schafer@worldvision.com.au)

## Consolidation of Analysis – A New Task Force on Information Management

After a thorough consultation, the IASC agreed to establish a new Task Force on Information Management to be led by OCHA. The decision to establish a Task Force was a direct follow up to the Global Symposium +5, which in its conclusions suggested the formation of a formal inter-agency forum to address Information Management on an inter-agency level. Previously OCHA led an informal inter-agency group which collectively agreed to seek IASC approval for a more formal body. In June, the IASC Working Group requested that OCHA produce a concept note to clarify the deliverables to be achieved by the Task Force with a specific time frame. The proposed work of the Task force will be informed by the “Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and

OCHA in Information Management”. The overall objective of the Task Force is to strengthen the management of information in humanitarian emergencies by improving inter-agency processes and tools for the collection, and dissemination of information to support decision making in emergencies. The ultimate goal is to provide decision makers with better, more timely information. The expected duration of the new Task Force is 18 months, with its work ending in mid 2010. Other information management items approved by the Working Group in 2008 include the revised Terms of Reference of the Humanitarian Information Centre, and (ii) the Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Lead Sectors and OCHA in Information Management.



**Mr. Brendan McDonald**  
 Manager, Field Information Services Unit, OCHA  
 E-mail: [mcdonaldb@un.org](mailto:mcdonaldb@un.org)

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## Real Time Evaluation – Inter-Agency Pilot Extended



The IASC agreed to extend the Inter-Agency Real-Time Evaluation (RTE) for an additional year in order to launch several more RTEs to explore the usefulness and worthiness. In recent years, efforts have been increasingly directed towards improving humanitarian response through learning and accountability. There has been a growing recognition that the Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IA RTE) – endorsed by the IASC Working Group in March 2007 as a one year pilot is one important tool through which such analysis may be conducted. As part of the IASC mandated pilot, an IA RTE on the response to Cyclone Nargis took place during October/November 2008. The outcomes were presented in Myanmar, Bangkok and Geneva. The IASC has encouraged the group leading the IA RTEs to provide suggestions on how to follow up on the recommendations of RTEs at the global and country level. In July 2009, the IASC will discuss the lessons learned

from the RTE pilot as part of an exercise to increase accountability at all levels.

**Mr. Claude Hilfiker**  
 Senior Evaluation Officer,  
 Evaluations and Studies,  
 OCHA  
 E-mail: [hilfiker@un.org](mailto:hilfiker@un.org)

## IASC Weekly Meetings



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The IASC Weekly Meetings serve as a forum for communication and information sharing among a wide range of humanitarian actors. Presenters from IASC organisations and other humanitarian partners from headquarters and from the field provide briefings on current and potential humanitarian concerns, leading to interactive discussions on country specific situations or policy issues. The Weekly Meetings are organised by the IASC Secretariat and take place at UN headquarters in both Geneva (Wednesdays) and New York (Fridays).

In order to be able to cover a broad range of issues, all IASC organisations are encouraged to make proposals for the agenda.

In 2008, UN agencies, NGOs, IOM and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement actively participated in IASC Weekly Meetings. Various Humanitarian Coordinators, Regional Directors and Heads of Offices briefed the IASC Weekly meetings during their visits to New York and Geneva. Reports and background documents are made available at the meetings. Agenda items included country specific issues such as Iraq, Somalia, the occupied Palestinian Territory, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thematic briefings comprised, amongst others, civil-military coordination, climate change, private sector collaboration, Internally Displaced People and the protection of

civilians. In addition, a variety of brown bag lunches were held in New York, to be able to host guest speakers such as the Registrar of the International Criminal Court, the President of the Afghan Red Crescent, as well as the Head of ICRC Somalia and the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. With the aim of improving the structure, content and participation of the IASC Weekly meetings in Geneva, the IASC Secretariat has undertaken a comprehensive consultation among IASC agencies. Based on feedback from the IASC Focal Points, the meetings' continuous relevance to the humanitarian community and an active engagement of UN and non-UN agencies will be kept under review.

## IASC Principals meetings in 2008

**THE IASC PRINCIPALS** met in Geneva in April 2008 to discuss two thematic issues: humanitarian action and complex inter-related challenges (rising food prices and climate change), and humanitarian space. The Principals also consulted on the humanitarian situation in **Afghanistan**. The issue of **IASC membership**, following a letter sent in January 2008 from the NGO Consortia and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement on the role and function of the IASC, was also on the agenda.

**OUTCOMES:** On Afghanistan, the IASC Principals agreed to undertake **common humanitarian advocacy efforts** and agreed on the establishment of a **common humanitarian action plan for**

**Afghanistan** which would embrace Government efforts and relate closely to development activities. With regards to IASC membership, IASC Principals called for greater NGO representation, with membership

expanded to include one additional NGO from each of the three NGO Consortia. Membership was also expanded to include UN-HABITAT, pursuant to General Assembly Resolution A/Res/60/203.

**THE IASC PRINCIPALS** met in New York in December 2008 to discuss three major thematic issues: integration, security and climate change, as well as a country specific situation, **the Democratic Republic of Congo**. To highlight the discussions on one of the thematic issues, the session on **integration** aimed to explore ways in which the IASC could work to improve coordination among humanitarian actors, and between humanitarian actors and Security Council-mandated political and peacekeeping missions while maintaining humanitarian space.

**OUTCOME:** The IASC Principals agreed that the Emergency Relief Coordinator would engage the broader humanitarian community in **planning processes for UN political and peacekeeping missions** in areas affected by humanitarian crises. With regards to DRC, issues relating to the protection of civilians, an improved

analysis and better dissemination of information, strengthened coordination arrangements in eastern DRC and the need for safe and reliable air services were discussed. IASC Principals reached agreements on how to move forward in a concerted manner to tackle those challenges. At the time of writing, consultations with the Humanitarian

Country Team were taking place on how to best implement the agreed action points.

**Agenda and background documents available at:**  
<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc>



## IASC Calendar of Events in 2008

### IASC PRINCIPALS MEETINGS:

30 April 2008 – Geneva

16 December 2008 – NY

### IASC WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:

11-13 March 2008  
New York, hosted by UNICEF

18-20 June 2008  
Geneva, hosted by UNHCR

19-21 November 2008  
Rome, hosted by WFP

## IASC Calendar of Events in 2009

### IASC PRINCIPALS MEETINGS:

30 April 2009 – New York

14 December 2009 - Geneva

### IASC WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:

18-20 March 2009  
Washington DC, hosted by  
InterAction

13-15 July 2009  
Geneva, hosted by OHCHR

11-13 November 2009  
Nairobi, hosted by  
UN-HABITAT

# Welcome New Colleagues in 2008 and Farewell to others.....

## WELCOME:

Mr. Bekele Geleta, IFRC  
Mr. William Swing, IOM  
Ms. Navanethem Pillay, OHCHR  
Ms. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT  
Mr. Alastair Mckechnie, World Bank  
Mr. Eric Laroche, WHO  
Mr. Dan Lewis, UN-HABITAT  
Mr. Jonathan Mitchell, CARE International  
Ms. Arnhild Spence, Norwegian Refugee Council  
Mr. Dominic MacSorley, Concern Worldwide  
Mr. Paul Larsen, WFP  
Ms. Evelyn Chung, WFP  
Mr. Laurent Thomas, FAO  
Mr. Ian Ridley, World Vision International  
Mr. Mamadou Ndiaye, Office of African Development and Cooperation (OFADEC)  
Ms. Jane Cocking, Oxfam  
Mr. Goerge Okoth-Obbo, UNHCR  
Mr. Raouf Mazou, UNHCR  
Ms. Sandra Aviles, FAO  
Mr. Gert Ludeking, UN-HABITAT  
Mr. Esteban Leon, UN-HABITAT  
Ms. Cristina Pellandini, ICRC  
Mr. Simon Lawry-White, IASC Secretariat  
Ms. Yukiko Yoshida, IASC Secretariat

## THANK YOU AND FAREWELL:

Mr. Marku Niskala, IFRC  
Mr. Brunson McKinley, IOM  
Ms. Louise Arbour, OHCHR  
Ms. Sarah Cliffe, World Bank  
Ms. Marilena Viviani, IASC Secretariat  
Mr. Allan Jury, WFP  
Ms. Pierrette Vhu Thi, UNICEF  
Mr. Richard China, FAO  
Mr. Giammichele DeMaio, WFP  
Mr. Stephan Gonah, UNHCR  
Mr. Samir Ben Yahmed, WHO  
Ms. Magda Ninaber, OCHA  
Mr. Everett Ressler, UNICEF



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# IASC Working Group meetings in 2008

**THE 70TH IASC WORKING GROUP** met in March in New York. The main areas of focus were follow up on humanitarian reform, including the evaluation of clusters and the cluster roll-out; operational policy issues such as real time evaluations; and the preservation of humanitarian space, protection and security.

As an **OUTCOME** of the meeting, the IASC Working Group agreed to establish an Evaluation Steering Group to assess the cluster roll out. Concerning **Real Time Evaluations**, the IASC Working Group concurred to extend the pilot phase for Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluations

until March 2009. To further discuss **humanitarian space**, protection and security the IASC Working Group requested that UNHCR and OCHA convene a consultation with interested agencies to further develop prioritised action points to be discussed at the IASC Principals Meeting on 30 April

2008. They also suggested to include security in the agenda of the 10 December 2008 Principals meeting following the outcome of the Independent Panel on **Safety and Security** of United Nations Personnel and Premises.

**THE 71ST IASC WORKING GROUP** met in Geneva in June 2008. Agenda items on the first day of the meeting included current and future challenges to the humanitarian community, such as food prices and food security, climate change and migration as well as humanitarian space. On the second day, recovery and transition, information management, clusters - particularly the definition of 'provider of last resort' - and the CERF were discussed.

**OUTCOMES** of the meeting included an agreement of IASC members to contribute to the process of the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, particularly in relation to adaptation, disaster risk reduction, displacement and the

overall humanitarian consequences of climate change. With regards to the clusters, the IASC Working Group endorsed the Operational Guidance on the Concept of **"Provider of Last Resort"**.



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**THE 72ND IASC WORKING GROUP** met in Rome in November 2008. The meeting focused, amongst other issues, on the Humanitarian Coordinators pool and the cluster evaluation, as well as on global challenges related to climate change, migration/displacement, food security and the strengthening of humanitarian response/ needs assessment tools. A discussion on humanitarian financing also featured on the agenda of the 72nd IASC Working Group.



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As an **OUTCOME** of the meeting, the IASC Working Group endorsed the continuation of the **Humanitarian Coordinator Pool** for a period of three years. Concerning **climate change**, the IASC WG concurred to add the humanitarian consequences of urbanisation to the list of operational and analytical gaps, with UN-HABITAT as the lead for this discussion in the IASC Taskforce on Climate Change. With regards to **humanitarian**

**financing**, the IASC WG agreed to continue to discuss ways to resolve system-wide partnership issues, which were identified by the CERF two-year evaluation. The IASC WG also requested the IASC Good Humanitarian Donorship Contact Group to develop a road map for joint action to address key areas of concern and to strengthen coordination among donors and providers at the global and field levels.



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**IASC** Inter-Agency  
Standing Committee

Annual Report for **2008**



**IASC**

## **Addresses and Contact Details for General Enquiries**

IASC Secretariat  
8-14, avenue de la Paix  
1211 Geneva 10  
**Switzerland**  
Phone: + 41 22 917 1438  
Fax + 41 22 917 0020  
**Web:** <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc>

IASC/ECHA Secretariat  
1 United Nations Plaza  
10017 New York  
**United States**  
Phone: + 1 212 963 5582  
Fax + 1 212 963 1312