

IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

Annual Report for **2009**



IASC

IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

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IASC

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 (UN-HABITAT)



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)

Foreword by the Emergency Relief Coordinator



Dear colleagues

When I started as ERC in 2007, humanitarian reform was just getting off the ground. Since then, much has changed for the better. With a great deal of effort from all IASC organizations - and more than a little debate – our approaches to humanitarian leadership, financing, coordination and partnership continue to improve. In the process, the IASC continues to prove its value as the inter-agency humanitarian policy-making forum.

In 2009, the IASC focused mainly on consolidating recent reforms. On leadership, the terms of reference for Humanitarian Coordinators were revised and the HC Pool became well established as a source of candidates for HC positions. Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams was developed and will help to make the HCT the accepted forum for coordinating humanitarian action at country level.

The IASC also established the Humanitarian Financing Group to provide a strategic view of the financing of humanitarian action, while overseeing improvements in the functioning of pooled funding mechanisms. On the cluster approach, the dual accountability of cluster lead agencies to manage clusters as well as their own programmes was clarified, while considerable progress was made in defining how early recovery activities fit into cluster portfolios and into humanitarian appeals.

In 2009, the advocacy power of the IASC was again demonstrated by its success, against a disappointing outcome overall, in ensuring that the humanitarian consequences of climate change were reflected in the run up to Copenhagen, through a coordinated strategy with ISDR.

This year the IASC has made progress on several initiatives aimed at improving quality and accountability in humanitarian response. IASC partners are playing an active role in the revision of the Sphere standards, to be completed in 2010. On inter-agency needs assessment, following extensive consultation and planning in 2009, the IASC is now much better positioned to move forward on this crucial but difficult area.

New versions of IASC guidance on HIV and on durable solutions for the internally-displaced were agreed, and a new product on safe access to firewood was released. Inter-agency Real Time Evaluation moved out of its pilot phase to become standard practice, with procedures for triggering an RTE and improved methodologies to be agreed in 2010. The IASC also initiated a reflection on accountability to disaster-affected people.

The IASC is also keeping an eye on longer-term developments. For example, this year the IASC began the development of a joint strategy on preparedness for, and response to, the growing challenge of humanitarian needs in urban areas.

In 2009, the inter-relationship between the battle to preserve humanitarian space, the role of integrated missions, and civil-military relations, has become clearer still, as insecurity and attacks on humanitarian workers have increased. In 2010, the IASC will develop joint strategies to overcome barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Even with the progress made in improving the quality of humanitarian response, there is no room for complacency. As I write, the aftermath of the recent massive earthquake in Haiti is putting all our systems and capacities to the test. We will need to learn the lessons from this experience once the worst of the emergency phase has passed. The IASC will also need longer-term strategies to respond to growing vulnerability from over-arching global challenges, especially climate change.

Finally, let me acknowledge not only the commitment of the organisations of the IASC to make our work more efficient and effective, but particularly recognise all those individuals who go the extra mile, even to the extent of giving their own lives, to ensure that people enduring terrible suffering in humanitarian emergencies have their rights protected and receive the life-saving assistance they need.

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Chair of the IASC

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About the IASC

**THE INTER-AGENCY
STANDING COMMITTEE** consists of 18 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

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

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THE IASC WORKING

GROUP is composed of Director level staff of IASC organisations. Chaired by the Director of OCHA Geneva, 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



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, with unlimited duration, dedicated to long and medium-term policy issues; (ii) Task Forces and other time limited groups, 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 produce IASC products.



IASC WG meeting in Nairobi, 2009

IASC Products found to be high quality but underused

Since its inception in 1992, the IASC has produced more than 90 products (guidelines, policies, policy statements, advocacy papers, operational tools and training packages).

Their development and dissemination requires considerable effort and cost but the level of awareness and utility of these products has not been assessed generally. In 2009, the IASC Secretariat undertook a review of IASC products, using a sample of the eight of the best known IASC products, to learn general lessons about the use and usefulness of IASC products, according to humanitarian workers. An independent consultant was hired to analyse the findings.

The review built on a literature review, interviews with key informants, and online surveys for product

originators, products users, and managers, with more than 400 responses collected. The final review report is available in the IASC website www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc. The review found that IASC products are seen as technically of high quality but not always user-friendly or readily available. Non-specialist respondents asked for shorter versions with less jargon. The review also documented successful dissemination strategies adopted by some IASC groups. Those products with technical support at the regional and country levels had the most penetration but even the best supported were sometimes not known. This was seen in part to be due to IASC organisations' weak promotion of IASC products, with agency specific policy and guidance receiving more attention. Translation was

also found to be key to successful adoption. The review highlighted the need to plan dissemination from the onset of product development, while the potential for clusters to play a role in disseminating and operationalising the IASC products was raised. The 'web-presence' of the products was found to be too limited. The review recommended that products be developed in a "package" to target different audiences (eg, technical experts, managers, the generalists etc).

The consultant's report provided nine recommendations on product development, endorsement, distribution, roll out and financing, which were discussed by the Working Group in November 2009. The IASC Secretariat was charged with developing a follow-up plan in 2010.

Key IASC Products in 2009

- Final Report - Addressing the Humanitarian Challenges of Climate Change, Regional and National Perspectives
- IASC Case Studies on Climate Change Adaptation - Addressing the Humanitarian Challenges of Climate Change
- Revised Guidelines for Addressing HIV in Humanitarian Settings
- Revised Terms of Reference for Humanitarian Coordinators
- Guidance for the parameters of the Humanitarian Country Teams
- Humanitarian Coordination core competencies
- Revised Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced

To access these documents please go to the IASC Website:

www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc



Photo credit: UNHCR

The collage features several IASC product covers:

- GUIDELINES for Addressing HIV in Humanitarian Settings**: A red cover with a photograph of a refugee camp.
- IASC FRAMEWORK ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**: A blue cover with a photograph of a family.
- CIVIL-MILITARY GUIDELINES & REFERENCE FOR COMPLEX EMERGENCIES**: A blue cover with a photograph of military personnel and civilians.
- CASE STUDIES**: A blue cover with a photograph of people in a rural setting.
- Action Humanitaire et Personnes Âgées**: A white cover with a photograph of an elderly man.
- FINAL REPORT**: A blue cover with a photograph of a well.
- Addressing the Humanitarian Challenges of Climate Change Regional and National Perspectives**: A blue cover with a photograph of people in a rural setting.

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IASC Strengthens Leadership through New Guidance, Tools and Inclusive Dialogue

The IASC continued to operationalize the policies of humanitarian reform throughout 2009 and finalized key policy guidance such as the revised terms of reference for Humanitarian Coordinators; guidance for the parameters of the Humanitarian Country Teams and Humanitarian Coordination core competencies. These documents were developed in the Humanitarian Coordination (HC) Group led by OCHA and were widely circulated to country level offices and used in trainings.

Throughout the year, the IASC strengthened its interface with the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO), which supports the Resident Coordinator (RC) System and invited

DOCO to participate in the work of the HC Group and attend relevant sessions of the IASC Working Group. Given that many Resident Coordinators will likely serve as Humanitarian Coordinators at one time or another, the IASC dialogue with DOCO will result in the best possible use of the HC pool as a feeder to the RC pool and ensure that humanitarian issues and competencies are adequately reflected in RC assessments and trainings.

With regard to the cluster approach, the IASC clarified key terminology and reinforced the dual responsibility of cluster lead agencies to represent both their own agency and the clusters they lead in meetings at the country level and the global level. The emergency directors of the cluster lead agencies

sent a joint letter to their respective field offices acknowledging this dual responsibility and asking that it be reflected in job descriptions as well as performance appraisals.

In 2010, the IASC will continue to prioritize humanitarian leadership, publish the Handbook for RCs and HCs on Emergency Preparedness and Response and revise the consultation mechanism for HC designation. The IASC will also consider and respond to the findings of the Phase II Cluster Evaluation and finalize guidance on clusters working with national authorities, as well as the benchmarks for mainstreaming of cluster functions and costs at both the global and country levels.

The IASC Creates a High Level Forum on Humanitarian Financing

In 2009, the IASC made a major change in its approach to humanitarian financing issues, bringing together and streamlining various groups to create a senior level forum, to be chaired by OCHA and WHO to address humanitarian pooled funds and humanitarian financing issues and trends. The creation of this forum followed rigorous debate about its scope, its leadership and the need for coherence. In November, the IASC Working Group endorsed the terms of reference for the overarching group and requested that it retain an appropriate balance between operational and strategic issues. The terms of reference for the

Humanitarian Financing Group includes a liaison role with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, replacing the GHD Contact Group, which was eliminated, and also covers the humanitarian programming cycle, including preparedness and early recovery. As part of the streamlining process, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF began a joint initiative with NGOs on UN-NGO financial partnership/ contractual arrangements, co-led by UNICEF and Child Fund. The IASC's work on humanitarian financing issues will continue in 2010 with monthly meetings of the Humanitarian Financing Group on both operational matters related to the CERF

and common humanitarian and other pooled funds and on strategic themes such as early recovery and transaction costs.



Photo credit: IRIN

A Strong Humanitarian Voice in the Climate Change Negotiations

In line with its priorities for 2009, the IASC, through its Task Force on Climate Change, continued to advocate strongly in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations by providing high-quality analytical inputs on the humanitarian consequences of climate change. In May 2009, the IASC Principals submitted a joint letter to the UNFCCC, urging negotiators to acknowledge the humanitarian dimension of climate change and reinforce existing capacities and mechanisms, such as emergency preparedness and response/recovery systems at the local, national, regional and global levels. In the run-up to the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009, agencies promoted the humanitarian message through media outreach and bilateral meetings on both high-level and technical level.

Joint key messages for use by all agencies helped agencies to speak with a common voice in a crowded field. Bilateral meetings and advocacy campaigns in Bonn, Barcelona and Copenhagen were coordinated through the Task Force. Technical papers submitted to the UNFCCC by groupings of agencies provided

in-depth information on issues such as the impacts of climate change on health, food security, migration and displacement. Joint side events helped promote a better understanding of humanitarian work. In Copenhagen, the agencies organised a "Humanitarian Day" at which IASC Principals called for urgent adaptation to climate change to reduce the humanitarian consequences. Advocacy by the IASC contributed to the explicit inclusion of humanitarian concerns in the final accord of the COP 15 meeting. In all of its activities, the IASC cooperated closely with the ISDR Secretariat. The Task Force members also worked on integrating climate risk management into agency policies and programmes. Under the leadership of OCHA, WFP

and IFRC, regional and national consultations were organized to document examples of good practice in climate change adaptation, and stimulate IASC support to the development of policies and programmes on the regional, national and local level, promote networking and cooperation and identify key priorities for action. The results of these consultations were presented in the report at the ISDR Global Platform in June 2009.

In 2010, the IASC will continue to follow the climate change adaptation debate and look for ways to increase its contribution to climate change adaptation and financing. The mandate of the IASC Task Force on Climate Change was extended until the end of 2010, with IFRC continuing its leadership role.



Photo credit: UNHCR

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IASC commits to improving Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

In 2009, the IASC committed to strengthen its participation in the revision of the Sphere Guidelines, designed to improve quality and accountability in humanitarian response. The Sphere handbook has become one of the most

recognised tools for setting standards in humanitarian response. The IASC expressed support for the first edition of the handbook published in 2000. The handbook was revised in 2004, since when significant changes have taken place in the

humanitarian sector - especially with regard to technical and cross cutting issues and humanitarian reform, including the development of the cluster approach. IASC organisations are fully engaged in the 2009-2010 revision process.

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Positive developments on early recovery but challenges remain

In 2009, IASC agencies reviewed the progress of the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery in mainstreaming early recovery activities across all clusters, and examined broader financing issues. This work culminated in a session at the November 2009 IASC Working Group held in Nairobi, with WFP presenting on behalf of the CWGER its report on "Implementing the Early Recovery Agenda: An Update." The update highlighted positive improvements such as an improved global understanding of early

recovery, a stronger role of humanitarian concerns in the Post-Conflict Needs-Assessments (PCNA) and Post-Disaster Needs-Assessments (PDNA), as well as an increased integration of early recovery in agency programming. Since the previous Working Group discussion in 2008, progress had been made in mainstreaming early recovery across clusters, but despite these positive developments, the CWGER and the Working Group stressed the importance of further deepening the mainstreaming of early recovery, and the need for further guidance, tools and

training support to the PCNA processes. Timely, adequate and predictable funding remained a critical challenge to the full implementation of the early recovery agenda, especially at country level. Due to the work of the CWGER and the CAP Sub-Working Group, early recovery activities were better reflected in CAPs and Flash Appeals, however, these activities were poorly funded. All IASC organisations were called upon to intensify their efforts to increase the timeliness and predictability of early recovery funding.

Preserving Humanitarian Space to Assist Those in Need

In early 2009, under the leadership of OCHA and UNHCR, the Core Group on Humanitarian Space developed a plan for roundtable discussions on humanitarian space to be held with field actors in Chad and Pakistan. For security and other reasons, these roundtables were postponed until 2010. In addition, the Core Group continued its preparation of a training package for NGOs on humanitarian principles, led by ICVA, as well as its consultations with representatives of humanitarian organizations on integrated missions, led by OCHA. As requested by the IASC Principals, OCHA facilitated discussions with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) to ensure greater participation of humanitarian agencies in the planning of integrated UN missions. Chaired by OCHA, an Integration Focal Points group meets quarterly, in advance of



Photo credit: UNHCR

the meetings of the UN Integration Steering Group (ISG). WFP led a one-day thematic discussion on how humanitarian workers are perceived, with participants from IASC agencies, DPKO, DPA and academic experts. The discussion covered a wide range of topics including the changing humanitarian environment, local perceptions of humanitarian workers, engaging with state and non-state actors and integrated missions. Participants noted that humanitarian space was not necessarily shrinking, but new challenges were

emerging, such as the political use of humanitarian assistance and the negative perception of humanitarians. Throughout 2009, the development of Guidelines on Integration Mission Planning Processes was ongoing, and elements of the IASC integration focal point group discussion were transmitted to the ISG for their consideration. In 2010, the preservation of humanitarian space remains a priority of the IASC, with OCHA and UNHCR continuing to co-leading the work of the Core Group.

IASC Engagement in Humanitarian - Civil-Military Coordination

In 2009, the IASC began to examine the evolving relationship between humanitarian and military actors. The IASC Working Group during its meeting in Washington in March 2009 discussed the need for strong coordination to ensure the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, while maintaining adherence to

humanitarian principles. The Working Group requested that OCHA prepare a paper analyzing the current state of humanitarian civil-military relations, including proposal for how current challenges could be addressed. OCHA presented its analysis at the meeting of the IASC Working Group in

Nairobi in November 2009, noting that humanitarian actors increasingly found themselves operating alongside peacekeeping missions and foreign military forces, with militaries directly involved in humanitarian action more frequently than in the past. The civil military advisor to the NGO coordination committee in Chad joined the panel discussion, highlighting three ongoing challenges: information sharing, evacuation planning and armed escorts for the humanitarian community. The IASC Working Group agreed to establish an informal IASC forum for further discussion and in-depth analysis of humanitarian civil-military relations. Co-chaired by UN OCHA and InterAction, the forum will convene in early 2010. The forum will coordinate closely with IASC bodies working on related issues, such as the Core Group on Humanitarian Space, the Steering Group on Security and the Focal Point Group on Integration.



Photo credit: UNHCR

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Humanitarian Agencies Trying to Become Better Listeners

In 2009, the IASC initiated a discussion on accountability to affected populations, including the concept of "downwards accountability" which is a key concept based on balanced partnership and transparency. In July, the IASC heard from Oxfam, CARE International and UNHCR on their ongoing initiatives to improve accountability, including peer review by the SCHR members, with UNHCR, and the Emergency Capacity Building Project. The IASC agreed on the importance

Photo credit: IRIN



of affected people being heard, and that the concepts of transparency, feedback, evaluation and participation must be ensured. In November, the IASC in Geneva heard an update on the review of Humanitarian

Accountability Project, at its weekly meeting. The IASC will continue to address accountability throughout 2010, with terminology and options on the way forward to be discussed by the Working Group.

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Subsidiary Bodies in 2009

In 2009, in addition to those mentioned in this reports news stories, IASC subsidiary bodies supported the policy and operational work of the IASC on the following topics: the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), Emergency Telecommunications, Gender and Humanitarian Action, Preparedness, HIV in Emergency Settings, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA), and Information Management. The Reference Group on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action was discontinued from March 2009.

CAP

In 2009, the Sub Working Group (SWG) on CAP facilitated the publication of 12 Consolidated Appeals for 2010, 7 Flash Appeals and 7 other appeals for 2009. For this, it provided support to the field in developing the appeals, reviewed and finalised at headquarter level, launched the appeals, and followed up on them, including by sharing information on humanitarian funding and updated funding requirements via the Financial Tracking Service. In addition, the SWG drafted two documents on the CAP, (role of cluster leads and HC in CAP). The SWG also developed methodology for improved prioritization and selection of projects in the CAP, which was adopted as standard practice in 2009.

EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Sub Working Group (SWG) on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) established a Technical Board to assist the WGET Secretariat in supporting WGET strategic objectives and technical initiatives, including cooperation with the private sector. A study was initiated to develop an International Telecommunication Charter for the provision of free Satellite Bandwidth and Services by Global Service Providers. The SWG has developed an on-line collaboration tool for WGET members to facilitate the WGET working group exchange and promote

WGET activities. The group also continued its work in developing and implementing inter-agency standards for telecommunications equipment and procedures.

GENDER AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action in 2009 continued to roll out the IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action and the Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, through a series of regional trainings. Six countries (CAR, Chad, Nepal, Sudan, Mozambique and Colombia) were targeted for implementation of the GBV guidelines. In 2009, GenCap deployed 20 GenCap Advisers to 19 humanitarian situations for a total of 120 months of deployments. The following countries received support from GenCap: Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea Conakry, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Myanmar, Namibia, opt, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Yemen and Zimbabwe. In addition, the SWG in 2009 developed the initial E-Learning course on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance. This three-hour online course is to be launched in 2010. The SWG also finalised the desk review on sex and disaggregated data (SADD), which highlighted that sex and disaggregated data was often lacking IASC

organisations' humanitarian programming. Based on the findings of the review, the SWG developed a set of recommendations for the IASC and the clusters on how to improve data collection and analysis.

PREPAREDNESS

The SWG on Preparedness and Contingency Planning continued to support the inter-agency preparedness and contingency planning process, through promotion of the IASC guidance on contingency planning and by producing three global Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA) reports, for discussion at the global level by the Emergency Directors meetings. The information collected through EWEA is now available on the Prevention Web platform. The SWG conducted a retreat in mid 2009 to redefine its focus and strategy. The SWG in 2010 will produce, among others, 3 IASC Early Warning/Early Action Reports, Revisions or enhancements to the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines, Evaluation of HEWSweb II initiative, a graphic presentation of the preparedness framework, Inter-Agency simulations, and contingency planning workshops.

HIV IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In 2009, the Task Force on HIV focused on completing its revision of the 2005 IASC Guidelines for HIV/AIDS. A pre-final version of the revised Guideline was circulated to the field for

Subsidiary Bodies in 2009

field testing. Following extensive consultation with field and global partners, the IASC Guidelines for Addressing HIV in Humanitarian Settings was finalised and endorsed by the Working Group in November 2009. In 2010, the Task Force will support dissemination and implementation of the Guidelines, and develop training materials as necessary.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

In 2009, the IASC Information Management Task Force was focusing on reviewing the Operational Guidance Note on Information Management, with a view of updating it. The consultant undertook a desk review and informant interviews in selected countries, and the review of existing IM practice will be incorporated in the 2nd Cluster Evaluation. In addition, the TF developed the pilot of "OneResponse" (provisional name of web platform) in Pakistan, which is an inter-agency web-

platform to support and manage the exchange of operational information in emergencies. The TF also worked closely with IASC Task Force on Needs Assessment, to provide Information Management related guidance to the Needs Assessment Task Force.

MEETING HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN URBAN SETTINGS

In March 2009, the Working Group established the Task Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Settings (MHCUA). Since then, the TF analysed the key strategic and practical challenges and institutional gaps in administering humanitarian assistance in urban areas, and developed recommendations, with the main output of the Task Force being the Initial Strategy Paper on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas. In 2010, the Task Force will undertake further analysis of IASC organisations experience in

urban settings and complete an IASC strategy for meeting the challenges already identified.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO SOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

The Reference Group on (RG) MHPSS focused in 2009 on the roll out of the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support in Emergency Settings. The RG continued to print and disseminate the Guidelines, which were translated into French, Arabic, Spanish, and unofficially into Indonesian, Farsi, Tamil, Slovakian, Japanese and Chinese. In addition, much effort was made to develop tools to assist field implementation of the Guidelines, such as guidance note on the MHPSS in specific country contexts, and simple, user-friendly version of the Guidelines. The RG was also instrumental in integrating MHPSS with relevant clusters, and developed a Guidance Note on Health and Protection Coordination Tools.

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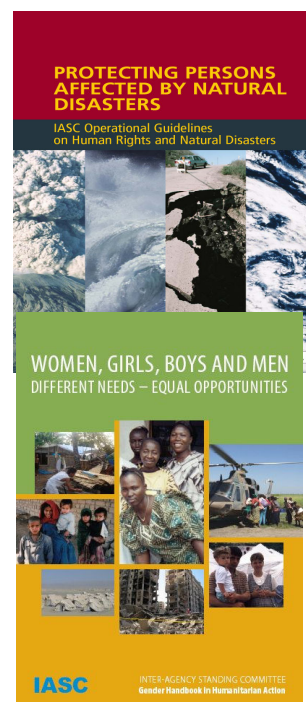
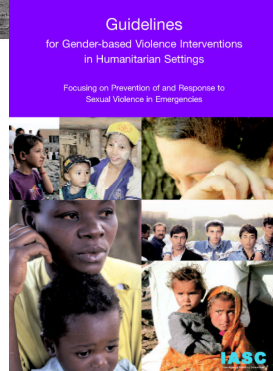
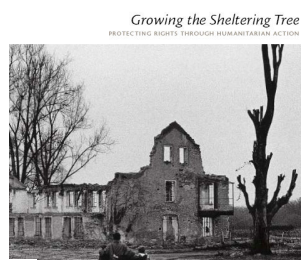
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Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Settings

The humanitarian sector is increasingly challenged by delivering humanitarian assistance in urban settings. Over 1 billion people across the world are already living in urban slums where many are exposed to urban hazards and associated vulnerabilities. Other groups such as refugees, IDPs and stateless persons often share densely populated and poorly serviced areas, making them more vulnerable to the impact of disasters and complex emergencies. In early 2009, UN-HABITAT, building on its work for the World Urbanisation Forum, presented the IASC Working Group with a concept paper outlining a proposal for a task force to develop an IASC strategy for responding to the consequences of urbanisation. The Working Group, recognising the gaps in some aspects of its humanitarian response tools and capacity in urban settings, agreed to establish a task force on meeting humanitarian challenges in urban settings. Part of the Task Force's mandate was to examine existing

approaches for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and consider ways to adapt the approaches to make the delivery of assistance more effective in an urban setting. The Task Force, chaired by UN-HABITAT, commissioned a team of experts to analyse the challenges presented by responding to crises in urban settings. IASC agencies met to discuss the initial analysis and draft strategy in a two-day workshop in Rome in September 2009. The consultants highlighted challenges such as identifying and collaborating with urban institutions, authorities and partners, as well as the identification and targeting of beneficiaries. The Task Force agreed to propose that the IASC undertake an internal assessment and mapping of their expertise in urban areas and to collaborate with humanitarian country teams to conduct assessments of inter-agency challenges and lessons learned from country level in delivering humanitarian assistance in urban areas. The Task Force reported back to the

IASC Working Group in November 2009 in Nairobi. The participants reflected on the need to both deliver humanitarian assistance in urban settings and also to reduce risk in the longer term. While recognising the importance of both, it was decided to focus on the former and so the mandate of the Task Force was extended until the end of 2010, with a concentration on humanitarian response and preparedness in urban settings.

In 2010, the Task Force will focus on the assessment of tools and mechanisms

already in use by IASC organisations, as well as country case studies to be conducted with humanitarian country teams, to evaluate lessons learnt in delivering humanitarian assistance in urban areas. The knowledge and experiences will be shared through a newly created website, forming an integral part of the knowledge management and tools of humanitarian agencies. By the end of 2010, the Task Force will deliver a completed strategy to the Working Group for discussion.

Photo credit: IRIN



Working Together to Harmonize Needs Assessments



Photo credit: UNHCR

Both the Principals and the Working Group have in the past discussed the gaps and overlaps in current needs assessment practices that have the potential to impede informed humanitarian decision making and reduce the effectiveness of humanitarian response. One of the IASC priorities for 2009 was advance inter-agency efforts to consolidate and harmonize needs assessments with the goal of developing a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral needs assessment framework.

In March 2009, the Working Group established the Needs Assessment Group (NAG) to align initiatives on needs assessment, while in April, the Principals noted that the global financial crisis meant that joint approaches to needs assessments to demonstrate an effective use of resources mean that this initiative needed to be accelerated. In July, the IASC Working Group restated its commitment to harmonizing needs assessment and transformed the NAG into an

IASC Task Force on Needs Assessment (NATF) with an accelerated time table for delivery of key products.

A two-day workshop on "Strengthening Evidence Based Humanitarian Decision-Making" was organised in November by OCHA to ensure a shared understanding of the purpose, linkages and design of the needs assessment, the humanitarian dashboard, the OneResponse website and situation report initiatives. At an ad hoc meeting in December 2009, the IASC Working Group decided that the development of the humanitarian dashboard would be overseen by the NATF and that further field testing would proceed in 2010.

IASC Weekly Meetings

The IASC Weekly Meetings serve as a forum for communication and information sharing among a wide range of humanitarian actors. Presenters from IASC organizations and other humanitarian partners from headquarters and 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 organized by the IASC Secretariat in Geneva and New York.

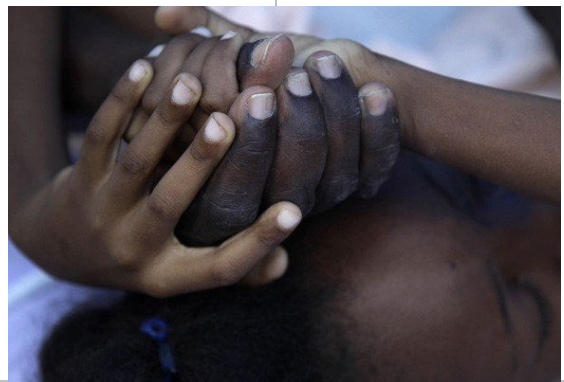
Myanmar, and Chad, among others, and Heads of Regional and Country Offices from Asia-Pacific, Ethiopia and DRC gave up to the minute operational briefings to IASC members. Other country specific items on the agenda included, among others, Colombia, DRC, the Philippines, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Somalia. Thematic presentations addressed issues such as civil-military coordination,

climate change and disaster risk reduction, the H1N1 influenza, negotiations at the General Assembly and the protection of civilians. In addition, several Brown Bag lunch seminars were held in New York, with the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced, and the Director of the Feinstein International Centre, among others.



Photo credit: IRIN

In 2009, UN agencies, NGOs, IOM and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement actively participated in IASC Weekly Meetings. Humanitarian Coordinators from Eritrea, Somalia,



IASC Principals meetings in 2009

THE IASC PRINCIPALS met in New York in April 2009 to discuss the strengthening of humanitarian response to forced displacement and migration resulting from climate change and sign a letter to the UNFCCC Secretariat on the humanitarian consequences of climate change. The Principals also discussed the global financial crisis and its impact on humanitarian financing and consulted on the humanitarian situation in **Sudan**.

OUTCOMES: the IASC Principals agreed to advocate for disaster risk reduction and **humanitarian consequences of climate change** to be fully included in **climate change**

negotiations in the UNFCCC process and noted the need to address challenges arising from increasing **urbanization due to climate change**. IASC Principals also reached agreements on the utility of common

messages on the humanitarian impact of the **global economic crisis**, and concurred on the need to further discuss ways of strengthening the aid delivery system in **Sudan**.

In addition, **THE IASC PRINCIPALS** held two extraordinary consultations on **Sudan**, and one on **Pakistan**. **Sudan** was discussed on 9 March, following the expulsion of thirteen international and three national NGOs. The main points raised included the safety of national and international staff, the risk of seizure of assets, possible expulsions of remaining NGOs, humanitarian principles, ways to fill gaps in assistance, and coordination of the handover of responsibilities. The impact of the expulsions on the rest of Sudan and the importance of sustained advocacy were also discussed.

The second extraordinary meeting on **Sudan** took place on 30 March. Principals discussed the Joint Assessment Mission report by the Government of Sudan and the United Nations, which had been conducted to assess gaps in meeting emergency needs in areas which had been covered by the expelled NGOs. Steps to hold the Government of Sudan accountable to the terms of the Joint Communiqué, as well as the protection of civilians were major items on the agenda.

The IASC Principals consulted on Pakistan on 12 June, following the bombing of the Peshawar Pearl Continental and the withdrawal of international staff, to discuss security challenges and the internal displacement crisis, in particular the prioritization of support to host families. The Principals reiterated their support to the new Humanitarian Coordinator, and their commitment to strengthen the cluster system in the country and step up efforts to reach out to donors.



Agenda and background documents available at (requires agency login): <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc>

IASC Calendar of Events in 2009

IASC PRINCIPALS MEETINGS:

30 March 2009 – Videoconf.
Extraordinary IASC Principals
meeting on Sudan

12 June 2009 – Videoconf.
Extraordinary IASC Principals
meeting on Pakistan

30 April 2009 – New York,
hosted by UNFPA

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

IASC Calendar of Events in 2010

IASC PRINCIPALS MEETINGS:

4 February 2010 – Geneva,
hosted by OCHA

6 May 2010 – New York,
hosted by UNFPA

15 December 2010 -
Geneva, hosted by WHO

IASC WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:

7-9 April 2010
New York, hosted by UNDP

7-9 July 2010
Geneva, hosted by IFRC

10-12 November 2010
Rome, hosted by FAO

Welcome to New Colleagues in 2009 and Farewell to others.....

WELCOME:

Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP
Mr. Jordan Ryan, UNDP
Ms. Yasemin Aysan, IFRC
Mr. Jeff Tschirley, FAO
Ms. Anna Zinecker, IFRC
Ms. Amanda Di Lorenzo, OCHA
Mr. Charles-Antoine Hofmann, SCHR
Ms. Jemilah Mahmood, UNFPA
Ms. Ansa Masaud, UN-HABITAT
Ms. Christine Knudsen, UNICEF
Mr. Brian Lander, WFP
Mr. Nicola Pontara, World Bank
Mr. Anders Kompass, OHCHR
Mr. George Deikun, UN-HABITAT
Ms. Daisy Dell, UNHCR
Ms. Hilja Gebest, IASC/ECHA Secretariat

THANK YOU AND FAREWELL:

Mr. Kasidis Rochanakorn, OCHA
Ms. Eva von Oelreich, SCHR
Mr. Robert Mister, IFRC
Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, OHCHR
Ms. Marina Throne-Holst, OCHA
Ms. Laura Sciannimonaco, FAO
Ms. Evelyn Chung, WFP
Mr. Gert Ludeking, UN-HABITAT
Ms. Letizia Rossano, IASC/ECHA Secretariat
Ms. Natasha Kindergan, IASC/ECHA
Secretariat
Ms. Caroline Kern, IASC/ECHA Secretariat



IASC Working Group meetings in 2009

THE 73RD IASC WORKING GROUP meeting was held in March in Washington, D.C., hosted by InterAction. Discussions addressed ways of improving the humanitarian response, including the consolidation and harmonization of needs assessments, revision of Sphere standards guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams, and the strengthening of humanitarian coordination; key challenges and new trends, such as the humanitarian consequences of urbanization, the preservation of humanitarian space, and civil-military relations. The former Administrator of USAID, provided the keynote speech

As an **OUTCOME** of the meeting, the IASC Working Group requested the Needs Assessment Group to include within its scope the **harmonization and coordination of needs assessments** across clusters and sectors. The IASC WG further requested the Humanitarian Coordination Group to oversee the production of revised IASC guidance on **Humanitarian Country**

Teams, and endorsed the terms of reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator and the **Humanitarian Coordination Competencies**. With regards to the **humanitarian consequences of urbanization**, the IASC WG agreed to establish a taskforce on urbanization to develop a strategy paper for the 75th Working Group meeting. To further discuss **humanitarian space**, the IASC WG

agreed that an expanded Humanitarian Space Core Group would prepare a discussion paper on the situation in Sudan for the IASC Principals meeting in April, and concurred that interested IASC organizations should nominate a focal point for integrated missions. The IASC WG also requested OCHA to prepare a paper analyzing the current state of **civil military relations**.

THE 74TH IASC WORKING GROUP meeting was held in July in Geneva, hosted by OHCHR. The meeting focused on, amongst other issues: humanitarian financing; the implementation of the cluster approach; key challenges for the humanitarian community, including disaster risk reduction, climate change negotiations and adaptation funding; as well as needs assessments and accountability to affected populations. The meeting also heard from Assistant Secretary General at ISDR

The **OUTCOME** of the meeting included the establishment of an IASC Core Group on humanitarian financing and the development of guidance for country teams on the Consolidated Appeals Process. The IASC WG further agreed to a clarified terminology for the cluster approach and to finalize

the Cluster Feedback Tool as a means of gathering information on the performance of clusters. Concerning disaster risk reduction and climate change, the IASC WG agreed to develop a plan for practical collaborative action between ISDR and IASC, and to maintain and where possible step up implementation of

programmes and projects in support of climate change adaptation at the regional, national, and local levels. With regards to accountability to affected populations, the IASC WG agreed to consider options for improving accountability to affected populations at the March 2010 IASC WG meeting.

THE 75TH IASC WORKING GROUP meeting was held in November 2009 in Nairobi, hosted by UN-HABITAT. This was the first Working Group meeting to be held in a developing country. Agenda items included: guidance for humanitarian country teams and a review of IASC products. Discussions also focused on the revised framework for durable solutions for IDPs; early recovery; humanitarian space and civil military relations; and ways of meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas. The Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees of the Uganda Government gave the keynote address.



Photo credit: IRIN

As an **OUTCOME** of the meeting, the IASC WG endorsed the **IASC Guidance for Humanitarian Country Teams**, and requested the IASC Secretariat to complete a final review report of IASC products. The IASC WG encouraged IASC organizations to disseminate and promote the revised **Framework for Durable Solutions for IDPs**, and requested the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery and all other Clusters to further strengthen their dialogue on **mainstreaming early**

recovery into clusters at both global and country levels. In order to improve dialogue on **civil military relations**, the IASC WG agreed to set-up an informal forum, with the possibility of establishing a formal forum in the future. With regards to **humanitarian challenges in urban areas**, the IASC WG decided to extend the task force mandate to the end of 2010, in order to further examine the humanitarian response and preparedness in urban settings.



Photo credit: IRIN



Photo credit: IRIN



Agenda and background documents available at (requires agency login): <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc>

For more information,
 please visit the IASC Website at
www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc

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“Working Together to Strengthen Humanitarian Assistance”

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WELCOME TO THE IASC

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It is a unique forum involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners.

The IASC was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. [More >](#)

CALENDAR Today | This week | All meetings

Wed 11-03-09 to Wed 11-03-09 9:30 to 10:30 (CET) Weekly IASC Weekly Meeting on Strengthening the Rule of Law in Conflict/Post-Conflict Situations: The Case of oPT >	Wed 11-03-09 to Wed 11-03-09 9:30 to 11:0 (NYT) Subsidiary Bodies IASC SWG on Gender and Humanitarian Action Meeting >	Thu 12-03-09 to Thu 12-03-09 15:0 to 16:30 (CET) Subsidiary Bodies IASC CAP SWG Meeting >
Fri 13-03-09 to Fri 13-03-09 10:00 to 11:30 (CET) Other UNHCR Briefing: Public Health and HIV: an Update and Future Strategies >	Mon 16-03-09 to Mon 16-03-09 9:0 to 17:0 (CET) Subsidiary Bodies IASC Task Force on HIV in Humanitarian Situations >	Wed 18-03-09 to Fri 20-03-09 A:D to A:D (CET) Working Group 73rd IASC WG Meeting >

Today | This week | All meetings

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IASC Products are guidelines, tools and documents endorsed by the IASC Working Group or IASC Principals and used by humanitarian actors in field or policy work [More >](#)

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IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

Annual Report for **2009**



IASC

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