
IASC Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA)
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date established: *January 2010*

End of mandate: *December 2012*

Background

In November 2010 the 78th IASC Working Group endorsed the Strategy and Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas. In preparing these reports, the TF:

- i. Reviewed and assessed tools and approaches used in humanitarian response in urban areas. Over 90 tools were reviewed and assessed with key strengths and gaps analyzed. Areas for new tools development were identified.
- ii. Undertook case studies of Manila, Nairobi, Eldoret and Haiti as examples of urban crises and evaluated key challenges in different sizes of cities
- iii. Assembled best practices and identified operational weaknesses in consultation with humanitarian and development organizations including UN agencies, IOM, International and local NGOs, select National and Local Governments, IFRC, ICRC and research and academia.

The Strategy builds upon six objectives for improving humanitarian response in urban areas: Strengthen partnerships among urban stakeholders for more effective humanitarian response, ii) Strengthen technical surge capacity with urban skills, iii) Develop or adapt humanitarian tools and approaches for urban areas, iv) Protection of vulnerable urban population against exploitation and violence, v) Restore livelihoods and economic opportunities during initial phase for expedited early recovery in urban areas, vi) and Improve preparedness in urban areas to reduce vulnerability and save lives.

The action plan (see Annex 1) includes the 12 highest priority actions identified in the Strategy to be undertaken by IASC member organizations during the two-year period, 2011-2012.

The 78th IASC Working Group Meeting also agreed to transform the MHCUA Task Force into an IASC Reference Group for Improving Urban Humanitarian Response.

Reference Group Objectives

The objectives of the IASC Reference Group are to:

1. Track, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommended actions in the Action Plan;
2. Create a platform for agencies to facilitate each others efforts at implementation of the Action Plan by providing inputs and feedback when requested;
3. Continue to interface with the IASC Global Clusters, IASC subsidiary bodies, Humanitarian Country Teams, and NGOs on strengthening urban preparedness, humanitarian policies, capacities and tools for urban crises responses; and

-
4. Share knowledge, lessons learnt and promote partnerships among humanitarian organizations on urban policies, preparedness, response and recovery issues.

Reference Group Composition

At the request of the IASC Working Group, UN HABITAT will serve as Chair of the Reference Group. Offers to co-chair from member agencies are welcome, especially from NGO partners.

Membership in the Reference Group is open to all organizations, IASC and others, which are interested in actively contributing to the work of the Reference Group and the two-year Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas.

Potential members could include: IASC agencies, NGOs, other UN agencies, other international organizations and cluster/sector representatives. Donors and academics are invited as technical resources to the Reference Group..

Methodology and Reporting Timelines

The Reference Group will plan to convene once a quarter or more often if requested by members.

An Annual Workplan will be developed based upon individual workplans from participating agencies in implementation of the Action Plan. The Workplan will be used for monitoring Action Plan implementation.

As requested by the IASC Working Group, a mid-term progress report will be submitted for its review in December 2011.