

News and Highlights from the IASC Community

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Welcome to the May 2015 issue of *IASC News*.



A Burundi mother flees into Rwanda to escape violence. Credit: Ignatius Ssuuna/IRIN Africa

LATEST NEWS

Stephen O'Brien Takes Up the Role of Emergency Relief Coordinator

On 1 June 2015, [Stephen O'Brien was officially sworn in as the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in New York](#), by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

As a former Member of Parliament in the UK, Stephen O'Brien was the Prime Minister's

Envoy and Special Representative for the Sahel 2012-2015 and prior to that served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development. He brings to his new role extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy and advocacy – not least in malaria – together with international leadership and senior management experience in the coordination of collective action within the humanitarian community.

He succeeds Valerie Amos, to whom the Secretary-General has expressed deep gratitude for her dedicated service and commitment to helping the most vulnerable people affected by conflict and disasters around the world.

Burundi situation continues to deteriorate

By the end of May, due to civil unrest in protest against a third-term bid by Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza [over 90,000 people have sought asylum](#) in neighbouring countries Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC and Uganda. The refugee crisis has been exacerbated by the spread of cholera in some areas. In response to this emergency, UNHCR launched the [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#), seeking US\$207 million for basic protection and assistance activities for up to 200,000 Burundian refugees until September 2015. Meanwhile the [ERC decided to release some US\\$15 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\)](#) to support life-saving relief work for thousands of Burundian refugees in Rwanda and Tanzania.

Presidential elections had been scheduled for 26 June and Senate elections were foreseen for 17 July. However, following a recommendation by a Summit of the East African Community to postpone elections for a period of “not less than one and a half months”, the [Government of Burundi has indicated it was favourable to this request](#).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- IASC Principals meeting in Nairobi
- IASC Ad Hoc Principals meeting on the L3 emergencies
- HC designations for the Sahel, CAR, Libya and Mali
- Update on the World Humanitarian Summit
- Launch of the new IASC Website



IASC Principals meeting in Nairobi. Credit: UNHABITAT Photo Gallery

IASC Principals meeting

The meeting held in Nairobi on 21 and 22 May 2015 was the first time the IASC Principals ever met in the Global South since the IASC was created 23 years ago. It was hosted by UN-HABITAT and chaired by its Executive Director Joan Clos. The Principals had constructive discussions on resilience and protection in the Horn of Africa; revitalizing principled humanitarian action, World Humanitarian Summit; strategy for urban challenges; migrants in crises; protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; and the future of humanitarian financing. The IASC also met with local and civil society organizations to discuss ways to improve humanitarian action in the region. Last but not least, the meeting was an opportunity for the IASC Principals to welcome the incoming Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Stephen O' Brien. Keep an eye on our new website for all up to date information regarding the [IASC Principals](#).

IASC Ad Hoc Principals Meeting on the L3 emergency response

The IASC met on 13 May 2015 to discuss the extension or deactivation of the System-wide Level 3 (L3) Emergency responses. The IASC decided to extend the L3 responses in Iraq and South Sudan for three months while a transition plan towards L3 deactivation will be developed; and to deactivate the L3 response in the Central African Republic with a recommendation to keep CAR high on the humanitarian agenda and review and develop a fundraising and communication strategy for CAR. Furthermore, a brief update was provided on the situation in Yemen.

ERC designates the Humanitarian Coordinators for the Sahel, Central African Republic, Libya and Mali

The Emergency Relief Coordinator has designed Mr. Toby Lanzer as Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel and Mr. Aurelien Agbénonci as Humanitarian Coordinator for the Central African Republic (CAR), both effective immediately. Mr. Ali Al-Za'tari, the incoming Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator for Libya, was also appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya. Furthermore, Ms. Mbaranga Gasarabwe, the incoming Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator for Mali, was appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator for Mali. The latter are effective upon their deployments.

Update on World Humanitarian Summit

The [Latin America and Caribbean Regional Consultations](#) took place in Guatemala from 5 to 7 May in the framework of the 7th "International Mechanisms of Humanitarian Assistance" (MIAH) meeting. 210 participants – including representatives of national governments and local authorities, international and regional organizations, national and

local NGOs, civil society and academia – developed recommendations on the four global themes of the Summit. Furthermore, discussions were held on the topic of displacement and violence due to its high relevance and impact in the region. In addition to the co-chairs summary of the regional consultations, the [Guatemala Declaration](#) will be submitted to the WHS secretariat.

Upcoming are the [Pacific Regional Consultations](#) which will take place in Auckland, New Zealand from 30 June until 2 July. For further upcoming events, please consult the [WHS website](#) and keep an eye out for online consultations and other events on the [PHAP website](#).

Launch of the new IASC Website

The new IASC website was launched on 13 May and can be found at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org>. This new web platform represents a transition from a static (HTML) website to a dynamic one. It is mobile responsive and can be viewed on computer monitors, tablets and mobile phones. The new site also offers decentralized content management, wherein users who manage a Task Team or Reference Group, for example, are able to directly manage and update the content of their pages.

The website is still in a pilot stage. The IASC secretariat relies on your feedback and suggestions to further improve the site. Please send any comments to iasccorrespondence@un.org.

IASC EVENTS

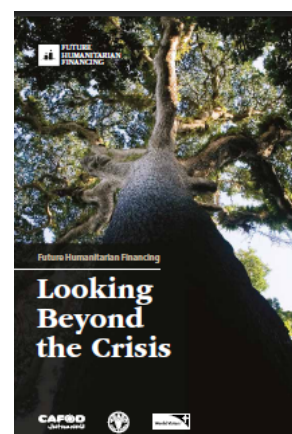
IASC events are organized on an ad hoc basis by the IASC secretariat in Geneva and New York

IASC Events in May 2015

Preparations for the 2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS)

New York, 15 May 2015: An IASC event was held to inform about the status of the preparations for the [Humanitarian Affairs Segment \(HAS\) of the UN Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) which will take place in Geneva from 17 to 19 June. ECOSOC HAS is a unique platform for Member States, UN agencies, humanitarian and development partners, the private sector and affected communities to discuss

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH



A new report on the “Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis” was launched by the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team to stimulate renewed energy and

emerging and pressing humanitarian issues.

The Segment will feature two High-Level Panels, a general debate, numerous side-events sponsored by a wide range of actors, as well as a humanitarian fair. The two High-level Panel discussions will be on "Addressing Capacity and Resource Challenges through Humanitarian Financing" and on "Protecting Civilians by Upholding International Humanitarian Law". The IASC is organizing [three side-events](#): "Future of Humanitarian Coordination"; "The Role of Crisis Affected Women and Girls in Shaping an Effective, Inclusive and Coordinated Future of Humanitarian Affairs"; and "The future of Humanitarian Coordination".

International disaster law

Geneva, 27 May 2015: Ms. Kelly Tessa and Mr. Paulo Cavaleri (Senior Disaster Law Officers at IFRC) briefed participants on recent developments related to international disaster law (<http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-law/>). The session provided an update on global progress since the adoption of the [Guidelines for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Assistance and Initial Recovery Assistance](#) (also known as IDRL Guidelines) in 2007. Furthermore, developments in the research on legislation for disaster risk reduction, in light of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction were highlighted. A [recent study](#) notes numerous positive developments and good practices since the adoption of the IDRL Guidelines. At the same time, the study points to remaining challenges of which many are rather similar to those compiled in an IFRC desk study from 2007. The session also introduced a new tool being developed together by IFRC and UNDP – a [checklist on law and disaster risk reduction](#) – that is expected to be adopted at the International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in December 2015. This tool provides a prioritized and succinct list of ten key questions on what law makers, implementing officials and those supporting them need to consider in order to ensure that their laws provide the best support for disaster risk reduction and serves

commitment to resolve longstanding humanitarian financing challenges and to identify new approaches and models of engagement to address the needs of humanitarian crises yet to come. A radical global agenda will be needed to meet the humanitarian financing challenges of the future, engaging and enabling a far wider ecosystem of actors in meeting the costs of managing risk and of responding to post-crisis needs, as a shared responsibility and a public good. And official launch of the event will take place in New York on 3 June.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

WHO and UNHCR have produced a [mental health Gap Action Programme Humanitarian Intervention Guide](#) (mhGAP-HIG). The new guide aims to assist non-specialist health workers in identifying, assessing and managing mental health needs. It provides practical, first-line management recommendations for mental, neurological and substance use conditions.

PHAP launched its [Online Learning Series on Humanitarian Law and Policy](#), which will provide an opportunity for continuous learning for those working in the humanitarian sector, as well as those interacting with humanitarian actors, to strengthen their understanding of legal and policy issues and to engage on topical and timely issues.

On 3 June 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) will hold an event on [The Role of Diaspora in Humanitarian Response](#) at the United Nations in New York. This event will look at the key questions to be considered

as an assessment tool to guide a review process of national and local level laws and regulations that can enhance disaster risk reduction. In addition to the IFRC website, further information and resources can also be found on the and the [Disaster Risk Reduction Law website](#). You are also invited to participate in the [Survey on law and disaster response](#).

UPCOMING IASC EVENTS

3 June, Geneva: [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and the World Humanitarian Summit](#)

11 June, Geneva: [DisasterReady.org](#)

in order to best engage the humanitarian community and diaspora groups to improve joint humanitarian responses. It will also examine the potential positive and negative aspects of diaspora engagement in humanitarian response. The discussion at the event will feed into the WHS process. The event will be [webcast live](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

3-4 June, New York:
ALNAP Global Forum

17-19 June, Geneva:
[ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment](#)
IASC side event: Panel Discussion on the "Future of Humanitarian Coordination" on 19 June at 17:15-18:30 in Room XXIV of the Palais des Nations

IASC PRIORITIES

Recent Developments

Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (AAP/PSEA)

InterAction convened a webinar on PSEA and AAP Coordination in Emergencies on 28 May. The discussions underscored the importance of highlighting potential AAP and PSEA concerns during the early stages in response planning and the need for individual and collective commitment. It was noted that violations tend to occur frequently where the essential needs of those most at-risk in communities are not adequately met and that such violations are serious protection concern and erode the confidence and trust of affected communities and the

Gender in Humanitarian Action

The IASC Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group have released a [Nepal Gender Alert](#) to provide guidance on the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into both the ongoing humanitarian response and the early recovery strategy under development. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all those involved in the coordination and implementation of the humanitarian response gather and use sex- and age-disaggregated data to inform their programming and planning priorities. It also gives specific recommendations for gender-responsive action in healthcare, shelter, non-food items, camp management, participation and leadership, protection, food security and livelihoods, and WASH.

host country. More information and support on ensuring commitment to AAP and PSEA can be accessed through the [Help Desk](#).

Humanitarian Financing

The Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT) launched the “Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis” report (see Product of the Month). The HFTT is also reviewing donor conditionalities and is planning to present the final results in July.

Preparedness and Resilience

The Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) guidance was finalized. As part of the roll-out, trainings are planned to take place in various locations, including Amman, Nairobi (covering Southern and Eastern Africa), Almaty, Dakar, and Bangkok. The Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience (TTPR) is discussing links among various preparedness tools, such as INFORM, the Early Warning/Early Action Report, and the ERP. The TTPR is also exploring further possibilities for engagement in the WHS process.

Protection

The [Independent Whole of System Review of Protection in the Context of Humanitarian Action](#) was finalized in May. The report will be launched in Geneva in June (exact date and venue to be confirmed).

Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action (PHA)

The Task Team on Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action is discussing the recommendations of the Draft Review of the Impact of UN integration on Humanitarian Action. The review intends to record humanitarian actors’ recent

Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA)

At their meeting in Nairobi, the IASC Principals endorsed the Second Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas 2015-2017.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (MHPSS)

In response to the earthquakes that struck Nepal in April and May 2015, the MHPSS Reference Group has established a dedicated [information sharing platform](#) on [mhps.net](#). In order to improve accessibility of information for local actors, it has also started to translate meeting records into Nepali.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

3 June: Global Protection Cluster Task Team

3 June: Gender Reference Group

16 June, Geneva: Humanitarian Financing Task Team mid-year retreat

22 June, Geneva: Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

26 June: Ad Hoc Working Group: Briefing on the *2008 IASC Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action Policy Statement* and the *South Sudan Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE)*

30 June, Geneva: Task Team on Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action

For upcoming meetings and events, please check the IASC website:

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/events>

experience and observations regarding the implications of UN integration arrangements since the adoption of the UN Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) Policy in April 2013.



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The IASC was established under General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991) as the primary inter-agency coordination mechanism for humanitarian action in complex and major emergencies. It is a unique forum which brings together UN operational agencies and other humanitarian organizations and is supported by the IASC secretariat. Email: iasccorrespondence@un.org

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