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IASC News Update - October 2014

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News and Highlights from the IASC community

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Welcome to the second issue of IASC News. We welcome your feedback and contributions to iasccorrespondence@un.org.



30 Sept 2014, Kolebengo, Guinea: To help stop the spread of Ebola, Red Cross volunteers in Guinea are visiting communities to meet with residents face-to-face. They sensitise people to change attitudes and practices that could spread the virus. Credit: IFRC/Moustapha Diallo

LATEST NEWS

The Ebola Crisis

The Ebola Virus, which has been declared “unquestionably the most severe acute public health emergency in modern times,” by Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director General of the World Health Organization, has affected people in eight countries. During September and October the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) deployed advance teams to its mission headquarters in Accra, Ghana, as well as to the most-affected countries - Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone - to accelerate efforts to provide and support the response. [Read more on the Global Ebola Response.](#)

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The IASC Working Group Meeting and Protection Review

The 87th session of the IASC Working Group (WG) was held in Geneva and an independent "Whole-of-System" Review of Protection in Humanitarian Crises began in September. Highlights are as follows:



A young boy sits in front of a destroyed building in Homs, Syria. September 2012. Credit: WFP/Abeer Etefa.

IASC Working Group Meeting

29–30 October: The 87th session of the IASC WG covered a broad range of topics. Highlights included a discussion with David Nabarro, UN Special Envoy on Ebola, on UNMEER and the Ebola Response; sessions on the importance of bridging the relief to development gap; addressing ways to meet the humanitarian challenges in urban areas and in the application of L3s in slow-onset and protracted crises. The WG revised progress to date by IASC Task Teams along with the processes for both the IASC Review and the Review of Protection in Humanitarian Crises. The IASC WG also considered the way forward on learning and best practice on the Humanitarian Programme Cycle as well as on Activity-Based Costing.

Independent "Whole-of-System" Protection Review

The international community, including the humanitarian community, continues to grapple with the challenge of systematically ensuring protection, including in appropriately preventing and responding to violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. A "Whole-of-System" Review on Protection in Humanitarian Crises has been initiated by the IASC, in collaboration with the Global Protection Cluster, to review the performance of the humanitarian system in achieving protection outcomes and identify measures to ensure the centrality of protection in humanitarian action. The review will be carried out over a six-month period.

IASC EVENTS IN GENEVA/NEW YORK

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

Global Humanitarian Assistance 2014 Report: Trends in Humanitarian Financing: Do Resources Meet the Needs?

22 October, Geneva: The yearly GHA Report highlights up-to-date trends in humanitarian financing. The event highlighted that, although funding for humanitarian response has increased, gaps in funding persist. A radical change in the way the humanitarian system works is needed, including in the way we programme our response; bringing development and relief closer together; providing greater support to local and national institutions; ensuring access of funding to NGOs and tapping in to new sources of funding. [Read](#)

Upcoming Events

12 November: New York IASC Event - Briefing on the Draft Resolution on "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations"

14 November: New York IASC Event - Communicating with Communities

17 November: Geneva IASC Event - Briefing on Colombia

18 November: Geneva IASC Event - Briefing on Ukraine

[the GHA 2014 Report.](#)

Communicating with Communities (CwC)

21 October, Geneva: [A report](#) on "Understanding the Information and Communication Needs Among IDPs in Northern Iraq" was released in August 2014 and highlighted the importance of access to information for Iraqi communities and how it impacts on their ability to cope with the current humanitarian crisis. CwC helps to understand the specific needs of the community, prevent mistrust and rumours, and ensures that affected populations are able to access relief services, empowering communities to demand accountability.

Briefing on the Sahel

15 October, New York: Robert Piper, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, gave an update on the humanitarian situation in nine countries of the Sahel region. He emphasized the lack of long term planning by Agencies and the fact that greater investment in the region and regional preparedness need urgent prioritization as there are major risks that could result in deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Sahel. [Read more about the current humanitarian status of the region.](#)

World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)

9 September and 10 October Geneva and New York: Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the WHS secretariat, and her colleagues met with IASC organizations to discuss the ideas emerging from the WHS consultations and to review progress in developing the four pre-identified themes. [Read more about the Regional Consultations.](#)

Briefing on Mali

5 October, New York: David Gressly, DSRSG/RC/HC for Mali, briefed on the humanitarian situation at a time when the Government is engaged in peace talks with rebel groups of the northern region. The security of humanitarian workers and protecting humanitarian space in this complex security environment was emphasized. The situation remains fragile with particular challenges of malnutrition and displacement. [Read more about Mali.](#)

Briefing on UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER)

26 September, New York: Anthony Banbury, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMEER, discussed the Ebola Response Strategy with IASC Partners. Topics covered included UNMEER's composition; the plan of action; staffing; resource allocation; and civil-military coordination. [Read about](#)

26 November: Geneva IASC Event - Sphere Training Session

4 December: New York IASC Event - Lessons from Somalia famine 2011

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

IASC Gender Handbook: Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs - Equal Opportunities



Photo: WFP/Abeer Etefa

[The Gender Handbook](#) aims to provide actors in the field with guidance on gender analysis, planning and actions to ensure that the needs, contributions and capacities of women, girls, boys and men are considered in all aspects of humanitarian response.

Niger, Dosso, Village Koumari.

[UNMEER](#).

IRIN News and the Future of Humanitarian Reporting

24 September, Geneva: IRIN News was the world's first humanitarian news service, founded by OCHA 20 years ago. It remains the leading source for credible humanitarian news, reporting and analysis from the frontlines of conflict and natural disasters. Trends in humanitarian reporting such as "parachute reporting"; the struggle against "disaster fatigue"; the blurring roles and boundaries of journalists in the field; competition by aid agencies for media coverage, leading to a distortion of facts; and the growth of cyber space were discussed, along with the future role of [IRIN News](#), which will become an independent media non-profit in 2015.

OPR Briefing on South Sudan

22 September, Geneva: An Operational Peer Review (OPR) of South Sudan was carried out in July 2014 following the Level 3 (L3) System-Wide Emergency declaration on 11 February 2014. It focused on four areas of the response: leadership; the humanitarian programme cycle; coordination; and accountability to affected people.

Briefing on Tacloban, Phillipines

22 September, New York: In March 2014, the first Tacloban Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan was launched to address emergency, recovery, and long term rehabilitation needs, with a focus on housing people in safer areas. The event gave an introduction on the lessons from Tacloban, highlighting concerns on the timely release of funding and the registration and coordination of NGOs. [Read about Tacloban's Recovery and Sustainable Development.](#)

IASC SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Meetings held included:

- **1-2 October:** [Gender Reference Group](#) Strategic Planning Meeting.
- **27 October:** [Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience](#) Plenary Meeting.
- **30-31 October:** [Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support](#) Annual Meeting.

Upcoming TT and RG Meetings:

18 November: Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action Task Team Retreat (Geneva)

19 November: Humanitarian Financing Task Team Meeting

21 November: AAP/PSEA Task Team Retreat (Geneva)

For more information or to join the groups,
please visit the [IASC Subsidiary Bodies
webpage.](#)



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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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