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IASC News Update - April 2015

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## News and Highlights from the IASC Community

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



*Rescuers at work in Kathmandu, Nepal. Credit: UNDP Asia Pacific*

## LATEST NEWS

### [Nepal earthquake - emergency response unfolding, cluster activation and Flash Appeal](#)

The 7.8 earthquake that struck Nepal on 25 April affected over eight million people in 39 districts, killing over 5,006 people and injuring more than 10,194 (as of 29 April). As many homes and buildings have collapsed and people are afraid of aftershocks, thousands have been sleeping in makeshift tents. Immediately responding to the Government of Nepal's request for international assistance, a United Nations Disaster Assessment and

Coordination (UNDAC) team was deployed to help coordinate the search and rescue and response efforts. Needs assessments and relief efforts (including incoming assistance from various agencies) have been hampered and delayed because of damaged infrastructure and limited capacity at Kathmandu airport. The ERC designated the Resident Coordinator Mr. Jamie McGoldrick to act as Humanitarian Coordinator and activated the following clusters to support the Government: Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Early Recovery, Education, Emergency Shelter, Emergency Telecommunications, Food Security, Health, Logistics, Nutrition, Protection (sub-clusters: Child Protection, Gender Based Violence) and WASH. On 29 April, a [Flash Appeal for a total of US\\$415 million was launched](#), prioritizing food, water and sanitation, food security, emergency shelter, healthcare items and protection.

## Emergency alert in Burundi

[Civil unrest erupted on Sunday 26 April in Bujumbura](#), the capital of Burundi, after the ruling CNDD-FDD party elected President Pierre Nkurunziza with an overwhelming majority (88%) the day before as its candidate for the 26 June presidential elections. Nkurunziza has already served two terms since 2005. Many actors (including the UN) have warned that an attempt to seek a third term is unconstitutional and contrary to the spirit of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi that ended a decade of civil war in the country. Widespread intimidation and arrests of rights activists were reported as well as efforts to shut down media outlets. Several people were reportedly killed. As of 26 April almost 25,000 people had fled the country, mainly to Rwanda (20,408), Democratic Republic of Congo (4,000) and Tanzania (100). While no urgent humanitarian needs have yet emerged in Burundi, the newly re-established Humanitarian Country Team has endorsed the [inter-agency contingency plan for the upcoming elections](#).

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- Alert on increase of humanitarian needs in Yemen.
- Update on the World Humanitarian Summit consultations and thematic discussions.



*OCHA warned that the growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen had alarming consequences for the education and well-being of children. Credit: OCHA*

## Increasing humanitarian needs in Yemen

Since the escalation of the Yemen conflict in March, 1,244 people were killed and 5,044 injured, including a large number of civilians. At least 150,000 people have been displaced, food prices have risen by more than 40% in some locations and fuel prices have quadrupled. The country's health system is at imminent risk of collapse due to shortages of

medical supplies and fuel for generators. In this context, protection of civilians and humanitarian access remain top priorities. The overall Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan for 2015 will be revised in the coming weeks. Meanwhile the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to fully fund the Flash Appeal for Yemen by contributing US\$274 million. These funds will be channelled through the existing Yemen Humanitarian Pooled Fund, managed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and accessible to UN and non-UN partners.

Following the evacuations of international staff from Yemen, a coordination hub was established in Amman, Jordan. The UN and partners are exploring ways of redeploying international staff to Yemen. In the meantime, the ERC activated the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster for Yemen, with WFP as Cluster Lead Agency, to address the telecommunications challenges already faced and to provide support to organizations in the event of a communication failure in Yemen.

## Update on the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) consultations

The World Humanitarian Summit process is fast nearing the end of its Regional Consultations stage, with the [Middle East and North Africa Regional Consultations](#) held from 3-5 March being the most recent. Six key issues were discussed in Amman: (1) Protection of Civilians; (2) Humanitarian Access; (3) Protracted Crises and Displacement; (4) Localizing Humanitarian Response; (5) Emergency Preparedness; and (6) Humanitarian Financing. In the discussions on localizing response, it was noted that humanitarian coordination mechanisms should be made more inclusive, complementary and accessible to local organizations. There was a call for the IASC to adapt to better reflect the diversity of humanitarian actors and the challenges faced within specific regions, including through its possible decentralization. For the next regional consultation in Guatemala, 5-7 May 2015, [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), the topic of [Displacement and Violence](#) will be discussed along with the four WHS themes. Consultations for the Pacific Region will take place in New Zealand on 30 June - 2 July 2015 and for South and Central Asia in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 28-30 July 2015.

### World Humanitarian Summit Thematic Discussions

The WHS held a second face-to-face meeting of the thematic teams in Bonn, Germany, from 21-23 April 2015. The participants discussed the seven action areas emerging from the WHS consultations discussions of the four core themes: (1) Ensuring affected people, particularly women, have a stronger voice and greater role in humanitarian action; (2) Confronting violations of International Humanitarian Law and finding new ways to protect and assist people in conflict; (3) Localizing preparedness and response; (4) Developing new approaches for managing recurrent and protracted crises; (5) Adapting the humanitarian system to new contexts, actors and challenges; (6) Collective action for funding humanitarian crises; and (7) Creating an enabling environment and investment in innovation to better deal with current and future humanitarian challenges. Meeting participants discussed the four core WHS themes and recommendations for each

emerging action area. On 20 April 2015, the [UN Secretary-General gave a briefing on the preparations of the World Humanitarian Summit to Member States in New York and Geneva.](#)

## IASC EVENTS IN APRIL

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

### Humanitarian situation in Nigeria

Geneva, 15 April 2015: Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, Mr. Safiedin, provided an overview of the humanitarian situation in Nigeria focusing on the impact of Boko Haram, with 1.2 million people displaced, 5.6 million directly affected and 4.6 million food insecure. Challenges and concerns faced by humanitarians and local authorities, including lack of funding (appeal is 11% funded), limited Government and private sector support and reluctance by donors to fund an overall rich country were discussed. A 90-day work plan has been developed to operationalize the appeal.

### Humanitarian and Security Situation in Darfur

Geneva, 22 April 2015: Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Darfur, Mr. Adham Musallam, provided an overview of the humanitarian situation – which is characterized by new displacements – and highlighted various challenges. In addition to decreasing funding for Darfur, the challenges include the need for accurate data in order to substantiate needs assessments; timely humanitarian access for in-kind assistance and capacity building measures; and further improvement of coordination. Participants discussed the challenges related to the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID and reductions in security staff as well as impact on the protection of civilians.

### DisasterReady.org

New York, 24 April 2015: Mr. Atish Gonsalves, [Director of DisasterReady.org](#) which currently offers

## PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

### Common Framework for Preparedness

As part of the IASC Transformative Agenda, the [Common Framework for Preparedness](#) supports the development of preparedness capacity in a more coherent manner using a systematic country level approach that collectively assesses capacity and need, uses this assessment to jointly develop programmes and plans, and coherently implements these programmes and plans to strengthen preparedness. Preparedness is situated within an overall, nationally led, disaster risk management (DRM) context, which includes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

*Other developments of interest in the humanitarian field include the following:*

A guidance paper on [Humanitarian Organizations' Participation in Military Events](#), training and other major events was produced by OCHA's Civil-Military

approximately 500 free e-learning modules on critical topics such as Humanitarianism, Program/Operations, Protection, Staff Welfare, Management & Leadership, Staff Safety & Security, and Soft Skills. DisasterReady has over 45,000 members to date; and is predicting to have over 75,000 by the end of 2015. Partners of DisasterReady include CARE, IFRC, OCHA, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and others.

Coordination sections, aiming at improving the coherence, coordination and efficiency engagement of the IASC members with military organizations. This paper includes reflections from InterAction, World Vision and WFP.

The [Sphere 2020 strategic plan](#) for the upcoming six years has just been published. The plan defines an ambitious agenda for Sphere to continue fulfilling its unique role within the humanitarian sector as a leading standards-setting initiative.

## IASC PRIORITIES

### Recent Developments

**Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT):** Efforts are being made to improve the standardization of financial reporting and to better align various reporting tools. An online repository on humanitarian financing studies and analyses will be created on ReliefWeb. On top, the work on re-negotiating donor requirements to contribute to reducing the burden on recipient organizations is moving forward.

**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Reference Group:** UNICEF and the Government of the Netherlands are convening the [Symposium on Children's Mental Health and Well-being in Protracted Armed Conflicts](#) in The Hague from 26 to 28 May, in partnership with the Child Protection Working Group, the IASC Reference Group on MHPSS, City University of New York, International

**Gender Reference Group:** The IASC Gender Policy Review working draft has been finalized for review by the Steering Group composed of Oxfam, OCHA, CARE International and UN Women. The Gender Policy Review will be discussed at an IASC Working Group ad hoc meeting which is tentatively scheduled for 11 June. A side event on gender at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment will feature a panel discussion on the Role of Crisis Affected Women and Girls in Shaping an Effective, Inclusive and Coordinated Future of Humanitarian Affairs. Discussions to adapt the Gender Marker are on going and will be informed by experience and case studies based on utilizing the Gender Marker for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

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

At their 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, the IASC Senior Focal Points on PSEA discussed the

Medical Corps, IOM, Johns Hopkins University, MHPSS.net, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance/U.S. Agency for International Development, Regional Psychological Support Initiative (REPPSI), Save the Children, Terre Des Hommes, UNHCR, WHO and World Vision.

**Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA):** Based on the discussions at the IASC Principals meeting in December 2014, a new Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas has been developed to be discussed by the IASC Principals in May. At the April meeting, ILO presented its work on Livelihoods in Post-Emergency Urban Contexts. The Project on Urban Food Security Assessment was also presented. The main objective of the six field studies undertaken as part of the project is to establish what elements need to be included in an assessment tool for urban areas to assess differences with rural areas. In preparation for the Global Urban Consultation in Barcelona in June, the draft recommendations "Urban Dimensions of Humanitarian Action" was shared with the Reference Group for comments.

On 13 May, the UNHCR Community-Based Protection Team in Geneva and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) in Malaysia are organizing a [webinar on the role of community-based protection for refugees in urban settings](#).

**Global Protection Cluster Task Team on the Protection Priority (GPC TT PP):** The draft report of the Whole of System Review of Protection in Humanitarian Assistance was presented

framework of the PSEA Minimum Operating Standards as well as the pilot (CBCM) project in Ethiopia and DRC. InterAction is managing a community of practice for its members to share lessons learned and best practices; UNICEF and WFP have found establishing inter-divisional working groups at the agency level useful to deal with PSEA issues jointly with other forms of misconduct. A report on the progress made in implementing PSEA Action Plans will be presented at the IASC Principals meeting in Nairobi.

An interactive and very informative Webinar on AAP was held on 16 April organised by STAIT, with participation of Jasmine Whitbread (SCF and AAP champion), Preeta Law (UNHCR co-chair AAP TT), Toby Lanzer (HC in South Sudan ) and field colleagues working on AAP. A recording of this and other webinars is available [online](#).

## IASC UPCOMING EVENTS

**5 May:** Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Intervention in the Aftermath of conflict: a Development Perspective (New York, UAE, UN Woman, OCHA)

**7 May:** French language Webinar on accountability to Affected People (STAIT)

**13 May:** IASC Ad Hoc Principals meeting on the L3 emergencies (Central African Republic, Iraq and South Sudan)

**13 May:** Webinar Community Based Protection in Urban Areas (UNHCR and ICMC)

**20 May:** Humanitarian Financing Task Team

to Member States and international organizations in Geneva on 13 April and discussed by the Global Protection Cluster Task Team on Implementing IASC Protection Priority Tasks. Agencies' feedback to the draft report was received and is being considered by the consultants. The final report is expected end of May.

**Preparedness and resilience:** In close collaboration with the United Nations Development Group on Transitions, the Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience continues to work on the Guiding Principles on fostering resilience. The Guiding Principles constitute a means to identify a more inclusive framework for humanitarian and development actors to work together.

**20 May:** Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience ad hoc meeting

**21-22 May:** IASC Principals meeting (Nairobi)

**26 May:** Task Team on Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action

**26-28 May:** Symposium on Children's Mental Health and Well-being in Protracted Armed Conflicts

**27 May:** Briefing by IFRC in International Disaster Response Law (Geneva)

**11 June:** IASC Ad Hoc Working Group meeting on Gender

**16 June:** Humanitarian Financing Task Team – Annual 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](mailto:iasccorrespondence@un.org)

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