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IASC News Update - January 2015

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## News and Highlights from the IASC Community

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Welcome back to the fifth issue of *IASC News*.

We welcome your feedback and input to [iasccorrespondence@un.org](mailto:iasccorrespondence@un.org).



*During the year, the IASC secretariat hosted 52 events, the IASC Principals held 16 meetings, 14 of which were ad hoc meetings to discuss country operations, and the IASC Working Group held two face-to-face meetings to discuss 17 different policy issues. The IASC Emergency Directors held 27 meetings, focusing on ongoing crises, the Transformative Agenda and optimising workflow and effectiveness. The EDGs also conducted three field missions to South Sudan and Sudan; Yemen and Somalia; Mali and the regional hub in Dakar.*

## A Year in Review

2014 was a challenging year stretching the humanitarian community to its utmost. The Ebola outbreak that began in early 2014 is the worst outbreak of this virus in history, and has been described as “the most severe acute public health emergency in modern times”. It resulted in the formation of the first ever emergency health mission (UNMEER). The Middle East faced multiple crises including an escalation of conflicts in Syria, Gaza and Iraq. Fighting broke out in the Ukraine after the secession of Crimea, and in South Sudan, conflict and the risk of famine continued while the year saw another typhoon in the Philippines. IASC Principals activated two System-Wide Level Three Emergency (L3) Responses in 2014 – South Sudan and Iraq, on top of the two already existing L3s in the CAR and Syria which helped to mobilize the IASC and provide the L3 surge required to alleviate suffering. Evaluations, reviews and lessons learnt

highlight progress made in improving coordination. While more clarity on coordination structures and roles has been achieved, and overall humanitarian coordination has been enhanced, more still needs to be done to minimize process and maximize outputs.

## LATEST NEWS

### [ERC Announces new HC in Ukraine and new DHC's in Iraq and Nigeria](#)

Following consultations with IASC partners, Neal Walker has been designated as Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine for an initial period of six months as of January 20th. Dominik Bartsch and Munir Safiieldin were designated Deputy Humanitarian Coordinators for Iraq and Nigeria, starting on the 25th of January and early February respectively.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- The IASC Principals approved the Haiti proposed humanitarian coordination mechanisms for 2015, including the deactivation of the four clusters in Haiti which had remained active in 2014 (Health, WASH, CCCM/Shelter and Protection)
- Ban Ki Moon appoints a Panel of Experts to select the next ERC.



*Children review cholera awareness and prevention posters during a class. Credit: UNICEF/Marco Dormino.*

### [Haiti Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms for 2015](#)

Following the decrease in the number of IDPs and people in need of humanitarian assistance as well as the declining number cases of cholera in Haiti, the Humanitarian Country Team proposed the deactivation of the cluster system for 2015, as approved by the IASC Principals. Humanitarian needs in the country will remain high in 2015 as a result of new outbreaks of cholera end 2014 and continued food insecurity. Some 500,000 Haitians are at risk of natural disasters. The 2015 humanitarian response will be systematically linked to development priorities. Alternative coordination mechanisms, involving national entities supported by UN agencies and NGOs will replace the cluster mechanism.

### [Panel of Experts Appointed to advise on the appointment of the next ERC](#)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has reportedly appointed a Panel of experts who will help the UN decide on the next ERC. Candidates will be interviewed in the weeks to come. NGOs have called for a fair and transparent process to find a person with profound expertise in disaster relief.

## IASC EVENTS IN JANUARY

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

### Briefing by IOM on the Humanitarian Situation in Iraq

**12 January, New York:** The briefing was provided by Dr. Thomas Lothar Weiss, IOM Chief of Mission and Director, Baghdad (Iraq), and provided a stark outlook on the situation in Iraq, with over 5 million people in need of assistance. Many of those cannot be reached because of lack of access to IS controlled areas. The crises in the region remain highly complex and interconnected. Challenges and priorities in 2015 include immediate emergency response, early recovery and community stabilization including the provision of support to the government to better address internal displacement, migration, winterization and protection issues. Stay up to date on the humanitarian situation with the [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) and [Situation Report](#) on Iraq, or view the [Strategic Response Plan for 2015](#).

### Update on the GA humanitarian resolution negotiations

**27 January, Geneva:** On 12 and 23 December, the General Assembly adopted resolutions relevant to its agenda items 69 (a), (b) and (c) on effective assistance on humanitarian assistance efforts. The IASC community was given a briefing by Yasin Samatar from the Policy Development and Studies Branch of OCHA. Achievements in the area of IDPs were highlighted with Member States recognizing the need for durable solutions; the Gender Marker being recognised as an important tool; the explicit mention- for the first time- of the right to sexual reproductive health. With respect to the Resolution on Natural Disasters, the emphasis remains on risk management and the prioritization of an anticipatory approach. Issues that will be pushed forward for inclusion in this year's Report by the Secretary-General include the White Helmets initiative, gender and the geography of humanitarian workers, as well as the Ebola response (coordination, socio-economic impacts and protection of healthcare workers); and other.

### Review of the 2014 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and Update

## Upcoming Events

**10 February, New York:** Preparations for the 2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

**February, Geneva (date TBC):** Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability

**10-11 March, Rome:** IASC Working Group Meeting

## PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

### IASC Product Guideline



With the aim of ensuring IASC Products are of high quality, well targeted, widely distributed, and effectively implemented. the [IASC Product Guideline](#) provides tips and advice on the development, publication and distribution of IASC products with the aim of increasing their relevance and use in the field.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

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

UNHCR study, [Living in the Shadows](#), shows rapid deterioration in living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

IOM has released a publication, [Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost During Migration](#), which examines migrant border-

## on the Preparations for the 2015 Segment

**27 January, Geneva:** OCHA's policy section provided a short brief on the preparations for the upcoming 2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) which will be held in Geneva from 17-19 June. It is anticipated that the 2015 Segment will consist of two High Level Panels on Humanitarian Financing and on Effectiveness, accompanied by 16-20 side events and the Humanitarian Trade Fair. The content of the side events are presently being decided, but some possibilities include the WHS, the Post 2015 Agenda and the CERF. The next formal briefing on the Humanitarian Segment will be held in New York on 10 February.

related deaths.

[Shelter Projects 2013-2014](#), the fifth edition in a series by the IFRC, UNHCR and UNHabitat, offers unique reference material for shelter and settlement practitioners worldwide.

A study on "[Ten Years After Humanitarian Reform: How Have Internally Displaced Persons Fared?](#)" identifies shortcomings in the ways in which the international community responds to IDPs and makes recommendations aimed at improving IDP protection and assistance.

## IASC SUBSIDIARY BODIES

### Recent Developments:

**Global Protection Cluster (GPC):** The consultants for the independent whole-of-system Protection Review undertook a mission to South Sudan mid-January, where meetings were held with field-level aid workers as well as local communities in Juba and Bentiu. In February the consultants will travel to Myanmar and Syria.

**Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action (RPHA):** On 20 January the Task Team met to discuss a concept note for the OCHA-led Risk Tolerance study and the submission of observations to the Peace Operations review panel. An extension of the deadline for completion of the UN Integration Survey was agreed upon. The survey can be accessed at the link below until 8 February:

<https://www.research.net/s/IASCsurvey>

**Gender Reference Group:** The Gender RG issued an updated version for the Ebola Crisis Gender Alert, which seeks to highlight the most pressing issues relating to ensuring gender-equality is a central

**Humanitarian Financing (HFTT):** The Task Team's retreat took place on 21-22 January. A wide range of topics were discussed including challenges in accessing country-based pooled funds, donor conditions, bridging relief and development, Good Humanitarian Donorship, and the World Humanitarian Summit. The Task Team agreed on a revised draft workplan for 2015 with clear priorities and timelines. The final report of the retreat will shortly be available on the IASC website.

### Upcoming Meetings:

**11 February:** AAP/PSEA Task Team - PSEA Workstream Meeting

**16 February:** AAP/PSEA Task Team Meeting

**18 February:** HFTT Meeting

**19 February:** Reference Group for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas Meeting

facet in the strategic planning and implementation of the continuing humanitarian response and the transition to recovery.

**24 February:** RPHA Task Team Meeting

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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