

IASC Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas

Progress Report 2014-2016:

Overall Goal

The MHCUA Reference Group serves as a repository of knowledge for urban humanitarian response and lessons learned exchange as well as substantive support to important urban responses.

Tasks

As per IASC Principals recommendations, The RG is working on:

1. Adopting Area-based Approaches: with activities designed and coordinated through geographical/spatial, community-city-based and inter-sectoral approaches, better linking people's settlements with their livelihoods and city services
2. Surging IASC Assistance within Local Governments and Partners fitting for purpose. Entering into more operational support and collaborative analysis to make sure local efforts are not duplicated rather empowered, and to ensure a coordinated evidence-based approach
3. Facilitating Affected Communities Direct Engagement for Enhanced Accountability

TOP ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE September 2015

Progress in implementation of the IASC MHCUA Strategy and First Action Plan 2011-2014 was perceived as highly satisfactory by IASC agencies and partners.

Although many initial members of the group have changed over the implementation period, there is a consistent number of agencies and organizations that continue to attend, giving continuity to the work plans and showing interest in the achievements.

Most IASC agencies produced results and specific deliverables consistent with the six objectives of the MHCUA Strategy and Action Plan and improving the effectiveness of their responses in urban areas.

Some of the key accomplishments include:

- The RG has nominated a co-chair (Gaia van der Esch, Deputy Director – IMPACT Initiatives) to further strengthen its outreach and capacity;
- The RG has undergone an outreach process to organizations and individual experts involved in urban humanitarian responses, in order to enlarge the capacity of the RG to respond to humanitarian crises in urban areas and linking this to longer-term solutions. The RG meetings currently include UN agencies, international NGOs, donors, as well as network of urban professionals and local governance;
- The RG has been highly involved in the creation of the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis. Among other, the RG has attended the Alliance meetings and has the lead in defining the performance indicators for the Urban Alliance, and will participate to the launch of the Alliance during the WHS;
- The RG has also developed a side event on “Adopting and Systematizing settlement-based approaches in humanitarian responses in urban crisis” for the WHS, which will take place on 24th of May and with participation of high-level panelists;
- The RG prepared IASC key messages to inform preparation and participation of the IASC at the Habitat III conference in October 2016 where a new Urban Agenda will be adopted by Member States;
- As part of the RG, partners have continued to implement the action plan, with the following achievements:
 - The establishment and piloting of the UDOC, including multi-stakeholder training;
 - Urban profiling Guidance provided by JIPS in numerous protracted crisis, including webinars;
 - Revision of HEART by WHO and release of WHO-UNHABITAT global report on urban health;
 - Finalisation of case studies under the project “Adapting to an Urban World”, led by the gFSC and WFP;
 - Roll-out of the Graduation Approach to enable sustainable livelihoods by UNHCR, with other pilot countries to be identified by further partners;
 - The implementation of urban consultations “cities in crisis” by IMPACT and UCLG – which will be presented during the WHS in a specific side-event focusing on the role of local authorities in urban crises.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES UNTIL THE END OF 2016

Priority activities for the remaining part of 2016 will include:

- Participating at the **Habitat III conference**, including the potential organization of a side event on linkages between humanitarian and development actors in urban crisis (application for side event submitted);
- Follow-up to the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit;
- Continued implementation of Action Plan.
- Development of performance indicators for the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis;