

## MEMORANDUM

### IASC REFERENCE GROUP FOR MEETING HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN URBAN AREAS

9 DECEMBER 2013 – MEETING MINUTES

#### **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:**

UNDP/BCPR-Early Recovery Cluster  
UN-Habitat Nairobi  
UN-Habitat Geneva  
UNHCR  
FAO-Resilience and Preparedness Task Team  
Financing for Emergency Preparedness Study Consultant Team  
British Red Cross  
International Refugee  
Global Food Security Cluster  
Shelter Center  
International Rescue  
IOM

#### **MEETING MINUTES:**

I. Syria Urban Advisor and Urban Analysis Update (David Evans, UN-Habitat Nairobi, Syria Emergency Director)

Discussion Summary: The IASC Strategy for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas calls for strengthening technical surge capacity for urban emergencies, including the fielding of an urban advisor(s) to the HC/HCTs to provide specialized urban expertise and an urban area-based analysis to response strategy development and cluster/sectoral analysis and programming (Strategic Objective 2). UN-Habitat is piloting this critical urban advisory role in the complex environment of the Syrian and its regional crisis. In spite of obstacles in humanitarian access and security that exist in the Syrian context, impressive results have been achieved that corroborate the value-addition of this role for a higher impact humanitarian response. The RG MHCUA noted among the noteworthy results of the urban advisor: (a) ensuring that the SHARP and RRP5/6 focus on the urban context for the strategic response plan by providing expert urban advice to the HC/UNCT; (b) informing the Comprehensive Regional Strategy with an urban focus in linking relief-recovery-development; (c) developing Rapid Urban Profiles for key Syrian cities (Homs and Aleppo) which provide a spatial diagnosis of damages, needs and vulnerabilities as well as local capacities in these key urban centers to inform cluster analyses and strategies; (d) cultivating significant working relationships with important Syrian urban partners including the Ministry of Local Administration (MOLA) and Syrian Syndicates of Engineers and Architects; (e) integrating so-called 'opposition-controlled' urban areas into an overall strategy of assistance to urban areas; and, (f) developing Urban Snapshots-The Urban Snapshot series examines critical urban issues relevant to the Syrian crisis and explores response options and approaches, including shelter (see attached Urban Snapshots). A major lesson learned is that, as much as the urban analysis and diagnosis is valuable, the urban advisor needs to be more grounded in field realities

by undertaking urban activities design and implementation in order to be a fully relevant partner in the HCT/UNCT in Syria.

Action Point: RG MHCUA requested that the urban advisor's local contacts in Syrian urban centers be provided for strengthening the networks of urban professionals among RG MHCUA agency partners in Syria.

II. Financing for Emergency Preparedness Study: Summary of Findings and Next Steps (FAO/Resilience and Preparedness TT Sandra Aviles and consultant team)

Discussion Summary: Enhanced preparedness in urban areas is one of the six strategic objectives of the IASC Strategy for MHCUA. Financing for preparedness is a key issue for this enhanced capacity and is becoming increasingly critical given increased urbanization and concentration of economic wealth in urban areas worldwide. A presentation of the key findings of Phase 2 of the emergency preparedness funding study was made to RG MHCUA as well as to Member States earlier in the day which include the following:

(a) A holistic and comprehensive understanding of emergency preparedness is required to support the necessary national and international systems to '*minimise loss of life and livelihoods, to ensure effective response to all crises, natural and man-made*'; (b) Emergency preparedness undertaken by the international community are piece-meal in nature and result in a lack of coordination and gaps in national preparedness systems; (c) Evidence from five country case studies (Myanmar, Niger, Haiti, Philippines and Sudan) points to a high level of unmet need for preparedness: increased levels of funding, channelled in a way that support sustainable national systems of preparedness, are required; (d) Emergency preparedness operates in support of reducing the humanitarian caseload over the longer term; (e) There is no conception of resilience that does not include preparedness as a fundamental component; therefore financing to preparedness is central to any pursuit of resilience; (f) Change is required to better finance emergency preparedness and a set of options to strengthen existing financing mechanisms in support of emergency preparedness, including the establishment of a global dedicated fund for preparedness. Among the next steps include: (a) launch in New York; (b) GHD to consider recommendations and next steps; (c) profiling preparedness and its funding mechanisms at the World Humanitarian Summit. Links to follow.

Action Point: RG MHCUA is invited to provide comments on: (a) emergency preparedness study from the urban perspective; (b) key messages for IASC Principals (attached).

III. Update on IASC Strategy MHCUA Strategic Objective 5: Restoration of Livelihoods and the Development of Guidelines for Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security in post-Emergency Urban Areas (Yvonne Klynman: Global Food Security Cluster)

Discussion Summary: GFSC introduced RG MHCUA partner to a proposed activity – 'Adapting Food Security Systems and Tools to an Urban World' – ,being undertaken in cooperation with WFP, for undertaking work toward the development of guidance and toolkit for enhanced food/nutrition security in post-emergency urban contexts at the request of a number of country clusters. The activity will compile existing information, identify gaps and identify new tools to achieve the objective. Among the key issues is

identification of indicators for urban food insecurity in post-emergencies and Sphere-like standards for humanitarians. GFSC invites RG MHCUA partners to comment on the attached concept note.

GFSC provided an update on work in the Philippines. The current appeal includes 27 projects for \$187million funding request for: food distribution, seed distribution to support the upcoming planting season, tree planting and preservation (esp for food-crop trees like coconuts) and cash-for-work to improve cash situation of affected populations. GOP is co-facilitating the food security cluster in Tacloban.

Action Point: GFSC requests RG MHCUA partners to identify opportunities for technical collaboration and/or financial co-sharing on this new activity.

IV. AOB

1. At the request of Concern-Kenya, who was unable to participate in the meeting because of the need to manage an emergency evacuation of staff, requested the RG MHCUA Chair, George Deikun, to provide an update on the five-year 'Indicator Development for Surveillance of Urban Emergencies Project' in Kenya including slum areas of Nairobi and Kisumu (brief attached).

Action Point: (a) Concern-Kenya invites RG MHUCA partners to a Nairobi workshop on 27 Feb 2014 of the TWG for monitoring urban emergencies; (b) Concern-Kenya invites RG MHCUA partners to join the Urban Vulnerability Forum, newly established in Kenya.

2. UNDP-BCPR announced that GOP has requested a PDNA including technical assistance from the UN community, particularly in identifying expert personnel. The PDNA is expected to start-up in early January.

3. Next meeting of the RG MHCUA: early February, 2014. RG MHCUA members are encouraged to submit agenda items to the Chair and to invite interested partners to participate in the meeting.