FINAL STRATEGY FOR MEETING HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN URBAN AREAS

I.   INTRODUCTION

The **aim of this IASC Strategy** is to recommend actions which humanitarian actors can take to make their responses to humanitarian crises in urban areas more effective and thereby save more lives and accelerate early recovery. Six strategic objectives and supporting actions are proposed which will enhance their expertise and operational capacities in urban areas. This Strategy further addresses and prioritizes the humanitarian challenges identified in the Initial IASC Strategy for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas of 2009.[1]

This Strategy includes a **Two-Year Action Plan** of priority actions to be implemented by IASC agencies and other interested partners. This Strategy and its Action Plan proposes that individual IASC agencies will choose those actions to implement which are of highest priority to their operations and to self-monitor their progress. Progress under the Strategy and Action Plan should be reviewed by the IASC Working Group after two years to determine follow-on steps.

The **principal objectives** of this Strategy are to:
- consolidate and enhance current expertise of humanitarian actors
- build their respective strategies for enhancing urban programming and response implementation
- identify good practices in tools and assessments, opportunities to further adapt rural tools and identify remaining gaps in order to improve operational capacity and impact of urban-based humanitarian assistance
- strengthen four key elements – partnerships, host country national and local leadership, preparedness planning and understanding/analysis of vulnerability, community resilience and beneficiary targeting.

The Strategy takes into account:
- Different types of international actor and mandates: United Nations agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, IOM, NGOs (international, national and local)
- Different types of crises: slow or sudden onset, natural or conflict-related disasters and complex emergencies
- No one assistance strategy fits all crises - adaptation to each crisis is required
- Need for advocacy with donors to better understand and to support urban relief efforts

II. URBANIZATION AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

In 2008, 3.3 billion people lived in urban areas, surpassing for the first time over 50% of the total global population. Of the total 3.3 billion urban dwellers today, one third or 1 billion live in precarious, under-served informal settlements and slums which compound their vulnerability to humanitarian crises and loss of life. By 2030 the urban population is predicted to exceed five billion and 80% of these urban dwellers will reside in towns and cities of the developing world. An urban area is a built-

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[1] The fifteen challenges identified in 2009 Initial Strategy TF report are: (1) Identifying and collaborating with urban institutions, authorities and partners; (2) Inter-agency coordination in an urban context; (3) Identification and targeting beneficiaries; (4) Adjusting organizational tools, procedures and capacities to urban requirements; (5) Linkages between humanitarian response and risk reduction in urban areas; (6) Linking humanitarian assistance to recovery and sustainability; (7) Urban shelter challenges; (8) Housing, land and property (HLP) rights and issues in urban areas; (9) Protection challenges; (10) Gender Based Violence; (11) Violence and security; (12) Health risks in urban areas; (13) Food assistance, security and livelihoods; (14) Water, sanitation and hygiene; (15) Vulnerability to climate change impacts.

up or densely populated area containing the city proper and continuously settled peri-urban areas[2]. Cities are also hubs of trade and industry. This is an important factor in why cities in the developing world are growing so fast and why they attract increasing numbers of migrants.

The fastest urbanizing region is Africa with a current urban growth rate of 3.3 per cent per annum. Asia is growing at 2.6 per cent per annum. In both these regions, the urban population is currently just under 40 per cent. However, in terms of sheer numbers, Asia currently does and will continue to house the maximum number of people in its cities and towns. Africa, although least urbanized today, will be home to 1.2 billion urban dwellers by 2050, with a growing majority percentage of youths. In these regions, urban growth is accentuated by the increasing numbers of refugees and IDPs who migrate to cities. In Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 77 per cent of the population lived in urban areas in 2005, and this region is growing on an average at 1.7 per cent per annum. Urban growth in developed countries takes place at a much slower pace, at an annual rate of 0.75 per cent. [3]

Why should urbanization be a critical concern for humanitarians?

There are important differences between urban and rural areas which need to be considered by humanitarians.

- The scale of rapid urbanization and the growing numbers of people at risk of a humanitarian crisis or needing assistance is a challenge compared to more sparsely populated rural areas.
- The concentration of resources, assets and services in cities can lead to more delibiltating impacts of disasters, conflict and violence. These resources are also part of the resilience and strengths of urban centers for response delivery, if not destroyed.
- The complexity of urban areas pose challenges in terms of varied partners but also presents an opportunity for productive partnerships for relief assistance delivery. This complexity, compared to rural settings, demands a deeper knowledge of the spatial and social structure of cities and the potential for stronger partnerships with municipal and national governments, civil society and communities. This calls for a paradigm shift in humanitarian assistance in urban areas based on a district or community-based, rather than, individual beneficiary approach so as to forge partnerships for assistance delivery and recovery with actors on the ground in these communities.
- The increasing migration of IDPs, refugees and undocumented (illegal) migrants to cities is creating additional challenges in beneficiary identification and assistance to already marginalized communities in informal settlements and slums which host most of these migrants. Pressure on urban administrations and governance is a growing issue for both humanitarians and beneficiary communities.
- The natural linkages between cities and their peri-urban and rural communities in terms of flow of people, goods and services is another distinctive feature of urban areas for responses.
- The great majority of tools, approaches, policies and practices for humanitarian responses are designed for rural settings. Although many have been adapted for urban areas, their scaling-up and the development of new tools to fill gaps among humanitarians is essential to enhance the impact of humanitarian assistance in urban areas.

What is different about urban-based humanitarian challenges and risks compared to rural ones which compel the need for new approaches?

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[2] Different criteria and methods are currently being used by governments to define "urban". The most commonly used criteria include: Administrative jurisdiction - limiting urban to the boundaries of state or provincial capitals, municipalities or other local jurisdictions; and Population Size - with minimum concentrations ranging broadly, from 200 to 50,000 inhabitants. Other criteria used to define "urban" include the economic base (typically, the proportion of the labor force employed in non-agricultural activities), and availability of urban infrastructure.

[3] UN-HABITAT. State of the World's Cities 2006/7: The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability: 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda, UN-HABITAT (2006) United Nations: Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses and World Urbanization Prospects.

- Rapid, uncontrolled urban growth and densely populated informal settlements in hazard-prone locations, together with the failure of urban authorities to regulate building standards and land-use planning strategies, render significant numbers of people vulnerable to humanitarian crises of even moderate intensity. Over-crowding and make the design and delivery of humanitarian relief more complex compared to rural areas.

- Urban humanitarian crises, typically epidemics, mass evictions, and urban violence unfold in these poorer, denser settlements compounded by the close proximity of individuals and communities and by severe deprivation - the lack of decent shelter on safe and affordable land, limited access to basic services like clean water and sanitation, primary health care and education, and by extreme inequality and exclusion.

- Complex yet fragile urban economies and service systems are particularly susceptible to widespread impacts of disasters or emergencies – destruction of livelihoods of poor urban households and infrastructure and communication systems, loss of food production and disruption of supplies and services to rural areas.

- Urban areas are centers of political power and contestation over scarce resources such as land, water and employment. These characteristics can generate insecurity if civil protection is not effectively in place, making cities, and social groups such as women and children, particularly vulnerable in cases of natural disasters, conflict and other forms of violence carried out by armed groups, gangs, drug cartels or crime syndicates.

- Identifying and targeting beneficiaries for humanitarian assistance in cities are particularly problematic for many humanitarians. Access to densely populated urban areas is often difficult. Conventional methods of needs assessment do not adequately distinguish between the ongoing chronic needs of poor urban households and the more acute vulnerability provoked by a disaster.

- It is faster growing small and medium-sized cities in the developing world which are both less equipped to deal with the problems of urbanization and urban-rural linkages with the impacts of natural disasters or complex emergencies.

III. THE STRATEGY

This Strategy is composed of six strategic objectives for enhancing humanitarian assistance and saving lives and livelihoods in urban areas. The objectives are divided into two broad categories:
- Get the Humanitarian Response Priorities and Initial Strategies Right
- Maximize Sustainability of the Humanitarian Response

Each strategic objective is discussed in terms of issues and gaps and recommended actions.

A.   *Get the Humanitarian Response Priorities and Initial Strategies Right*

Strategic Objective 1: Develop Operational Strategies Early-on that Ensure Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Enhanced Coordination, Impact and Effectiveness of Humanitarian Assistance in Urban Areas

Issues and Gaps

Based on country case studies[4] and prior IASC experience, humanitarian assistance can be more effective when clear and effective strategies for multi-stakeholder partnerships are developed prior to a crisis in a high-risk setting or as early at the outset of an emergency as possible. The

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[4] IASC Task Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas Case Studies for Nairobi/Eldoret, Manila and Haiti, May-June, 2010

stakeholders in these partnerships should include: host national and local governments, disaster response agencies, national NGO, civil society and business actors in urban areas. These strategies need to recognize that the host government must lead, or at a minimum coordinate, an emergency response. This can maximize the use of available institutional capacity for assistance delivery, build local ownership, diminish dependency on assistance and avoid creation of parallel response structures. Findings from the recent Haiti six-month post-earthquake evaluation substantiate the need for local ownership in spite of the loss of government capacity.

International actors usually activate a first phase *rapid strategic assessment* of the scale and scope of the emergency and host country capacity (usually within the first 48 hours), and then a first phase *strategic action plan* (within the next 48 hours). These need to build on in-country capacity among government and NGO partners, even when diminished by a crisis. Key sectors for most emergencies include: WASH, Health, Shelter, Food Security and Protection of Vulnerable Groups.

Recent experience in the aftermath of floods in Manila demonstrates that joint implementation plans with host governments and service providers, including the private sector, are most effective if forged prior to an emergency. This is because agencies are reluctant to take the time required to plan when confronted with an emergency and resort to pre-established (pre-emergency) ways of doing business.

The advantage to humanitarians in these partnerships is that host government agencies and local interlocutors[5] can better ensure that assistance reaches intended beneficiary communities transparently and effectively because they possess:
- knowledge of the hazards and vulnerabilities of beneficiary communities
- institutional resources to complement delivery of assistance by international actors
- community outreach capacity to reach and to engage the most vulnerable beneficiaries
- parallel responsibilities in development sectors to sustain relief investments in disaster risk management, early recovery and reconstruction.

Humanitarian actors should be prepared for 'governance gaps' and manage these through their operational strategies.
- Up-front streamlining decision-making and identifying clear, accountable roles are important to strengthen coordination and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks.
- Because disasters, urban violence or conflict can severely weaken local capacity, humanitarians need to support these functions at the outset of a response, as the post-earthquake Haiti experience pointed out.
- The arrival or presence of large numbers of NGOs, with varying levels of expertise, can present additional coordination challenges.

Recent complex emergencies and natural disasters in Pakistan, Haiti and Kyrgyzstan demonstrate the importance of communities and host families to saving lives when they support affected populations. They can be critical to building resilience of communities and in provision of essential services. However, host families themselves are usually highly vulnerable, since they reside in the same under-served settlements to which migrants flee. Vulnerability is then accentuated for even more people by the migration of additional poor families into communities, which are already stressed through over-stretched WASH and diminished food stocks, including through lost urban agriculture and livestock. A more systematic assessment and approach to supporting host families as partners in humanitarian responses is a high priority for IASC agencies and other humanitarian actors. Findings from the recent Haiti disaster indicate that putting communities at the core of an integrated response yields higher impacts.

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[5] Actors include: local governments, service agencies, line departments of national and provincial governments, urban councils, faith-based groups, private sector interests and community based organizations, police departments, health institutions and in cases of disasters, entities especially designated to address relief and reconstruction.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop a simple framework to: (a) map all stakeholders involved and their capacities (including ministries/departments at national and/or municipal levels, IASC actors, disaster response and management actors, development actors who have roles in response and early recovery, donors, NGOs, civil society and private sector groups) and (b) identify existing and means to strengthen coordination and partnership with humanitarians in the event of a crisis, with due consideration of the leadership and coordination role of host government institutions. (Action Lead: OCHA Kenya, OCHA Nepal, OCHA/UNCT Colombia; Support: UN HABITAT, UNDP, IWG (Catholic Relief Services in Kenya/Mercy Corps in Nepal) with local and international NGOs, FAO/WFP/UNICEF and UNCT/HCT Kenya and Nepal)

2. Pilot the framework in at least two at-risk cities/countries including a review of synergies, gaps and existing and needed processes for collaboration and productive relationships, including opportunities for capacity building. (Action Lead: OCHA Kenya, OCHA Nepal, OCHA/UNCT Colombia; Support: UN HABITAT, UNDP, IWG (Catholic Relief Services in Kenya/Mercy Corps in Nepal) with local and international NGOs, FAO/WFP/UNICEF and UNCT/HCT Kenya and Nepal)

3. After two years of implementation of pilots for partnership-building for humanitarian responses, assess results, lessons learned and task relevant humanitarian actors to mainstream coordination mechanisms into their operations, including contingency planning system-wide, to strengthen responses in eventual urban emergencies. (Action Lead: OCHA Kenya and OCHA Nepal, UNCT Colombia, UN HABITAT, UNDP, local and international NGOs; Support: UNCT/HCT Kenya and Nepal)

4. Compile good practices, identify gaps and develop guidance for community-based support and capacity-building in urban areas, including host families' support, displaced and not displaced for broader dissemination and accessibility by humanitarian actors in order to deepen the impact of humanitarian assistance. (Action Lead: IFRC and UNICEF; Support: UN HABITAT, ICRC, FAO, WFP, NGOs and UNCT/HCTs)

Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen Technical Surge Capacity for Emergency Responses in Urban-based Challenges

Issues and Gaps

With the increasing number of natural disasters and complex emergencies in urban contexts, it is important for IASC, Red Cross/Crescent Movement and other humanitarians to upgrade the skills of their staffs to address urban-based challenges, particularly in first responses.

Recent emergencies in post-earthquake Haiti, Kenya and Pakistan point out the inadequacy of urban expertise and technical skills among first responders. This inadequacy contributed to the reduced effectiveness of relief assistance. Gaps included:
- Technical Knowledge Gaps: Identification of land for temporary shelter, urban WASH, land ownership and tenure issues, urban food and nutrition security, rubble removal and similar urban shelter, land, infrastructure and protection challenges. Getting strategies, humanitarian responses and early recovery strategies right from the start requires that these skills be part of the mix among first responders.
- Slow deployment of sufficient numbers of experienced staff with appropriate technical skills

- Lack of or slow deployment of sufficiently experienced Shelter Cluster Leads and urban advisors to coordinate the multiplicity of actors, including providing guidance in building collaboration among NGOs and private sector groups through a common strategy. This task is usually complex in urban contexts with the greater number of actors.

Recommended Actions

1. Build stand-by technical capacity, by revising existing or developing templates of technical TORs and rosters of qualified consultants for long and short term deployments in key urban technical areas such as land management and tenure, urban WASH rehabilitation, transitional shelter and rehabilitation, urban food and nutrition security, rubble removal as well as skills to coordinate the multiplicity of urban actors in cooperation with local/national governments. (Action Lead: UN HABITAT, Protection Cluster AOR for HLP; Support: FAO, WFP and interested NGO partners, PROCAP and GENCAP roster managers)

2. IASC agencies and other humanitarian actors consider strengthening inter-agency partnerships to share expertise in urban WASH, land and transitional shelter solutions, urban food and nutrition security, including the merits of expanding the current IFRC/UN HABITAT Partnership model as one approach for shelter humanitarian responses cooperation. (Action Lead : UN HABITAT; Support: IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WFP and NGOs)

3. Develop TORs for Shelter and Urban Advisors to be recruited in support of HCs to guide urban policy and program interventions of the HCT in shelter, land and urban WASH and urban food and nutrition security. This is important in UNCT/HCTs where there is no or weak urban or shelter expertise at the time of a crisis. (Action Lead: UN HABITAT, Support: OCHA)

4. Expand the training of Humanitarian Coordinators and eventually key HCT staffs to include urban issues and approaches (Action Lead: OCHA; Support: UN HABITAT)

5. Review and revise new staff recruitment priorities to bring on-board new staff or to train existing staff in urban skills such as land management and tenure, urban WASH rehabilitation, transitional shelter, shelter rehabilitation, urban food and nutrition security, protection and related areas. (Action Lead: IASC Member Agencies, Support: UN HABITAT)

Strategic Objective 3: Develop or Adapt Humanitarian Approaches and Tools for Urban Areas

Issues and Gaps

In support of this Strategy's development, an assessment of tools, approaches and guidelines used by IASC agencies and others to address urban humanitarian challenges was undertaken. The assessment reviewed the use of tools and guidelines for: assessing needs, beneficiary targeting, effective response design and monitoring response performance. This was complemented by field assessments and case studies of Manila, Nairobi, Eldoret (Kenya) and Haiti (desk study) to identify good practices and gaps in addressing urban crises. Although not exhaustive, the assessment offers a representative sample of tools that humanitarians found useful for programming and targeting assistance. Virtually all of these useful practices and tools were developed predominantly for rural areas. While some of these have been successfully adapted, experiences in Kenya, Philippines and Haiti indicate that new tools are also required for urban areas. Development of humanitarian guidance and tools in the future should ensure that urban issues are better addressed.

Good Practice Tools and Approaches:

SOPs and Rapid Assessments: SOPs in Emergencies (ICRC/IFRC), Aerial surveys (inter-Agency), Rapid Assessment Tool (UNICEF), Needs Analysis/Framework with urban indicators (OCHA), Rapid Health Assessment (WHO), Global Risk Identification Program (UNDP)

Vulnerability, Targeting, Enumerating, Profiling and Registering of IDP/Refugees: Participatory Protection Appraisal-PPA (UNHCR), IDP Urban Profiling (IDMC), Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (IFRC), Heightened Risk Identification Tool (UNHCR), Psychological Needs Assessment in Emergency Displacement (IOM), Joint IDP Profiling Service (NRC-IDMC, UNFPA, IOM, OCHA, UNHCR, DRC), Urban Pilot Project (UNHCR)

Food Security: Emergency Food Security Assessments (WFP, FAO), Market Analysis tools for cash or food-for-work, food vouchers, cash transfers – EMMA, Stand-by Contracts with Local Suppliers instead of stockpiling relief items (WFP, IFRC, World Vision, Oxfam), Integrated Food Security Phase Classifications (FAO)

Livelihoods: Sustainable Livelihoods Assessment Tool Kit and Approach (FAO/ILO), micro-finance, cash for livelihoods grants, vocational training and others can be adapted for different livelihoods contexts in urban or peri-urban areas.

Emergency Shelter: Shelter Kits and other shelter assistance methods, including tents provision (IFRC, UNHCR, IOM, UN HABITAT), Local Estimate of Needs for Shelter and Settlement – LENSS (Emergency Shelter Cluster), Haiti Community Participatory Approach to Shelter Site Selection and Design (UN HABITAT), Haiti Return Strategy (Shelter and Early Recovery Clusters), Risk Mapping for Shelter Response Planning (UN HABITAT, UNDP, IFRC, UNHCR)

WASH: WASH upgrading in schools and intensified hygiene awareness (UNICEF and NGOs), various approaches to emergency, portable water, toilet provision and waste management

Health: SPEED Pilot system for improved health surveillance to track/report epidemiological outbreaks (HCT-Manila), Health Services Availability and Regional Health Risk Mapping (WHO)

Protection/Violence: Restoring Family Links in Disasters (ICRC), Global Strategy on Violence (IFRC), Participatory Protection Appraisal (Protection Cluster), Safe Houses (UNHCR), Provisional Program Guide on Coexistence (UNHCR), Assistance to Street Children (Save the Children/ECHO), Gender-based Violence Information Management System (UNHCR, UNFPA, IRC)

Gaps in Tools and Approaches: There is a need for urban-specific operational strategies and tools in all the key humanitarian sectors including WASH, Food Security, Shelter, Health and Protection. Some of the significant gaps are:

Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments: Based on earlier IASC WG recommendations[6], there is an urgent need for standardized and improved rapid vulnerability and resilience assessments in order to design and target humanitarian relief to be most effective and to accelerate recovery. One out of three urban residents or one billion people worldwide live in densely populated slums or marginal informal settlements whose vulnerability is high and severely exacerbated by emergencies. Nonetheless, resilience of communities needs to also be recognized and built upon so as to strengthen coping mechanisms, livelihoods and social networks that mitigate negative impacts. These rapid assessments should simply define, assess and map the vulnerabilities and resilience of different groups and how

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[6] a) The Global Public Policy Institute and Groupe Urgence-Rehabilitation-Developpement, <u>IASC Cluster Approach Evaluation 2nd Phase</u>, Synthesis Report, April 2010, page 56.
www.gppi.net/fileadmin/gppi/GPPi-URD_Cluster_II_Evaluation_SYNTHESIS_REPORT_e.pdf
b) IASC Guidance Note on <u>Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response</u>, November 2006, notably recommendation 15.
www.**humanitarian**reform.org/**humanitarian**reform/.../**cluster**%20approach%20page/.../.

they might be affected by a humanitarian emergency. Key elements of these vulnerability assessments should include:

- Who are vulnerable groups in the affected urban settings, displaced and non-displaced residents, considering that vulnerabilities and those affected vary by urban setting and crisis?
- What are the vulnerabilities they experience including multi-risk/hazard mapping?
- What 'triggers' distinguish acute vulnerability from chronic urban poverty?
- The nature of resilience - immediate resources, coping mechanisms and community support networks that vulnerable people use.

The ground-breaking work in developing urban vulnerability indicators for chronic emergency contexts in close partnership with national, municipal and civil society partners, being developed by the HCT in Nairobi, could help inform this work.

Targeting, Enumerating and Registering of IDP/Refugees: A variety of tools and approaches already exist to identify, register, protect and target assistance to urban IDPs and refugees and identify hidden groups; however, they are not used widely enough and have not been adequately scaled up. Criteria for targeting assistance to individuals and communities can be better defined including for illegal migrants.

Emergency Shelter: Transitional shelter and relocation/resettlement solutions need to account for housing, land and property (HLP) complexities, land tenure security and host family support for shelter expansion. Approaches to urban rubble removal and disposal need to be developed to free land for transitional or permanent shelter construction (Haiti RTE)

WASH: Scaling-up of the innovative approaches being tested in Nairobi and Manila, such as de-sludging technologies, pre-identified waste disposal landfills and upgrading school sanitary facilities.

Food Security: Urban Food Security Needs Assessments for the most vulnerable and affected populations need refinement as well as urban Market-based Approaches to provide Food Security Assistance, including guidance on cash, vouchers, food fairs, food production and similar tools in urban areas. Food aid needs to consider the challenges of food preparation, distribution and urban-based agricultural production in limited and very crowded urban neighborhoods as well as security risks related to stocking of large rations.

Livelihoods: Scale-up existing innovative tools, such as microfinance and small business support, and more effectively target them in urban areas, including through strengthened partnerships with local communities and private sector. New tools for enhanced natural resources management and adaptation in differing livelihood contexts in urban and peri-urban areas.

Health: Scaling up Health Vulnerability and Risk Analysis and Mapping (VRAM)

Protection/Violence: Scale-up the Participatory Protection Appraisal

Preparedness: Update UN and NGO country preparedness and contingency plans, in cooperation with national authorities. Develop tools for pre-crisis actor mapping, including identification of stand-by agency and government staff with urban experience for rapid deployment and coordination

Recommended Actions

1. Develop a methodology with indicators across sectors for understanding and identifying urban vulnerability and resilience in the design and delivery of humanitarian programs in at-risk countries. (Action Lead: IASC Needs Assessment Task Force; Support: UN HABITAT, NGOs and UNCT/HCTs)

2. Broaden the Rapid Protection Assessment Toolkit (RPAT) under development to incorporate urban vulnerability analysis (Action Lead: UNHCR and Protection Cluster; Support: NGOs and UNCT/HCTs))

3. Promote improved knowledge management of urban tools and methodologies by creating a repository of useful tools and supporting data bases for use in urban emergencies for wider dissemination and accessibility by humanitarian agencies and public. Ensure quality control, user-friendly repository design and update of materials. (Action Lead: UN HABITAT and NGOs; Support: Humanitarian Partners)

4. Identify approaches to land needs for transitional shelter, long-term resettlement and sustainable livelihoods. This should include reviews of land rights, tenure types, occupancy rights and land availability in cities. (Action Lead: Shelter and Early Recovery Clusters; Support: IASC agencies and NGOs)

Strategic Objective 4: Promote Protection of Vulnerable Urban Populations against Violence and Exploitation

Issues and Gaps

The security and protection needs of affected populations constitute one of the most significant differences between rural and urban settings. The pressure on services and livelihoods from urban-based emergencies on poor urban households in densely populated towns can exacerbate poverty and discrimination leading to the incidence of violence and exploitation. Growing urban violence accentuates vulnerability of poor urban populations through the destruction of basic infrastructure, displacement, destroyed livelihoods as well as increasing mortality and morbidity through injuries, disrupted food supply, malnutrition and weakening of health systems. These same conditions arise in the aftermath of crises precipitating an increase in urban violence as affected populations compete for scarce life-saving resources such as food, water and shelter.

Women may be subject to additional violence – rape, domestic violence and sexual exploitation. Vulnerable people, and especially children, who may be separated from their families face psychological trauma. Children and adolescents can be vulnerable to recruitment by rebel armed forces and joining armed gangs. Humanitarians can diminish the incentives for involvement of young people in urban violence through improved urban livelihood and employment opportunities in relief and early recovery operations.

Out of fear of harassment, detention and possible *refoulement* many migrants live in illegality, reducing and often impeding their access to official mechanisms of protection (police, courts and ombudsmen). Similarly, urban refugees may be unregistered and undocumented in contrast to encamped refugees in rural areas. Many IDPs who become dispersed in urban areas or wish to remain anonymous may also miss out on registration for assistance and protection.

Targeting assistance runs the risk of offering preferential treatment to those displaced people who can be indentified and registered, thereby increasing the potential for tension and conflict with other city dwellers not receiving relief assistance. At the same time targeting may expose households and individuals who wish to remain concealed. A community-based approach may be more appropriate to address these sensitivities.

Human rights protection and security are government prerogatives and responsibilities through their national and municipal institutions and legal frameworks. Humanitarian actors have a key role to

play in supporting these responsibilities and in monitoring adherence. Some innovative approaches have been developed such as the UNHCR's new urban refugee policy[7].

Strategic policies and operational tools are needed to improve urban-specific protection strategies to limit the effects of urban violence. Approaches are being developed by global and local protection clusters, including ICRC and collaborating Red Cross/Crescent societies. Innovative approaches are being used in Nairobi and Bogota which address two strategic dimensions:

- General protection and security needs for urban communities and specific groups such as children or women threatened by conflict or localised violence carried out by armed actors, gangs, drug cartels, crime syndicates.
- The protection needs for increasing numbers of refugees and IDPs who migrate to cities.
- A key issue is to find ways of working in situations where governments might be associated with the violence against communities and are thus part of the protection issue for vulnerable groups and migrants.

Recommended Actions

1. Ensure that protection assessment methodologies created by the Protection Cluster, among them the Rapid Protection Assessment Tool kit, include the ability to identify and address concerns of affected populations in urban areas and broadly disseminate tool for use by the humanitarian community. (Action Lead: UNHCR; Support: Humanitarian Actors)

2. Develop, as needed, new policies and strengthen existing policies and operational tools to engage authorities on their obligations under human rights or refugee law in situations of urban violence or to mitigate the effects of such violence on at-risk populations.

3. Work with local partners to reinforce access for the most vulnerable to existing monitoring and conciliatory mechanisms that safeguard individual or community rights at the municipal level.

4. In crisis contexts, reinforce the dialogue with local enforcement agencies to prioritize measures of physical protection of 'at-risk' groups, including IDPs and refugees, illegal migrants, women and children.

B.   *Maximize Sustainability of the Humanitarian Response*

Strategic Objective 5: Restore Livelihoods and Economic Opportunities as a Priority, starting in the Emergency Phase for Expedited Early Recovery in Urban Areas

Issues and Gaps

Emergency activities need to more systematically enable crisis-affected households and communities to restore their livelihoods rapidly and sustainably. Recent post-earthquake experience in Haiti demonstrates the importance of restoring cash flow through temporary employment to accelerate recovery and diminish dependence on humanitarian aid.

Livelihood restoration in response strategies can also be strengthened by:
- supporting the *shelter reconstruction process*, resuscitating self-build methods, providing technical and logistical support to local partners, giving guidance on building standards for building back better with reduced risk and providing financial assistance. This is a vital element in the post-earthquake Haiti and Pakistan relief programs.
- facilitating *recovery of food supply chains and distribution systems*, assisting price stability through subsidies, promoting urban agriculture and livestock, reducing secondary impacts (eg

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[7] UNHCR: Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas, UNHCR Geneva Sept 2009 www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=4ab356ab6&query=urban%20refugees

food insecurity and severe nutritional deficits), rebuilding local markets and food or cash-for-work programs.

- *leveraging local suppliers and contractors*, thereby preventing local livelihoods being crowded out by larger commercial and corporate enterprises.
- enhancing the *role of protection measures* for physical security of assets and protection from violence and extortion.
- ensuring an appropriate level of natural resources management and mitigating negative environmental impacts.
- ensuring gender sensitivity in approaches and more inclusion of the needs of urban youth.

A recent ALNAP review highlighted several principles which should guide humanitarian actors in supporting livelihood restoration as part of an emergency response[8]. The livelihoods approach involves participatory methods, local ownership of strategies and gender and youth sensitivity.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop guidance on supporting food and nutrition security in post-crisis urban and peri-urban areas (Action Lead: FAO and WFP; Support: UNCT/HCTs and NGOs)

2. Complete the development of programming and policy guidelines for mainstreaming multi-year urban household livelihood recovery and right to work for urban refugees and share broadly with humanitarian partners, including through training programs, for possible adaptation to non-refugee and other emergency operations. (Action Lead: UNHCR; Support: Humanitarian Actors)

3. Develop guidelines for working with local police and security and regulatory authorities to strengthen measures to protect households' livelihood assets, safety of household members and protection from exploitation during emergencies (Action Lead: Early Recovery Cluster, Support: UNCT/HCTs).

Strategic Objective 6: Build Preparedness into Humanitarian Assistance Policies for more Effective Emergency Responses that Save More Lives and Livelihoods in Urban Areas

Issues and Gaps

Because cities are home to large populations (over 3 billion of the world's total population) living at high densities and in impoverished conditions, the potential impact of emergencies can be huge in terms of loss of life and economic assets. At the same time, cities generally provide a higher, although variable, level of human and institutional resources to draw upon for the delivery of emergency responses and longer term community resilience.

The increasing incidence of rapid onset disasters attributed to climate change – through extreme weather events - is further impoverishing the lives of one billion urban residents living in

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[8] ALNAP summary principles guiding humanitarian actors in re-establishing local economies and livelihoods:
- working with or through organizations of long standing in the area, which already have an understanding of livelihoods
- supporting aid delivery that uses and builds on local capacities, thereby limiting the use of external personnel, and reducing costs
- taking time to understand how the urban poor are coping, and designing aid programs to support these household initiatives to build ownership
- using participatory approaches in all stages of programming assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation
- recognizing the importance of rural–urban linkages in providing opportunities to deal with disasters in either locale.

Source: ALNAP *Responding to urban disasters: Learning from previous relief and recovery operations,2009 page 17*
www.alnap.org/pool/files/alnap-provention-lessons-urban.pdf

slums and informal settlements. Over 60% of coastal areas are prone to climate change-induced rising sea levels. Climate change and its impacts on cities are predicted to cause more frequent disasters and humanitarian emergencies, both sudden and slow onset. Desertification will precipitate loss of livelihoods and push poor households to migrate to urban areas increasing the numbers of people vulnerable to crises by further stressing already insufficient services. Vulnerability may be exacerbated by climate change impacts in urban areas through the disruption of fragile economic livelihoods, urban communications and supply chains. Climate variability resulting in extreme events area a continuing concern, as recent Manila and Pakistan floods and droughts in the Horn of Africa and Sahel demonstrate.

The scale and often unpredictable location of urban-based humanitarian crises underscore the need for preparedness, risk management and contingency planning to be fully incorporated into a humanitarian strategy for at-risk urban areas. Protection of natural resources is essential to contingency planning. Security and protection of populations, including urban violence related to crises, is a significant gap in humanitarian action that can be addressed through better preparedness. Evidence over many years confirms beneficial impacts of preparedness in lowered overall costs of relief assistance, reduced loss of life and livelihoods and enhanced capacity to rebuild faster with safer techniques by building on local capacities and resilience.

Urban preparedness planning and strategies need to address the following:
- Develop a risk and vulnerability analysis and early warning capacity, including mapping 'community hotspots' and potential crises induced by extreme climate events
- Strengthen contingency planning and partnership-building in advance of an urban crisis, including community resilience mechanisms with gender and youth sensitivity
- Improve prepositioning of emergency stocks of food, temporary shelter, health providers and preparing logistics chains and establishing 'pro-forma' contracts with local providers
- Define roles and responsibilities of different actors and mapping of capacities
- Strengthen citizen security, community policing and monitoring roles by CSOs
- Build the capacity of partner national and local governments in responses and preparedness
- Link humanitarian tools of urban-based preparedness to early recovery and developmental goals through regular information-sharing and sustainable programs

Recommended Actions

1. Prepare a coherent and programmatic implementation plan for the strategic objective, including an assessment of the often fragmented, urban preparedness tools and approaches to identify existing good practices. (Action Lead: UN HABITAT; Support: Preparedness sub-WG, IWG (Mercy Corps), UNDP, IFRC, ISDR, FAO and UNCT/HCTs Colombia and Nepal)

2. Pilot test the implementation plan in one or two at-risk cities which would put national and municipal authorities in leadership while identifying areas for coordination on preparedness based on their capacities and potential response. Synergies should be encouraged in those countries where multi-stakeholder partnership frameworks are being developed under Strategic Objective 1. Both exercises will contribute to revising country/city contingency planning and complement the planned five-country national preparedness strengthening activity of the Sub-Working Group on Preparedness. Among potential, initial at-risk pilot cities are Kathmandu and Bogota. (Action Lead: UN HABITAT; Support: Preparedness sub-WG, UNDP, IWG (Mercy Corps), IFRC, ISDR, FAO and UNCT/HCTs Colombia and Nepal)

3. Expand the OCHA 'Global Focus Model' from national-level comparisons to prioritize preparedness for the most-at-risk cities and areas within cities (Action Lead: OCHA, Support: UNCT/HCTs)

IV. ACTION PLAN

The IASC Task Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas recommends the following as the highest priority actions to be undertaken by IASC member agencies in the coming two years on a voluntary and self-monitored basis.

Strategic Objective	Recommended Action	Agencies Responsible
Strategic Objective 1: Develop Operational Strategies early-on that ensure multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhanced coordination, impact and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in urban areas	1.1 Develop a simple framework to: (a) map all stakeholders involved and their capacities (including ministries/departments at national and/or municipal levels, IASC actors, disaster response and management actors, development actors who have roles in response and early recovery, donors, NGOs, civil society and private sector groups) and (b) identify existing and means to strengthen coordination and partnership with humanitarians in the event of a crisis, with due consideration of the leadership and coordination role of host government institutions. 1.2 Pilot the framework in at least two at-risk cities/countries including a review of synergies, gaps and existing and needed processes for collaboration and productive relationships, including opportunities for capacity building. 1.3 Compile good practices, identify gaps and develop guidance for community-based support and capacity-building in urban areas, including host families' support, displaced and not displaced for broader dissemination and accessibility by humanitarian actors in order to deepen the impact of humanitarian assistance.	1.1 Action Lead: OCHA Kenya, OCHA Nepal, OCHA/UNCT Colombia; Support: UN HABITAT, UNDP, IWG (Catholic Relief Services in Kenya/Mercy Corps in Nepal) with local and international NGOs, FAO/WFP/UNICEF and UNCT/HCT Kenya and Nepal 1.2 Action Lead: OCHA Kenya, OCHA Nepal, OCHA/UNCT Colombia; Support: UN HABITAT, UNDP, IWG (Catholic Relief Services in Kenya/Mercy Corps in Nepal) with local and international NGOs, FAO/WFP/UNICEF and UNCT/HCT Kenya and Nepal 1.3 Action Lead: IFRC and UNICEF; Support: ICRC, UN HABITAT, IWG, FAO, WFP, NGOs and UNCT/HCTs
Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen Technical Surge Capacity for Emergency Response in Urban-based Challenges	2.1 Build stand-by technical capacity, by revising existing or developing templates of technical TORs and rosters of qualified consultants for long and short term deployments in key urban technical areas such as land management and tenure, urban WASH rehabilitation, transitional shelter and rehabilitation, urban food and nutrition security, rubble removal as well as skills to coordinate the multiplicity of urban actors in cooperation with local/national governments 2.2 IASC agencies and other humanitarian actors consider strengthening inter-agency partnerships to share expertise in urban WASH, urban food and nutrition security, land and transitional shelter solutions, including the merits of expanding	2.1 Action Lead: UN HABITAT, Protection Cluster AOR for HLP; Support: FAO, WFP and interested NGO partners; PROCAP and GENCAP roster managers 2.2 Action Lead : UN HABITAT ; Support : IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WFP and

	the current IFRC/UN HABITAT Partnership model as one approach for shelter humanitarian responses cooperation.	NGOs
Strategic Objective 3: Develop or Adapt Humanitarian Approaches and Tools for Urban Areas	3.1 Develop a methodology with indicators across sectors for understanding and identifying urban vulnerability and resilience in humanitarian programs' design and delivery in at-risk countries.	3.1 Action Lead: IASC Needs Assessment Task Force; Support: UN HABITAT, NGOs and UNCT/HCTs
	3.2 Broaden the Rapid Protection Assessment Toolkit (RPAT) under development to incorporate urban vulnerability analysis	3.2 Action Lead: UNHCR and Protection Cluster; Support: NGOs and UNCT/HCTs
	3.3 Promote improved knowledge management of urban tools and methodologies by creating a repository of useful tools and supporting data bases for use in urban emergencies for wider dissemination and accessibility by humanitarian agencies and public. Ensure quality control, user-friendly repository design and update of materials.	3.3 Action Lead: UN HABITAT and NGOs; Support: Humanitarian Partners
Strategic Objective 4: Promote Protection of Vulnerable Urban Populations against Violence and Exploitation	4.1 Ensure that protection assessment methodologies created by the Protection Cluster, among them the Rapid Protection Assessment Toolkit, include the ability to identify and address concerns of affected populations in urban areas and broadly disseminate tool for use by the humanitarian community.	4.1 Action Lead: UNHCR; Support: Humanitarian Actors)
Strategic Objective 5: Restore Livelihoods and Economic Opportunities as a Priority, starting in the Emergency Phase for Expedited Early Recovery	5.1 Develop guidance on supporting food and nutrition security in post-crisis urban and peri-urban areas	5.1 Action Lead: FAO and WFP; Support: UNCT/HCTs and NGOs
Strategic Objective 6: Build Preparedness into Humanitarian Assistance Policies for more Effective Emergency Responses and Save More Lives in Urban Areas	6.1 Prepare a coherent and programmatic implementation plan for the strategic objective, including an assessment of the often fragmented, urban preparedness tools and approaches to identify existing good practices. 6.2. Pilot test the implementation plan in one or two at-risk cities which would put national and municipal authorities in leadership while identifying areas for coordination on preparedness based on their capacities and potential response. Synergies should be encouraged in those countries where multi-stakeholder partnership frameworks are being developed under Strategic Objective 1. Both exercises will contribute to revising country/city contingency planning and complement the planned five-country national preparedness strengthening activity of the Sub-Working Group on Preparedness. Among potential, initial at-risk pilot cities are Kathmandu and Bogota.	6.1 Action Lead: UN HABITAT; Support: IWG (Mercy Corps), Preparedness sub-WG, UNDP, IFRC, ISDR, FAO and UNCT/HCTs Colombia and Nepal 6.2 Action Lead: UN HABITAT; Support: IWG (Mercy Corps), Preparedness sub-WG, UNDP, IFRC, ISDR, FAO and UNCT/HCTs Colombia and Nepal

In addition, the Inter-Agency Working Group of international humanitarian NGOs (IWG)[9] has proposed the following in support of this Strategy's and Action Plan's implementation:

--World Vision International (WVI) will maintain a liaison role between IWG agencies and the IASC regarding the Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas strategy implementation.

--Catholic Relief Services in Nairobi and Mercy Corps in Kathmandu will share information on related work with IWG member agencies and NGO's with OCHA and UN HABITAT for the pilot frameworks for urban partnership and emergency planning and strategies development in Kenya and Nepal.

--OXFAM, America, supported by WVI, will inventory urban emergency engagements by IWG agencies. This information will be used to link IWG agencies, knowledge base and experience in urban emergencies more effectively with the IASC urban strategy framework and resources.

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[9] The Inter-Agency Working Group (IWG) on Emergency Capacity was formed in 2003 to address the challenge of increasing magnitude and complexity of disasters and the capacity of the international NGOs with humanitarian mandates to respond to this challenge. The IWG is composed of emergency directors from 7 agencies - CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam GB, Save the Children and World Vision International - and discusses the most persistent obstacles in humanitarian aid delivery, including in urban areas. In October, 2010, the IWG members reviewed the draft IASC Final Strategy for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas and identified areas for collaboration.