2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

Bridging the humanitarian-development divide in urban crises: Area-based approaches and disaster recovery frameworks - the way forward?

Side Event organized by World Bank/GFDRR, UN-Habitat, UK/DFID, IRC and UCLG

Wednesday, 17th June 17.15-18.30
Room XXIV Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness.

Background and objectives

The consequences of urbanisation and of rapid and poorly planned urban growth constitute one of the most urgent issues facing humanity. Over the coming decades, towns and cities will be increasingly affected by humanitarian emergencies. With the rapid growth in urban populations in low and middle-income countries, and the geographical spread of poorly planned urban settlements, comes greater exposure to a range of natural and man-made hazards. Populations that are already vulnerable, living in informal settlements without adequate housing, basic services and infrastructure, will be at additional risk from extreme weather events associated with climate change.

Amongst the growing global urban population are increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). More than half of the world’s estimated 16.7 million refugees and a further 33.3 million IDPs have sought a safe haven in towns and cities, fleeing conflict but also natural disasters. Large influxes of displaced people impact host communities and neighbourhoods, often putting a critical strain on service provision, even in areas where services were previous meeting needs. Where these new arrivals settle in already deprived areas, the additional stress on inadequate basic services can exacerbate social problems.

Regional consultations towards the World Humanitarian Summit have highlighted the urgent need for the urban dimensions of humanitarian action to be given consideration in the
Summit and in other processes, including Habitat III. Recommendations emerging from ongoing consultations with urban experts demonstrate the critical need to bridge the humanitarian-development divide in urban areas. These recommendations include new partnership models, protocols of engagement for humanitarian and development actors and area-based arrangements to facilitate coordination, prioritisation and empowerment of affected neighborhoods and cities.

The Side Event will present some of the emerging thinking on the need to adapt humanitarian programming to the specificities of the urban context, including working more closely with development actors, and operating in collaboration with municipal authorities. It will draw on a major review of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake Shelter and Settlement Response, but will also draw on experiences of recent and on-going responses (Typhoon Haiyan, Syria region, Nepal) and their implications for policy within the IASC and beyond.

**Discussion points**

The side event will:

1) Introduce the debates on the value of area-based approaches and consider their potential in contexts of urban displacement and of natural disasters.
2) Examine how recovery frameworks can foster alignment between national/local governments and humanitarian and development/recovery actors,
3) Provide the perspective from city mayors, and the need to localize response and surge through local authorities.

**Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**

1) The event will inform and refine the recommendations for the World Humanitarian Summit and will serve as a direct input into the Global Urban WHS Consultation taking place in Barcelona from the 22nd till the 23rd of June 2015.

**Format**

Panel Discussion

**Chair:** Lucy Earle, Urban Adviser, DFID

**Moderator:** Jean-Christophe Adrian, Director of the Liaison Office for European Institutions, UN-HABITAT

**Panel composition:**

- Alyoscia D’Onofrio, Senior Director, Governance & Rights, International Rescue Committee
- Nicolas Wit, Deputy Secretary General of Cites Unies, France
- Priscilla Phelps, lead author Haiti Report, World Bank / GFDRR

**Background Material**

WHS urban track: https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_urban


http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20019
(available July 2015 on www.urban-response.org)

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