UN-Habitat commitments for the World Humanitarian Summit
Istanbul 23-24th May 2016

Adapting to an urbanizing world

The Global Alliance for Urban Crises has summarized key facts that make it imperative for the humanitarian and development community to 'adapt to an urbanizing world':

- By 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas. Accelerating urbanization is defining our global reality and will shape our future. Urbanization intersects with climate change, natural disasters, conflict and displacement. It is a critical lens through which to review national and international efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises, conflict and disasters.
- Over 80% of the world's GDP is produced in cities. As cities also constitute a central part of the global risk landscape, their vulnerability presents significant risk to national and global economic output.
- The urban population in lower-income and fragile countries has increased by 326 percent in the last 40 years. Urban poverty is concentrated in fast-growing, at-risk, and mostly unplanned informal settlements.
- The displaced are increasingly seeking refuge in urban areas, with half of the world's 38 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and more than half of its 19.5 million refugees living in towns and cities. Displacement is also becoming increasingly protracted and is now averaging 25 years.

The increasing frequency of natural and man-made emergencies in urban areas requires new efforts to address risk, prepare for unavoidable events and mitigate the impact of crises. The provision of immediate humanitarian relief should be aligned with efforts to strengthen urban resilience and to build on the opportunities for self-recovery present in towns and cities.

Urban areas and their exposure to a range of natural and man-made hazards are central to a number of recent international processes and events, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Urban crises are of critical relevance to the design and implementation of the New Urban Agenda (outcome of the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development - Habitat III).

UN-Habitat's Governing Council already adopted in 2007, a Strategic Policy on Human Settlements in Crisis" guiding our engagement in humanitarian operations, based on a "Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction" framework. Since UN-Habitat became a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2008, it has been advocating to adapt humanitarian response to urban settings. UN-Habitat led the development of the IASC Strategy on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas and has since been co-chairing the related Reference Group. It is time now to leverage the improved practices into a system-wide institutional and paradigm shift across all core responsibilities outlined by the Secretary-General in the Agenda for Humanity.

UN-Habitat initiated an urban track towards the World Humanitarian Summit, working closely with IRC and DFID. This resulted in an Urban Crisis Charter, a set of Urban Recommendations and the commitment to set up a Global Alliance for Urban Crises to take an action-oriented agenda forward.

As a member and partner in the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, UN-Habitat wishes to make the following commitments:

I. Changing people's lives - from delivering aid to ending need

Anticipate, Do Not Wait:

1. UN-Habitat will advocate for more support to cities at high risk of humanitarian crises, including through the development of **Resilience Action Plans**, allowing them to take early action in order to minimize the impact and frequency of known risks and hazards on people, public and private assets, and the continuity of functions and processes in all cities at risk. The presence of policy enabling the integration of resilience-based **urban planning and design** central to anticipatory action.
    a. Preparation of advocacy, guidelines and technical support for delivery of resilience-based national, sub-national and local policies in countries and cities at risk.
    b. Work with 50 cities to incorporate risk reduction and sound urban planning and design principles which increase resilience in urban plans (incl. urban extensions)

Reinforce, Do Not Replace:

2. UN-Habitat will work with the United Cities and Local Government Task Force for Disaster Response, other local government networks, and other partners to **prioritize and strengthen local municipal leadership** in determining response to urban crisis that is aligned with development trajectories, through:
    a. Developing guidance on engagement with local authorities during crisis response;
    b. Developing and advocating for adopting area-based approaches to programming and coordination that are adapted and appropriate, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and building on, rather than duplicating, existing city systems;
    c. Design of rapid capacity assessment tools to identify the necessary surge capacity for local governments;
    d. Work with partners to support the development of urban crises response rosters with urban and local government expertise;
3. UN-Habitat commits to further develop its **"People's Process"** approach (which seeks to empower households and communities in partnership with local authorities to plan and implement recovery, while contributing to restoring livelihoods), upscaling it up to the city level, in view working more effectively with affected populations during a humanitarian response;

Transcend Humanitarian-Development Divides, working towards collective outcomes for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors:

4. UN-Habitat will update its **Strategic Policy on Human Settlements in Crisis** and its Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction framework to provide guidance on how the humanitarian - development divide can be best transcended in urban areas and to align it with the New Urban Agenda (to be adopted in Habitat III (Quito), and seek its endorsement at UN-Habitat's next Governing Council;

5. UN-Habitat commits by 2017 to develop targeted policy and planning approach for cities in acute or protracted crisis, including **adapting its key urban policies, urban planning and design tools and strategies** (city profiling, national urban policies, territorial and urban planning guides, urban planning and design labs, participatory slum upgrading, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning) for use in countries and cities in acute or protracted crises situations to ensure humanitarian response feeds into more resilient and sustainable urban growth trajectories. 3 countries/cities to be supported in 2016 and the same number in 2017 at least.

6. UN-Habitat commits to develop the **Land and Conflict Coalition,** building on the work of the Global Land Tool Network, advocating for a theory of change that focuses on catalyzing levers of change and capacity development for conflict prevention and mediation, for sustained coherent engagement on land throughout the conflict cycle, and working towards enhanced capacities to conduct root cause analysis of land and conflict.

II. Natural disasters and climate change: Managing risks & crises differently

1. UN-Habitat commits to develop with its partners a Flagship **Urban Resilience Programme**, building on its City Resilience Profiling Programme and including a specific focus on cities at high risk of humanitarian emergencies or affected by recurrent or protracted crises. The Urban Resilience Programme will prioritize good **urban planning and design** as key to resilience and provide a framework for guiding joint humanitarian and development engagement, leveraging immediate measures (humanitarian and emergency) for longer term reconstruction and development.

III. Leaving No One Behind: A commitment to address forced displacement

1. UN-Habitat commits to further tailor its three-pronged approach to sustainable urbanisation in view of an improvement **management of urban displacement** as both a humanitarian, development and human rights concern with a focus on 1) urban planning and design, 2) urban economy and financing and 3) urban policy and legislation (incl. land);

2. UN-Habitat will engage key international, national and urban actors **to plan temporarily settlement of displaced (incl. camps)** as much as possible as part of planned city extensions or infills, **using qualitative urban planning and design,** allowing integration of local and displaced populations;

3. UN-Habitat will advocate, jointly with the members of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, for **direct political, policy and financial support to local authorities and utility actors** who are in the frontline of managing displacement while ensuring social cohesion and contribution to longer term sustainable development needs.

IV. Political leadership to prevent and end conflicts

1. UN-Habitat will through its role in the **Land and Conflict Coalition Forum** and within the UN system work towards increased political leadership and engagement through all stages of a crisis to overcome, where relevant, land as a root cause and driver of conflict or relapse into conflict,

engaging regional actors such as the African Union, the International Conference for the Great Lakes, and country level UN leadership (ex. HC/RCs);

2. UN-Habitat will support Mayors in using urban planning processes as a tool for intercommunity dialogue and resource management so as to enhance conflict prevention and equitable economic development, with a particular focus on divided cities and marginalized informal settlements;

V. Women and girls: Catalysing action to achieve gender equality

1. UN-Habitat commits to continued application of its **Gender Equality Marker, Human Rights Marker and the Youth Marker**, to all projects relating to humanitarian response during project formulation and, by 2018, as part of monitoring and evaluation, with a particular focus on gender-based violence in urban settings;

VI. Humanitarian financing: Investing in humanity

1. UN-Habitat will, through its role in the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, advocate for specific windows, accessible by local authorities and urban communities in existing or proposed prevention, preparedness, and response funding and financing mechanisms, while enhancing the capacities of municipalities and urban communities to deliver.