



Global Urban Crisis Charter

Adapting Global Crisis Response to an Urban World

A Proposed Policy Commitment

(Post Barcelona DRAFT 2)

Adapting to an urbanizing world – the case for urban at the core

By 2050, 70% of the world population will live in urban areas. Accelerating urbanization - together with climate change and in a context of increasing numbers of disasters - is defining our global reality and will shape our future. It is a critical framework by which to define, 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 economic 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 over half of the world's 38 million IDPs and approximately half of the 13 million refugees living in towns and cities. Displacement is also becoming increasingly protracted and is now averaging 17 years.

Natural disasters and armed conflicts in urban areas require new strategic responses to address risk, prepare for unavoidable events and mitigate the impact of crises – responses that provide immediate humanitarian relief and simultaneously strengthen urban resilience.

The scale and nature of escalating urban risk and the opportunities cities offer for a more effective response should drive further humanitarian reform. The urban crisis agenda should be a key focus of the World Humanitarian Summit, as it provides a link to an evolving broader agenda, as outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the upcoming Paris Climate Conference (COP21) and the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III, October 2016).

Overarching Principles

We, the actors/signatories, representing national and local governments, civil society, United Nations and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia and researchers, commit ourselves to work together to enable urban societies, in particular those most at risk, to prepare for, cope with and recover more quickly from the effects of natural disasters and/or armed conflicts.

We recognise that cities have specific characteristics which require effective, context-specific approaches.

Our commitment is underscored by the urban-specific tenets enunciated below, embedded in human rights-based approaches and based on principles of gender equality, inclusive participation, accountability to affected populations, non-discrimination and the right to remedy of violations. We commit to ensure that gender disparities are addressed to ensure equality of access and outcomes in crisis preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery activities.

We furthermore commit to:

1. Prioritise local government leadership in determining their development trajectory and the response to urban crisis, promoting the active participation of affected people –with special attention to the participation of women – and other key urban stakeholders recognizing that the complexity of cities requires:
 - Building on the local knowledge of local government, community leaders and urban communities;
 - Mobilizing through a bottom-up approach all local resources and capacities through broad partnerships, including the private sector, local professionals and community-based organisations;
 - Strengthening existing urban governance mechanisms, transparency and accountability, respect for the rule of law and for the rights of citizens, and protection of the most vulnerable.
2. Adopt urban resilience as a common framework to align human rights, humanitarian and development goals, which requires:
 - Building all action on existing urban systems (governance, economic, infrastructural, service delivery), people’s own recovery mechanisms, and the strength of the urban economy, acknowledging the key role of women;
 - Aligning immediate life-saving and protection priorities, reducing the number of individuals, families and neighborhoods at risk or in need of humanitarian assistance. This requires climate adaptation, and putting cities and towns on a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient post-crisis urban development track.
3. Manage urban displacement as a combined human rights, development and humanitarian concern, which requires:
 - Accepting a collective responsibility to ensure that towns and cities are welcoming, inclusive and safe environments for those displaced by violence, armed conflict and natural disaster;
 - Balancing the needs of refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) with the needs of the host community, and in particular those subject to chronic vulnerabilities and protection needs;
 - Recognise the contribution of the displaced to the local society and economy, and advocate for their right to the city, so they can benefit from all that city life has to offer.
4. Build partnerships connecting the city, national, regional and global level, across disciplines and professions, ensure involvement of Local Government and Professional Associations in order to:
 - Mobilize social, economic, institutional and financial resources to better address immediate humanitarian needs during urban crisis and to sustain longer-term resilience
 - Prioritise reinforcement of local, regional and national capacities, in particular urban and local government expertise, to support urban crisis preparedness and response in cities in need;
 - Facilitate knowledge development, exchange of experiences and learning processes.



We commit to advocating for these principles and transforming them into concrete action. In particular, we will advocate for their inclusion in the humanitarian reform agenda, as well as in the New Urban Agenda as it will be defined at Habitat III.

Signatories

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