

WHS SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

Perspectives from cities in crisis – the role of local actors

Submitted by IIED, UCLG Task Force, IMPACT Initiatives and IRC

Side Event organized in line with the principles of the Urban Crises Charter and in support of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

Background:

Humanitarian emergencies are increasingly urban: both in the location of shocks, and in the places where their consequences are experienced. In order for humanitarian agencies to effectively respond to urban crises, there is a need for a better understanding of urban processes and systems, and of local actors' experiences and perceptions, both of which can inform context-appropriate and inclusive approaches to urban humanitarian response. In particular, there is a need for local governments, local civil society, and international humanitarian actors to work together more effectively in the complex physical and institutional terrain of towns and cities. In the lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), a series of consultations organised by the Urban Expert Group have recognised the above points, leading to the establishment of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. The Alliance has drafted a set of Urban Recommendations and a Global Urban Crises Charter, pointing to (among others) the need to 'foster collaboration between city, humanitarian and development actors', to promote 'area-based approaches' in urban response and to 'prioritise local municipal leadership in determining response to urban crisis'.

Objectives:

In alignment with the Global Urban Crises Charter and building on the recommendations emerging from the consultations "Perspective from cities in crisis" conducted by UCLG and IMPACT in early 2016 within the framework of the Global Alliance for Urban Crisis, the aim of this session is to recognise the important role that local level actors, in particular local government and local civil society, can play in the context of an urban humanitarian response, and the value of collaboration during the process.

This side event will bring together urban stakeholders from local government and civil society for an interactive moderated discussion. Drawing on the personal experiences of the panellists in recent urban humanitarian crises and from the recommendations of the consultations recently conducted with local authorities in 6 crisis-affected cities, approaches for more effective future interventions in the complex context of urban areas will be highlighted. Together, they will discuss:

- The different roles that local actors can play before, during and after a response;
- Approaches to fostering pro-active engagement of local actors, notably municipalities and civil society, before, during and after a crisis occurs, and efficient coordination mechanisms with international stakeholders;
- The importance of partnership between non-state actors and municipal actors to build capacity and complementarity.

By the end of the session, the following messages should emerge:

- How the coordination gap between humanitarian actors and local actors can be addressed;

- The role that an area-based approach to programming and coordination can build on the existing strengths of all actors involved;
- The ways in which the involvement of local actors, including local government and local civil society, can address some of the gaps and challenges in humanitarian preparedness and response.

Speakers:

- Two moderators (TBC)
- Chair (TBC)
- Four city mayors, possibly from: Mafraq, Gaziantep, Port au Prince, Bangui, Gao or Tacloban
- Two civil society representatives, possibly from: Nepal, the Philippines, Lebanon
- Two rapporteurs

Format:

- Interactive, facilitated panel discussion
- 2 hours
- Up to 50 audience members
- U-shape style seating

Translation:

French, English, Arabic

NB. As a number of the mayors are likely to attend the urban special session, we would appreciate if this session could be on a different day to avoid a clash