

# Global Alliance for Urban Crises

## Adapting Global Crisis Response to an Urban World

### Overview Document

Draft for Discussion during Barcelona Pre-Launch Workshop

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The Global Alliance for Urban Crises is a global, multi-disciplinary and collaborative community of practice. It is a 'network of networks' working to prevent, prepare for and effectively respond to humanitarian crises in urban settings.

#### Background

The Global Alliance for Urban Crises (the Alliance) is an initiative arising out of consultations for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016. In the run-up to WHS, a number of committed organisations led an urban expert group and developed a series of *Urban Recommendations* which are reflected in the Synthesis Report for the WHS. The Alliance is the vehicle through which these recommendations will be put into action. It is guided by a series of principles, also developed by the urban expert group, as laid out in the *Urban Crises Charter*.

The Global Alliance will be formally launched during a Special Session at the WHS, where institutional and joint commitments will be made by Alliance members focused on improving interventions in urban areas affected by crises. Whilst the Alliance is an initiative developed as part of the WHS process, the true value of the Alliance will be demonstrated in the activities and outputs delivered by members over the next three to five years. The first milestone for progress made by the Alliance will be Habitat III in October 2016.

#### Vision

The Alliance promotes a vision of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and towns (as laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda) in which urban communities, their leaders and members have the power, capacities and resources to address the risks and reality of humanitarian crises, to mitigate crisis impacts on the most vulnerable and to enable affected people to determine, with dignity, the course of their lives and their futures.

#### Value of the Alliance

The Global Alliance for Urban Crises reflects a **new type of collaboration** – it joins a diverse group of stakeholders who do not systematically work together. The Alliance places municipalities and affected communities at the centre of its work and encourages a supportive and collaborative approach from humanitarian, development, and other relevant actors during urban humanitarian crises.

The strength of the Alliance lies in the broad range of actors who are collaborating in pursuit of common goals. Members will provide the knowledge, build capacities, and develop necessary approaches to prevent, prepare for, and respond to humanitarian crises in urban environments.

The Alliance will operate on the assumption that working in partnership and collaborating towards common outcomes breaks down silos and improves effectiveness.

## Functions of the Alliance

Led by the Secretariat, the Alliance will:

- Work to achieve an improved understanding of, and commitment to, effective humanitarian action in urban settings.
- Manage a repository of knowledge on current initiatives in agencies and organisations.
- Identify gaps in evidence, capacity, tools and approaches.
- Promote the up-take of urban specific tools and approaches to ensure stakeholders are better equipped to work effectively in towns and cities affected by crisis.
- Support members to contribute to shared goals of improved preparedness and response through their own individual or joint initiatives.
- Advocate for and mobilise appropriate financing mechanisms and funding windows to support such initiatives.
- Advocate for the inclusion of an urban crisis focus in other relevant communities of practice, for example those addressing the impacts of climate change, forced displacement and migration, and global health risks.
- Work to increase the availability and inclusion of urban expertise in humanitarian response.

## Membership

The Alliance is a multi-stakeholder initiative made up of a broad membership that includes actors not traditionally considered humanitarian responders. It includes development, urban professionals and local authority networks.

Membership numbers will not be capped. The Alliance will seek to build its membership, bringing in representatives from Southern municipalities, countries and regions. The ultimate aim is to achieve a shift in mindset so as to ensure context specific and effective programming and interventions.

*What is required of members and partners?*

The Alliance will operate with a two-tier system of membership. In order to join the Alliance, members commit to the principles set out in the *Urban Crises Charter* (by becoming a signatory) and use them as a basis for both policy level and operational engagement.

Those who want to contribute more to the Alliance may become Partners. In addition to committing to the principles, Partners commit to the following:

- Strengthen their institutional set up, capacity and programming in order to contribute more effectively towards the goal of improved prevention, preparedness and response to urban humanitarian crises;
- Make specific commitments to work with other partners to develop new initiatives that will operationalize the urban recommendations developed for the WHS.
- Actively support the core functions of the Alliance (e.g advocacy, knowledge management, evidence, etc.).

*How to become a member/partner*

Members and partners are required to sign a letter of commitment that outlines the above bullet points. Member and partner commitments will be made public at the launch of the Alliance during the WHS.

## **Governance**

The Alliance will be run by a small secretariat of two to four staff members. Certain functions of the Alliance (e.g knowledge management) may be outsourced to Partners.

### *Partnership Council*

A small group (six to ten partners), representing different constituencies and on a rotating basis, will meet regularly to:

- a) Monitor the effectiveness of the Alliance (measured by partnerships built, knowledge disseminated, growth in membership, etc);
- b) Decide on strategic direction and a collective workplan for partners, including priority initiatives;
- c) Review and, where appropriate, endorse key initiatives submitted to the Partnership Council;
- d) Agree on advocacy strategy and messaging;
- e) Oversee functioning of the secretariat and fundraising to finance the secretariat and administrative costs.

During the first year, the Partnership Council will be convened on a quarterly or six-monthly basis, taking advantage of gatherings such as ECOSOC, UNGA, etc.

### *World Urban Crisis Forum*

The Alliance will convene a World Urban Crisis Forum, as part of the World Urban Forum (held every two years) to provide an opportunity for all members to share good practices and organize dialogues to contribute to and refine the overall priorities of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.