Dear ICVA Members,

Happy New Year!

This Quarterly Update provides you with information on some of ICVA’s work from September to now. The purpose is to keep you updated on various initiatives, as well as solicit your feedback. In 2013, we will be sending you shorter monthly bulletins with links to areas of interest on our website. Please be in touch if you would like further details, or have questions on any of the areas covered, by contacting secretariat@icva.ch

Warm regards,
On behalf of the ICVA Secretariat,
Ed Schenkenberg

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1 March 2013

Annual Conference

This year the theme is “Innovate: It Doesn’t Have to Be Like This Just Because it Always Has Been.” We’ll be looking at ways we can innovate to improve how we work. More information will be available in the New Year, but please mark 1 March in your calendar!
OVERVIEW

The last quarter has been an interesting one in considering future humanitarian policies. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has been considering its forward agenda; OCHA has held its policy conference, etc. ICVA in turn has been working closely with its Board and its newly formed Policy Committee to consider its policy priorities for 2013. As a result, in 2013, ICVA will align its policy work under the following policy areas:

1. Promote the critical and central role of national and local NGOs in humanitarian action;
2. Improve humanitarian effectiveness;
3. Promote principled humanitarian action; and
4. Link operational and advocacy concerns with regards to situations of forced displacement.

This work on defining policy priorities, a review of ICVA’s work during 2012, and the recent external evaluation to consider ICVA’s work to date with UNHCR and IASC, has fed into the Annual Plan 2013. The Annual Plan is available upon request from tanya@icva.ch.

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC)

On 13 December, the IASC Principals met in Rome. The ICVA Chair, Penny Lawrence (OXFAM) and Vice Chair, Faizal Perdaus (Mercy Malaysia), took the ICVA seats at the table. Somewhat unplanned, time was devoted to discussing actual crises situations, including Syria, Burma, D.R. Congo, Somalia, Sudan, the Sahel, and Mali. In reflecting on this part of the meeting, the Principals agreed they would like to devote more time of their meeting to these ‘unscripted’ exchanges in the future.

One issue that has presented itself is the case of Syria and whether or not the IASC should qualify this situation as a “Level 3” crisis, which implies that IASC participating agencies will strengthen their leadership and scale-up their operations for this crisis. The Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC), Valerie Amos, noted that at a time when there is a political deadlock on Syria, humanitarians should be very careful to not serve as a substitute and ‘fig leaf’ for political (in)action. Moreover, access is unlikely to be forthcoming because of an “L3” declaration by the IASC.

On the situation of the Rohingya in Burma, which the ERC had visited a week earlier, Faizal Perdaus, President of Mercy Malaysia, noted that more attention should be given to the critical role that local NGOs could play in the clusters, which need to be ‘reignited.’ He also stressed that while the international community can address the plight of the Rohingya, attention must be given to the situation of the Rakhine and social-economic issues, going beyond emergency response.

On Somalia, a question was raised on the discussion in the UN to establish an integrated mission. The non-UN agencies made it clear that UN integration would drive a strong wedge between the UN and them. While Amos pointed out that the UN is aligned in its position that structural integration should not happen, she also explained that the Somali government wants to have one point in the UN as an interface. On (northern) Mali, IASC participating agencies shared their view that military intervention is not a way forward for the international community. The UN system, including the political side of the UN, agrees with this view.

On Sudan, the IASC recognised that since the tripartite agreements no progress has been made in terms of improving humanitarian access. There is a dearth of ideas of initiatives on what to do next. Darfur has (also) fallen off the agenda and donors are showing a lack of interest.

There has also been substantial discussion around the forward-looking agenda for the IASC. Areas that it will likely focus on are accountability to affected populations, resilience including preparedness, engagement with non IASC members, cohesiveness in protracted or highly complex security environments, and the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian responses (including through technology). For further information on the IASC, including background documents, Working Group meeting minutes, ICVA talking points please refer to the http://www.icva.ch/whatshot.html.
WHERE ARE WE AT WITH THE TRANSFORMATIVE (TA) AGENDA?

The “Transformative Agenda” (TA) is an initiative undertaken within the IASC since December 2010 to make improvements to the humanitarian reform process, which in 2005 introduced the clusters, established new financing mechanisms, and made an attempt to strengthen humanitarian leadership. The TA is meant to result in more effective coordinated responses that meet the needs of, and are accountable to, affected populations. The process, initiated at the IASC heads of agency (Principals) level, was in response to the well-known failings of the humanitarian responses to the Haiti earthquake and the Pakistan floods. Much of the focus of the TA has been around the response to future large-scale (“Level 3”) emergencies. A number of elements of the TA will be applicable to all humanitarian crises, except for refugee situations where UNHCR has the mandate to coordinate the response. Further information about the implications of the TA for NGOs can be found at http://www.icva.ch/doc00005182.html.

During 2013 there has been substantial work done in the IASC to develop certain reference documents, known as “protocols,” which would guide how this work is rolled out. These include guidance on activation around L3 emergencies, cluster coordination and -- in 2013 -- will include further guidance on preparedness and accountability. While the “protocols” are ready or almost ready, there is now a far larger piece of work that needs to be done on the dissemination, communication, implementation and monitoring of the TA. ICVA will be following this process closely to ensure the dissemination strategy includes plans for distribution wider than the HCT, to include local civil society, governments, etc. It is important that the TA is seen as something beneficial for the humanitarian community, and not just a UN-centric process. It will also be important to ensure a clear monitoring system is put in place, so there is learning from the TA’s implementation to make improvements, acknowledging that it has been a very Geneva-based process to date.

In the IASC Principals discussion on the Transformative Agenda, the ERC noted that while implementation has been patchy, much has been achieved in moving the TA forward. The real test, however, will be the next huge disaster. However, a number of questions and issues were raised in connection to this, which included: questioning the triggers for the activation of a “Level 3”, given that a huge crisis may also happen in a more slow-onset manner (e.g. Pakistan floods). Not all conditions may be fulfilled at the same time. A concern was expressed that the focus on “Level 3” for the TA has raised complications in terms of ensuring that leadership, coordination, and accountability is also strengthened in other situations. Perhaps the TA had raised donors’ expectations with regards to increased humanitarian effectiveness too much? Even if an L3 response would be activated, humanitarian agencies may not be able to save more lives because of the context. ICVA questioned why NGOs had not been part of the meeting of UN emergency directors with a group of donors held on 7 December.

In clarifying the further implementation of the TA, Valerie Amos explained her vision for three IASC groups: the Principals steering group which will monitor progress; the IASC working group that will work on further policy guidance where needed; and the emergency directions that will look at operational issues in the context of the implementation of the TA. The TA will remain a standing item on the IASC Principals Agenda.

UNHCR

Donors Pledge $550 million to UNHCR

Every December donors gather in Geneva to announce how much money they will give UNHCR the following year. At this year’s December 11 pledging conference donors promised to give UNHCR $550 million in 2013. The good news is that this amount exceeds last year’s pledges of $482 million. The bad news is that it only covers 14% of UNHCR’s total budgetary needs for 2013 (UNHCR’s 2013 budget currently stands at $3.92 billion). In the coming year, we expect UNHCR will struggle to pay for existing programmes, as well as adequately respond to current humanitarian crises in the Middle East and parts of Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa. We are already seeing this funding situation affect NGO implementing partners in places like Dadaab, Kenya. Please let us know how these financial challenges are affecting you by emailing Melissa@icva.ch.
The High Commissioner Agrees to Improve Partnership with NGOs

On December 11 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres presided over a four-hour “Structured Dialogue” between seventeen NGO representatives, the IFRC and twelve senior UNHCR managers. They discussed general issues related to improving NGO – UNHCR partnerships, as well as considering specific opportunities for partnership related to joint advocacy, strengthening partner capacity and urban refugees. The discussions were positive, but also highlighted some of the inherent problems in NGO-UNHCR partnership, such as power dynamics, predictability and transparency, risk management versus innovation, etc.

The basis of the discussions was around suggested recommendations for improvement that had been prepared by teams comprising of members of ICVA, Interaction, IFRC and UNHCR. Many of these recommendations were received positively by the High Commissioner, including: a simple annual report on partnerships; a review of the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultation process; piloting regional NGO UNHCR consultation; a simple guidance note on joint advocacy; an institutional strategy for local partner capacity development; and a pilot program to improve urban programming.

The plan is now for a smaller task force to be established to oversee implementation of these recommendations in the run-up to the 2013 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultation. A full report on the meeting can be found http://www.icva.ch/doc00005592.doc.

If you have any further questions, please email Tanya@icva.ch.

Are IDPs better off than they were twenty years ago?

Twenty years ago, the Secretary-General, at the request of the Commission on Human Rights, appointed his first Representative on internally displaced persons, Francis Deng. Since then, much has been done on the issue of IDPs. Has it made a difference in the lives of IDPs?

ICVA and other NGOs (including NRC, IDMC, Interaction, and Refugees International) participated in a November 28-29 roundtable event to answer this question and identify next steps. They were joined by Chaloka Beyani, his predecessor Walter Kälin, governments, UN agencies, ICRC, IOM, and the World Bank. The event was organized by the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement. An interview with Mr. Beyani for our members, can be accessed at http://www.icva.ch/doc00005593.html.

It is clear IDPs benefit from more attention, staffing and financial resources than they did twenty years ago. Spurred by the Rapporteurs, the international community has made progress advancing normative frameworks (e.g. the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Kampala Convention) and developing the coordination systems (e.g. the establishment of an Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the clusters). For these achievements, we should be proud.

However, we still have a long way to go. There are more IDPs today than before (27 million IDPs today compared to less than 20 million in 1990). We still need to integrate new instruments into national laws and more quickly and effectively respond to IDPs situations. And there are still unacceptable IDP situations in Africa (like violence in eastern DRC), the Middle East (like hindered access inside Syria) and Asia (like the lack of response to Rohingya in Myanmar).

ICVA is concerned that IDPs have been “mainstreamed” into oblivion. Since the cluster system was introduced in 2005, the IASC’s focus on IDPs has significantly waned. The humanitarian system reform agenda has widened to the point that documents on the transformative agenda do not even reference IDPs. When IDP-specific needs arise, whom should we ask for help? How do we ensure the ERC, RCs, HCs and agencies prioritize the protection of IDPs?

Despite the rich diversity of views presented at the roundtable event, participants managed to agree on two key priorities for joint action: “First, we should work together to promote the implementation of the Kampala Convention. Second, we should promote the implementation of the Secretary General’s Durable Solutions Framework involving development actors. Many also want to strengthen the international system’s capacity (with better staffing, training, and funding) and find ways to increase support for the Special Rapporteur (who works part-time and pro bono). A report and proposed next steps will soon be provided by Brookings and a Steering Committee and can be requested from Melissa@icva.ch.
**JSI AND CERTIFICATION**

In early November, the ICVA Board meeting discussed the views of ICVA members on the future of the quality and accountability agenda in terms of joint (humanitarian) standards and certification. The Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) and Steering Committee for Humanitarian response (SCHR) recently developed processes on looking at standards and certification, respectively.

The ICVA Board decided that ICVA’s role in the JSI and SCHR Certification processes will be four-fold: (1) ICVA will make an effort to keep member agencies fully informed of the processes; (2) ICVA will emphasise the centrality of humanitarian principles in relation to any new standards; (3) where relevant ICVA will make connections among various humanitarian policy processes (e.g. between the NRC-led project on principled humanitarian action and the JSI); and (4) with regards to certification, ICVA feels that many NGOs have raised the right questions on it and, therefore, it is now time for (individual) NGOs to answer these questions. (Some of the most pertinent questions are: what problem is certification expected to solve? In whose interest is certification? Is certification seeking to be an exercise that includes or excludes agencies? And, what is the relationship between certification and improved quality in humanitarian response?)

At the Sphere Board meeting in December, the Sphere board, which includes ICVA Executive Director and ICVA Board member Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC), produced a note with a set of issues that should be reflected in the JSI process. This note highlights the following points: the need for sufficient time for the consultations, beyond June 2013 if so required, while making use of existing (field-based) networks and (NGO) coordination forums; keeping a distinction between the standards and certification discussions, as JSI does not exist to serve the SCHR certification process with a set of standards against which agencies can be certified; maintain the humanitarian focus of the JSI process; push agencies that sit on multiple boards of the Q and A initiatives to present a consistent agency perspective on the future landscape; and improving communications on the purpose and nature of the JSI consultations.

Unfortunately, many of these points have been insufficiently reflected in the JSI communication that came out following after the 29 November meeting.

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**STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP IN DISASTER RESPONSE**

**LET’S DISCUSS...**

In October 2011, ICVA together with the Swiss government, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) convened the “International Dialogue on Strengthening Partnership in Disaster Response: Bridging National and International Support” (IDDR). The IDDR gathered over 130 representatives from governments and humanitarian organisations to discuss how to improve cooperation in international disaster assistance, identify common challenges, exchange best practices, and develop new ideas for moving forward, with a particular focus on the role of affected states. At this meeting, participants recommended a range of actions, including efforts to share knowledge and foster additional dialogue on the humanitarian system. In response, the conveners developed a “training workshop on the institutional and legal frameworks for international disaster response” aimed at legal and humanitarian focal points in the permanent missions in Geneva, New York, Brussels, AddisAbaba and other regional locations to be determined.

The first one-day workshop was held in Geneva in October 2012, where 54 representatives from various Government missions attended to learn more on International Disaster Response Law, as well as participate and discuss implications for response. Feedback from participants was particularly positive.

In preparation of the second training workshop planned for March 2013, a preparatory meeting was held in New York in December. Participants at the meeting, which included the governments of Pakistan, Japan, Spain, Bangladesh, Canada, UK and representatives from ECHO, all expressed great interest in the training workshop and asked to include a regional dimension to it so to integrate current efforts on disaster response being carried out at the regional and sub-regional level.

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1 This communication can be found here: [http://pool.fruitycms.com/humanitarianstandards/News/JSI-FINAL-Joint-Communique-29-Nov.pdf](http://pool.fruitycms.com/humanitarianstandards/News/JSI-FINAL-Joint-Communique-29-Nov.pdf)
The main aim of emergency response funds (ERFs) is to provide rapid and flexible funding to in-country actors to address unforeseen humanitarian needs. These country-based pooled funds are un-earmarked and decisions for fund allocations are made at the country level.

Established for the first time in Angola in 1997, ERFs are managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). These relatively small-sized funds are available to both NGOs and UN agencies. All project applications have to be approved by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) before they can receive a grant from the fund. There are currently 13 ERFs in operation.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Valerie Amos, endorsed and signed the Global ERF Guidelines in October 20122. NGO’s were given the opportunity to provide input into these guidelines. A report is available at http://www.icva.ch/doc00005595.html, which provides further details of what has and has not been changed as a result of the NGOs feedback in the current Guidelines.

OCHA has recently conducted an evaluation of the ERF, whose final report will be issued in January 2013. The evaluation highlights the helpful role played by the Guidelines in operationalising the ERF process. Preliminary findings have shown ERFs to be effective instruments in filling gaps or meeting unforeseen needs. However, the evaluation also points to some specific challenges. As noted by many NGOs, there are considerable delays in funding emergency interventions through the ERF mechanism, including receiving quality proposals, approval of these proposals and disbursement of project funds. More broadly, there is a need for OCHA to clarify the strategic focus of the ERF, how they differentiate it from other pooled funding mechanisms and to clarify the degree to which they see the ERF as a priority mechanism, acknowledging the reality that most of them are underfunded.

Measures have been put in place to monitor delays in the project cycle, and ultimately to identify unnecessary administrative processes that could be eliminated. However, NGO proposals to address the source of these delays, such as pre-qualification of potential applicants, approval for spending to commence prior to fund transfer, and increased spending limits in acute emergencies, have not been adopted due to OCHA Financial Regulations and Rules. OCHA plans to continue discussions with the UN Controller’s Office on many of these ‘matters preventing flexibility’.

After being the subject of extensive consultations, the Guidelines are planned for a revision in 2013, which will be an opportunity to improve their relevance to the local contexts and to clarify the rationale that underpins the opening of an ERF and its subsequent closure and other elements such as the criteria for project selection. Understanding that a more dynamic approach to risk management is necessary to comply with the desired speed and flexibility of the funds, OCHA will be trying to strike a balance between flexibility and accountability.

NGOs have an opportunity to comment on the preliminary findings of the ERF evaluation until mid-January 2013. If you would like to contribute your views or if you have any questions, please contact marzia@icva.ch.

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2 These guidelines can be found at http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/emergency-response-funds-erf/global-erf-guidelines
HUMANITARIAN POLICY & INNOVATION

OCHA organised its annual Policy Forum in December 2012. Some 50 participants from research institutes, universities, NGOs and UN agencies came together to discuss some of the main dilemmas currently facing the humanitarian community (e.g. risk taking vs. accountability, proximity vs. remoteness – wanting a solution that can go global but that has a reach into the community).

Participants were encouraged to identify ‘innovative solutions’ to those dilemmas.

ICVA will be building on this theme in its Annual Conference on 1 March 2013, with the theme “Innovate: It Doesn’t Have to Be Like This Just Because it Always Has Been.” Look out for more information coming your way in January.

Improving NGO Coordination to Support Humanitarian Operations

NGO HUMANITARIAN REFORM PROJECT UPDATES

A key role of ICVA, alongside its policy work, is to improve NGO coordination. One means it does this is through co-hosting with five member NGOs the ECHO-funded NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project Phase II in five focus countries; consolidating lessons thus far and developing practical approaches to improving NGO access and participation in the reform mechanisms and the TA. The NHRP is a 16-month project due to be completed in April 2013, that has been promoting improved and increased national and international NGO engagement with clusters, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), financing mechanisms, and generally strengthened more assertive NGO voices providing leadership in the humanitarian system. In each of the Project’s four focus countries a dedicated staff member has dramatically increased engagement of NGOs, particularly national NGOs, with the UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms, enabling NGOs to better inform and influence implementation.

Below are some articles based on some of the work being conducted in the project.

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN SOMALIA

The NHRP II project in Somalia has been exploring the relationship between international NGOs and East African NGOs with operations in Somalia to examine to what extent partnerships have been having a strengthening effect on the latter.

The protracted humanitarian crisis in Somalia combined with the growing insecurity and recent challenges of access to affected populations created strong reliance of international NGOs on Somali NGOs for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As a result, a large number of Somali NGOs are working in partnership with international NGOs (INGOs) and playing a more centre-stage role in humanitarian action than ever before. Given that most Somali NGOs do not have access to direct sustainable funding, many are scaling up and down according to the needs and funding of their international partners. This creates a dependency on project-based funding, which hinders investments towards coherent and effective capacity building for their organisations.

The study suggests that the main challenges facing stronger partnerships between Somali NGOs and INGOs are a lack of mutual trust and confidence in each other’s motives. This lack of trust stems from two main issues: the perceived lack of impartiality and the perception that financial gains are the main driver for some Somali NGOs. The mistrust Somali NGOs have of the international NGOs is linked to the belief that financial interests drive many INGOs and that some have ulterior motives linked to political affiliations. Identifying where this trust deficit exists, why and what can be done about it is a necessary first step for improving the working relationship between the different parties. The study further suggests that Somali
NGOs need to shift from operating in short-term survival mode to longer-term strategic planning. International NGOs are urged to invest more in capacity building, as an integral part of partnership arrangements, shifting from short to longer-term engagements. The goal of capacity building for the Somali organisations is to increase the quality, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and sustainability of humanitarian action. Yet each set of humanitarian actors working in Somalia today has a different range of mandates, commitments and approaches for achieving these diverse goals. A more coherent capacity building strategy must be applied and the costs and benefits of different approaches carefully analysed.

**CLUSTER LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH SUDAN**

In April, 2012 an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) team visited South Sudan in order to ‘field test’ the Transformative Agenda in an on-going humanitarian context. Their findings showed that, ‘the strength of cluster coordination is, in turn, largely based on the shared leadership of cluster between the UN and non-UN operational agencies (enabled by a strong NGO forum), dedicated and qualified cluster coordinators and a transparent use of pooled funds to cement a strong assistance strategy.’

Why has the cluster approach been deemed so successful in South Sudan while it has struggled in so many other emergencies? While there are number of reasons there seems to be three broad categories responsible for the clusters success which are described below:

**i) Context & History of Inter-Agency Cooperation:** South Sudan has a long history of joint implementation between UN agencies and NGOs - something which is not often present in new emergencies. Under Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) [1989 – 2005] assets, information, implementation responsibility, and even compounds in Lokichoggio, the nearest logistical base in Kenya, were shared. Although the OLS relationship was not without its problems a history of joint action was created.

Sectoral coordination also existed prior to the cluster system implementation. This coordination was led by UN, with NGO co-leads who met at least on a quarterly basis, around UN processes such as the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) and some ad-hoc contingency planning. When the cluster system was first introduced it developed organically within each sector with often the NGO co-lead on the sector being automatically considered the cluster co-lead.

**ii) An Open and Pragmatic Approach during Initial Implementation:** When the decision was being taken on whether to roll out the clusters in South Sudan it was made in collaboration with all partners and not imposed as a ‘UN fait accompli’.

There was a strong NGO Forum presence on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and they were given time to review and discuss the pros and cons of the roll-out prior to a decision being taken. Clear feedback by the NGO Forum in support of the cluster roll-out was dependent on NGO co-leadership and this was well received by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and HCT. This transparent and consultative approach and incorporation of co-leadership contributed to NGOs feeling that they were equal partners from the outset.

While there has been plenty of conversation about how to name the cluster co-leadership, essentially, function was chosen over form as evidenced by the willingness of some UN agencies to abdicate the title ‘lead’ in support of a well-functioning cluster. This acceptance has meant that the clusters can move beyond the rigidity of a system wherein a UN agency might be forced to assume the lead while lacking the capacity.

**iii) Personal skill set:** While the roll-out took time from its initial HCT approval, the first cluster leaders often arrived with significant experience of both the cluster and humanitarian reform at the global level or in other emergencies. Additionally, many NGO cluster leads brought a wealth of previous field experience in South Sudan as well as experience bringing together a diverse group of NGOs through the sectors.

There has also been an evolution in thinking of the personal skill set an individual cluster leader should possess. Previously, it was maintained that technical knowledge was the most important skills that cluster leadership could bring. Now, it is becoming increasingly accepted that technical ability is only one necessary attribute, with others including: pragmatism, maturity/experience in coordination, flexibility, cooperation and diplomacy and a willingness to work with all partners.

In general, there is no formal or documented process for sharing cluster leadership and each cluster has an informally worked out a system that suits them. While the quality of leadership within the clusters has varied, having two leaders has strengthened the overall cluster operation so that if the UN leadership is weak the NGO co-lead can pick up the slack and vice versa.

This combination of previous joint UN/NGO action and implementation, a cluster roll-out that evidenced true partnership, and the personal capacities of the cluster leads have led to strong cluster coordination in South Sudan.
REGIONAL HUBS

A key aspect of ICVA’s Strategic Plan 2012 to 2014 is to develop ICVA Regional Hubs in order to bring field realities to policy discussions at the global level in order to ensure that policy decisions better reflect the needs and capacities of NGOs engaging in humanitarian work in the field. The Hubs will help deepen the dialogue with existing members and partners, as well as create opportunities for new links and increased membership, thus strengthening the voice of field-based actors in global debates. They will also help to more effectively disseminate information from the global level to these actors to inform their operational decision-making as relevant, all with the overall aim of strengthening the humanitarian response in the region.

The Regional Hubs will build on the positive outcomes of the NGO Humanitarian Reform Project (NHRP) II, which is due to be completed in April 2013. There is a strong recognition by members that the NHRP model of deploying a dedicated staff member closer to programme delivery has had dual advantages. Firstly, ICVA’s advocacy to the multilateral bodies – UNHCR, OCHA, IASC – is improved by access to a broader range of local views and experiences and secondly, the locally deployed colleagues are able to quickly and thoroughly disseminate new and emerging policies, guidance, and ideas on coordination and other relevant topics.

It was agreed at ICVA’s Board Meeting in June 2012 that South East Asia would be the first Regional Hub to be launched. A regional workshop was held in Bangkok in September 2012 with 18 member and partner organisations to explore the added value of a South East Asia Hub and give members an opportunity to provide input to the development of its aim, objective, and setup. Notes from this meeting can be found at [http://www.icva.ch/doc00005552.html](http://www.icva.ch/doc00005552.html)

Since the meeting, ICVA is concluding its hosting arrangement with the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN). The position will be advertised shortly, with the aim to have someone in place in March 2013 and start the first ICVA Regional Hub.

Learning from the Bangkok Hub will feed into the development of subsequent Hubs, with East Africa and West Africa being the next regions for consideration. Regional workshops will be held (funding permitting) in 2013 to consult on the Hubs workplan and establish the Host organisation. The next stage would be to explore establishing Regional Hubs in areas where there is limited ICVA representation. This could include the Middle East and Latin America in order to strengthen membership and linkages in those areas.

ICVA Membership Announcements and Services

New ICVA Member: Afrique Secours et Assistance (ASA)

ICVA is pleased to welcome and introduce a new member to the ICVA network: Afrique Secours et Assistance (ASA). ASA is an NGO from Cote d’Ivoire, which is dedicated to assisting vulnerable people affected by humanitarian or natural disasters. Founded in 1998, ASA has dedicated its work to assisting children in difficult situations through three main sectors: Health and Nutrition, Education and Economic and Social Development projects. ASA’s main focus is to promote the respect of children’s rights and ensure their protection, especially for children in vulnerable situations (children orphaned due to AIDS and other grave diseases), unaccompanied or separated minors, refugee children, and child victims of trafficking.
ICVA’S NEW COMMUNICATION STRATEGY & WEBSITE

With a new team, New York office, and new regional hubs, as well as an overall changing dynamic, ICVA has produced a new Communications Strategy in order to better achieve a shared vision and strategic direction for communicating as a network. It aims to enable the Secretariat to reach specific audiences through better and more targeted means. It focuses on key communication tools, such as the new ICVA website (to be launched in January 2013), as well as formalise the way ICVA communicates with its members through its new Newsletters, Monthly Bulletins (to be launched in January 2013), more telephone/video conferences, marketing material (brochures and flyers), as well as ‘Opinion Pieces.’ Improving communication with, and information on membership organisations is a priority. For more information, please contact Information@icva.ch.

ICVA Secretariat Updates

FOND FAREWELLS & NEW STARTS: CHANGES IN ICVA STAFF

It has continued to be a busy time of change for the ICVA Secretariat with three key changes.

Change of Executive Director
These last few months have seen the positive conclusion to the recruitment process for the new Executive Director (E.D.) to take over from Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. ICVA is delighted to announce that Nan Buzard will be taking over as ICVA E.D. from 1 February 2013. Nan will be known to many of you already. She was previously the Senior Director for International Response and Programmes at the American Red Cross. From 1998 until 2003, she was the Manager of the Sphere Project, based in Geneva, after which she worked for UNHCR. As such, Nan brings experience from the field, from headquarters, and from working in collaboration across NGOs on quality and accountability through managing the Sphere Project.

However, ICVA will sorely miss the leadership of Ed, who has been with ICVA for 13 years and has grown the organisation into the successful global humanitarian network it is today. We know you will all thank Ed for the work he has done.

ICVA’s New York Representation
ICVA realised its long-standing aspiration to establish a presence in New York in November thanks to the recruitment of Marzia Montemurro. ICVA is very grateful for one of its members, Church World Service (CWS), to host Marzia.

The decision to establish an ICVA presence in New York was taken earlier given the on-going shift in the centre of gravity for humanitarian coordination and decision-making in New York. The New York presence is also part of ICVA’s plan to build an even stronger global network.

ICVA’s work in New York will further support and enhance ICVA’s priorities by contributing to a better understanding of humanitarian decision-making processes in New York and the opportunities to influence them; liaising with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, OCHA and other UN agencies on humanitarian issues as well as engaging UN member States on issues such as humanitarian principles and humanitarian access. Marzia would be delighted to hear from you at Marzia@icva.ch.

New Policy Officer
Another significant change in staffing during these last months has been the departure of Rüdiger Scöch, who had played a fundamental role in ICVA over the last five years, and was a very valued member of the team to our members. However, ICVA is happy to welcome Melissa Pitotti as his replacement, who has joined us from working with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. She is known to many of you form the roles she previously played as a program officer covering Asia, the UNHCR EXCOM Rapporteur, the focal point for the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Refugee Resettlement (ATCR). We are very fortunate to learn from her donor experience and her knowledge of UNHCR. Melissa can be contacted at Melissa@icva.ch. We know you will enjoy working with her.
In March 2012, the ICVA General Assembly agreed that ICVA should play a pivotal role in advocating for the integration of quality and accountability in the coordination and implementation of humanitarian response. It was with this role in mind that the ICVA Secretariat has agreed to host the Sphere Project as of early 2013. It is expected that a closer relationship between ICVA and the Sphere Project, enabled through the hosting of the project, will see synergies in terms of ICVA’s policy and advocacy work which, in turn, should contribute to better and more coherent humanitarian outcomes.

Upcoming Events

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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>NRC event on Counter Terrorism Measures ICVA office, 12.30-14.00. Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:secretariat@icva.ch">secretariat@icva.ch</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>New ICVA Executive Director Starts</td>
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<td>27 &amp; 28 ICVA Governing Board Meeting</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>ICVA Conference “Innovation and Partnership” CICG, Geneva</td>
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<td>UNHCR Standing Committee (Operations)</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Annual NGO UNHCR Consultations UNHCR Standing Committee (Protection)</td>
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<td>UNHCR Standing Committee (Budget) UNHCR Executive Committee</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>HC’s Dialogue on Protection</td>
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