



**GLOBAL
SHELTER CLUSTER**

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements

2030

GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER STRATEGY

Life Saving and Life Enabling

MARCH 2025



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GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER COORDINATORS' STATEMENT

Pablo Medina and Seki Hirano

The idea that shelter is life saving and life enabling is essential to grasp the far-reaching impacts of shelter and settlements responses. Shelter is where families find safety, children study, meals are prepared and futures are rebuilt. By providing shelter, we not only offer protection from the elements but we empower individuals and communities to nurture hope, promote health and restore their capacity to overcome adversity.

An increasing number of people need shelter and settlement solutions that support them to maintain their health, safety, dignity, livelihood, and community connections. Yet complex and constantly changing factors – geopolitical, environmental, social, scientific, economic, technological – create a rapidly changing framework within which to meet those needs. So we need to be more prepared and flexible than ever.

As the GSC coordinators, we see many reasons to be optimistic. For example, we are heartened by the way in which environmental and climate change awareness is driving new approaches to shelter and settlements responses. We are equally reassured by the growing number of localization initiatives and the evidence of their success. We are hopeful about emerging technological solutions, such as digital cash transfers. One area that we are particularly excited about is the potential for artificial intelligence to drive dramatic changes in data collection and analysis, in communication, in forecasting and in developing more efficient ways to provide shelter and settlements responses. We also see opportunities arising from the determination to integrate humanitarian and development efforts, and to reform financing models.

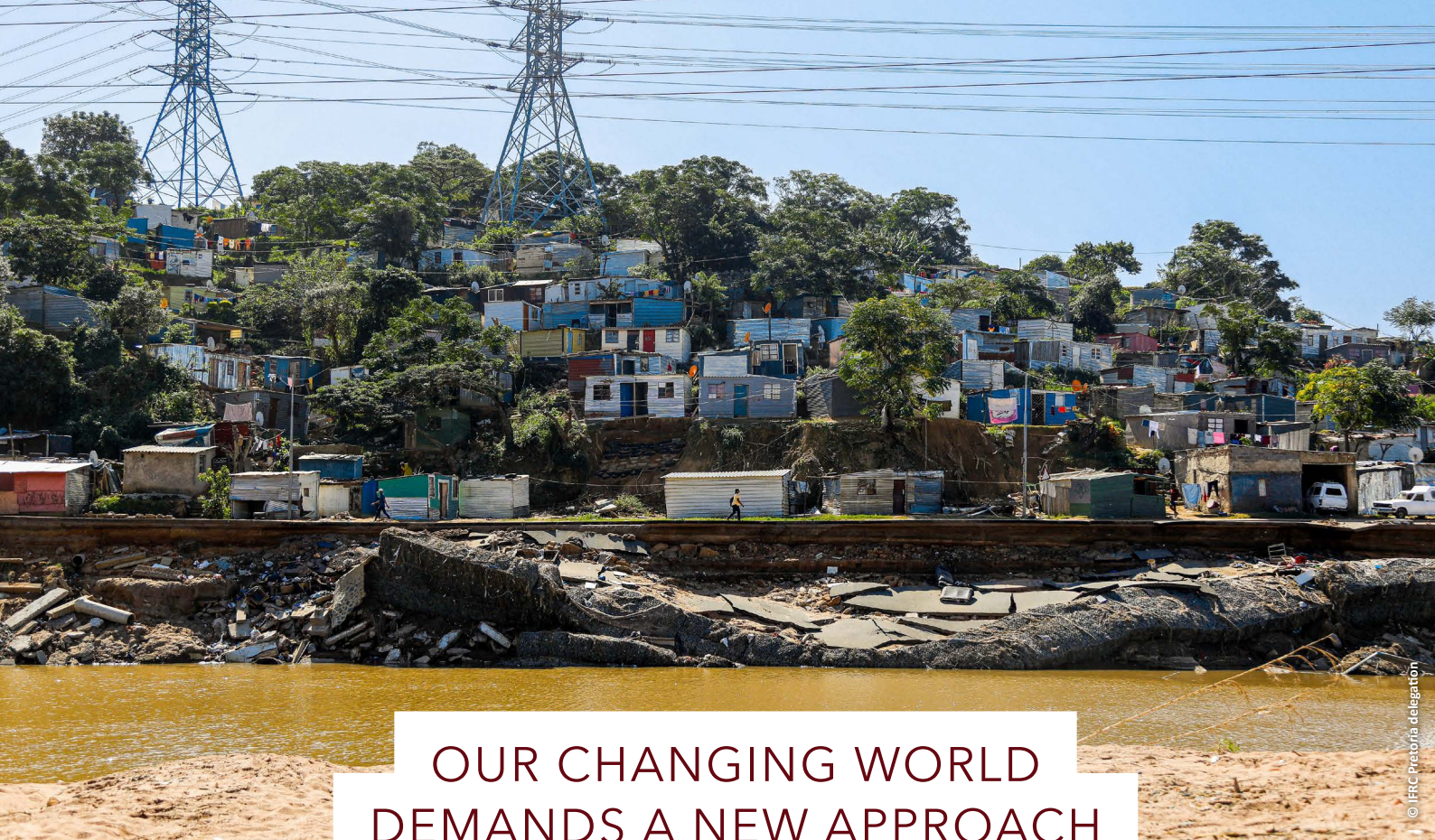
There is much cause for hope and enthusiasm about where we go next as a cluster. But the fact remains that new demands on us and the many new – and old – challenges that we face mean that 'business as usual' will not take us far. Instead, we need a new framework for working.

The 2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy provides that framework. The GSC Strategic Advisory Group oversaw the development of the Strategy and will drive its implementation, welcoming ongoing involvement with every partner.

The Strategy benefits from the ideas and considered opinions of diverse stakeholders. Importantly, it captures decades of cumulative knowledge and experience, while also acknowledging the need for bold new transformational approaches. It is intentionally aspirational because the changes that will continue to affect our work demand nothing less.

If we implement the Strategy in the same spirit of collaboration in which we developed it, we can be confident that we will save lives and enable lives well into the future.



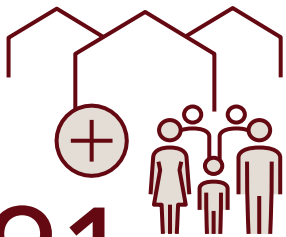


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OUR CHANGING WORLD DEMANDS A NEW APPROACH

The *2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy* sets out a focused vision and a practical framework for delivering shelter and settlements support in a changing world. It challenges us to optimize our collective reach and extend our collective impact.

We've developed the Strategy collaboratively and we will deliver it collaboratively. We want to work with partners who share our vision, and we'll be accountable to them and to the people and communities who need safe, dignified and appropriate shelter and settlements.



91 MILLION
PEOPLE NEEDED
SHELTER IN 2024



+141%
IN SEVEN YEARS

More people than ever need safe and dignified shelter

The *2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy* responds to a concerning year-on-year increase in the number of people requiring humanitarian support. The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024* estimates that some 300 million people required some form of humanitarian support in 2024, compared to 136 million in 2018, an increase of over 120% in seven years.¹

We see an even higher rate of increase in the number of people who need shelter. In 2024, 91 million people needed shelter, compared to just under 38 million in 2018, an increase of 141% in seven years.

The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024* attributes the increase in humanitarian need to shifts in three primary areas: climate change, conflict and macroeconomic conditions.

¹ OCHA. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*. December 2023



Climate change, conflict and macroeconomic pressure are driving a change in our strategy



+45%
2021 → 2022

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including droughts, floods, damaging storms and heat waves. Without drastic reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, average land and sea temperatures will continue to rise. According to the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*, internal displacement caused by climate change increased by 45% between 2021 and 2022. We therefore expect rates of displacement to continue to rise, with an associated rise in the need for shelter support. The *2024-2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy* acknowledges this pressure and encourages innovative approaches to deal with it.

59 → ⚡ ←

**STATE-BASED
CONFLICTS IN
34 COUNTRIES**

State-based conflicts affect an increasing number of people in an increasing number of countries. In 2023, 59 state-based conflicts were recorded in 34 countries, the highest number of conflicts registered since 1946.² Damage to infrastructure, destruction of property, denial of livelihoods and disruption of social function are all consequences of conflict that drive the need for shelter support. It also shifts the focus of humanitarian response much more towards urban areas. That change means we need to rethink our established approaches and to work with new partners who can complement our skills and knowledge.

4.2 → \$

**USD TRILLION
SHORTFALL
IN FINANCE
REQUIRED TO
ACHIEVE GOALS**

Current global macroeconomic conditions are characterized by slow growth, supply issues in several sectors, and interest rates that are higher than the long-term average. Those conditions tend to divert resources away from the 17 sustainable development goals, especially in the least developed countries.³ We see evidence of that in the current USD 4.2 trillion shortfall in finance required to achieve the goals. It's no doubt a factor in why inequality, in terms of wealth, income and socio-economic factors, is rising globally. For example, in 2021, the poorest half of the population earned just 8.5% of global income and held 2% of all wealth.⁴ These conditions highlight the importance of shelter and settlements responses remaining a humanitarian priority.

² IDMC. *2024 Global Report on Internal Displacement*. May 2024

³ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Economic Situation and Prospects. Mid-year update*. May 2024

⁴ Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E., Zucman, G. et al. *World Inequality Report 2022*, World Inequality Lab. 2021

The funding framework related to humanitarian work is also changing


**TOTAL AMOUNT
ODA SINCE 1960**


**%
OF TOTAL
GROSS
INCOME**
**0.37% IN 2023
(TARGET OF 0.7%)**

Changes in aid and development financing are also forcing us to rethink how we can use available resources more efficiently. For example, we see sign of changes in how official development assistance (ODA) from OECD countries is distributed to developing countries. The total amount of ODA has increased annually since 1960. However, the amount as a proportion of total gross national income has decreased over the same period. It has consistently fallen well below the target of 0.7%; in 2023 the proportion was 0.37%. The shortfall represents a missed opportunity to support developing countries and people in need of humanitarian assistance. The proportion of ODA allocated for humanitarian response has grown in recent years, but it has not kept pace with growth in funding requirements. Several countries that contribute to ODA have recently reduced their contribution, suggesting that it might be sensible for us to expect future funding cuts. There is also an emerging move towards providing ODA as loans rather than grants, which adds to the public debt of the countries that receive assistance and limits their ability to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises.

By acknowledging current and future changes in development and humanitarian financing, the *2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy* encourages us to pursue new funding sources and ways of sharing those resources.

The Strategy offers a way to navigate the changing humanitarian environment

With 91 million people needing shelter in 2024, and indications that this will increase, our collective efforts, grounded in humanitarian principles, are more critical than ever. If we are to continue to provide shelter to people whose lives have been disrupted, whose homes have been destroyed and whose livelihoods have been threatened, we must rethink how we implement those efforts. The *2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy* sets out how we will do that.



RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER

The GSC is a coordination mechanism established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to ensure that people affected by disasters and conflict-induced displacement have access to safe, dignified and appropriate shelters and settlements. The GSC facilitates effective collaboration among shelter and settlements actors to deliver timely and quality humanitarian assistance to those in need.⁵ The GSC and Shelter Clusters work collectively with national response actors to support people affected by disaster and conflict with timely, effective and predictable shelter and settlement responses. The GSC is a public platform co-led by UNHCR and IFRC at the global level and has partners who actively contribute to discussions and outputs. At the global level, IFRC convenes the Shelter Cluster in disaster contexts, while UNHCR leads the Shelter Cluster in conflict situations. Clusters are not activated in refugee settings, where the Refugee Coordination Model⁶ would apply.

The GSC leads are accountable for system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies, and for ensuring predictable and effective inter-agency responses. Specifically, leads are responsible for establishing broad partnership bases that engage in:



STANDARDS AND
POLICY-SETTING



BUILDING
RESPONSE CAPACITY



OPERATIONAL
SUPPORT

The GSC supports Shelter Clusters in meeting their **6 core functions**:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 <i>Supporting service delivery</i> | 3 <i>Planning and implementing Shelter Cluster strategies</i> | 5 <i>Building national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning</i> |
| 2 <i>Informing the Humanitarian Coordinator / Humanitarian Country Team's strategic decision making</i> | 4 <i>Monitoring and evaluating performance</i> | 6 <i>Supporting robust advocacy⁷</i> |

⁵ The purpose and role of the GSC and all global clusters are defined by the [IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response](#).

⁶ The Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) was developed to ensure more accountable, inclusive, predictable and transparent leadership and effective coordination in responding to refugee situations. It builds on the key role governments have in leading refugee responses and provides UNHCR and partners with a blueprint to support government planning, coordination and implementation of the response link; [Refugee Coordination Model \(RCM\) | UNHCR](#)

⁷ As defined in the [IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module](#)



VISION

The Global Shelter Cluster envisions a world where all people affected by humanitarian crises have timely access to safe, dignified, and appropriate shelter and settlement solutions, in accordance with the humanitarian principles and the right to adequate housing.

EVIDENCE AND INNOVATION

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To achieve this vision, the Global Shelter Cluster partners will lead effective, efficient and accountable humanitarian shelter and settlement action to achieve extended impact and optimal reach.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

ENABLERS

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

EXTENDED IMPACT

- 1.1 *Promote integrated approaches to preparedness and response*
- 1.2 *Improve environmental impact*
- 1.3 *Enable safe, secure, accessible and protective living conditions*
- 1.4 *Plan for recovery and durable solutions from the start*

OPTIMAL REACH

- 2.1 *Prioritize and resource shelter and settlement responses*
- 2.2 *Improve targeting of the most vulnerable people*
- 2.3 *Increase coverage*

ENABLERS

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

LOCALIZATION

ADVOCACY

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

EXTENDED IMPACT

1.1 *Promote integrated approaches to preparedness and response*

- Emphasize that shelter is a foundation for wider humanitarian outcomes
- Demonstrate the consequences of inaction
- Achieve a multi-sectoral approach through linked or joint programming
- Adopt a settlements approach

1.2 *Improve environmental impact*

- Prioritize environmental considerations in organizational strategies, policies and tools
- Strengthen capacity to deliver environmentally sustainable and climate-smart approaches
- Foster an integrated approach to environmental protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Implement locally appropriate shelter solutions

1.3 *Enable safe, secure, accessible and protective living conditions*

- Promote the centrality of protection
- Mitigate protection risks, including gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Be accountable for actions to promote inclusion, considering age, gender and disability
- Promote housing, land and property rights

1.4 *Plan for recovery and durable solutions from the start*

- Foster incremental recovery through long-term planning to increase community resilience
- Apply disaster-risk-reduction principles
- Support self-recovery and self-reliance to achieve locally appropriate solutions
- Adopt durable shelter solutions
- Transition international coordination mechanisms to local systems

OPTIMAL REACH

2.1 *Prioritize and resource shelter and settlement responses*

- Respond in a timely and appropriate manner
- Strengthen preparedness, contingency planning and anticipatory action
- Mobilize adequate resources
- Increase donor engagement

2.2 *Improve targeting of the most vulnerable people*

- Include marginalized populations
- Apply the shelter severity classification
- Advocate for humanitarian access to affected populations
- Use area-based coordination
- Consider urban, peri-urban and rural contexts

2.3 *Increase coverage*

- Optimize cost versus quality
- Increase multiplier effect
- Use cash and market systems



PILLARS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Strategy is based on two pillars



Under each pillar, we've defined specific strategic priorities.

EXTENDED IMPACT

Shelter and settlements responses provide safe and adequate living conditions, enabling essential household and livelihoods activities to be undertaken with dignity after and during a crisis. It's essential that we raise awareness of how shelter and settlements responses enable the achievement of other sector outcomes, extending the impact of our action beyond our own sector. We can do this by focusing on four strategic priorities:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.1

Promote integrated approaches to preparedness and response

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.2

Improve environmental impact

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.3

Enable safe, secure, accessible and protective living conditions

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.4

Plan for recovery and durable solutions from the start

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.1

Promote integrated approaches to preparedness and response

Populations affected by crises have complex needs that are unlikely to be met by a single sector. When sectors provide isolated humanitarian assistance, they may meet some immediate needs, however, they may also inadvertently undermine or negate the efforts of other sectors. Such a segmented response seldom contributes to extended impacts or longer-term recovery.

Conversely, integrated approaches, involving multiple sectors and in consultation with affected communities and other stakeholders, can address interlinked and prioritized needs of the affected communities. An integrated approach is more likely to meet affected populations' complex needs.

Any assessment of vulnerabilities and needs in affected communities must be done collaboratively with local and national actors, understanding their contexts, ensuring joint decision making and considering recovery and sustainability aspirations. The sectors with which shelter and settlements actors often interact include Protection, WASH, CCCM, Health and Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods, and Logistics.

The Settlements Approach Guidance Note, developed by GSC's Urban Settlements Working Group, lays out four key characteristics and related principles for implementing integrated programming. The four key characteristics are:

- ✓ Define specific settlements with high needs
- ✓ Work with multiple stakeholders
- ✓ Work multi-sectorally
- ✓ Consider the whole population

The approach improves collaboration between sectoral actors, national and international stakeholders, donors and humanitarian and development agencies.

The Settlements Approach promotes ways for humanitarian and recovery responses to increase local impact. It is a framework for aid agencies and local stakeholders to plan and deliver more effective, targeted and accountable humanitarian responses.

Operationalizing an integrated approach requires an understanding of its benefits and challenges, both for individual practitioners and their organizations. Implementing agencies should advocate for more integrated programming and resource mobilization.

At the global level, the GSC will proactively engage with inter-agency processes, such as the Global Cluster Coordinators Group, and Humanitarian Country Team policies to promote integrated multi-sector responses. We will share knowledge and learning about integrated multi-sector responses and draw on the Settlements Approach to inform, influence, contribute to and lead on humanitarian policy and practice.

At the country level, Shelter Clusters will promote the Settlements Approach among HCTs, national/local authorities, civil societies and recovery and development actors.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.2

Improve environmental impact

Considering the environment – including climate change – in shelter and settlements programming improves the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and has long-term benefits for populations affected by crises. This includes reducing risks and building resilience to future crises.

Conversely, not considering the environment has the potential to inadvertently contribute to environmental degradation and climate change, resulting from:

- ✓ carbon emissions
- ✓ the use of plastics and other non-sustainable materials for emergency shelter, packaging and non-food items
- ✓ unsustainable natural resource use
- ✓ failure to proactively manage environmental hazards.

Achieving positive outcomes requires shelter and settlement responses that anticipate, assess, mitigate and improve environmental hazards, vulnerabilities and risks associated with response and recovery. This requires adopting more integrated and localized approaches to humanitarian assistance, which will foster greater effectiveness and cost efficiency. Environmental considerations need to be incorporated into all humanitarian decisions, alongside humanitarian standards, donor requirements, cost benefit analysis and providing essential assistance to affected populations.

Recent global policy shifts have encouraged the GSC and partners to prioritize and expand the integration of environmental and climate change considerations in shelter and settlement responses. These efforts have ranged from anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction through to response and recovery. GSC partners should capitalize on these policy shifts and prioritize the systematic integration of environment and climate change into organizational strategies, policies and tools. This will strengthen their capacity to deliver environmentally sustainable and climate-smart responses. They should do this in collaboration with other sectors, balancing environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and locally appropriate shelter solutions. Key to this approach is to anticipate, prepare for and adapt to climate change and environmental degradation.

Integrating environmental and climate change considerations into shelter and settlements responses reduces harm to crisis-affected populations, improves their living conditions and enables self-recovery. This will not only save lives in the near term but will also contribute to durable solutions that save the lives of future generations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.3

Enable safe, secure, accessible and protective living conditions

Most people who need humanitarian assistance face multiple dimensions of risk: conflict, climate and/or socio-economic vulnerability. Crises and displacement disrupt the social and physical fabric of communities and exacerbate inequalities and power imbalances. These manifest in increased protection risks, including risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, abuse, discrimination, eviction and exclusion.

Providing safe, secure and protected living conditions is ultimately about upholding people's rights to protection, security and to life with dignity.

Adopting a people- and protection-centred approach to crisis response prevents and mitigates harm, promotes rights and well-being and empowers affected populations.

Our responses should:

- ✓ respect and uphold housing, land and property rights, applying a gender, protection and climate change lens.
- ✓ include due diligence and reduce the risks of violations of rights, such as forced evictions, dispossession or discrimination
- ✓ be conflict sensitive, avoid causing or exacerbating harm, and consider unintended consequences of our actions on the most vulnerable
- ✓ involve affected populations at all stages, from assessment to evaluation. This helps us to understand their needs, capacities and aspirations, and it promotes ownership and self-reliance
- ✓ provide safe, accessible and effective mechanisms for managing feedback and complaints
- ✓ ensure equitable access to assistance, considering age, gender, disability, socio-cultural identity and the specific needs of different groups
- ✓ ensure that the environments in which people seek shelter, including individual or collective accommodation, are safe, secure, accessible and appropriate and avoid marginalization
- ✓ consider the evolving and multi-dimensional needs of populations and adapt to provide the most appropriate support for recovery and self-reliance.

Integrating protection principles into shelter and settlements responses will improve the quality, appropriateness, relevance and effectiveness of our collective efforts, and will ensure positive impact on the lives of the people we serve.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1.4

Plan for recovery and durable solutions from the start

Linking humanitarian actions to longer-term thinking, understanding priority needs, and adapting responses to specific contexts are crucial to enabling recovery, increasing community resilience and finding durable solutions to displacement.

Recovery from a humanitarian crisis starts immediately but is a long-term process. From the outset, we must consider how short-term, life-saving humanitarian responses will support recovery and consider how people affected by crisis can be supported to achieve durable solutions. In complex emergencies, systems thinking and key actors need to be involved in decision-making processes in the early stages of the response.

Most people affected by humanitarian crises do not receive humanitarian aid and will self-recover. Providing agency to those people and creating an enabling environment for recovery can be an effective way to support them.

Shelter and settlements programming is essential in enabling durable solutions. It improves the living conditions in areas of return, facilitates local integration or relocation, and ensures adequate access to shelter or housing and settlement-level infrastructure and services. Restoring or strengthening housing, land and property rights reduces vulnerability and is an essential component of recovery and achieving durable solutions.

Our responses should:

- ✓ Support and facilitate integrated approaches with other sectors and address the need for infrastructure and services that support entire communities
- ✓ Seek alternatives to camps and apply urban planning principles in displacement settings, and apply integrated and incremental approaches for shelter solutions
- ✓ Build resilience of people, places and systems while enhancing preparedness and applying conflict sensitivity
- ✓ Support and use humanitarian mechanisms that align with development principles
- ✓ Apply disaster-risk-reduction principles
- ✓ Acknowledge that local actors have a leadership role and promote and support the primary role of government in recovery efforts when appropriate
- ✓ Ensure that affected people, in all their diversity, have a voice and are meaningfully engaged in all phases of crisis response
- ✓ Promote women's and girls' voices and leadership in socio-economic recovery and peace building, as they are often the most affected by inadequate housing and are frequently excluded from decision making

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ✓ Ensure that women's rights, including tenure rights, are respected, enhanced and prioritized
- ✓ Use incremental methods to support recovery, such as core housing or transitional shelters that can be transformed, and support self-recovery, including through repairs or rental assistance
- ✓ Advocate for and drive enhanced access to adequate housing by using data and evidence
- ✓ Support self-reliance by working closely with livelihoods and economic development partners to ensure shelter and settlements designs facilitate income-generating activities
- ✓ Ensure that technical assistance, advocacy and policy changes address the realities of climate change and environmental degradation, while also considering socio-cultural, physical and financial sustainability
- ✓ Build back better, using 'better' in the widest sense, learning from experience and building on local and international expertise



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



OPTIMAL REACH

Disasters, conflicts and unprecedented displacement impact more people each year, with available resources limiting humanitarian capacity to respond. We can achieve optimal reach in those conditions by focusing on three strategic priorities:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.1

Prioritize and resource shelter and settlement responses

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.2

Improve targeting of the most vulnerable people

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.3

Increase coverage

The need for timely and well-resourced shelter and settlement responses is critical. Millions of displaced people around the world are in unsafe shelter and living conditions that exacerbate their suffering, increasingly with little hope of return. There is an urgent need to optimize the reach of shelter and settlement responses. To achieve that, we must look beyond current humanitarian funding sources to government and private sector sources.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.1

Prioritize and resource shelter and settlement responses

Continued advocacy for shelter and settlement responses to be prioritized and resourced is critical. The living conditions of millions of people affected by crisis demand immediate and continued action.

Effective advocacy relies on shelter and settlements actors being ready to mitigate disaster impacts in a timely and appropriate manner. Robust contingency plans enable rapid, organized responses, reducing chaos and inefficiencies in emergencies. Learning from past experiences and fostering anticipatory action by foreseeing future trends will add value to these efforts. Delays in response lead to unnecessary suffering and complicate recovery efforts. Effective coordination among agencies and stakeholders is also essential to ensure aid reaches those in need promptly and efficiently.

We must continue to advocate for timely allocation of sufficient resources – financial, human and material. Without these, even well-designed plans cannot be effectively implemented and no real and lasting impact is likely. The insufficient coverage of shelter needs for affected people impacts many aspects of their overall well-being, including their physical and mental health, protection, access to education and livelihoods. Consequently, aligning shelter and settlements responses with available funding requires a coordinated and integrated approach with specific strategies for neglected crises.

Strong relationships with donors, built on transparent and constructive exchange and collaboration, establishes trust and aligns priorities. Such relationships are essential for securing ongoing support and resources to address the humanitarian shelter and settlement needs of affected populations.

Addressing current shelter and settlements challenges and predicting and preparing for future challenges will require partnerships that are built on sharing data, knowledge and capacity and a willingness to conduct joint analysis and advocacy. The GSC will continue to build a sense of belonging and cooperation with partners in these areas.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.2

Improve targeting of the most vulnerable people

The ways that people are affected by a crisis are not always equal. Variations in factors such as people's living circumstances, home condition or geographic location can change how they are affected by a crisis. Their individual capacities to respond and recover also varies, according to their available resources and resilience. Understanding, measuring, and describing relative vulnerability of people and families allows humanitarians to identify who is most in need of assistance, including marginalized populations. Tools like the Shelter Severity Classification system⁸ are useful for geographically prioritizing responses – whether in urban, peri-urban or rural areas – and directing resources to groups with age-, disability- and gender-related vulnerabilities.

Such approaches, particularly when combined with area-based coordination, optimize humanitarian reach and upholds the dignity and well-being of communities affected by crisis. It can also provide a useful basis for humanitarians to advocate for access to affected populations where that is needed. More effective targeting can also foster greater accountability and transparency within the humanitarian system.

GSC partners can improve targeting effectiveness by establishing partnerships that expand the data available for decision making. Collaboration with local communities and stakeholders can generate more comprehensive and nuanced data than might otherwise be available.

Enabling the affected population, local communities and their leaders, and national actors to play a more active role in defining targeting approaches and strategies is essential. The GSC will add affected populations' perspectives to targeting and monitoring processes, thereby allowing us to provide improved assistance to vulnerable populations.

More direct knowledge of the demographics and geographical characteristics of vulnerable populations will allow humanitarians to refine targeting strategies and implementation approaches to improve assistance to vulnerable people.

⁸ The objectives of the Shelter Severity Classification methodology are to 1) Determine the level of severity of shelter needs and people in need, 2) Analyze the context, and 3) Identify possible contributors of shelter severity and people in need, and in turn, possible impacts of unmet shelter needs

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2.3

Increase coverage

Coverage is a measure of the number of people who receive humanitarian support, expressed as a percentage of either:

The total number of people in need or # The number of people that humanitarians targeted

Because humanitarians operate with finite resources, they seldom aim to support the total number of people in need. Therefore, the most common way to express coverage is as a percentage of the number of people targeted.

The number of people in need globally (measured through Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), flash appeals and other coordinated appeals) has more than doubled in the last decade. While resources have also increased, they have not done so at the same pace. Shelter Clusters therefore need to reach more people with the resources available. Strengthened coordination and accountability to affected people may increase efficiency, including localization mechanisms, to ensure strategies are informed and made jointly with affected people and local authorities.

More cost-efficient responses, translating in greater coverage, will be achieved by incorporating local solutions, practices and resources and making use of existing markets. The use of cash, where possible and appropriate, can strengthen market capacities both for people targeted for assistance and for those who are self-recovering. At the same time, cash provides economic benefits to the affected population. This contributes to further response efficiencies, effectiveness and longer-term recovery. Other shelter multiplier effects, such as improved health outcomes and livelihood opportunities, may encourage strategic resourcing of shelter assistance.

Shelter responses also need to consider durability when calculating coverage and the implications this has for scale, including hosting, rental, as well as individual shelters. Responses that reduce dependency may require an initial resource input but over time that has greater benefit in terms of numbers of people assisted. Achieving durability while maximizing the number of people receiving immediate essential shelter assistance is a challenge; incremental strategies may be adopted to achieve adequate durability over time. For example, investing in durable materials may reduce future repair and replacement costs and prove cost effective over the response period, providing net savings to assist more people.

Coordination and collaboration between system actors (humanitarian, development, government, and markets) have a direct impact on the immediate and longer-term capacity for potential coverage. Developing the capacity of local Shelter Cluster partners will also contribute to greater efficiency in shelter responses.

Systems-thinking approaches provide an analysis of the response and existing systems to leverage existing and potential capacity for both quality and scaled outcomes. For example, supply-chain analysis may identify a need for a common pipeline for shelter materials, while allowing markets time to recover and respond. Humanitarian organizations collaborating with the private sector to gain access to properties for rent is another example.

The GSC will continue to promote an understanding of the interconnections between actors and identify system changes that can increase coverage.

ENABLERS

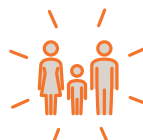
This Strategy recognizes four enablers as opportunities for partners to ignite the vision and achieve the strategic priorities:



1 |
**COORDINATION &
COLLABORATION**



2 |
LOCALIZATION



3 |
**ACCOUNTABILITY TO
AFFECTED PEOPLE**



4 |
**EVIDENCE &
INNOVATION**

1 | COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Coordination and collaboration are critical in enhancing humanitarian shelter and settlements action, especially given the scale and complexities of humanitarian crises. No single agency can address all the needs of the world's most vulnerable populations. The sheer magnitude of these challenges requires multiple actors to come together, pooling their resources, expertise and capacities to provide more effective and efficient responses.

Strengthening coordination with national and local governments is essential, as they have intimate knowledge of the affected regions and can facilitate more effective operations, regulatory compliance and community engagement. Governments also mobilize substantial resources and ensure that humanitarian efforts align with national priorities and development plans, fostering sustainability and long-term resilience.

Collaboration with development and peace actors links humanitarian responses to broader developmental and peace-building efforts. Such integration can enhance the sustainability of shelter and settlement projects, ensuring that they contribute to long-term stability and development rather than just providing immediate relief.

Engaging the private sector and civil society brings additional strengths to humanitarian shelter and settlement actions. The private sector can offer technical expertise and logistical support, while civil society organizations bring grassroots connections, local knowledge and community trust. These partnerships enable more culturally appropriate and context-specific responses, enhancing the overall effectiveness and acceptance of humanitarian efforts.

In essence, coordination and collaboration among these diverse actors foster a holistic approach to humanitarian shelter and settlements, leveraging each actor's strengths to cover gaps, improve resource use and ultimately provide more comprehensive and impactful support to those in need.

2 | LOCALIZATION

Localization involves recognizing the fundamental role of local and national actors in leading, shaping and implementing humanitarian action, emphasizing a shift in power dynamics. Investing in localization promotes respect, equitable relationships and partnerships, making humanitarian assistance more effective, efficient and sustainable. Within Shelter Clusters, increased localization can enhance coordination quality, elevate participation, strengthen partnerships and facilitate cluster transition and deactivation. This includes fostering local leadership, expanding participation of local and national actors in strategic advisory groups and improving sub-national coordination to facilitate meaningful participation. Supporting the financing of humanitarian action through local and national actors, such as through country-based pooled funds, and crafting shelter and settlement response strategies informed by local knowledge and practices are essential.

The GSC remains committed to localization and will continue to recognize the fundamental role of local responders and centre its approach on crisis-affected people. By strengthening local decision making, this Strategy aims to provide relevant, accountable and localized responses. We will build on existing governance structures, create meaningful spaces for local and national actors to take and influence leadership and strategic decisions. That will ensure that humanitarian action is well-informed and effectively implemented. The renewed emphasis on localization underscores the importance of local actors in driving sustainable and impactful humanitarian efforts.

3 | ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Accountability to affected people (AAP) is a global commitment by humanitarian actors to take account of, give account to and be held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist. Promoting and strengthening AAP is one of the core functions of a cluster. People affected by crises must be at the centre of the Shelter Cluster response. This means that affected people must be supported to meaningfully participate and lead decision making in an inclusive manner, with consideration being given to age, gender and diversity. Affected people must also be provided with timely, relevant and actionable information and be able to provide feedback on the Shelter Cluster response that is acted on. The GSC also needs to engage, support and partner with local and national organizations, including those that represent different groups such as women, girls, young people and persons with disabilities.

Understanding the different needs, risks and barriers affected people face and supporting their leadership in decision making allows Shelter Clusters to improve targeting of the most vulnerable people in need of shelter and to enable safe, secure, accessible and protective living conditions tailored to individual needs.

4 | EVIDENCE AND INNOVATION

Evidence is crucial to enable humanitarian actors to uphold humanitarian principles, to improve the quality of programming, and to strengthen the credibility of budgets and strategies. Promising approaches also require evidence to drive innovation and scalability.

The GSC will make available and use existing and relevant evidence to inform planning, coordination and decision making. Where gaps in the shelter and settlements evidence base are found, the GSC will continue to support initiatives to fill these and manage the knowledge produced.

The GSC's evidence-based approach enables the extended impact and optimal reach of humanitarian shelter and settlement assistance. Robust evidence extends the impact of Shelter Clusters by incorporating lessons learned into critical decision making to achieve targeted, effective assistance, adapted to local contexts. Sharing evidence of the wider impacts of shelter and settlements, such as human development outcomes and environmental impact, improves integrated programming across humanitarian sectors. Evidence of the shared benefits of durable solutions, including safety and security, leads to more sustainable solutions and development gains.

Evidence of humanitarian capacity, needs and scale supports advocacy for appropriate resources and humanitarian outcomes, which helps to optimize our reach.

The GSC is well-placed to inform and to innovate, using its access to local and global knowledge through its relationships with a range of stakeholders. It collects, manages and analyses data to answer both operational and strategic questions. This includes the operational questions posed by needs assessments and capacity analysis, vulnerability and context analysis, monitoring and evaluation and strategic questions posed by policy making and advocacy. To ensure data and research findings have impact, the GSC will continue to share these using a range of approaches, matching the format to the appropriate audience. These include operational dashboards, HRP outputs, practitioner-facing publications and peer-reviewed research papers.



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IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Advocacy and strengthening capacity are two effective modalities for GSC partners to attain the vision and objectives in the *2030 Global Shelter Cluster Strategy*.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a critical tool for the GSC and its international and national partners to promote and safeguard the right to adequate housing. Effective advocacy influences policies and mobilizes resources, ensuring that shelter needs are prioritized in humanitarian responses and planning for durable solutions.

Effective advocacy raises awareness among policy makers, donors and other relevant stakeholders about critical issues for shelter and settlements. By highlighting gaps in current policies and showcasing successful responses, effective advocacy, both public-facing and private, can lead to increased funding and vital support. This visibility highlights that shelter is a fundamental human need that is integral to overall health and well-being and to recovery in humanitarian crises. Advocacy also fosters collaboration and alignment among diverse stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels. By engaging governments, international organizations, NGOs and affected populations, advocacy can standardize approaches and ensure that shelter responses adhere to globally recognized principles.

Advocacy should be based on:

- ✓ Evidence-based research data and real-life stories to objectively illustrate the urgent need for adequate shelter
- ✓ Policy dialogue and continuous engagement with decision makers to trigger policy and legislative reforms that protect the right to adequate housing

Additionally, leveraging media and public platforms can generate widespread support and encourage pressure for action.

Advocacy is a vital and compelling tool for GSC partners to raise humanitarian standards and influence policy. It can also highlight humanitarian shelter needs and financial requirements, attracting more funding and supporting more effective shelter and settlements responses. By strategically employing both public and private advocacy, we can ensure that the right to adequate housing is not only recognized but also realized for all, especially in crisis-affected areas.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

Strengthening global and regional surge capacity to respond to increasing global crises is essential. It provides humanitarian coordination and technical support to Shelter Clusters, ensuring timely and efficient shelter responses. Global trends highlight the need for humanitarian shelter and settlements actions that contribute to longer-term outcomes. This approach integrates short-term relief with sustainable development goals, addressing immediate needs while laying the groundwork for durable shelter solutions. Given increasing humanitarian demands, the GSC and its partners will enhance current responses and implement strategies to boost overall capacity.

The GSC will build response capacity through:

- ✓ Enhanced training
- ✓ Localized capacity building
- ✓ Robust partnerships

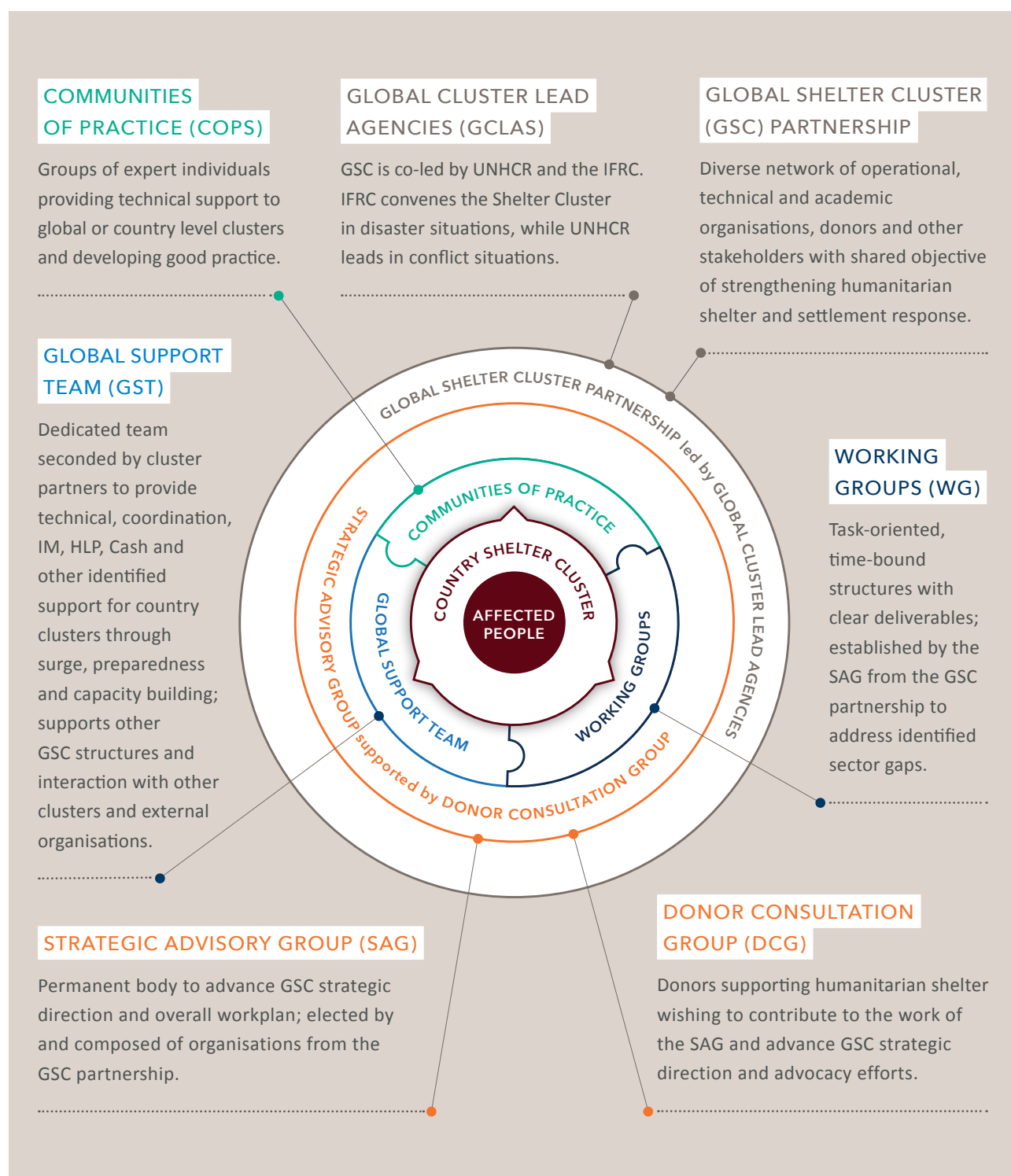
The GSC will expand its Humanitarian Shelter Coordination training to include two additional pillars: Humanitarian Shelter Programme Management and Humanitarian Shelter Information Management. These additions will emphasize country and sub-national level capacity building, equipping practitioners with skills in strategic planning, implementation, and data-driven decision making, ensuring proficiency in operational implementation and information management.

When we align capacity strengthening with localization, we empower local actors to design and implement sustainable and contextually relevant responses.

Robust partnerships are also critical. The Global Support Team, Working Groups and Communities of Practice are essential for a cohesive response, along with broader collaboration with humanitarian, recovery and development actors, the private sector and diaspora. The GSC will also foster knowledge exchange between Shelter Clusters and capacity building between clusters and local actors. That will ensure the knowledge and skills are enhanced collaboratively.

GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER PARTNERSHIP MODEL

The diagram below shows the interconnecting components of the GSC partnership model.





GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER

Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements

