



The Sphere Project

Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards
in Humanitarian Response

CHF CAMBODIAN
HUMANITARIAN
FORUM

SPHERE FOCAL POINT FORUM

COMMITTED HUMANITARIAN PRACTITIONERS PROMOTING SPHERE STANDARDS ACROSS ASIA

Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan in collaboration with The Sphere Project organized the 2014 Sphere Focal Point Forum in Bangkok from Oct 14-15. It was jointly financed by The Sphere Project, Diakonia-Sweden, Act for Peace, and CWS-P/A. As the Sphere regional partner for Asia, CWS-P/A supports the promotion and implementation of the Sphere standards through a variety of activities including this regional forum, which is the second of its kind. The first Forum took place in 2011.

“The Sphere community in Asia has grown; there are now around 11 country focal points as compared to 6 in 2011. The diverse nature of Sphere country focal points which includes organizations, academia, networks, and working groups is certainly adding a lot of value to the whole Sphere community and the focal point system in particular,” shared Shama Mall, CWS-P/A’s Deputy Director. To start the program, the forum welcomed new focal point from Cambodia, represent by Cambodian Humanitarian Forum (CHF).

The Forum demonstrated the importance of promoting Sphere standards in disaster and conflict-prone situations, while increasing local ownership and creating a momentum among people who believe in the Sphere standards.

PARTICIPANTS UPDATE – FROM CONCRETE SUCCESSES TO SUBSTANTIAL CHALLENGES

Most focal points have demonstrated success in increasing awareness among their peers. From Korea and Japan to Philippines and Indonesia, focal points acknowledged a growing interest from the most important humanitarian actors. However, mainstreaming



Participants share materials and tools they developed and/or translated to promote Sphere Photo credit: Hira Sajjad/CWS-P/A

The Sphere Focal Point Forum presented an opportunity to share knowledge and experience among humanitarian practitioners. For the 19 participants representing 14 organizations from 11 countries, it allowed them to identify the emerging needs and challenges, strategize planning, and formulate future action plans with respect to their role as focal point in their respective country. With a growing number of Sphere practitioners and focal points within Asia, the Forum also presented an opportunity for networking and partnership for the common interest of enhancing quality and accountability of humanitarian action.

into the programs and more training, monitoring, and evaluation work are required.

Almost all countries organized training sessions and translated Sphere material and tools in their respective language. In countries such as Pakistan, Korea, and Japan, the growing



demand for in-depth training is a good example of a wider outreach of Sphere as many partners are willing to move further in the application of the standards.

Another significant achievement is the focal points' efforts to engage with other stakeholders, by extending their networking and awareness-raising activities to governmental agencies, academia, and the private sector. All participants expressed the importance to have both local and central governments on board, in order to create incentive and mainstream the application of the standards. As expressed by the Indonesian representative, who succeeded in making quality and accountability standards as part of the national policy, the challenge is to enforce such law and make sure it is applied on the ground.

The private sector is considered an important stakeholder to take on board, especially as an incentive for potential donations. Sri Lanka started working with the Asia Pacific Alliance

for Disaster Management to create a tripartite platform with the aim to improve cooperation in time of disaster taking in consideration quality and accountability standards. In Japan, the Japan Platform (JPF), a fundraising consortium including non-profits, government, and private sector, has integrated the standards as part of the prerequisite for all applications.

The Alliance of Sphere Advocates in the Philippines (ASAP) was created. This growing network of organizations provides a national platform for sharing best practices and creates stronger linkages between the members.

The Forum ended with a review of each focal point's terms of reference and action plan. Suggestions included engaging with their respective governments, enhancing coordination and capacity building, and mobilizing more resources.

"We need to tell the story beyond the standards, how they improve people's life and make concrete impact on communities, as a way to attract more funding," stated a representative from the donor community.

The participants, which included 10 focal points and representatives from Habitat for Humanity (Philippines), Mennonite Central Committee (Chiang Mai), and Quality and Accountability Working Group (Japan), expressed their gratitude to share with and learn from their peers. They left the Forum with a renewed motivation and a strong commitment to take the Sphere standards forward.

Sphere Focal Points in Asia	
<p>Afghanistan Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief</p>	<p>Myanmar* Radanar Ayar Rural Development Association</p>
<p>Bangladesh* Sphere Community Bangladesh—</p>	<p>Nepal* Sphere Nepal/DPNet Nepal</p>
<p>Cambodia* Cambodia Humanitarian Forum/Partnership for Development in Kampuchea</p>	<p>Pakistan* Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan</p>
<p>China* Collaborating Centre for Oxford University and CUHK for Disaster and Medical Humanitarian Response</p>	<p>Philippines* Lutheran World Relief</p>
<p>Indonesia* Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana Indonesia/Indonesian Society for Disaster Management</p>	<p>South Korea* Korean NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation</p>
<p>Iran International Consortium for Refugees in Iran</p>	<p>Sri Lanka* Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies</p>
<p>Japan Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation</p>	<p>Vietnam Sphere Working Group</p>
	<p><i>*Attended 2014 Forum</i></p>