# The Core Humanitarian Standard in the 2018 Sphere Handbook
## Harmonising humanitarian principles and standards

In 2012, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, People In Aid and Sphere joined forces as the Joint Standards Initiative to promote greater coherence for users of humanitarian standards. In 2014, Groupe URD became a partner in the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) development process and integrated the CHS into its Quality COMPAS framework. The CHS is now managed by Sphere, the CHS Alliance and Groupe URD, and is integrated in the 2018 edition of the **Sphere Handbook**.

The inclusion of the **Core Humanitarian Standard** in the Sphere Handbook reaffirms its rights-based approach and alignment with international law and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all which are included in the Sphere Handbook.

The Sphere Handbook frames rights and principles by including the **Humanitarian Charter**, the CHS, the **Protection Principles** and the four sets of technical standards covering key life-saving sectors: **Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion**; **Food security and nutrition**; **Shelter and settlement**; and **Health**. The Handbook offers an integrated and people-centred approach to humanitarian work, combining the purpose, process and concrete activities of humanitarian response.

The Humanitarian Charter of the Sphere Handbook describes the right to life with dignity which includes:

- measures concerning the right to life and to an adequate standard of living;
- dignity beyond physical well-being and respect for the whole person, and the values and beliefs of individuals and affected communities; and
- respecting rights pertaining to liberty, freedom of conscience and religious observance.

The Humanitarian Charter builds on the **Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief** which remains an integral part of the Sphere Handbook. Many humanitarian organisations have signed the *Code of Conduct*, recognising the humanitarian imperative and providing humanitarian assistance wherever needed, guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

The Sphere Handbook is developed and reviewed periodically in collaboration with thousands of practitioners and experts globally using evidence, experience and learning. The Sphere Handbook is the most commonly used and widely known set of humanitarian standards globally across governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, academia and civil society including community organisations.

Sphere hosts the **Humanitarian Standards Partnership** (HSP), a collaboration of seven standards-setting initiatives that strive to harmonise and promote the quality and accountability of humanitarian work. HSP Partners have developed complementary standards, based on the same philosophy, commitments and approach as Sphere. HSP standards provide universal benchmarks for assistance in **education**, **child protection**, **livestock**, **economic recovery**, **market analysis** and the **inclusion of older people and people with disabilities**.

Together the HSP standards improve quality, promote accountability, support local leadership and enable local, national and international organisations to deliver services to all people and communities affected by disaster and conflict according to agreed standards.

The **Sphere Handbook 2018** offers an integrated approach to humanitarian work incorporating humanitarian principles, the core humanitarian standard and technical standards.

| Foundation Chapters | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Humanitarian Charter** | **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)** | **Protection Principles** |
| • The right to life with dignity<br>• The right to receive humanitarian assistance<br>• The right to protection and security | 1. Appropriateness, relevance<br>2. Effectiveness, timeliness<br>3. Strengthening Local Capacities<br>4. Communication, Participation, Feedback<br>5. Complaints Mechanisms<br>6. Coordination, Complementarity<br>7. Learning, Improvement<br>8. People Management<br>9. Resource Management | • Avoid exposing people to further harm<br>• Ensure impartial assistance<br>• Assist in recovery from violations<br>• Help people to claim their rights |

*The Principle "Right to life with dignity" is put into practice by implementing the Core Humanitarian Standard and the technical Standards in humanitarian response.*

### Structure of Technical Standards

The Standards are qualitative outcome statements which are universally applicable and represent general expressions of rights.

*Guidance Notes* help to understand the context and operational requirements. *Key Actions* specify what should be done and *Key Indicators* help measure progress.

HSP Standards have a similar structure:
Education (INEE), Livestock (LEGS), Economic recovery (MERS), Market Analysis (CaLP), Child Protection (CPMS), Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with disabilities (ADCAP).

### Structure of the Core Humanitarian Standard

*Commitments* describe what people can expect from humanitarian organisations and *Quality Criteria* state how to deliver humanitarian assistance.

*Key Actions* specify what should be done to fulfil the Commitments and *Organisational Responsibilities* describe what must be in place in organisations to implement the *Key Actions*.

*Guidance Notes* provide additional information on how to meet each CHS Commitment and *Indicators* outline how to measure achievement of the Commitments.

| Technical Chapters | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WASH** | **Food** | **Shelter** | **Health** |
| 1. Hygiene promotion<br>2. Water supply<br>3. Excreta management<br>4. Vector control<br>5. Solid waste management<br>6. WASH in disease outbreaks and healthcare settings | 1. Food security and nutrition assessments<br>2. Management of malnutrition<br>3. Micronutrient deficiencies<br>4. Infant and young child feeding<br>5. Food security<br>6. Food assistance<br>7. Livelihoods | 1. Planning<br>2. Location and settlement planning<br>3. Living space<br>4. Household items<br>5. Technical assistance<br>6. Security of tenure<br>7. Environmental sustainability | 1. Health systems<br>2. Essential healthcare<br>2.1 Communicable diseases<br>2.2 Child health<br>2.3 Sexual and reproductive health<br>2.4 Injury and trauma care<br>2.5 Mental health<br>2.6 Non-communicable diseases<br>2.7 Palliative care |

**Improving the quality and accountability of humanitarian response
with a people-centered, rights-based approach**

The Sphere community sets standards for humanitarian action and promotes quality and accountability