

1.2 The Humanitarian Charter and the Rights- Based Approach

Trainer's Note

Session at a Glance:

Content	Activity	Time
1. Intro and objectives	Brief oral presentation	5 minutes
2. Humanitarian Charter	Brief oral presentation	20 minutes
3. Rights exercise	Individual activity + Plenary review	20 minutes
4. Sphere hierarchy	Brief oral presentation	20 minutes
5. Book & tabs tour	Guided Individual Activity	20 minutes
6. Conclusion	Brief oral summary of goals	5 minutes
Total Session Time: 90 minutes		

Required Materials: Sphere books for all participants, blank forms for the rights exercise to be written individually, 1.2 OH set, flipcharts, tabs or small "sticky notes" for all participants to tab their Sphere books

Trainer's Notes:

1. Intro and Objectives – 5 minutes

Distribute Sphere books and tabs for marking key pages before workshop begins. There are two main parts to this session: (1) Introduction of the core principles found in the Humanitarian Charter and the international legal instruments on which they are based, and (2) Introduction to the structure and hierarchy of the sphere book and approach. The first OH in the session set can be used during this short intro. Explain to the group that this session provides the key upon which all of the following sessions are based, so they should pay careful attention.

2. Humanitarian Charter – 20 minutes

This is a straightforward presentation of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and a very quick overview of the main international legal structures on which it is based. While this session is designed for practitioners rather than lawyers, and solid preparation in the basic documents is very useful in answering more detailed questions that may arise. The following basic documents can all be easily found and downloaded from the Internet – having a copy of each at hand is very useful:

- ◆ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- ◆ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- ◆ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- ◆ Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols (1977)
- ◆ Convention on the Status of Refugees (1951) and additional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (1967)

Other important sources, but not specifically required for this session are:

- ◆ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
- ◆ Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
- ◆ Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- ◆ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998)

The main message of this part of the session is that the Sphere Humanitarian Charter (HC) is nothing new. No new ideas have been put forward, nor is anything not already covered in international law introduced. The HC does extract the basic ideas from these sources and asks humanitarians to recognize these core rights as belonging to all people. The task of helping others realize these rights is seen as a responsibility for those able to respond rather than as an act of charity – this is the so-called “humanitarian imperative”.

3. Rights Exercise – 20 minutes

Distribute the forms for this exercise (or direct participants to the form if the materials are bound into a course workbook). Explain that this is simply a quick review and that the previous presentation should have made the answers clear. Use the facsimile OH to illustrate one of two possible answers and allow 5-10 minutes for participants to fill in the cells as well as they can. After participants have answered individually, work through the matrix using the animated OH and review the answers in plenary.

4. Sphere Hierarchy – 20 minutes

Use the prepared OHs to work through the design and structure of the Sphere book. Explain the hierarchy of the Humanitarian Charter as the underlying key on which the rest of the book is based. It is often useful to illustrate the fact that the HC is 5 pages long, there is still another 300+ pages...what are they there for?

The answer is that the following 5 chapters seek to give practical meaning and definition to the basic human rights in 5 key areas that humanitarian responders have traditionally worked in: Water and Sanitation, Nutrition, Food aid, Sites and Shelter, and Public Health. These chapters seek to convert the idealistic notion of “a right to life with dignity” into practical action. This is done in a series of hierarchical steps within each chapter.

These logical steps are:

1. To define global **standards** of “a life with dignity” in broad and generally subjective terms such as “sufficient”, “adequate”, or “equitable” access to food, shelter, water, health care, etc.
2. To then illuminate these standards further with objective **indicators** that may be used to measure whether or not the standards are being met
3. Finally, to provide **guidance** (guidance notes) in the usage of these indicators in practice, considering context, timing, and other conditional factors which may affect their viability as useful indicators.

This attempt to relate the basic rights, together with humanitarian responsibility, into practical actions is what the Sphere process and documents bring to the humanitarian community.

5. Book & Tabs Tour – 20 minutes

This session reinforces the previous presentation by making all participants actually open the Sphere books and begin to mark key sections with tabs, and to personalize the books for their own use. Remind the participants that the Sphere document is far from perfect, yet it remains one of the best sources of its kind

for practical field emergency response guidance. Furthermore it brings together experience from a very wide field of humanitarian responders from around the world. Encourage the group to read the chapters closely, to look for problems or areas that they do not understand, and to feel comfortable to raise these concerns as each chapter of the book is examined in detail later in the workshop.

6. Conclusion – 5 minutes

After tabbing and marking the books, the participants are now ready to begin a week of intense practice using the *Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response* for a variety of problems in each of the sectors.

Quick Rights and Sources Quiz

Fill in the empty cells of this matrix as well as you can.

Understanding the Main Legal Instruments

	Human Rights Law	Humanitarian Law	Refugee Law
Example of Documentary Source			
Core Ideas			
Who has rights?			
Who has duties?			
When do they Apply?			