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**Global Shelter Cluster Statement**
**Extreme Heat in Humanitarian Contexts: A Critical Gap in Current Governance Frameworks**

Over **83 million internally displaced individuals** live in areas increasingly exposed to extreme heat, in conditions that often fall short of minimum shelter standards. Current efforts to develop a *Common Framework for Extreme Heat Risk Governance* do not directly incorporate the situation of IDPs exposed to extreme heat, leading to a gap in the overall approach to managing this hazard.

Extreme heat—where high temperatures, often combined with humidity, threaten human health and lead to increased mortality, is receiving growing global attention. This reflects both the rising frequency and severity of heatwaves due to climate change and their mounting impact, especially in urban settings. Initiatives such as annual Heat Action Days, proliferating national heat plans, and increased technical guidance illustrate the growing recognition of extreme heat as a critical and immediate risk to human life.

These efforts are now being consolidated under the *Common Framework for Extreme Heat Risk Governance*, led by WMO and UNDRR. As a conceptual tool, the *Framework* provides a strong basis for understanding and mitigating heat risk through established disaster risk governance mechanisms—such as early warning systems, community-level cooling centers, and public health coordination.

However, a serious omission remains: the *Framework* does not yet adequately address **extreme heat in humanitarian crises,** particularly in contexts dealing with displacement, or conflict. These are contexts where shelter is often temporary or severely damaged, services are limited or absent, governance structures may be non-functional as well as excluding some segments of the population, and even the most basic protections—such as shade or drinking water—are inaccessible. Under these conditions, together with limited resources, an initial humanitarian response may be forced to deliver basic shelter and other assistance which does not address extreme heat as a significant threat to lives and wellbeing.

Moreover, standard interventions like cooling centers are often unworkable in crisis environments where electricity, security, or space are unavailable, or where compromises are made due to lack of funding or donor restrictions. Night-time cooling needs, security risks linked to crowding, and extreme exposure among displaced or crisis-affected populations further complicate implementation. These challenges continue to exist for the response to the recent earthquake in Myanmar and likely arise in relation to the current heat wave in Pakistan[1].

The **Extreme Heat Working Group**, hosted by the Global Shelter Cluster and open to all extreme heat stakeholders, is actively addressing the operational challenges of managing extreme heat in crisis contexts. However, these efforts must not remain isolated from broader global policymaking. Risk governance strategies and preparedness plans must be informed by the realities of crisis response, just as lessons learned in emergencies should directly shape future recovery frameworks and national heat action planning.

The absence of humanitarian considerations in the *Common Framework* presents a **critical policy and operational gap**. Recent inter-agency consultations on extreme heat have raised

[1] **Health Emergency: Situation Report # 3 Heatwave in Pakistan**. 12/06/2025. World Health Organization

concern due to limited engagement with humanitarian actors and insufficient integration of operational field realities. It is essential that upcoming guidance, standards, and financing tools **incorporate humanitarian learning, expertise, and constraints**, ensuring crisis-affected populations are not overlooked in efforts to address extreme heat.

The Global Shelter Cluster encourages the parties involved in developing the *Framework* to work with the Extreme Heat Working Group and partners to integrate extreme heat during crises into the overall heat governance framework. Extreme heat response must be embedded across the entire disaster risk management cycle—including crisis settings. This is not only a matter of technical integration, but of equity, protection, human dignity and, above all, saving lives which may otherwise be lost.