

Thursday 1 December, 2011
18:30
Lecture room MS130, Uni Mail

« **ABIDJAN :**

spotlight light on an urban crisis and the humanitarian response. »

CERAH, a joint programme of the Graduate Institute (IHEID) and the University of Geneva, is launching a series of conferences on the major challenges to contemporary humanitarian action.

In recent years, urban environments have become a focus of humanitarian concern. Because cities are engines of economic development and strategic nerve centres, they attract and concentrate growing populations. Yet rapid population growth is also one of the reasons why cities can develop into spaces at risk and why they are increasingly becoming an arena of humanitarian action. The increasing frequency of so-called 'natural' disasters and the growing complexity of internal or international armed conflict are further factors that make urban contexts more vulnerable. Emergencies in urban areas have specific characteristics and challenges, sometimes to such an extent that they call for a revision of established humanitarian response mechanisms.

Within the framework of CERAH's Thematic Seminar on 'Crises and humanitarian intervention in urban areas', this conference will present an examination of the specific characteristics of humanitarian action in urban areas. As a case study, the conference will consider Abidjan, Ivory Coast's largest city, which recently experienced several months of unrest that strained urban systems and placed the modalities of humanitarian intervention into question.

Programme

Introduction:

Prof. Gilles CARBONNIER, The Graduate Institute (IHEID), Chair, CERAH Board of Directors President

Speaker:

François Grünewald, Director General, U.R.D. Group

Response:

Patrick Villedieu, Head of Crisis, Médecins du Monde France

Thomas Calvot, Head of Operations, Handicap International

The debate will be followed by the account of Jules Koffi, WFP project coordinator, CERAH student of the Ivory Coast, and a Q and A session with the audience.