



OCHA POLICY AND STUDIES SERIES

COMMON HUMANITY, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: Advancing Humanitarian Effectiveness



OCHA
United Nations
Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs



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Managing Editors: Lesley Bourns and Jessica Alexander

Research team: Jessica Alexander, Lilian Barajas, Lesley Bourns, Andrew Billo, Dayna Brown, Sarah Cechvala, Pia Hussein, Isabella Jean, Romano Lasker, Veronika Martin, Paulina Odame, Rodolpho Valente, Andrew Bostrum, Nicole Goddard, Frederic Tutu Kama-Kama, Frederica Sawyer, and Ananita Varughese.

Editor: Matthew Easton

Design and layout: Girish Arora

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Produced by: OCHA Policy Analysis and Innovation Section, Policy Development and Studies Branch
Brian Grogan, Chief, Policy Analysis and Innovation Section
Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch

E-mail: ochapolicy@un.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

As of July 2015, an estimated 114 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, compared to 40 million just over ten years ago.¹ Needs are not only growing, but their drivers and time horizons have also changed (see sidebar and infographics at right for figures). Crisis-affected people face new challenges, some of which the international humanitarian system was not designed to manage when it was formally established 25 years ago.

Alongside these challenges is a growing range of on-the-ground capacities to prepare for and manage crises. Actors from all backgrounds are engaged in humanitarian action, beginning with affected people themselves, wielding unique contributions and skills. International humanitarian actors continue to play a fundamental role in providing assistance and protection when these other systems become overwhelmed or break down. Significant progress has been made in strengthening humanitarian coordination, professionalizing and establishing standards for delivery, and promoting resilience and accountability to affected people. Despite these gains, too many people continue to fall through the cracks, or to be trapped in a humanitarian holding pattern that offers no clear path to normalize their circumstances.

While every context is different, as we consider what it means to be effective, it helps to be reminded of the people that are most commonly facing humanitarian needs today. We now know that this person is likely to be a woman. She is increasingly likely to have left her home, often without the right to work for a steady household income and without access to basic social services like healthcare and water. She is likely to be fleeing from or living in conflict, where she faces an increased risk of violence in her home and in the community around her. She is likely living in a poor country and with a high risk of natural disaster that, leaving her family vulnerable to a heightened level of need and insecurity.

And she and her family may live in these circumstances of displacement and chronic vulnerability for more than a decade, meeting their needs through community networks, diaspora support, and, in some cases, through a formal government or international humanitarian aid system. When aid is available, it is most likely to be provided without her input or feedback, and to overlook what is most important to her and her family, such as education for her children, safe housing or a source of livelihood. As years pass with limited improvement in her

“The pace of change is accelerating; what used to take a generation now happens in five years. Humanitarian organizations need to be in a constant state of review, adapting and reinventing ourselves, if we are to remain relevant and do the best to deliver quickly and effectively for people in need.”

Stephen O’Brien, United Nations
Emergency Relief Coordinator



Between 2004 and 2015, the amounts requested through annual inter-agency humanitarian appeals have grown by approximately 600 per cent, from US\$3.4 billion to US\$19.44 billion. However, the gap between what is requested and what is received has also grown in recent years, from \$3.3 billion in 2011 to \$7.2 billion in 2014.



As of 2014, an estimated 80% of those affected by crisis were women and children, and many of the core development indicators that reflect the health and well-being of women are at their lowest in crisis- and conflict-affected locations.



Unplanned urbanization and the pace of climate change are among the major causes of vulnerability. An estimated 22 million people were displaced by extreme natural hazards in 2013 alone. By 2050, 70 per cent of the population will be living in cities, with the number of slum dwellers expected to reach 2 million by 2030. Conflicts are also changing in nature, with the vast majority of political conflicts intrastate in nature, at 82% globally.

prospects, the systems designed to protect her and her family, and to meet their needs, most likely cannot grapple with the challenges she faces. **How can humanitarian action adapt to this reality in order to deliver more effective results?**

This study is being concluded at a time of unique opportunities to reduce and better meet the needs of the most vulnerable, through improved humanitarian action as well as the broader recognition from that vulnerable and crisis-affected communities must be integrated into planning and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains a pledge to “reach the furthest behind first.” The Agenda includes a vision for global solidarity with people in vulnerable situations, a renewed commitment to resolve or prevent conflict and the recognition of the important role of migrants, internally displaced people, and refugees. By recognizing that many of the drivers of humanitarian crises “threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades,” the Agenda opens a formal bridge to greater cooperation with humanitarian and development actors to fulfil the pledge that “no one will be left behind.” With the World Humanitarian Summit preparing to offer a new vision for humanitarian action, this is a critical opportunity to advance new models for humanitarian action that will better engage the dynamic capacities, understand the dynamic needs and adapt to the dynamic contexts of crisis-affected people.

In light of these factors, this study explores the elements that are critical to effective humanitarian assistance and protection and recommends a number of near-term changes needed to realize them.

Many evaluations of humanitarian effectiveness are relatively narrow, limited to international actors and measuring inputs and individual institutional performance rather than context-specific, meaningful results for crisis-affected people. This study is intended to spark discussion that can help advance collective accountability to affected people and to measure progress toward realizing results, practices, and enablers of success. The study builds on previous reviews and processes on this topic, but aims to make a contribution that is unique in two primary ways: first, it is based on extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders to understand whether affected people feel their needs are being met, who is meeting them, and where the gaps remain (*see page 8 for details on the*

“The question is not what you can do for us, but what can we do together.”

Community leader, Tacloban, Philippines

research approach). The findings are based on a 1,600-person global survey, six country visits that included hundreds of interviews, and other consultations. Second, it intends to bring all actors together into one framework for effectiveness, examining both the process of undertaking humanitarian action, and the necessary environmental and structural factors that enable effectiveness, with overall results for affected people as the basis for evaluating effectiveness.

The study is divided into four sections:

- 1) A description of *the changing landscape*, which details the global trends that shape humanitarian needs and expectations for response.
- 2) A section on the purpose of the study which examines “*why effectiveness, why now?*” and situates this study in relation to concurrent processes and recent trends on the topic of effectiveness.
- 3) *The Findings*, which are the core of the study, bringing together what we heard from a broad range of stakeholders through our global survey, six country visits, and related research. The findings reflect what we heard about the vision for effective humanitarian assistance and protection, and what needs to happen to get there. Using a bottom up approach to the analysis, the findings have been grouped into three types of “elements of effectiveness,” as follows:

- **Results: Crisis-affected people have a right to humanitarian assistance and protection that is relevant, timely, and accountable to them.** These elements describe the desired outcomes most cited by affected communities and those working to meet needs.
- **Practice: To deliver effective humanitarian assistance and protection, those contributing to humanitarian assistance must be connected, coherent, complementary, and nimble.** These elements describe the desired behaviour and approach of actors, including but not limited to international humanitarian actors, in achieving results for crisis-affected people.
- **Enablers: To enable effective humanitarian assistance and protection, the environment must have strong foundations of governance, leadership, resources, information and evidence, and respect for humanitarian principles.** These elements outline the essential enablers required to achieve results for affected people. The study recognizes that humanitarians are often called to

act because these very things are lacking in crisis-affected environments; However, their absence is not an excuse for ineffectiveness, but rather, a factor to be evaluated alongside delivery in order to determine to what extent they contributed to or hindered positive results.

The elements of effectiveness are presented as a structure for organizing the findings, but they also serve as a draft framework that could be taken up by an independent monitoring mechanism to evaluate progress on effectiveness on a periodic basis. Taken together, performance on these elements reflects progress on achieving outcomes for affected people, improved practice and relevant roles to deliver on those outcomes, and encouragement of an environment for effective assistance and protection. Creating such a framework would require wider consultation, but these elements serve as a starting point. This study suggests that such an independent mechanism will be critical to advancing concrete change in the humanitarian system.

- 4) Finally, the study then proposes *five systemic changes and related recommendations* that chart a course for moving toward more effective results. Emerging from the findings, the proposed shifts have strong implications for the multilateral humanitarian system and donors as well as governments, national civil society organizations, and others contributing to humanitarian action such as private sector actors, militaries, and diaspora communities.

Those shifts are as follows:

- **Reinforce, don't replace: national and local systems and obligations**
International humanitarian actors must respond to needs quickly, with relevant responses, and at the necessary scale. But their aim should always be to enable national actors and institutions, not to substitute for them. Humanitarian action should reinforce the self-reliance of affected people and invest directly in targeted capacity development for local and national actors, starting by developing the skills and providing the funding to enhance national capacities. International actors should also uphold and reinforce the rights of affected people, stressing the primary responsibilities of States and parties to conflict under relevant international law and other instruments. These efforts should include promoting accountability and supporting national institutions and local actors to protect civilians, manage risk, guide response and reduce vulnerability.

- **Collaborate to ensure an outcome-driven approach**

Acknowledging that humanitarian crises are neither short-lived nor isolated from medium- and long-term efforts, humanitarian actors must work more closely in setting context-specific targets for reducing need and improving the prospects of crisis-affected people, together with development and peacebuilding communities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a number of useful commitments to support this aim. Planning should employ multi-year compacts, bringing together capacitated actors at the national and regional levels with specific, dynamic benchmarks and outcome targets against which to measure progress.

- **Intensify connectivity and strategic leadership**

Coordination platforms, tools, and financing models should reflect the diversity of actors meeting humanitarian needs and the contexts in which crises happen, building stronger connections between national and international actors and between humanitarian and non-humanitarians where those added capacities will increase effectiveness. They should be designed ahead of crises, particularly in areas at high risk, aiming to recognize the range of capacities and build relationships over time in order to activate them when crises occur. Strategic leadership should be strongly supported, both among governments and international actors: reinforcing obligations, calling for accountability, and emphasizing discipline. Leadership should identify and promote crisis-wide outcomes and facilitate collaboration that cuts across traditional silos.

- **Adopt a picture of needs that is complete, context-driven, and informed by risk**

In order to keep needs at the centre of response, all actors require consistent definition of humanitarian need and frequent analysis of its drivers, including disaggregation for the unique needs of people within the affected population. Open and safe data will be critical to advancing this, with the maximum level of sharing and access encouraged, balanced with the highest degree of protection for privacy and safety of affected people. In addition, responses to crises, whether driven by conflict or natural disasters, are consistently more effective when the groundwork to meet those needs is in place ahead of time, based on an analysis of known risks and capacities, and with investments in preparedness where risks are greatest.

- **Measure shared results for collective accountability**

Collective accountability should be promoted by all actors leading and delivering on humanitarian action, including

governments, international actors, donors, national actors and others. Shared benchmarks for success should be tied to real results for affected people. This will include common feedback mechanisms and aggregated data on needs and priorities of affected people, linked to decision-making processes on financing, strategy and operations. Building on tools like the IASC's Commitments on Accountability to Affected People, and the Core Humanitarian Standard, benchmarks should be linked to regularly collected and analysed feedback from affected people, with adjustments to both inputs and targets. This process will require each actor to deliver on commitments in a predictable manner, based on a clear contribution to broader outcomes, with flexible tools and structures to adapt to feedback.



Since 29 April, some 52,000 tarpaulins have been distributed in 29 districts and an additional 234,160 tarpaulins are en route to Nepal.

(Credit: OCHA/Orla Fagan)

RESEARCH APPROACH

Research Approach

In addition to a detailed literature review, including field and headquarter operational reviews, the study used a mix of methods for data collection, including key informant interviews, six country visits and a global survey by OCHA, global and regional consultations led by OCHA and other humanitarian actors.

The field visit locations were selected in order to explore humanitarian assistance and protection in a range of types and phases of crises, in light of diverse coping strategies, expectations for assistance and protection, and resources and capacities for response. Field visits lasted between one and two weeks and were conducted by mixed teams of OCHA and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. Individual interviews and focus groups were organized with the aim of gender balance and to ensure marginalized groups were included.

Teams visited the Philippines (sudden onset natural disaster in a middle-income country), Myanmar (protracted conflict and displacement in restrictive humanitarian setting, in a lower-income country undergoing dramatic economic and political transitions); Jordan and Lebanon focused on the Syria regional crisis (protracted conflict and displacement in middle-income countries), Eastern DRC (protracted conflict and chronic vulnerability in lower-income country); Ethiopia (cyclical drought and chronic food insecurity in lower-income country with rising economic prospects); and Haiti (sudden onset natural disaster and chronic vulnerability in a lower-income country). In total, more than 1,500 people were consulted throughout the field visits.

OCHA administered its survey online in English, Arabic, and French. A total of 1,607 individuals responded, from: INGOs, UN agencies, local NGOs, Government agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, donors, academia, affected people, private sector (both in an affected country and multinational corporation), foreign military, regional actors, diaspora, UN Peacekeeping force or a national military of an affected country. The majority of respondents came from INGOs, UN organizations, local NGOs and Government agencies.

The study also drew upon a number of consultations dedicated the issue of humanitarian effectiveness and the related subset of issues, in 2014 and 2015.

ACTORS CONSULTED AND KEY QUESTIONS

1. Affected populations
2. Local and national civil society organizations including faith-based groups
3. Crisis-affected governments at central and local levels.
4. UN agencies and programs
5. International NGOs and ICRC
6. Private Sector Companies
7. Donors
8. Others, including academics, military, diaspora communities and regional organizations. These groups were consulted in smaller numbers.

Below is a sampling of questions asked in each context. The field visits and other consultations were left flexible to allow a set of definitions and expectations of humanitarian effectiveness emerge from the research.

For example, ***we asked those responding to needs:***

- What does “effective humanitarian action” mean to you?
- What do you prioritize in order to effectively meet the needs of people?
- What are your priorities, and what do those imply for how you conceptualize your role, responsibilities, and measures of your effectiveness?

We asked people affected by crisis:

- How are you meeting your own needs in times of crisis?
- What do you expect from others?
- What kinds of inputs and actions do you consider to be the most effective at meeting your needs?

A Note on Coverage

Coverage and Targetings

Before examining effective humanitarian assistance and protection, it is important to address the overarching challenge of understanding and measuring coverage. In this context the term “coverage” refers to the extent to which all of those vulnerable to and in need of humanitarian assistance and protection are reached.

While this study did not evaluate the performance of humanitarian actors in achieving coverage globally, those interviewed confirmed recent findings that the relationship of humanitarian funding and delivery to overall need is difficult to measure, inconsistent and often politicized, and it is also reflective of the underlying challenge of not having a universal, coherent definition of humanitarian need.

As noted in the 2015 *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*, “There is no exact data on how many people were affected by crisis and where: many people go unreached and uncounted, situations change quickly, and population data is often lacking in the most

crisis-prone settings.” The report also notes that even the available figures on humanitarian need do not reflect those vulnerable to crises for lack of preparedness or resources to recover from crisis, heavily influenced by poverty. Need is context-specific, it is often prolonged and it is not always easy to measure. Yet the ability to evaluate effectiveness is fundamentally linked to achieving a shared understanding and measure of humanitarian need.

Similarly, the ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2015, which examines coverage together with sufficiency, found that despite increases in funding and some improvements in coverage in rapid onset natural disasters, overall coverage decreased. The decrease is attributed to a number of factors, including weak data, lack of access to people in crisis, gaps in response capacity on the ground, or disagreement about what constitutes need and who is responsible for reaching which groups. Actors have varying definitions of what constitutes “humanitarian need,” often defaulting to unsatisfactory proxy indicators, such as funding levels or people reached. As a result, they often evaluate what has been done and who has been reached, with a more limited picture of those in need of assistance and protection who were not acknowledged or simply not reached. In the words of the former United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, “Yes, 5 million people a month receive aid in Syria, but what is that compared to the 12 million who need it?”

This study echoes the call for improved clarity around the assessment of need both as a basis for improving the reach of humanitarian assistance, and for

*“There is something important in the Sustainable Development Goals: it is the character of inclusiveness; it is the idea that is clearly expressed that nobody should be left behind. Which means that we need to make sure that **areas in crises, and people affected by crisis, need to be incorporated in the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.**”*

Antonio Guterres, UNHCR, 19 August 2015

measuring success in meeting the broader need. As humanitarian actors set out to improve global coverage, the study also emphasizes the importance of broadening partnerships outside of the humanitarian system, particularly in light of the commitment made in the Sustainable Development Goals process to “leave no one behind,” which extends to groups previously ignored by development targets, such as internally displaced people and migrants. Broader partnerships will require working more closely with development, peace building actors and national institutions including public and private sector, as well as affected communities and local leaders, to identify and strategically reduce needs. The shift to this kind of a “shared humanity” is one of the overall aims of this study.

*“... please try to avoid the tendency to report how many beneficiaries one has reached with a food basket, without simultaneously reporting on who one knows one is not reaching... **without a comprehensive picture of the gaps, you give those of us on the political and diplomatic side alibis, and we lack a true picture of the need that is out there.**”*

Amb. Samantha Power, Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action, 2015.



17 July 2014, Ambassel Woreda, South Wello Zone, Amhara Region: Flood workshop participants visiting flood mitigation activities.

(Credit: UNOCHA Ethiopia/ Zelalem Letyibelu, HAO)

THE HUMANITARIAN LANDSCAPE

Global landscape: risks, challenges and opportunities

In the past, conflicts and natural disasters have been seen as the main drivers of humanitarian need. They are often treated as discrete events, with little analysis of the underlying causes and warning signs. Today, the humanitarian landscape is changing more rapidly than ever. Global risks are recognized as increasingly central to humanitarian crises. They can make people more vulnerable and prevent them from building the resilience necessary to cope with shocks. The protracted and recurrent crises we see around the world today are a direct result of this vulnerability. In some cases,

Food security

BASELINE: Of the world's 570 million farms, 9 out of 10 are run by families. Family farms produce about 80 per cent of the world's food. By 2014, approximately 805 million people were chronically undernourished, down more than 100 million over the last decade.

PROJECTION: In 2050, global food production will have to increase by 60 percent from its 2005–2007 levels to meet increasing demand by the world's projected population of 9.7 billion.

Gender violence

BASELINE: One in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way – frequently by someone she knows. One in every four pregnant women has been abused. Six hundred million women globally are living in countries where domestic violence is still not considered a crime.

PROJECTION: One in five women worldwide will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. The majority are these victims will be young women.

Pandemics

BASELINE: By the end of 2014, there were 12,861 confirmed cases of Ebola in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. About 75 per cent of new human diseases are caused by microbes that originate in animals.

PROJECTION: Pandemics like Ebola, MERS, HIV/AIDS and SARS will continue to be spurred by population growth, increased global trade and travel, global warming and poverty. Methods for dealing with pandemics will need to change from reactive to proactive to manage the threat.

Climate change

BASELINE: No year since 1880 has been as warm as 2014. In 2014, 48 per cent of disasters occurred in Asia. In East Asia and the Pacific, the number of people exposed to floods and tropical cyclones increased by 70 per cent since 1980.

PROJECTION: Climate change may reduce raw water quality and pose risks to drinking water quality even with conventional treatment. Climate change without adaptation will negatively impact crop production for local temperature increases of 2 degrees Celsius or more. Future annual losses due to disasters are estimated at \$314 billion in built environments alone.

Diaspora

BASELINE: Remittances constitute the second largest source of foreign capital (after foreign direct investment). In 2014, 245 million migrants sent half a trillion dollars to their countries of origin, supporting on average 4.5 people each and having an impact on over a billion people worldwide

PROJECTION: Diaspora groups are as diverse as the communities they serve, and there is not enough data to understand the capacities and role of the diaspora. In the humanitarian context, diaspora could become a key aid partner.

Economy

BASELINE: In 2014, global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$77.87 trillion, with an annual growth of 2.6 per cent. Inequality has reached unsurpassed levels: the richest one per cent own 48 per cent of global wealth. Of the remainder, 94.5 per cent is owned by the world's richest 20 percent, leaving 5.5 per cent of global wealth to be distributed among 80 per cent of the world's population.

PROJECTION: Increasing inequality will result in the 1 per cent having more wealth than 99 per cent of the global population in the next two years. Global GDP is expected to increase to 3.1 per cent in 2016.

this vulnerability is exacerbated by the absence of political solutions to conflicts. The humanitarian community has placed renewed emphasis on better understanding the drivers of crises, to move towards an evidence-based model where the root causes of humanitarian need are better understood and therefore, the humanitarian community can serve affected people in a more effective way.

FIGURE 6



Humanitarian Effectiveness in Context: The Humanitarian Landscape

Passed in 1991 in the wake of the Gulf War, Resolution 46/182 created a system that better coordinated the work of UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) delivering humanitarian assistance and protection. In the 25 years that have followed, the international humanitarian system has grown and professionalized, with notable progress in areas such as standards, coordination, leadership, and resource mobilization. The system has expanded its technical expertise and its understanding of the drivers of crises and the need for preparedness. The system is reaching more people, funded at a higher level, than ever before.

Despite these developments, reviews of international humanitarian engagement continue to point out persistent challenges, along with newer calls for adaptation to the current landscape of needs. Affected people and governments are among those questioning the effectiveness, sustainability and appropriateness of the international humanitarian system, as are many within the system itself. Southern actors in particular are challenging global normative frameworks and the universality of humanitarian assistance and protection, calling for context-specific programs and standards. International actors in particular are increasingly being called

to demonstrate their comparative advantage among a diversified set of actors, capacities and opportunities. The following section examines global trends influencing the nature of humanitarian need and humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to the implications they have for the international humanitarian system. While not all of the trends are dramatically new, taken together, they present a different operating environment from that of 25 years ago.

Drivers of Need

The dramatic impact of conflicts and climate-related natural disasters, coupled with major trends such as water scarcity, population growth and urbanisation, are expected to affect a greater number of people for longer periods of time. Meanwhile, growing expectations are moving the goalposts for success, challenging humanitarian standards, and driving up costs. Protracted crises are forcing humanitarians to provide “care and maintenance” for decades.

Protracted crises are not new, but have become the “new normal,” with few easy solutions for reducing humanitarian needs in settings such as Somalia, Syria and South Sudan. While the protracted nature of these crises cannot be pinned to the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the humanitarian system, it does have implications for how human-

itarians now relate to peacebuilding partners, development actors, and those working on political and mediation processes. Despite economic development in Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa, vulnerability and exposure to hazards are increasing due to climate change, water scarcity, rising inequality, population growth, urbanization and other de-

mographic shifts, and additional needs may emerge from complex crises similar to the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa.

Efforts to adapt to the longer-term nature of needs have increased demands on the international humanitarian system, which now routinely deals with the consequences of crises with complex and interrelated roots. Many of these root causes have been driving humanitarian need long before the international system was established: poor governance, political paralysis, underdevelopment, extreme poverty, and inequality.

Conflict and Violence

Most humanitarian work takes place in countries and regions affected by conflict. Under international humanitarian law (IHL), parties to conflict have primary responsibility to protect civilians from the effects of hostilities, facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance, and ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. Parties to conflict also have primary responsibility under IHL to provide for the basic needs of civilians who are under their control, although a humanitarian organization can “offer its services” (Geneva Conventions, common article 3). In practice however, many parties to conflict not only fail to uphold this responsibility, but deliberately attack civilians and humanitarian actors and arbitrarily deny access to humanitarian assistance. Calls for adherence to IHL alone are not sufficient to address these violations.

In most recent and on-going conflicts, parties have consistently shown complete disregard for the most basic human rights of civilians and for their obligations under IHL or under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Lack of political solutions to conflict and commitment from parties to conflict to comply with their obligations are putting more pressure on the international humanitarian system to respond to the consequences of violent conflict. One fundamental disincentive for compliance is the lack of an effective and systematic accountability mechanism.

At the international level, existing tools to promote the responsibility to protect civilians and humanitarian actors and to facilitate humanitarian assistance are ineffective for several primary reasons. First, a vast majority of current conflicts do not have an international character, hence are not resolvable through traditional state-state negotiations.

Secondly, accountability mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, Security Council-mandated commissions of inquiry, or national or ad hoc tribunals, remain limited, essentially for lack of capacity and political will to refer situations and individuals to those mechanisms. Thirdly, compliance tools, such as Security Council sanctions or diplomatic pressures, and hence are not systematically implemented by States. There is a need to review the rules, regulations and conventions that underpin the humanitarian system to find ways to enforce them more effectively.

Within conflicts, far from being “collateral damage,” civilian deaths or suffering are often the very purpose of attacks, sieges and other forms of denial of access to humanitarian assistance. They have become a common part of warfare. In addition to direct targeting of civilians for strategic purposes, parties to conflict knowingly resort to indiscriminate tac-

tics, such as the use of explosive weapons with wide-range effect in populated areas. The operating environment has also become increasingly insecure for aid workers. Extreme levels of violence against civilians and aid workers mean that, with some notable exceptions, international humanitarian workers can no longer operate safely in many conflict-affected countries. Meanwhile, developments in information technology over the past decade raise questions about whether new ways of sharing and gathering information can trigger obligations and accountability measures for those mandated to protect civilians in conflict.

Sexual violence and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains a critical concern, with women and adolescents being disproportionately affected. Humanitarian crises, both conflicts and natural disasters, exacerbate and intensify various forms of GBV including trafficking, early marriages and domestic violence. In addition, while humanitarian organisations hold a commitment to zero tolerance on sexual exploitation and abuse, its continued occurrence remains a major barrier to progress for protection and gender equality outcomes.

Response environments with multiple centres

Despite these challenges, opportunities are arising from the growing recognition and capacity of national and local actors in many contexts. Multi-polarity in international power, combined with economic growth, has led to new investments in humanitarian assistance as a foreign policy tool, with an increase in bilateral and regional assistance. This trend offers the opportunity for more global and regional cooperation in resolving and responding to crises, but it may also contribute to further fragmentation of humanitarian assistance and protection efforts.

While historically a small number of Western governments dominated funding and debates, a growing number of countries are more engaged in funding and delivering humanitarian assistance.

While many countries continue to support multilateral assistance, the majority of funding is bilateral and within regions, especially among donors outside the OECD-DAC. The South African Development Partnership Agency was launched in 2011 to manage, administer and coordinate aid. Regional dynamics

have been particularly evident in the Syria crisis, with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates all significantly increasing funding to countries in the region, while Kuwait has organized pledging conferences, the latest of which helped raise \$3.8 billion in early 2015. A growing number of countries are seeking to shape the international humanitarian agenda, such as Brazil's proposal of a "Responsibility while Protecting" at the 2011 General Assembly. China was one of the first and largest contributors to the international response to the West Africa

"These trends indicate that real improvement to humanitarian effectiveness cannot be achieved by relying on one dominant international system, or one that is organized primarily for aid distribution."

Catherine Bragg, former Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator

Ebola crisis, including contributions to the UN multi-trust fund for Ebola. Saudi Arabia recently established the King Salman Center for Humanitarian Aid in an effort to provide greater coherence and oversight to its sizable investments in humanitarian assistance. These trends are already broadening strategic partnerships within and beyond the traditional multilateral framework.



Climate change leads to changes in the frequency, intensity, spatial extent, duration, and timing of extreme weather and climate events, and can result in unprecedented extreme weather and climate events.
(Credit: IPCC 2012)

More ownership by affected Governments

The growth in the number of middle-income countries has allowed many former aid recipients to invest in disaster preparedness and response capacity and to reassert the primacy of government leadership in managing humanitarian assistance, resulting in fewer requests for multilateral humanitarian assistance.

Many governments are meeting needs through their own response capacities, including National Disaster Management Agencies, domestic militaries, civil society and the private sector. Many countries demand a greater role in global decision-making and coordination around humanitarian issues, emphasizing paragraphs three and four of Resolution 46/182 concerning state sovereignty. The international humanitarian system is considered by some as overly-focused on supporting parallel governance, which has led to some countries requesting assistance less frequently or requesting select skills or services rather than a large-scale multilateral present. Moreover, decentralized administration is on the rise and the response capacity of national line ministries, municipalities, civil society

and the local private sector will continue to grow over time.

While the increase in domestic capacities is a positive trend, in many of the most persistent crises the capacity to manage response and coordination lags behind the desire to play a leading role. Regardless of national capacities, complex and large-scale crises will continue to require the international humanitarian system to provide surge response capacity in some cases, which was its original purpose. The role of international humanitarian actors must be carved out to suit the risks and drivers of need in each context, and the existing capacities to meet them. Many are suggesting that the international humanitarian actors transition over time, and in a more deliberate manner,

“The multilateral system is still a Western-conceived system. Our values are almost entirely common values, but we need a common platform to bring together these actors and the response capacity of those countries now excluded from the existing system.”

Antonio Guterres, UNHCR

to a more facilitative role, working with affected governments to act on areas of greatest risk and to increase disaster preparedness and response capacity. The nature and timing of that process will be necessarily driven by the context. While the international system can still provide global leadership and reinforce norms and principles, the changing landscape calls for “recognizing where our norms and principles need to evolve to take into account new realities.”

Capacity and diversity in response

The growing reach of individuals, the massive growth of global civil society, and increased South-South cooperation and learning is changing the way humanitarian assistance is conceived, planned and implemented. The growing influence of the private sector, diaspora networks and civil society movements as core humanitarian actors will continue to grow, requiring the humanitarian system to effectively navigate these relationships.

State authority and central decision-making are in many cases less critical to humanitarian action than local government, the private sector, civil society, diasporas and individual networks. Advances in education and social media, coupled with growing income gaps, are spurring popular demands for representative government and equitable growth. However, in many contexts the space for civil

society is shrinking due to laws and other obstacles.

While government donors still provide the vast majority of funding for humanitarian assistance, private donors play an increasingly important role, contributing about a quarter of all international humanitarian funding in 2014. Remittances are also thought to constitute 21 per cent of international resources available

“For too long, people in UN agencies and our partners saw themselves as the main responders. But today, we understand that national and local authorities, and the people themselves, form the first line of response in any crisis.”

Jan Egeland, former Emergency Relief Coordinator

to the largest humanitarian recipients. These sources complement the often under-recognized capacities of women’s organizations and associations, youth

groups, religious organizations and national and local civil society actors, as well as diaspora networks. Despite these

capacities, the international humanitarian system often fails to sustain relationships with local and national actors, due

in part to a failure to provide access to international funds and to planning and decision-making processes.

Technology-enabled shifts

Developments in technology and communications have dramatically changed humanitarian assistance, giving many more people the means to question and get assistance elsewhere. Moreover, tools to capture and analyse data and meta-data allow crises to be predicted more accurately, and needs to be assessed more rapidly.

The 2015 earthquake in Nepal demonstrated how new technologies such as social media, direct giving, SMS fundraising and crowdfunding are making it easier for people to contribute outside the humanitarian system to directly meet needs. Innovations such as real-time mapping based on crowdsourcing, and the use of remote sensing technology such as unmanned aerial vehicles and satellites are providing novel perspectives on developing crises. Data platforms, such as

the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), increasingly provide real-time access to data for needs assessment, coordination and response, and the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) is the first global, open-source tool for sharing and presenting predictive data on the risk of crises. Innovation in technology and information management offer opportunities for remote monitoring, needs assessments, protection, delivery of assistance and other aspects of field operations.

At the same time, some argue that there is not enough systematic investment to ensure that the humanitarian system is informed by the latest technology, and has the skills to manage and analyse data to benefit affected people more consistently. Some solutions that emerge based on new technologies but not driven by and understanding of needs and operating environments can add little value, or even distract from critical response efforts. There is also growing recognition of the risks that technology brings to the safety of affected communities, and the imperative to “do no harm,” through cybersecurity protections and privacy guidelines.



March 8, 2014 marks International Women's Day. In Haiti there are more than 5 million women. Of those, 61.7 per cent are living under the poverty line of US \$1.25 a day. 60 per cent are illiterate. Only 29 per cent of women attend secondary school. 1 in 83 women die during childbirth. And yet they are considered the backbone of Haitian society.

(Credit: Logan Abassi UN/MINUSTAH)



15 Sept 2014: International Medical Corps is an international humanitarian organizations providing lifesaving treatment services to those infected with Ebola in West Africa.

(Credit: International Medical Corps/ Stuart J. Sia)

WHY EFFECTIVENESS, WHY NOW?

Purpose and Context of this Study: Why Effectiveness, Why Now?

Purpose

The current emphasis on humanitarian effectiveness grows out of a confluence of factors, including the environmental realities described above. One primary driver is the failure of resources to keep pace with growing financial requirements associated with meeting needs: in 2014 there was a \$7 billion gap between what the global humanitarian appeal requested (\$18.7 billion) and what was received. This unsustainable trajectory has forced a review of how needs are defined, how they are met and by whom, and how they can be reduced.

The Study in Context

This section explores some of the key drivers, challenges, and expectations shaping humanitarian effectiveness discourse, such as value-for-money, accountability and standards, operational failures, and the acknowledgment of diverse expectations for humanitarian action.

Building on the development effectiveness debate

Attempts to measure and improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action are not new. General Assembly Resolution 46/182 was based in part on the desire to “strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community,” and numerous national and international reform processes have pursued greater quality, accountability, efficiency, and other measures of effectiveness.

“No doubt, a shared understanding of humanitarian effectiveness will also stimulate change in the design, tools and approaches, and results measurement, within the humanitarian system.”

Rachel Scott, OECD, 2014.

However, the humanitarian community still lags behind the development sector, which has already achieved key milestones clarifying “aid effectiveness”. Multilateral meetings in Rome in 2002 to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation agreed to in Busan in 2011 were the culmination of lessons learned over decades from development efforts in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile environments. The gatherings also reflect underlying shifts in power, wealth, and capacities, which influenced donor-recipient relationships in the development sphere and have led to a more inclusive discussion. In 2012, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States cemented a new framework for development assistance, reflecting

“Even language is the wrong way round. In OECD language there are donors and partner countries. But in reality it is the donors which are considered by developing countries as their partners in development. The developing countries are the protagonists.”

Jonathan Glennie, ODI Busan Debate, 2011

many of the themes of earlier meetings: inclusivity and ownership, national ownership of development goals, and the need to develop strong government institutions while acknowledging the diverse actors delivering development results. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reinforces these elements and vision. The humanitarian aid community has not adopted such a shared vision for effectiveness, despite many significant reforms and improvements in the tools and approaches to measuring effectiveness.

The evolution of the humanitarian effectiveness debate

Changing expectations

The challenge of adopting a shared definition of effectiveness is linked to the diverse expectations and definitions of “humanitarian action” itself. The term historically embodied two main characteristics: 1) association with conflict, in which humanitarians set themselves apart from other actors on the basis of principled action, and 2) short-term action in response to a crisis, viewed as an exception to the norm. In practice, neither reflects most of today’s humanitarian crises. While conflict continues to drive the bulk of humanitarian action, those responding to chronic vulnerability, climate-driven shocks, rapid urbanization, and a host of other hazards now coexist in a complex and interconnected picture. Protracted crises are the norm, and the line between “pure” humanitarian actors and others is increasingly blurred.

As a result, humanitarian actors have taken on a wider range of roles and

Even if we protect the essence of humanitarian action, perceptions, culture, values and identity influence social interactions as much as facts . . . humanitarian aid is basically a social interaction, not just the delivery of service . . . [B]ig budgets don't make aid more effective, but understanding the needs and expectations of those affected by conflicts and disasters does.

South-South Humanitarianism Conference Report, 2014, Jindal University

challenges: addressing prolonged displacement; filling gaps in the social safety net and providing basic services; ensuring preparedness and risk prevention before and after a crisis; contending with the changing nature of violence and new hazards; and facing global trends like urbanization and climate-driven crises. In this environment, clarifying effectiveness requires understanding the expectations against which humanitarian assistance and protection are now measured.

Value-for-Money

Humanitarian assistance is not only reaching more people, but it is also funded at a higher level than ever before. Humanitarian financing has increased year-on-year since 2010, and the rising levels of global contributions have led to a greater emphasis on cost-effectiveness over the last five years. However, the drive for easily quantifiable, input-oriented measures of success—tents or vaccines distributed, vaccines supplied, or schools constructed—are increasingly recognized as less significant than realizing medium- and longer-term outcomes.

The desire to eliminate transaction costs and perceived waste of channelling

funds through the international system has been a frequent component of humanitarian effectiveness discussions, with “value for money” arguments focused on reducing inefficiencies but also on direct financing for national actors and affected communities.

Qualitative measures

Much of the discussion about measuring humanitarian effectiveness has been driven by acknowledgement of the *ineffectiveness* of past responses, motivated by a genuine desire by humanitarian actors to continue to do better, as well as by donor pressure. The increased presence of international media, particularly in sudden-onset natural disasters, also contributes to greater scrutiny of the use of public funds. Independent evaluations of multilateral responses over the past 20 years have launched successful reform efforts, even as they highlight lingering challenges. Because reforms are often driven by an evaluation of past failure, humanitarian actors can seem to be catching up to fix what failed the last time, with less attention to preparing for the known risks of the future. These operational reviews also often focus on feedback from humanitarian actors, “to the neglect of insights and ideas from *direct* operational counterparts such as national governments, implementing partners or disaster-affected communities.”

Pressures from within and outside of the international humanitarian system have encouraged greater accountability to affected people, with widespread agreement that effectiveness would improve if humanitarians worked more closely with affected people to design assistance and then adjust it based on regular feedback. Promotion of standards and certification has been another approach to professionalize humanitarian assistance and hold humanitarian actors accountable.

While the humanitarian system has grown massively in recent years, this has not led to the proportionate improvement in performance during emergencies.

MSF Where is Everyone. 2014

Following the widely recognized failures of the international humanitarian response to the 1994 Rwanda genocide and subsequent refugee crisis, ALNAP and the Sphere Standards, along with a series of reform initiatives and processes (see box at right) have worked to increase and measure the effectiveness of humanitarian action. These efforts reinforce the importance of adopting a

Recent efforts to improve and monitor humanitarian effectiveness include:

- The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (1994)
- The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (1997)
- The Sphere Project (1997)
- Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (2003)
- International Aid Transparency Initiative's Aid Transparency Index (2008)
- People in Aid (1995)
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (1997 as the Humanitarian Ombudsman Project)
- IASC Response Monitoring Framework (2012)
- UN-System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (UN-SWAP) (2012)
- Core Humanitarian Standards Alliance (2015)

(See www.sphereproject.org for their list of Quality and Accountability initiatives)

shared definition of what it means to be effective. To hold actors accountable, one must ask what are they accountable for, and how you measure whether they have fulfilled their obligations. The answers affect the incentive structures and priorities of humanitarian actors.

While these initiatives have resulted in significant improvements in many areas, concerns remain: the voluntary nature of most standards, with inconsistent incentives; limited success in prioritizing the views of affected people against competing pressures for speed and scale; inadequate attention to context-specific aspects of effectiveness; and limited emphasis on outcomes over time due to short-term planning and financing. Some of these challenges can be addressed through the adoption of a shared definition of effectiveness and collective efforts to incentivize and measure progress.

Widening the debate

Many past reform efforts approached the problem of effective humanitarian action from the perspective of the international humanitarian system, without considering the experiences, perspectives, values, and attitudes of crisis-affected people or their governments. Research has shown a disconnect between the priorities of humanitarian actors and those of affected populations for what determines effectiveness.

Recent processes such as the World Humanitarian Summit Regional Consultations and the Future Humanitarian Financing debates have begun to broaden discussions beyond international policymakers and donors. The discourse on “Southern Humanitarianism” has also brought together views raised by the G77 group during the development aid effectiveness debate, including trust, justice, humility, and sovereignty as principles of equal importance to humanitarian

Actors from the South and Islamic countries are providing new perspectives, opportunities and resources; some of them conflicting with the values and modalities of the established humanitarian system.

Humanitarian Challenges: Perspectives from the South and Islamic Countries. Bakhit, 2013

principles. Many Southern governments continue to associate the international system with the political and economic interests of particular States that remain dominant in some of the organs of the UN and related institutions. The private sector, military, and emerging donors have also expressed differing views about which actors are defined as “humanitarians” and what their roles and responsibilities are. As one recent policy report notes, “There is not one single way to do humanitarian work, and a space will need to be defined that gives room to the ‘many faces of humanitarianism.’ After all, many are the players who will need to work together to make aid count in the future.”

Challenging traditional approaches

Technology is enabling new approaches in aid delivery, as well as ways for people to push for change and communicate their needs. Technology-enabled social movements allow people to advocate for themselves and articulate their own needs, rather than to receive information passively. Increases in global wealth distribution and the reach of markets also expand access to goods and resources without the international humanitarian system, calling its value into question. The growth of cash-based programming, with proven gains in efficiency and flexibility, is reframing the traditional conception of humanitarian action along sector lines. Cash allows a more integrated approach and provides

a tool to meet individual priorities. Core components of humanitarian action, such as logistics and sectoral expertise, are receding as drivers of effectiveness.

A multi-faceted concept of humanitarian effectiveness

While the reform efforts noted above have delivered significant improvements, the cyclical, long-term and complex nature of needs has motivated an examination of whether existing measures deliver an adequately collective, people-centered, outcome-oriented approach that will deliver meaningful results for crisis-affected people.

“As beneficiaries have increasing access to information and communication technologies and can better evaluate, compare and ultimately rank the ‘performance’ of various humanitarian actors, the more the latter will have to prove their worth and earn their reputation through relevant, effective action.”

Yves Daccord, ICRC

(<http://www.trust.org/item/20141201075225-n0dsh/>)



On 8 November 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Yolanda) swept across the Philippines leaving a trail of destruction.

(Credit: OCHA)



A Syrian woman waits her turn to cross the Jordanian border, on June 17 2013, as she arrives at a crossing point with her family.

(Credit: UNHCR / O. Laban-Mattei / June 2013)

FINDINGS

Findings

After reviewing the field studies, surveys, and related research, we have identified 11 elements of effectiveness arranged a three-tiered framework.

- I. Crisis affected people have a right to humanitarian assistance and protection that is relevant, timely, and accountable to them.**

Presented at the top, these elements are essential to the desired results of humanitarian assistance and protection. All planning, inputs and implementation undertaken by humanitarian and other actors to meet humanitarian needs should be measured against the extent to which they contribute to achieving these results.

- II. To facilitate effective humanitarian assistance and protection,** those contributing to humanitarian assistance must be complementary, connected, coherent and nimble.

These elements describe the desired behaviour and approach of actors, including but not limited to international humanitarian actors, in achieving results for affected people. They require a number of shifts from the current approach in order to be fully realized.




- III. To enable effective humanitarian assistance and protection,** the environment must have strong foundations of respect for humanitarian principles, leadership, resources, information and evidence, and governance.

These elements outline the essential enablers that must be part of the operating environment in order to achieve results for affected people. These elements should be evaluated alongside delivery to determine to what extent they contributed to or hindered results.







The following sections explain each element through a brief definition of the term, an explanation of why it matters for effectiveness, and a summary of “what we heard” on this element in the course of the study.






I. Crisis affected people have a right to receive humanitarian assistance that is needs-based/relevant, timely, and accountable to them.

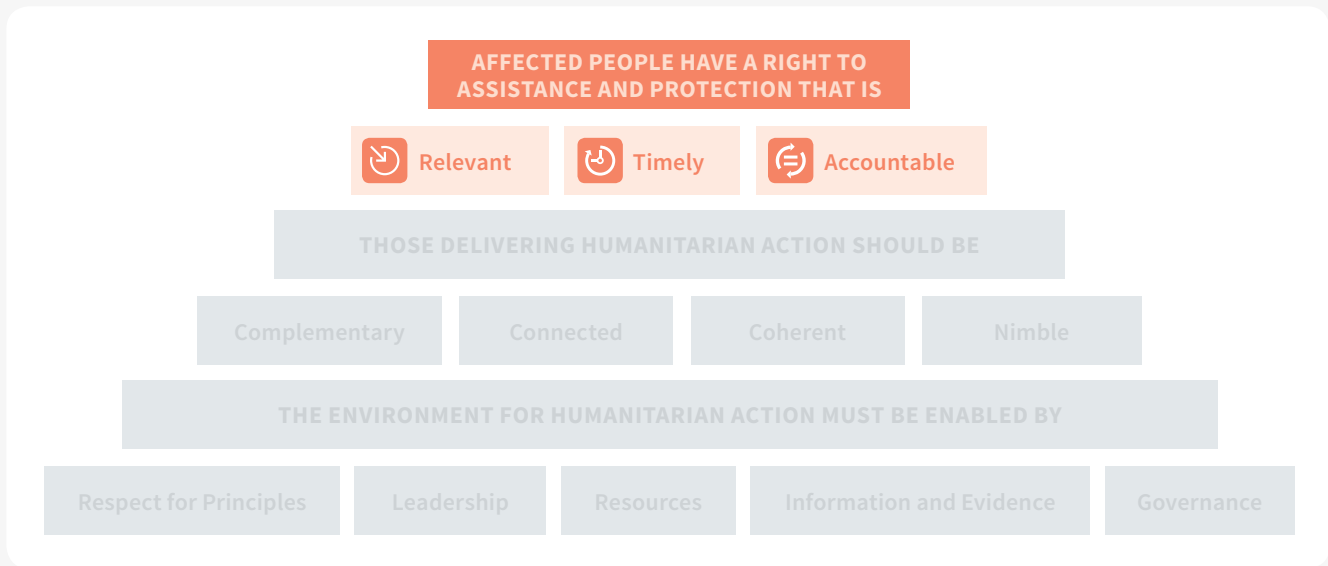
Element	Definition	Summary
<p>Relevant</p> 	<p>Goods, services, and other assistance reach those in need in a manner consistent with their holistic set of needs, while reflecting local priorities, culture, and coping strategies.</p>	<p>The relevance of humanitarian action is increased by a deep understanding of local needs, coping strategies, and culture. Relevant assistance requires flexible tools like cash-based programming that consider needs holistically, in context, and in light of the reality of protracted crises and urban refugee populations.</p>
<p>Timely</p> 	<p>Crisis preparedness and humanitarian response are conducted in a manner that produces the fastest possible effort to relieve suffering and meet needs.</p>	<p>The actors most associated with timeliness are typically those closest to the crisis event, supported by extended networks. These actors, including local communities, diasporas, and businesses, are particularly important early in the response to sudden onset crises. For all actors, preparedness efforts, including mapping response capacities and roles in advance of crises, can significantly improve timeliness, while actionable data and technology can speed up targeting and communication about risks, responses, and needs.</p>
<p>Accountable</p> 	<p>People affected by crises are able to influence decisions about how their needs are met, and humanitarian action delivers on commitments predictably and transparently.</p>	<p>Despite progress, humanitarian action still falls short in systematically engaging with affected people. Donors are broadening their definition of value beyond delivery of outputs, and there is room for continued growth in accountability through stronger feedback loops from affected people, better access to and use of data, the propagation of effective and inclusive standards, and building a collective sense of responsibility for the overall response and its results.</p>

II. To realize these objectives, humanitarian assistance must be connected, coherent, complementary, accountable, and nimble.

Element	Definition	Summary
<p>Complementary</p> 	<p>Humanitarian action recognizes and enhances national and local capacities accountability.</p>	<p>Complementarity will depend on context and capacities, but the end goal should be one in which the international system recognizes and supports, rather than replaces, national and local humanitarian action. International actors should enter with humility, supporting the roles and responsibilities of those actors, investing in capacity development and building strategic partnerships, while supporting governments to fulfil their obligations.</p>
<p>Connected</p> 	<p>Mutual awareness, communication, and leadership trigger the assets, capacities, and unique contributions of actors based on their comparative advantage.</p>	<p>The first step in enhancing connectivity is to identify the capacities and comparative advantages of different actors and to define means of engagement, modes of communication, standards. Mechanisms for connecting and coordinating should ideally be established before a crisis hits, building trust and working with local leaders and systems and reflecting the needs of the context, phase, and actors involved. Leadership can encourage connectivity by bringing together actors around shared goals and clear roles.</p>
<p>Coherent</p> 	<p>Humanitarian action is driven by the pursuit of context-specific outcomes in close partnership with t efforts to build resilience and reduce the drivers of need through development, peacebuilding, and other approaches.</p>	<p>Achieving coherence is not simply a matter of a handover between actors. It requires working toward a shared understanding of capacities, risks and needs and then undertaking joint planning and programming towards shared outcomes. The right tools and skills can shift the focus on short-term needs to a joint effort to achieve longer-term impact, particularly important in chronic vulnerability settings and complex emergencies.</p>
<p>Nimble</p> 	<p>Humanitarian action easily transitions from one phase to another as needs and circumstances change, phasing out operations as appropriate.</p>	<p>As needs and capacities shift, actors must adjust accordingly. While a challenge, especially ceding control back to governments, policies and processes are emerging to support a more nimble approach through modularity, better data collection and analysis, better planning, and readiness to change with each phase.</p>

III. To enable effective humanitarian action, the environment must have strong foundations of
governance, resources, information, and respect for humanitarian principles.

Element	Definition	Summary
<p>Respect for humanitarian principles</p> 	<p>People in need have safe, rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance throughout the crisis on the sole basis of their needs.</p>	<p>Principled humanitarian action remains a critical enabler for building acceptance, gaining and sustaining access in protracted conflict, and ensuring that assistance is provided on the basis of need. As the nature of conflict and delivery changes, including a growing role for actors outside of the multilateral system, the value and role of principled action must continue to be emphasized.</p>
<p>Leadership</p> 	<p>TBD</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>Resources</p> 	<p>Funding for humanitarian action is efficiently provided to allow for coverage on the basis of need, support results for crisis-affected people and enabling the elements of relevance, timeliness, and accountability to affected people.</p>	<p>To enable effectiveness, humanitarian resources must be timely and flexible enough to support relevant programming in rapidly changing environments. Effective funding must also align coherently with longer-term goals, including development, as well as be available to national and local actors. To assess the impact of investments outside the international humanitarian system, including from affected governments, there must be greater visibility and alignment of existing resources, as well as more funding for national actors, reimbursement for governments, and private sector sub-contracting.</p>
<p>Information and evidence</p> 	<p>The best available data and analysis of capacities needs, risks, and drivers of need are made available to responders and to affected people themselves. Evidence of which tools and approaches are most effective is systematically captured and openly shared.</p>	<p>In a more diverse and connected landscape of actors, diverse data and information must be governed by standards and privacy guidelines to promote trust and enable responsible sharing. Data should enable risk-based planning and investment and be fed up to leaders and out to affected people as a basis for relevant decision-making at all levels. Incentives should be created and resources invested in strengthening the evidence base for humanitarian tools and approaches.</p>
<p>Governance</p> 	<p>The crisis-affected government prepares for and manages responses to crises, engaging productively with local, national, international and regional actors.</p>	<p>During and after crises governments provide essential leadership in a response and activate necessary domestic and international resources and assets. Governments should invest in preparing for known risks, including through capacity mapping and plans to engage humanitarian and non-humanitarian resources, as well as through structural and regulatory steps to create an enabling environment for effective response. Governments must continue to observe obligations to fulfill international humanitarian law and to reduce and meet the needs of communities vulnerable to crises. Where these obligations are not fulfilled, advocacy by international actors is critical.</p>



I. Crisis-affected people have a right to humanitarian assistance and protection that is relevant, timely, and accountable to them.

Presented at the top, these elements are essential to the desired results of humanitarian assistance and protection. All planning, inputs and implementation undertaken by humanitarian and other actors to meet humanitarian needs should be measured against the extent to which they contribute to achieving these results.

Relevant: Goods, services, and other assistance reach those in need in a manner consistent with their holistic set of needs, while reflecting local priorities, cultures and coping strategies.

As one CSO worker in Indonesia put it in OCHA’s 2014 Humanitarian Effectiveness survey, “aid is effective when provided right on target and appropriate to the needs.” However, as noted by Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator Nigel Fisher, “we are still giving people what we have, not what they need,” comparing the humanitarian system to a cargo cult. In contrast, the notion of relevance, and of effectiveness more broadly, focuses on how humanitarian assistance and protection can address needs holistically, measuring not only what was delivered, but how the overall package of assistance matches up against the totality of needs.

We heard consistently of the need for humanitarian action to be more flexible, informed by local consultation and

analysis, and aligned with coping strategies. In all settings, the inputs that were considered most relevant were those that considered people or households holistically in terms of their needs. Inputs like cash-based programming may allow people to determine their priorities, while community or area-based approaches can also address a range of context-specific needs, not just certain sectors or what aid agencies have to offer.

Where is relevance most emphasized?

The importance of relevance was noted across all contexts, though in sudden onset emergencies it was less emphasized than in complex crises, recovery or protracted settings. Similarly, the ALNAP State of the *Humanitarian System*

Report 2015 notes that targeting following sudden-onset natural disaster was better than in chronic vulnerability and conflict settings. In protracted settings in particular, the efforts viewed as most relevant were those that recognized the long-term and often cyclical nature of the crisis, going beyond traditional humanitarian outputs to include prevention, resilience, or development programming that encompassed education, health services, financial services, or livelihood support.

What we heard about relevance

- **A broader view of meeting needs**
In shifting from a supply-driven model to one motivated by what is most relevant to crisis-affected people, the need to listen to people’s real priorities, even those not on the

“humanitarian menu” was consistently emphasized. One international staff member in Yemen noted “despite talking constantly about consultation and needs assessment, we were not really hearing what people needed. We went in asking about water and food, which of course they needed, but they spent the most time talking about education and security, which we hadn’t considered.”

- **Cash-based programming**

It has been widely documented that cash programming brings flexibility and ownership to affected people, allowing them to direct resources to the most pressing needs and to meet their needs holistically. A local humanitarian actor working with Syrian refugees noted, “people don’t need just health or water or food. They need all three.

Cash breaks down the artificial silos across these sectors that the humanitarian community has created, and cash allows people to spend it on what they determine most important for their and their family’s survival.” The flexibility of cash-based programming is also demonstrated in its ability to meet the needs of specific groups within a broader population, such as women, migrants and other uniquely vulnerable groups in a given context. In the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, for example, cash based interventions targeted women working in the fishing and coconut farming sectors, who had been previously been working as unpaid labourers. Through a cash-for-work program, they gained new skills and an equitable wage, as well as specific cash grants for pregnant and lactating women. (source)

Some cash-based approaches were seen as more relevant than others. In the Philippines a Buddhist organization provided the equivalent of a month’s salary to more than 30,000 families within two weeks of Typhoon Haiyan. Communities cited it as the most effective response, noting the disbursements were quick and large enough not just to meet immediate needs, but also to invest in recovery. Many of the cash-for-work schemes of international actors, by contrast, provided a few days of minimum wage, enough to buy some food but not to rebuild homes or restart businesses. Cash is not always the most relevant form of aid, but when distributed based on an understanding of the local context and markets, it addresses the needs of the whole person without assuming sectors of priority.



28 Dec 2013, Guiuan, the Philippines: Guiuan on the south-east tip of Eastern Samar, was the first town to be hit by Typhoon Haiyan. (Credit: OCHA/Gemma Cortes)

- **Relevance is local: standards and coping strategies in context**

Like previous studies, this one found that **a nuanced understanding of context, informed primarily by local actors, is fundamental**. Field visits found that actors in the international humanitarian system sometimes overlooked the importance of cultural traditions, social structures, and needs outside of traditional humanitarian offerings. Another consistent message concerned **the lack of involvement of national actors in context analysis and planning**. One international NGO worker noted “our staff regularly establish networks of national actors to implement programs and support us on security issues, but we fail to capitalize on them as strategic partners in helping us to prepare for the future and recognize broader factors like political economy and geographical exclusion.” The ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2015 report found, particularly in chronic crises, “a need for more joint, system-wide monitoring, with genuinely independent, transparent and critical analysis that incorporates the perspectives of affected people.” This study reaffirmed recent documentation of the **failure to adapt models**

from rural, camp-based environments to urban settings with dispersed populations. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti highlighted the limitations of humanitarian response in urban settings, and field visits to the middle-income countries of Lebanon and Jordan found the humanitarian community forced to rethink what services are relevant to “the preservation of dignity” of Syrian refugees. One UN staff person noted, “We have humanitarian standards, like Sphere, but we’ve had to adapt them to recognize local standards and expectations . . . **we’re continually challenged to adapt our traditional standards to this context.**”

Understanding context was also seen as critical to reinforcing coping strategies, rather than undermining them with well-meaning assistance. In the DRC, some displaced people noted that assistance **clashed with local culture and coping strategies, and did not consider “traditional solidarity.”** Residents of Mugunga camp near Goma, for example, noted that because they were not consulted in the factors contributing to their vulnerability, the vulnerability-based distribution system that was adopted was undermining

existing coping strategies. Specifically, familial structures call for the youth to provide for the elderly, but when aid is distributed directly to the elderly, the youth abandon elderly family members in order to fend for themselves. In a different example, evaluations of the Ebola response in West Africa found international actors slow to recognize that cultural norms, such as burial rites, conflicted with public health protocols, requiring additional outreach to encourage compliance. The WHO noted the importance of “working within the existing context of cultural beliefs and practices and not against them. **As culture always wins, it needs to be embraced, not aggravated.**”

SUMMARY: The relevance of humanitarian action is increased by a deep understanding of local needs, coping strategies, and culture. Relevant assistance requires flexible tools that consider needs holistically, in context, and in light of the reality of protracted crises and urban refugee populations.



Timely: Crisis preparedness and humanitarian response are conducted in a manner that produces the fastest possible effort to relieve suffering and meet needs.

Timeliness is fundamental to reducing suffering and saving lives. Affected people mentioned timeliness as a priority in every field visit, and it was ranked in the top three elements of effectiveness by all categories of survey respondents in all contexts. In field visits, informal community groups and networks, followed by diasporas and locally based businesses, were said to have the timeliest response, in some cases surpassing local government and the international system. Very often women play a critical role in these first response networks at the community level, one that is commonly overlooked. The initial speed of response, however, often lacks the scale that governments, militaries, and international actors achieve.

Where is timeliness most emphasized?

The importance of timeliness was linked more to the *phase* of a crisis than to the nature of the event that triggered it. Respondents considered it most important early in a sudden-onset crisis, whether natural disaster or conflict. Its importance was noted less frequently in contexts of prolonged displacement and protracted crises, as priorities shift from life saving to recurrent or cyclical needs.

What we heard about timeliness

- **Proximity and Solidarity**

Affected communities and local institutions typically provide the fastest response due to proximity, relationships, trust, and awareness of needs. In natural disasters, most early search and rescue efforts are carried out by survivors. After Typhoon Haiyan, one community rescued 40

A log book in one of the communities most heavily affected by Typhoon Haiyan, in Leyte, Philippines, showed the first offers of help came from local churches and community groups, municipalities, the Philippine Red Cross, and credit cooperatives, later followed by multilateral actors.

people in the first two days, while also clearing roads and organizing security. After the Haitian earthquake, local civil society quickly mobilized, using food and medical supplies donated by businesses and individuals. Port-au-Prince residents described a neighborhood committee system springing up within 48 hours and mirroring the UN cluster system: women cooked for local responders, a trained nurse cared for the non-critically injured, and a logistics team located water and supplies, while an armed team provided security.

In the Eastern DRC, however, internally displaced people in some areas reported a lag in international hu-

One week after the April 25, 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Dalchowki village had only received aid from “a small, spontaneously-born network of local volunteers.” One organizer reported, “Everywhere we’ve been, people say, ‘You’re the first one we’ve seen. We haven’t seen the government; we haven’t seen organisations.’”

IRIN, 3 May 2015, The Local Volunteers Behind Nepal’s Response

“While you are researching, we already know the answer and are out there working.”

CSO Leader, OCHA Field Visit 2015

manitarian response of roughly three months from crisis event to intervention, enough time to return home or to be displaced yet again. Local civil society actors, such as faith-based networks and CSOs, were said to be best suited to assist this highly mobile population due to access, information and speed.

Initial responses by affected people are often followed by extended networks, including diaspora communities. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Rotary Club and faith-based networks mobilized assistance for private clinics from abroad, including an airlift of food and medical supplies on members’ private jets. Diasporas and migrants are also often the first to inject cash into affected communities: after the 2004 tsunami, 1.2 million Sri Lankan emigrants were the largest source of foreign exchange.

Local and national branches and businesses are also crucial. After Typhoon Haiyan, the private sector in the Philippines restored infrastructure and communications, restarted supply chains through credit schemes, and provided heavy machinery to remove debris, often faster than humanitarian agencies. A community leader stated, “The most effective partner is the private sector and they are sincere, there’s no political baggage. They were fast. The Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, they energized our people and

pumped something into our economy that wasn't there." Interviews emphasized that good private sector relations with government facilitated these critical operations. Despite this association of private sector actors with speed and efficiency, it is worth noting that in other contexts visited, particularly those characterized by conflict or where commercial interests were at odds with humanitarian concerns, the role of the private sector was less visible or viewed in a more negative light.

It is worth noting that those with the greatest proximity and solidarity are also those most affected by crises, and their ability to respond beyond the earliest days of a crisis or at the scale necessary to meet on-going needs, tended to be limited. Extended networks, supplemented by international actors, were seen as critical to the timely delivery of a scaled-up response in areas devastated by crisis.

- **Greater preparedness, faster response**

A timely government response is also made possible by recognizing an impending crisis, and preventing or mitigating it. The 2012 IASC Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya noted that Ethiopia's sophisticated food security and humanitarian system saved thousands of lives.

In the Philippines, the official response to Typhoon Haiyan was facilitated by preparedness and risk awareness due to frequent natural disasters. Local governments had ordered evacuations and the stockpiling of relief goods and

food. Within 24 hours of the typhoon's landfall, they were receiving reports from communities and within 72 hours they had sector reports for Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction authorities to consolidate and send to the Governor for response.

Preparedness is not always in the form of pre-positioning assets, but also being ready to receive relief goods. A DHL manager who was in Haiti's Port-au-Prince Airport days after the earthquake observed, "There was no-one to coordinate this unprecedented flow of people and supplies. As a result, assistance was slower than it needed to be in getting to those affected." DHL has a new program to train airport staff ahead of disasters, as one element of its contribution to preparedness.

- **Actionable Data**

The targeted collection and analysis of data is a preparedness measure that can enable a timely response, particularly evacuation and rapid targeting. In India the 13,000 member National Disaster Response Force is complemented by an INSAT-3D satellite and other technologies to predict natural disasters. In 2014, this system predicted Cyclone Hudhud's strength, track, location and time of landfall five days in advance. The government partnered with mobile phone providers, texting approximately two million warnings across seven states to vulnerable populations such as farmers and fisherman. Airports were shut down and approximately 150,000 people were evacuated to safety and cyclone shelters. While a comparable cyclone in 1999 killed 10,000 people, Cyclone Hudhud caused just 46 deaths.

SUMMARY: The actors most associated with timeliness are typically those closest to the crisis event, supported by extended networks. These actors, including local communities, diaspora networks and businesses, are particularly important early in the response to sudden onset crises. For all actors, preparedness efforts, including mapping response capacities and roles in advance of crises, can significantly improve timeliness, while technology can speed up targeting and communication about risks, responses and needs.



Accountable: People affected by crises are able to influence decisions about how their needs are met, and humanitarian action delivers on commitments predictably and transparently.

*“Put the local and affected people front and centre, make the UN and INGOs follow their lead, not the other way around. Ensure that all strategic plans are rooted in meaningful discussions with the affected communities and local representatives... **not as an afterthought, not to tick the box of ‘consultation,’ but as the starting point.**”*

OCHA Humanitarian Effectiveness
Survey respondent, December 2014

As the humanitarian system has grown in size and influence, there have been calls for greater accountability to affected people, on the part of both governments and international humanitarian actors. Evaluations note insufficient effort by international humanitarian actors to listen to affected people and be guided by their priorities, even as accountability is increasingly linked to ensuring effectiveness.

Many organizations have adopted voluntary standards and guidelines to promote accountability to affected people, as well as predictability and quality. Both one-off and system-wide initiatives promote two-way communication with affected people, inclusive planning and program design, and consequences for failing to uphold commitments or meet standards. However, there is still significant room for improvement in these areas. Furthermore, mechanisms do not create checks and balances for affected people to review and sanction agencies, and their lack of influence, as well as the tension sometimes created by competing lines of accountability to others such as donors, remains a key challenge.

Where is accountability most emphasized?

Accountability was a priority in all contexts, although strategies and challenges differed due to access constraints, time pressure, and pre-crisis conditions. In protracted crises, accountability discussions focused more on governments and senior international officials, and on political resolutions and legal accountability for violations of IHL. In all contexts and phases, affected people and donors raised the need for two-way communication, predictability, and transparency by international institutions.

What we heard about accountability

- **Active engagement and feedback loops**

Recent reports note that effective feedback mechanisms and continuous two-way communication improve trust and strengthen relationships between affected communities and humanitarian providers, forming the basis for accountability. But mechanisms are often passive, waiting for beneficiaries to raise issues and focusing on what was distributed to whom, instead of perceptions and results. Newer approaches, such as the model adopted by Ground Truth in Ebola-affected Sierra Leone, ask affected people about their satisfaction with the response over time, feeding results to senior officials to inform strategic decisions. Given that existing mechanisms vary widely in quality and consistency, some have called for shared tools or standard operating procedures to generate comparable, traceable feedback. As an OCHA

Progress in accountability to aid recipients has been more normative than practical . . .

While nearly every agency interviewed in the field attested to having some sort of communication or feedback mechanism, the aid recipient surveys and interviews revealed little consultation on project design before the fact and little practical action on complaints and feedback after the fact.

2015 State of the Humanitarian
System Report,
ALNAP, Forthcoming, 1 October 2015

representative noted during the 2015 Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Affairs Segment, “community feedback is fundamental and not up for discussion; the question is how to do we do it. *We as a community still haven’t come up with a standard operating procedure and that’s absolutely something we need.*”

- **Data for transparency and adaptation**

With improving data and analysis on needs and perceptions of aid, the barriers to accountability increasingly lie in making those findings public and using them to change behaviour. It is easier than ever to share information with communities, with fewer excuses not to do so. In addition, affected people are demonstrating agency through use of social media and access to data on how aid is used. As one donor noted, “We’re only one YouTube video away from being called out for bad practice.”

- **Predictability and standards**

With so many actors, including private sector, military, and a diverse set of national and international actors, there is a need to ensure minimum standards. Sphere and the process that has led to the Core Humanitarian Standard, and the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women represent significant strides in this area. Standards play an important role in clarifying expectations of what humanitarian assistance is and can achieve, and in holding humanitarian actors to a shared metric. There is wide agreement that standards are largely positive, setting shared expectations for what humanitarian assistance can offer and creating a space for dialogue and accountability of humanitarian actors to affected people. However, in some contexts, their relationship to effectiveness is complex, with some concerned that they can discourage actors from operating in more challenging environments due to reluctance to be seen as failing. Some pointed out that standards can also have unintended consequences that can work against effectiveness; when they are used to select which actors can operate in a given areas, they can exclude local and national actors, particularly when used as a basis for funding. A range of other actors stressed, however, that standards are meant to promote inclusion, forming the basis for developing capacity and expanding the pool of actors who can deliver on them. When adapted appropriately to context, standards can also initiate dialogue about the function of humanitarian assistance and what is to be expected, forming a basis for measuring performance and holding actors to account.

- **Accountability to donors**

Because most humanitarian action relies on public funds, accountability for use of those funds remains central. This is often referred to as “value for money,” but not in the pure sense of efficiency and reducing waste. Most donors interviewed focused instead on the need for greater rigor in determining which approaches deliver the best results. Many donors are pushing for a more tangible “return on investment”, promoting evidence-based research and economic modelling. This aspect of accountability calls for evaluating an approach’s contribution to results, not just whether a commitment was fulfilled. One donor in the DRC urged, “particularly in protracted settings like these, which we find ourselves in more and more, *we need to get smarter about what we are really trying to achieve in the long term, and clarify what evidence we plan to gather to show that we’ve done it.*”

- **Collective accountability**

Humanitarian actors tend to look at accountability to the population or sector in which they work, or to their donors. Many actors noted too much focus on the performance of individual actors or agencies in delivering outputs, rather than the impact on people’s lives. One NGO respondent engaged in the Syria regional response, for example, reflected the comments of many when he noted, “the accountability for the overall response is unclear.” With a growing number and diversity of actors, many are encouraging more integrated feedback mechanisms and joint accountability frameworks that highlight individual responsibilities to achieve results with links to a shared sense of accountability to affected people.

“Accountability is a broader process of understanding what people need, telling them what you can do, setting expectations, and then doing what you say you will. International actors tend to be good at asking, but not as good at setting expectations, and even worse at re-engaging when context changes.”

Mike Penrose, Action Against Hunger
Economic and Social Council, Humanitarian
Affairs Segment, 19 June 2015.

SUMMARY: Despite progress, humanitarian action still falls short in systematically engaging with affected people. Donors are broadening their definition of value beyond delivery of outputs, and there is room for continued growth in accountability through stronger feedback loops from affected people, better access to and use of data, the propagation of effective and inclusive standards, and building a collective sense of responsibility for the overall response and its results.



II. To facilitate the above elements, those contributing to humanitarian action must be connected, coherent, complementary, and nimble.

These middle elements describe the desired behaviour and approach of all actors working to deliver results for affected people. They require a number of shifts from the current approach to be fully realized.



Complementary: Humanitarian action recognizes and supports the capacities and accountability of national and local actors, and reinforces the resilience of affected people.

General Assembly Resolution 46/182 states that each State has “the primary role in initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.” Complementarity is particularly important to reinforce the primacy of national actors to meet needs within their borders, with international action as an exception in times of crisis. However, particularly in complex crises with weak or compromised national institutions, or where States are parties to a conflict, the international system has tended to enter with a “whole of government” mentality. It creates parallel systems to meet short-term needs but fails to integrate them with national efforts. A lack of complementarity can create role confusion, disincentives for governments to assume responsibilities, and a diversion of resources to international efforts rather than the long-

term self-sufficiency of local actors and national institutions. A complementary approach also recognizes and reinforces the range of local capacities, including self-reliance measures at the household and communal levels, which are fundamental to meeting the needs of crisis-affected people. This approach includes attention to the role of women and their extended networks as first responders, and requires reliable sources of data on their needs and capacities.

Where is complementarity most relevant?

Complementarity was emphasized in sudden onset emergencies, particularly where national institutions are well organized but surge support is needed. However, its importance was also noted in chronic vulnerability settings, where

the multilateral system fills gaps in basic services, but often without promoting national accountability and leadership. Where governments play a role in perpetuating conflict or need, the international role in protection, delivery, and advocacy for positive changes remains critical.

What we heard about complementarity

- **Complement, don’t substitute**
The researchers heard frequently that the international humanitarian system creates parallel structures that overwhelm and side-line national institutions and local actors, as short-term arrangements become entrenched. Complementarity requires a commitment by governments to invest in the necessary preparedness and response systems, and to create an environ-

ment that enables collaboration (*explored in more detail in the element on Governance*). It also requires an accurate and regularly updated assessment of existing capacity as a basis for determining what can be complemented, and where gaps need to be filled as capacities are developed.

In the DRC, government officials placed an emphasis on the need for investment in capacity building, stating that, “what we really want is to build capacity here so that we can be the ones responding the next time.” This spectrum of national capacities must be evaluated and understood in order to determine the nature of complementarity.

In March 2015, the Vanuatu Government noted that a lack of respect for national coordination structures caused delays in the response to Hurricane Pam. National Disaster Committee Deputy Chair Benjamin Shing stated of UN and international NGOs, “I do apologise but I have to state the facts. We have seen this time and time again. In nearly every country in the world where they go in [they have their own operational systems, they have their own networks and they refuse to conform to government directives](#). We had to spend the first three days trying to get some form of coordination in place. That was much precious time that could have been spent doing the assessments instead.”

Even where governments may be overwhelmed or under-capacitated, community groups and local networks are at work nearly everywhere. In the most difficult areas of the Ebola response in West Africa, including the slums of Monrovia, locals have taken up community-led monitoring where international actors would not venture. The CDC team leader in Liberia explained, “Communities are doing things on their own, with or without our support. Death is a strong motivator. When you see your friends and family die, you do something to make a difference.” However, international humanitarian actors may overlook or even undermine these coping strategies and networks. In Haiti, a community member noted, [“After the quake, people were saving lives, sharing plates, sharing what they had. Then ten days later, the same people were fighting over bags of rice at a distribution point.”](#)

There were also positive examples of international actors supporting and complementing national institutions, particularly around partnerships on preparedness measures and efforts to reduce vulnerability to crises. The joint coordination structure in Ethiopia, for example, was viewed as a successful model of complementarity in coordination with the Strategic Multi-Agency Coordination Group co-chaired by an Ethiopian official and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator.

Evaluations of cases in which national capacities were not adequately recognized, respected and supported.

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006)

“...There was too much emphasis on speed and profile, leading to unnecessary and wasteful use of expatriate staff, many of whom had little relevant experience and were at a particular disadvantage in addressing the highly complex social structures of communities in the region. Structurally, this reflects an underestimation of local capacities, which were generally coping with most of the immediate problems.”

“International aid was most effective when enabling, facilitating and supporting local actors.”

Haiti Real-Time Evaluation (2012)

“The humanitarian community has been limited in its communications by not having a sufficiently clear understanding of Government of Haiti recovery plans with respect to, for example, a resettlement strategy.”

“The response has been hindered by a lack of engagement in a genuine two-way communication and the effective support of Haitians, who feel sidelined and are increasingly critical of NGOs and the overall aid effort.”

Typhoon Haiyan Evaluation (2014)

“The inter-agency surge did deliver an effective response, but one that side lined many in-country staff, failed to adequately join up with national systems, and ended up creating parallel structures for planning and coordination . . . While inter-agency operational priorities drove the response, its structures and processes were not adjusted sufficiently nor early enough to take account of the international community’s complementary role in this middle income country with an established albeit stretched government disaster management system.”

- **Be humble and build trust**

Governments and civil society actors emphasized the need for greater humility by international actors, and for them to build trust before crises strike through more frequent interaction that enables a better understanding of the national and local strengths and capacities. A Filipino CSO leader urged, “Don’t go into an area as if you know everything. You know a lot, but you can complement what you know by consulting us on how aid is delivered in our villages. *We can provide guidance on outdated distribution lists, on cash for work programming, on how to target the most vulnerable, and on what needs are most urgent.* We want to learn more about you too, who are these agencies, where does aid come from and what is the intention of it? How are beneficiaries chosen and how long will the aid last? We want to solve problems together.”

*“Because of weak state capacity in Haiti, there is an assumption that there is no capacity at all. We are asked to deliver programs but there is a persistent perception that we can’t manage budgets. **The internationals should measure their effectiveness based on how well they build our capacity for all the steps in the process.**”*

CSO leader, Haiti

- **Develop existing capacity**

In any humanitarian crisis, life-saving efforts must be the priority. However, in many contexts visited, particularly protracted settings but also the transition out of sudden onset natural disasters, it was noted that capacity development could be introduced earlier and more deliberately. While many national actors acknowledged they could often not meet all human-

“Develop the capacity of all players – CSOs and Government. The focus should be on reducing vulnerability and not just during the emergency response. Aid should be used in a way to become better than what we did in the past.”

Leader of Regional CSO network, Philippines

itarian needs alone, some expressed concern that internationals were using humanitarian funds for their own operations with no capacity development investment from the outset, and that nothing was “left behind” when international engagement ended. One local CSO director in Haiti noted, “Because of weak state capacity in Haiti, there is an assumption that there is no capacity at all. We are asked to deliver programs but there is a persistent perception that we can’t manage budgets. *They should measure their effectiveness based on how well they build our capacity for all the steps in the process.*” One recent analysis noted that 80 per cent of earthquake aid to Haiti was channelled through NGOs and contractors, observing, “Funding channelled through international NGOs failed to help strengthen the capacity of Haitian public institutions that must provide health, education and other essential public services to poor Haitians over the long term.”

Similarly, in Myanmar a CSO representative explained, *“We should be the targets for technical capacity support. We will be living here forever with the community, even though the UN and other organizations will go home.”* While many international humanitarian actors are increasingly focusing on capacity development, there is recognition that it requires additional staff and new sets of skills beyond what is

immediately available among some international humanitarian actors.

- **Direct funding and strategic partnership**

Many local organizations reported that international actors viewed them as local “implementers” and “subcontractors” with access and knowledge that multilaterals needed. They were frustrated by their exclusion from strategic decision-making processes, where they could help ensure a sustainable response and recovery after internationals leave. Excluded from funding opportunities, they were reliant on sporadic and short-term contracts with multilateral organizations. Indeed, only 1.6% of humanitarian assistance between 2009 and 2013 was directed to national and local NGOs. As one CSO leader in Lebanon mentioned, *“we have a vibrant civil society and institutions that could be more effective at delivery – it’s about partnership, not contracting.”* Some called for a shift from a “neo-colonial way of working” to one based on an exchange of knowledge and information, as well as direct access to resources. A Congolese CSO director noted that, “Some things have improved with funding, but still 80 per cent of funds go to international actors. They know all of the funding mechanisms and appeals and they can get funds immediately after they arrive, even if they have no knowledge of the country. This proportion should at least be balanced, if not in favour of national actors.” He emphasized that

“Local organizations are the first victims of foreign engagement. Most of them are subcontractors to internationals, and in this role, you cannot be the master of your own plan.”

Civil society leader, DRC. OCHA field visit, 2014.

the current system spends time and money sending internationals to remote areas, when local actors already have a trusted presence.

- **Reinforce obligations**

International humanitarian actors rightly focus on their accountability to affected people, but governments still hold the primary responsibility for and accountability to their citizens. The importance of the international community's role in advocating to ensure protection and that needs are met was regularly emphasized by affected com-

munities and a range of other actors, including through preparedness and risk reduction but also protection and crisis response. (*This issue is explored in more detail in the section on governance.*) For example, when asked what would be most effective in meeting her needs, a refugee woman in Lebanon said, “apply pressure to find a solution to the refugee crisis. The UN can add most value in advocacy and supporting the locals who will go in and do something. Ensuring our safety and solution to our problems should be more of a focus.”

SUMMARY: Complementarity will depend on context and capacities, but the end goal should be one in which the international system recognizes and supports, rather than replaces, national and local humanitarian action. International actors should recognize and support the roles and responsibilities of those actors, investing in their own staffing and skills to support capacity development and building strategic partnerships, while supporting governments to fulfil their obligations.



Connected: Mutual awareness, communication, and leadership trigger the assets, capacities, and unique contributions of actors based on their comparative advantage.

“What we need is to take the added value of what everybody brings, rather than everybody thinking that they have to do everything.”

Valerie Amos, Former ERC

The survey found connectedness, or “participation of all actors in humanitarian efforts”, important to all respondents, with national CSOs ranking it third. A connected approach draws on the comparative advantage of diverse actors, brings additional resources, builds trust, and clarifies roles. Interviewees reinforced the understanding that humanitarian action is the result of the efforts of many systems and actors, and many different centers of coordination and leadership. This calls for stronger linkages among those systems in order to bring in each actor’s critical contribution.

In field visits, most interviewees also emphasized connectedness, although *motivations and expectations differed:*

- Governments and Regional Organizations emphasized the importance of national platforms for information exchange and systematic integration of lessons learned.
- Militaries prioritized standards and procedures for information sharing.
- Local organizations emphasized inclusivity in coordination.
- Private sector actors sought greater awareness of humanitarian needs, as well as guidance on technical standards.
- International humanitarian organizations stressed that greater connectivity contributes to efficiencies, better

In August 2015, OCHA launched its Think Brief *Interoperability: Humanitarian Action in a Shared Space*. The document looks at how to optimize humanitarian response by making actors and systems work together in a predictable way, harnessing their respective comparative advantage to meet needs in a collective manner. In some contexts, realizing this approach will require the multilateral humanitarian system *to shift from delivering to enabling* an effective response. The paper explores how to make connecting and enabling others a centrepiece of the field work of international actors.

coverage, and ease of promoting principles and standards.

Connectivity is challenging in part due to each organization’s need to demonstrate institutional results to donors, to respond to the appetite of the broader public for highly-visible interventions, to adhere to internal guidelines, and to overcome the lack of dedicated space for dialogue about how to build practical connections across institutions. The challenge of leadership was also consistently raised, specifically what kinds of leadership are needed, and what determines who should set the strategic direction in circumstances that lack clear or reliable authorities.

Where was connectedness most emphasized?

Connectedness was most emphasized for natural disasters, preparedness,

and chronic vulnerability. In conflict environments, questions arose as to who humanitarian actors can work with while maintaining integrity and neutrality. Others pointed to an increasing reliance on national CSOs in conflict environments like Syria and Ukraine due to limits on access.

What we heard about connectedness

• Inclusiveness and diversity

Field visits confirmed that national actors are not adequately included in coordination mechanisms. The cluster system requires national actors to fit logistically and linguistically into an international system, often in a supporting role. A Haitian first responder and hospital manager described coordination meetings after the 2010 earthquake: “Haitians had to park

Connected and principled?

“The challenge in such a crowded environment is to clearly distinguish and separate principled humanitarian action from pure relief assistance. Blurring of the lines between the two ultimately complicates or hinders impartial humanitarian access to people on both sides of a conflict for all actors. To this end, the principles of humanity and impartiality must be the minimum common denominator among all humanitarian actors, regardless of their particular mandate or approach.”

Yves Daccord, ICRC Director-General,
“Humanitarian action in a changing
landscape: fit for purpose?”

CONNECTING DIVERSE ACTORS, UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE ROLES

Connecting the different actors and systems requires understanding drivers, limitations, and unique contributions of all actors such that their added value can be clarified and leveraged to respond effectively to needs. While the particular roles and capacities will depend on context, this image is meant to illustrate the kinds of things that we heard for this study about the drivers and motivations, as well as the limitations and challenges, of different actors.

CRISIS-AFFECTED GOVERNMENTS¹

Drivers and motivations: As sovereign entities, governments are expected to prepare for and respond to disasters that affect their people. Some are particularly motivated to take action in the aftermath of a major disaster, or to reduce the impact and cost of recurrent crises. In addition to fulfilling their responsibilities to serve their citizens, politicians and officials may also be motivated by political favor demonstrated by disaster management, or by pressure to care for citizens, whether brought by civil society advocacy and legislation.

Limitations and challenges: Some governments lack capacity, whether due to loss of institutions and staff due to the crisis itself (such as in Haiti); the lack of pre-existing crisis management systems and infrastructure (such as in the Ebola outbreak in West Africa); or lack of investment and prioritization, especially in countries with significant development needs (as in the DRC). NDMA's can compete for influence and resources and face short planning horizons and frequent staff rotations. In fragile states with weak governance, crisis response may suffer from neglect. Weak governance can in fact be a root cause of a crisis. Where it serves political aims, governments may restrict access to aid or even target innocent civilians, or restrict information flows to communities and local leaders.

CIVIL SOCIETY²

Drivers and motivations: Local groups cite the humanitarian imperative, the desire to ensure lives are treated with dignity and respect, and that they, friends, and families are part of affected communities. Some are motivated by jobs, funding, and local power dynamics.

Limitations and challenges: Pressure from government, business, religious, social or other hierarchies may interfere with the ability of local actors to act with neutrality and on the basis of assessed needs. As with any actor, capacity will vary greatly depending on context and the enabling environment, and some CSOs may have high turnover in times of crisis (sometimes due to international 'poaching') and weak corporate structures. Even strong local groups may struggle to scale up in major crises. More limited access to financing what is available to multilateral actors.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE

Drivers and motivations: Affected people are determined to survive to ensure their needs are met, and to participate in prevention, preparedness and risk reduction for their future.

Limitations and challenges: Despite creativity and resilience, resources and abilities to cope are quickly stretched, particularly in protracted conflicts or major disasters. In conflict areas with distrust between IDPs and hosts, people may have distrust of one another, leading to a breakdown of social support networks and presenting challenges for needs-based aid delivery.



**SHARED
INTERESTS:
MEETING
THE NEEDS**

DIASPORAS

Drivers and motivations: Diasporas cite solidarity with family and friends the primary driver to act. They may also be driven by religious or cultural affinity or national pride. Some also wish to return at some point to their countries of origin, and therefore want to promote stability.

Limitations and challenges: Diaspora agendas may be influenced by historical grievances, or political, economic, familial, ethnic, or national ties. Diaspora involvement can exacerbate underlying tensions. For instance, although humanitarian emergencies such as Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, famine in Ethiopia and Somalia, and the tsunami in Sri Lanka were caused by natural disasters, underlying political, ethnic, or other dynamics contributed to the way diaspora populations related to the affected governments and to affected communities. Real or perceived ties that some members have to political parties or armed groups may be a barrier to neutrality and delivery on the basis of assessed need.

DONORS

Drivers and motivations: Government donors support international humanitarian response based on their own national policies and priorities and commitments to initiatives such as the Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. For some, support for international humanitarian response stems from historical, religious and cultural motivations or from economic and political priorities at global and regional levels. They are also motivated by popular domestic pressure, whether through diaspora communities in their countries or national popular interest in a humanitarian cause, often linked to media attention.

Limitations and challenges: Neutrality and impartiality can be compromised when they conflict with the policies and preferences of government donors. This can be seen with regard to priorities of states in UN and regional bodies, funding of certain humanitarian sectors and emergencies over others, the decision to use military assets as a contribution to humanitarian response, counter-terrorism requirements for humanitarian actors. Moreover, procedural and political constraints can prevent donors from partnering with a broad range of partners, particularly at the national level; providing funding to emergencies in a timely and flexible manner; and funding what affected people most need, in cases when those needs fall outside of what is understood as purely humanitarian.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Drivers and motivations: The core motivation is to relieve suffering and save lives, and to fulfill a particular mission or mandate. This motivation is reflected in adherence to humanitarian principles, standards and codes of conduct, in the individual mandates. Multi-lateral actors are also motivated by the desire to advocate on behalf of those in need and to bring an end conflicts and other crises with political solutions. Though they all operate within the IASC system, the unique and well-articulated roles of the UN (eg. the State-based system, mandates and global normative framework) and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (eg. The General Assembly, national societies, and foundations in the Geneva Conventions) make them distinct from international NGOs and from one another. International actors are seen as providing an important measure of neutrality and impartiality that tends to be less feasible for national actors, particularly in conflict environments.

Limitations and challenges: International institutions and actors are, by their nature, more removed from a deep understanding of national and local dynamics and capacities that drive and manage crises. In recent years, the UN and international NGOs in particular have been critiqued for creating parallel response structures that linger alongside national and local institutions, in some cases diverting attention and investment away from national systems. Based on their mandates, humanitarians have been less invested in building capacity than in short-term response and may lack the skills and capacities to formulate resilience and recovery programming that is increasingly requested in protracted and post-conflict environments.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Drivers and motivations: Motives include good citizenship and community relations. Businesses are also part of the affected community: in a 2014 survey of private sector actors in North and Southeast Asia conducted by OCHA and the WHS, 96% reported being affected by a disaster, noting staff casualties, disruptions in supply chain, loss of revenue, and impact on customers. These are strong motivations to help restore basic services and infrastructure.

At the same time, private sector actors are motivated by profit. As one private sector actor in the Philippines noted “at the end of the day, (we) need to make profit. CSR budgets will quickly run out and for us to continue involvement in the humanitarian work, it has to come back around to us somehow.”

Limitations and challenges: Companies may have mixed legacies and motives that undermine trust and compromise neutrality. As noted during the field visit to the eastern DRC, mining companies respond to needs of their staff, and in some cases, host communities, but are also accused of perpetuating the corruption, land disputes, and conflict dynamics at the heart of prolonged need. Businesses may fail to understand that in some cases, inefficiencies in delivery may be unavoidable in order to uphold humanitarian principles.

Finally, companies tend to be wary of engagement in conflict areas, unless directly linked with core business. For example, representatives suggested their involvement only extended to natural disasters, not conflicts. In Myanmar, many businesses assisted with the responses to cyclones Nargis and Giri, but not conflicts in Kachin or Rakhine.

FOREIGN MILITARIES

Drivers and motivations: Foreign military engagement in humanitarian response is influenced by a number of considerations, including the scale of media coverage, which adds to public pressure to provide military support. As a core government asset, military deployment is heavily influenced by national interests, diplomatic and historical ties and reciprocity. Logistics requirements and proximity of assets and related cost-benefit considerations will also heavily influence use of military assets.

Limitations and challenges: Militaries are deployed as government assets on the basis of geopolitical interests, and in their affiliation with their governments can undermine their reception by local authorities or an affected population. Political and diplomatic considerations, as well as wariness of putting military assets at risk for civilian responses, have also led to the deployment of assets that do not match needs and can even reduce efficiency. For example, while military assets were highly desired in the early stages of the West Africa Ebola response, the requests were primarily for medical doctors, not for the logistics crews who ended up arriving to construct field hospitals. Managing foreign military engagement requires a commitment to facilitate interaction with an asset that is bound by firm set of pre-determined rules and guidelines. After Typhoon Haiyan, for example, the Philippine military was entirely consumed with its role in protecting the 25 foreign militaries that engaged, leaving limited capacity for response.

- 1 The role of crisis-affected governments is explored in more detail in a dedicated section on page XX.
- 2 Including CSOs, faith-based groups, local first responders and other non-governmental actors and networks.

outside the base and walk to the gate. Entering Logbase [the UN compound] felt like going through a secure airport. We had to look for the right tent, then finally get to the meeting where people talked at you. Meetings at Logbase were not accessible for Haitian responders.” *Language and volume of meetings can be a barrier to national actors*, often requiring at least one dedicated staff member able to engage with international coordination systems. It was also noted that greater effort should be made to systematically include women in coordination bodies and leadership roles, which has been shown to contribute to improved humanitarian outcomes. A 2015 UN Women study found, as just one example of many, that in Nepal “women reported an increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and pride when working to build their communities, and when taking leadership positions in their villages. They demonstrated self-confidence and a new capacity to collectively organize.”

Many noted that mechanisms remain limited for engaging non-humanitarians, such as the private sector, military, or the peacebuilding community. Interviewees also noted the *value of a level playing field to share information*. At OCHA’s 2014 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum a civil-military liaison called for “adapters that allow us to better connect with each other – rather than constantly trying to influence each other’s way of working. *Power needs to go both ways.*”

• **Coordination for context**

Interviewees emphasized the importance of *working through existing national and local structures for coordination, rather than creating parallel ones*. Despite progress, the challenges addressed by the Humanitarian Reform Agenda and Transformative

One member of a Lebanese NGO asked, “Why should we come to your coordination meetings – why don’t you come to ours?”

The NGO runs a humanitarian database that connects up to 1,400 local organizations, but often struggles to get accurate data from international agencies.

OCHA field visit, 2014,

Agenda persist: duplication of effort, unreasonable staff time requirements, lack of strategic decision-making, and limited space to learn from mistakes. Actors in Lebanon and Jordan echoed sentiments that coordination had taken precedence over aid delivery, taking up time and resources and impeding an effective response.

Most international and national actors agreed that despite flaws, *coordination efforts should continue but their size and structure should be shaped by context, phases, and capacities*.

For example, the United States military’s centralized model was seen as effective in initial relief coordination and recovery of critical infrastructure in Haiti, but as hindering joint planning with the Haitian government and communities later. Of particular note was the value placed by respondents on *coordination models led by neither governments nor international actors*:

- ~ In Myanmar’s Kachin State, local CSOs formed a Joint Strategy Committee to broker relationships with multilateral actors, coordinate effort, and conduct joint advocacy.
- ~ In Haiti, to enhance coordination and the role of civil society, a national platform of humanitarian NGOs (PONT) emerged in 2011 with OCHA’s support. Members can directly access Emergency Relief Funds once reserved for interna-

tional organizations.

- ~ During the Ebola response in Liberia, ArcelorMittal led a group of international private sector actors to form and expand regionally to share information.

In some cases, there may be multiple centers of coordination for different groups, which can be more efficient if the connections among them are strong, and the collective goals are clearly articulated.

• **Trust and common ground: capacity mapping and tools for engagement**

Despite an increase in one-off partnerships, there remains a lack of *standing platforms to build dialogue, relationships, and trust*. Interviewees noted the need for proactive capacity mapping to identify gaps, opportunities, and common ground among diverse actors, particularly at the national level.

Individual institutional policies may create barriers to collaboration, such as policies that restrict private sector pro-bono support or seconding staff

“... normative standards could be the uniting force, which help the aid agencies and private sector, business and commercial organisations find a common ground in the humanitarian endeavour. But dialogue will need to be held with these new actors not just during a response but before (in contingency and preparedness planning) and after (in recovery periods) to ensure that these normative standards unite and do not become divisive.”

David Hockaday, START Network, Humanitarian Interoperability: is humanitarianism coming of age?, 2014

to international organizations. A 2015 study on humanitarian innovation identified [institutional barriers to collaboration](#) as a key factor slowing the inclusion of new ideas, tools, and technologies into the humanitarian systems. Greater interaction among diverse players will also require new standards and rules of engagement to clarify roles and procedures.

SUMMARY: The first step in enhancing connectivity is to identify the capacities and comparative advantages of different actors and to define means of engagement, modes of communication, standards. Mechanisms for connecting and coordinating should ideally be established before a crisis hits, working with local leaders and systems and reflecting the needs of the context, phase, and actors involved.



27 November 2014, Goma, North Kivu, DRC.
(Credit: OCHA/Naomi Frerotte)



Coherent: Humanitarian action is driven by the pursuit of context-specific outcomes in close partnership with efforts to strengthen resilience and reduce systemic drivers of need through development, peacebuilding and other approaches.

The study found that coherence depends on an understanding of context that moves beyond needs assessment, achieving a holistic knowledge of vulnerability, coping strategies, and underlying drivers of need. Where humanitarian action was at odds with efforts to address systemic drivers of need, it led to inefficiency and the perpetuation of need, leaving affected people in what one interviewee called “a humanitarian holding pattern,” with few options to return to normalcy.

Particularly in protracted crises and post-conflict environments, reviews and reforms in the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development sectors have highlighted the value of closer collaboration in analysis, risk identification, and joint planning among different actors. This kind of joint effort is expected to lead to more effective responses during crises and a more effective and responsive development effort after crises, due to a stronger understanding of pre-existing vulnerabilities and capacities and how those are exacerbated by crisis. Given the unique impacts of crises on women, men, girls and boys, this analysis is particularly valuable when based on data that is disaggregated for sex and age.

The challenge of adopting shared narratives and outcomes was also acknowledged, as actors have their own motivations and interests, but this was not seen as a reason not to work more closely together. Failures of coherence were noted primarily with respect to international actors, although many national institutions now mirror the separate structures for humanitarian and development efforts. Many available

“When you visit crisis-affected areas as a member of the UN, you hear people say ‘thank you for saving my life,’ but very quickly they are wondering, ‘what about saving my living?’ Many people live on the brink of crisis for years, and that’s what we need to tackle better.”

Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General,
OCHA Global Humanitarian Policy Forum 2014

tools from government, private sector financial institutions or local networks are not systematically linked with humanitarian assessment, planning, and implementation.

Where is coherence most emphasized?

Coherence was raised most prominently in contexts where complex and protracted crises have led to prolonged displacement and chronic vulnerability. It was relevant in contexts with pockets of instability or dramatic underdevelopment, or those where legal status and conditions varied, particularly between refugees or IDPs and host communities.

What we heard about coherence

- **Shared narrative, shared action**

The field visit to the DRC illustrated the problem of competing agendas and concurrent funding streams for stabilization, development, and humanitarian action leading to incoherent efforts to serve the same population. While some felt urgent humanitarian needs were falling off the radar due a perception of increased stability,

others felt development and resilience investments were too limited due to the fears of a recurrent crisis. These conflicting views were not brought together into a complete picture of need, but instead were left to compete.

A lack of coherence is also reflected in the disconnect between humanitarian and development efforts to reach particular populations such as women and girls. Understanding the pre-crisis and post-crisis circumstances and particular vulnerabilities of affected people, with disaggregation for sex and age, has largely been a task of development actors. Bringing this analysis together with humanitarian actors during various phases of humanitarian response is expected to strengthen the relevance of the humanitarian phrase of response, but also to ensure greater continuity with development programs and those that follow. For example, conflict and crises have a marked negative impact on gender equality, as reflected in performance on development indicators like maternal mortality, education, and health, yet out of the total resources, only 4% is invested during crises and recovery periods in gender equality programming.

Recent initiatives have set out to address this fragmentation at the planning and operational levels. The 2015-2016 Transitional Appeal (TAP) in Haiti was an effort to present a shared narrative in a place with varied needs. The TAP was launched in March 2015 following five months of planning by government ministries, the office of the Special Representative to the

Secretary General, 20 UN entities, NGOs and local civil society partners. The multi-year appeal, involving both humanitarian and development agencies and donors, addresses acute and urgent needs, as well as chronic deprivation.

Actors outside the UN system are also encouraging coherence at the program level, such as the *Do More Good* network in the DRC. One international NGO representative in the network explained, “There’s a terrible humanitarian situation, and we need to address it, but we can’t stay in that gear. In order to shift up, we need to address root causes with a division of labour.” That NGO has shifted its focus in the DRC to durable projects such as water systems and a program to reach the mobile displaced population

with cellular-based cash transfers and short-term employment.

- **Tools for the Task**

In Haiti, a mismatch was noted between short-term humanitarian tools and skills and the longer-term, structural nature of needs. Despite efforts like the TAP, many interviewees expressed frustration at the artificial boundaries between planning and programming for relief, recovery, and development efforts. A CSO leader describes Haiti as a place “where traditional humanitarian interventions meet their limits and where sustainable solutions are needed to meet residual humanitarian needs.”

Achieving coherence is further complicated where host communities are also in need of basic social services.

“As humanitarians workers, we would make really bad surgeons. We would probably take patients in the Emergency Room, put them under and proceed with the surgery without checking their vital signs or maybe even what the problem was in the first place.”

David Loquercio, CHS Alliance, ECOSOC
Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2015

A study by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre found that nearly 90 per cent of the countries monitored are home to people displaced for ten years or more. At the same time, services provided to those communities were typically designed and funded on a short-term basis, usually by NGOs and international actors in parallel to



Support Center for Reconstructing Damaged Houses (CARMEN), supported by the UNDP and the Haitian Government, was established to help families rebuild their homes, making them safer, stronger and more resilient to future disasters.
(Credit: MINUSTAH/Victoria Hazou)

government services for neighbouring communities. The study found extremely limited involvement of host governments, development actors, and the private sector in meeting those needs.

Where public institutions are strained by refugees in urban settings in middle-income countries like Lebanon and Jordan, [humanitarians described efforts to deliver what is effectively development assistance](#): improving water systems, expanding basic health services, and ensuring livelihoods. Coherence requires a [shift from a delivery mode to address longer-term livelihoods, development, and durable solutions](#). As local NGO employee in Lebanon put it, “Why are humanitarians still trucking water? They should be building a reservoir and putting money into building the system. Otherwise you won’t leave anything sustainable behind. The internationals were here in 2006 doing quick impact projects that left no roots for the locals. The collective thinking needs to be stronger among humanitarians and others.”

Humanitarian actors noted that [short-term tools persist due to several factors](#). Short-term planning and funding cycles do not invest in infrastructure, livelihoods, capacity building, or structural reform. Operationally, many

“We arrived and started planning in the short term, but quickly realized the larger problems. But our functions depend on budgets, and we plan our budgets based on immediate needs, even as the situation grows more complex and long-term.”

INGO representative, Myanmar field visit, 2015

humanitarian and development actors at the local level recognize the need for longer-term planning, but these are not translated into systemic changes from headquarters. Still others feel that they are already stretched in meeting their more traditional humanitarian roles, and taking on medium- and long-term efforts in a strategic manner would require additional staff with a different set of skills and experience and may end up competing with core deliver efforts. Many donor reporting systems measure results on a short-term, output-oriented basis, while efforts to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience take longer.

Despite these challenges, governments and international actors are beginning to [engage development and humanitarian actors in integrated planning](#). The Jordanian government has led development of a three-year national resilience plan, while in

Lebanon efforts are underway for a government-led response plan integrating emergency response and resilience. One [UN-led model that aims for greater coherence](#) is the Transitional Solutions Initiative in Colombia, a joint UNDP/UNHCR programme with funds from WFP and FAO. The program addresses some of the mismatch noted above by combining community awareness, training and income generating programmes to help the most vulnerable IDP communities meet their needs, while building the capacity of local authorities.

KEY MESSAGES: Achieving coherence is not simply a matter of identifying a point of “handover” between different actors, such as humanitarian and development. Rather, it requires working toward a shared understanding of capacities, risks and needs and then undertaking joint planning and programming towards shared outcomes. These approaches can shift the narrow focus on short-term needs to a joint effort to achieve medium- and longer-term impact, particularly important in chronic vulnerability settings and complex emergencies.



Nimble: Humanitarian action adjusts to changing dynamics and local priorities.

The study found that the [phases of a crisis shape needs and capacities](#), requiring humanitarian actors to scale up or down, shifting roles with agility. The increasing presence of refugees, IDPs and other affected people living outside camps is one trend that requires adaptation in rapidly changing contexts. As reported in June 2015 by an international NGO in Northern Iraq, “Only 16% of the IDPs we are trying to reach live in camps – the rest live with family members and others outside of an affected area. Unique kinds of remote communication and delivery are needed to reach those groups.” For international actors in particular, rigid planning and funding structures can limit the ability to adapt to changing needs, circumstances, and coping strategies.

This flexibility is largely reliant on a strong and [continuous analysis of context and needs, undertaken in partnership with local and national actors, particularly community groups and local leaders](#). Programs are often designed on the basis of initial assessments and analysis, but with inadequate monitoring of how needs, actors, and response capacities change. As noted in a recent ALNAP report, “the humanitarian community still tends to see assessments as ‘one off’ events, rather than as on-going processes, and effective assessment suffers from the same constraints as programme monitoring as a result – notably a lack of funding and institutional support.” This trend is even more pronounced in terms of determining the specific results for women, men, girls and boys within the overall population. A recent review of the link between gender equality programming and humanitarian outcomes found the use of gender-

focused baselines is limited, and even where tools such as the IASC Gender Marker have been introduced, they have been limited to gender equality programming at the design phase, not in terms of the results.

The ability to react to good analysis is also influenced by recruitment and administrative procedures, technical skills, and openness to changing roles, particularly for international actors. The difficulty in transitioning from a lead role to more of a supporting and technical advisory role, for example, prolongs the presence of international actors, undermines national institutions, and detracts from the relevance and coherence of response. NGOs generally have greater flexibility than UN actors. Many international NGOs are “multi-mandate,” while local NGOs often do not classify themselves as “humanitarian” or “development” organizations. They are typically able to adjust to circumstances, though many struggle to maintain consistent funding that allows them to set their own priorities or scale up or down.

Where is being nimble most emphasized?

This element was most prominent in transitions from sudden onset emergencies to other phases of crisis, such as prolonged displacement or the end of a humanitarian presence. In protracted crises, which can often be seen as more “fixed” because of political stalemates, affected people are constantly adapting to the changing economic, social, and political factors that influence their needs and capacities, and they expect those supporting them to be as nimble as they are.

What we heard about nimbleness

- **Modularity: from *prix-fixe* to *à la carte***

As needs and capacities shift during a crisis, humanitarian actors must have the flexibility and incentives to adjust accordingly. The research reinforced the need for the international humanitarian system in particular to be more “modular,” with scale and scope dictated not by the amount of funding available but by the demand for expertise and the ability to scale up, down or out. In such a model, a government might request predictable and well-defined modules of assistance in needs assessments or information sharing, but not the entire package. Where strong national capacity exists, this will mean more of a technical advisory role for multilateral actors, with the associated shift in skills and tools.

- **Changing with phases**

In the wake of natural disasters, the transition to a medium- or longer-term approach is often slow, with few triggers to signal when needs change from immediate relief. As one CSO staff person responding to Typhoon Haiyan put it, “Disaster response should last only a few weeks and transition quickly to development aid with a focus on getting people back on their feet through livelihood support.”

However, shifting from a large-scale response where needed to a recovery phase is complex and requires strong data and a high level of flexibility. Valerie Amos, then Emergency Relief Coordinator, explained, “[people don’t live their lives in a linear way, moving from ‘relief’ to ‘development’](#). In the

*“In circumstances where there are ongoing humanitarian situations, like in Colombia, **organizations do what they have always done and beneficiaries adapt to what they get.** They don’t make any sustainable transition . . . In such contexts, a lot of programmes respond to realities that existed 3, 5, 10 years ago, not to the realities of today or tomorrow.”*

Humanitarian Coordinator,
OCHA interview, 2014

morning they may be in a relief situation, and later in the day be thinking about livelihoods and recovery. Often by the time we have arrived, people have moved on from the initial crisis and they need something else from us. We have to track needs very closely.” In protracted crises, changes may be especially subtle, with the international humanitarian system getting stuck in a response mode. Describing the IDP situation in Myanmar, a UN representative stated, “There is no finality

about how long the humanitarian response will go on. We are still treating it as if it’s a fresh emergency.”

Challenges were also noted when ramping up emergency operations where longer-term development programming has been the norm. The same phenomenon was described in MSF’s report *Where is Everyone?* in Maban, South Sudan, where “particular agencies came under withering criticism from others for not being ready to respond to predictable crises and being too focused on their long-term programmes to spot coming storms.”

Being nimble is not just about adjusting to rapid change, but also “entering with an exit strategy,” working together with development actors to establishing benchmarks that signal the time for a change in approach. This kind of approach is being piloted in Ethiopia and the Sahel, where the humanitarian community will gradually exit by supporting the government’s social safety net programmes.

SUMMARY: As needs and capacities shift, actors must adjust accordingly. Policies and processes are emerging to support a more nimble approach through, modularity, more flexible tools for planning and analysis, and better monitoring linked to a readiness to change with each phase.



III. To enable effective humanitarian action, the environment must have strong foundations of governance, resources, information and evidence, and respect for humanitarian principles.

These elements outline the essential enablers that can help achieve better results for affected people. Efforts to improve these elements should be evaluated alongside the delivery of aid in order to determine to what extent they contributed to or hindered positive results.



Respect for Humanitarian Principles: People in need have safe, rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and protection throughout the crisis on the sole basis of their needs.

Respect for the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence remains essential to humanitarian action, not only for normative reasons, but also in support of effectiveness. Especially in protracted conflicts, experience demonstrates that to establish and sustain safe and timely access to humanitarian assistance and protection, organizations must be recognized by parties to conflict and communities as pursuing a purely humanitarian purpose, in a neutral and independent manner. A number of factors have however made it more difficult for humanitarian organizations to adhere strictly to these principles and be seen as doing so.

The distinction between parties to conflict and civilians, including humanitarian actors, is increasingly undermined

“These principles are of great importance to the ICRC, because they allow it to gain the widest possible acceptance by all stakeholders, and thereby to gain safe access to populations in need of protection and assistance. The relevance, the effectiveness, and ultimately the perception of humanitarian action are crucial to gaining this acceptance.”

McGoldrick, The future of humanitarian action: an ICRC perspective. 2011

by the changing nature of violence and political factors. A 2014 United Nations University study noted that civil wars and battle deaths have been on the rise, and that those conflicts are becoming

more intractable due to organized crime and the internationalization of civil conflict. In these contexts, civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, continue to be targeted.

Some counter-terrorism laws and policies have also, over the past decade, negatively impacted on the ability of humanitarian actors to act in a principled manner, or to be perceived as principled. Some counter-terrorism measures have conditioned funding for humanitarian operations on due diligence exercises that might jeopardize recipients’ real or perceived neutrality. Militarized assistance, including so called “humanitarian” military interventions and associated “stabilization” or “hearts and minds” campaigns have blurred the line between neutral, needs-based human-

itarian action and politically or strategically motivated assistance in places like Iraq, Libya, Somalia or Afghanistan.

The deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers is changing the nature of response, with greater reliance on delivery by local actors and remote management. Some humanitarian organizations have been tempted to compromise humanitarian principles to be able to operate and achieve immediate results. While inevitable in some circumstances, and despite some possible gains in the short term, such compromises have made access to humanitarian assistance and protection by people more uneven over time and throughout affected areas. Principled humanitarian action has often proven to be a tool for effectiveness, reinforcing the importance of humanitarian actors upholding their obligations, and for governments and non-state actors to create and sustain the conditions for principled action.

How can respect for humanitarian principles enable effectiveness?

- **Principles in context: enabling acceptance**

International humanitarian actors are increasingly challenged to uphold principles as they balance neutrality and impartiality against the obstacles outlined above. As a former Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria has written, “to work on humanitarian issues in Syria is to walk an ethical tightrope. The humanitarian principles which underpin the Western aid system are under extraordinary pressure. Independence, neutrality, impartiality and humanity are under continual strain due to murky – if necessary – compromises and accommodations.”

Still, humanitarian principles provide a fundamental tool for building accep-

tance between humanitarian actors and communities, as well as other actors. In some contexts, humanitarian actors must pay particular attention to demonstrating commitment to these principles on a daily basis to maintain acceptance, particularly in highly politicized environments. As one humanitarian worker in Yemen noted, due to communal, clan, and security considerations, any movement needed to be planned and cleared with more than two dozen actors to demonstrate neutrality, “not just to say the words.” In other environments, the perceived neutrality of humanitarian actors may be less fundamental to effectiveness, but the importance of needs-based, impartial delivery remains fundamental. While humanity and impartiality constitute the very essence of humanitarian action, neutrality and independence are essential tools to achieve these goals.

Neutrality and impartiality are a means of engaging with parties to conflicts and other actors, informing the response and gaining acceptance to protect and assist those in need. The study consistently found that principles should not create a barrier to communication or collaboration with non-humanitarian actors; on the contrary, dialogue with a range of actors is essential to maintaining acceptance, though some lines of communication may require dedicated forums that clarify differing roles and motivations. Civil-military dialogues and forums for humanitarians to interact with private sector actors provide a growing number of examples.

- **Supporting principled local action**

As space narrows for international humanitarian actors to operate in conflict, reliance increases on local actors and others with better access. Some studies show that half or more of inter-

national NGO projects are conducted remotely, largely in response to the increased targeting of aid workers. Those interviewed emphasized the importance of reinforcing humanitarian principles with local partners, particularly humanity and impartiality. In the DRC, for example, local actors have far greater access to some remote and conflict-affected communities through informal channels, playing a critical role in front-line humanitarian response. However, community members noted that local responders can leave out some communities or individuals due to limited capacities, divisions created by conflict, and pre-existing local dynamics and weaknesses in rights frameworks that can leave women and girls more vulnerable to violence and other gender-related protection concerns.

Coordination with the private sector, diaspora, and military actors continues to raise issues of neutrality, real or perceived, and challenge other principles. Some humanitarian actors viewed corporate social responsibility and charity with suspicion where companies were thought to be feeding corruption or perpetuating conflict. There was broad agreement on the need to clarify the framework for engagement with non-humanitarian actors.

SUMMARY: Principled humanitarian action remains a critical enabler for building acceptance, gaining and sustaining access in protracted conflict, and ensuring that assistance is provided on the basis of need. As the nature of conflict and delivery changes, including a growing role for actors outside of the international system, the value and role of principled action must continue to be emphasized.



Leadership: Strong leadership is supported with adequate capacity and authority to achieve timely and results that respond to the needs and priorities of crisis-affected people.

How does leadership enable effectiveness?

This study did not examine the effectiveness of any given leader or model of leadership within the institutions visited, but numerous interviewees made a strong link between the importance of different types of leadership and the effectiveness of a given response. It was acknowledged that government leadership is critical to effective response, and this is explored in some detail in the elements on complementarity and governance. This element looks at the leadership role required by other actors in the system, including international humanitarian actors, to enable an effective response.

The discussions reinforced the recent finding in ALNAP's *Between Chaos and Control* that while many humanitarian agencies focus on the challenge of finding good leaders, in fact good results emerge from leadership teams and from organizations committed to supporting leaders, not as the results of individual performance alone. The need for institutional and system-wide support for leadership, and for the teams and skills needed to provide leadership in today's contexts, was also noted in several contexts, with interviewees noting that individuals that find success do so because they are, as one NGO observer noted, "personally willing to take risks despite their institutions, not because of backing from them."

Considering leadership as an enabler, it was noted that there is no single leader in a humanitarian response, but rather, there are multiple nodes of leadership for the various systems involved in response, each managing its assets and

pursuing its desired outcomes. We observed these various types of leadership from the local to international levels, some more acknowledged than others, but all critical to achieving results. There was agreement that leadership should suit the context in which a crisis happens, and in pursuing coherence, a core aspect of any leader engaged in humanitarian assistance should be to ensure connections between all relevant actors to examine how there are working together to meet a complete set of needs. The links between leadership and accountability were also strongly made, with a call for those in international humanitarian leadership positions to have the institutional support to call for accountability on the part of both governments and non-governmental entities.

What we heard about leadership

- **Multiple nodes and styles of leadership**

With different styles and centers of coordination bringing in new capacities, the importance of leadership was consistently emphasized as central to connecting different actors and systems around shared goals. Numerous actors in different contexts called for stronger leadership within the UN cluster system, to bring greater alignment to the different agendas and promote collaboration. This cross-organizational leadership continues to be a challenge, as it pegs success to the performance of one individual, without necessarily supporting results with a full institution. In terms of enabling complementarity to national and local actors in particular, there was an emphasis on bringing forward the role

of local and national leaders and re-framing the international engagement in some cases as a supporting role or in partnership, or building necessary capacity to shift to a locally-led model deliberately over time.

It was also noted that depending on the phase and context of a crisis, different types of leadership are needed, ranging from a tightly controlled and centralized system in the earliest days of a crisis to looser function of connecting and facilitating collaboration to achieve significant outcomes over time. In highly diverse and capacitated environments, many held the view that leadership involves enabling relationships and connecting actors, and working with those actors to fill gaps in response.

- **Strategic leadership**

Some interviewees noted that humanitarian leaders are put in place without being given a clear picture of the results they are meant to achieve. One noted that unlike in peacekeeping missions, which are tied to a dedicated process of achieving a set of goals in a given country before engaging, "humanitarians do not have a collective process of defining a problem statement and setting a clear goal that all are bound to uphold in order to engage in the response. This is a critical, and sometimes missing, kind of authority that must be given to senior humanitarian leadership." This comment echoed a common theme of the need for strategic leadership that sets clear outcome targets, backed by incentives and requirements for humanitarian actors to work toward those shared targets.

One international NGO respondent working on the response to the Syria crisis noted that, “Leadership is what has been most needed here in the last three years. There are a lot of leaders here, with a lot of overlapping TORs. It’s led to many internal struggles over mandates and ownership. There’s plenty of work to be done, but we’re not doing it pragmatically or efficiently.” The call in these settings was not for more leaders, but rather for a leadership structure with clear roles and the necessary authority to compel relevant actors to align with a set of coherent outcomes. This could include the authority to compel some humanitarian actors *not* to engage where their work does not contribute to coherence or over-rides national systems, or otherwise undermines effectiveness. As noted in the connected element, local leadership is also critical to understanding needs, facilitating connectivity and producing improved outcomes, and outreach from multilat-

eral actors to local leaders was noted as particularly lagging in making these connections.

- **A Voice of Accountability**

It was noted across the contexts that one aspect of the leadership role is to highlight weaknesses, gaps, and failures, and to take risks on behalf of an institution or the overall system in order to ensure that these issues are addressed. This includes acknowledging that feedback from affected people shows that not enough is being done, and being an advocate for their views. Many felt that humanitarian leaders should play a greater role in linking systematically to feedback received from affected people as a guide for adapting response and measuring results, that leaders should “balance the competing forms of accountability” among donors and others to ensure that affected people are given primacy in setting priorities.

KEY MESSAGES: Stronger institutional support for successful leadership is necessary to build coalitions and clarify strategies, bring diverse actors together, and realize clear results for affected people. There are multiple types of leadership and centers of coordination at local, national, and international levels, as well as among actors outside of the humanitarian system, each with unique comparative advantages that can feed into the achievement of overall results. Bringing these together will require clarity on the roles of each actor, and shared procedures for collaboration, information sharing, and decision-making.



Resources: Funding for humanitarian action is efficiently deployed to allow for coverage on the basis of need, support results for crisis-affected people and enabling the elements of relevance, timeliness, and accountability to affected people.

Recent studies and intergovernmental processes have explored the effectiveness of humanitarian financing, examining tools and political challenges in great detail. This study looks at resources as an enabler of effectiveness, considering how the timing and type of resources, and the incentives created by donors and funders can contribute to achieving an effective response, as defined by the elements presented in this study. As these other in-depth dialogues and research have pointed out, effectiveness cannot be separated from financing and the broader role of donors in delivering results for affected people, but financing alone cannot deliver those results. The study joins others in calling for a change in the way that resources are considered and used, leading to: greater alignment between assessed needs and the allocation of resources; better visibility of what is invested globally; more financing of prevention and preparedness; and greater alignment among development and humanitarian donors to address vulnerability and achieve shared outcomes.

How can resources enable effectiveness?

- **Relevant and timely: Getting resources right**

Despite international funding for humanitarian assistance and protection reaching another record high in 2014, inadequate alignment persists between funding and assessed needs across and within crises. The 2015 *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* found a 78 per cent difference between the best and worst funded humanitarian appeals, the largest gap since 2008. Natural disasters receive more

funding initially than conflict situations due to the challenges of data collection and publicity, as well as political considerations. Among the issues the need to be carefully examined in order to understand how resources related to effectiveness are: the lack of a consistent way to define and assess need as the basis for humanitarian appeals, and the lack of reliable measures of whether the outcomes of a well-funded appeal were better than those that were underfunded.

Field visits revealed the extent to which some communities or areas received greater spending than others, despite similar levels of need. This discrepancy was due in part to the challenge of assessing the needs of crisis-affected people living alongside others who were chronically vulnerable, but also due to inconsistent investment. For example, there was an influx of donor money and engagement by international actors after the M-23 incursion in Eastern Congo in 2012. In 2014 there were over 140 NGOs in M-23's primary target area in North Kivu, but only 44 in Katanga, a vast province home to an area referred to by UNHCR as "the triangle of death", with tens of thousands displaced by extortion, torture, forced labour, and forced recruitment. This disparity was attributed, in large part, to the funds available for each region. The strong relationship between funding levels and media attention was also raised in a number of settings, with one INGO representative in Myanmar stating, "If you want funding, you will be tempted to exaggerate the needs. Donors could be the ones to correct this situation." Indeed,

quantitative surveys of press coverage of humanitarian crises have shown that, "in terms of column inches, acute disasters attract significantly more attention in proportion to their actual severity than long-term crises, with a strong correlation with the amount of money donated by the public."

Recent data also show that the speed of funding varies widely across crises as well. For example, the percentage of appeal fund requirements met in the first month of the 2013 Haiti appeal (49%) was more than double that at the same point following the Pakistan floods (24%) that same year. By the fifth month, response began to level out. While acknowledging the progress made by CERF and numerous donor rapid funding windows, those consulted for this study encouraged funding arrangements that would allow for more consistent, timely release of funds, including localizing funds in countries with known risks or recurrent crises and funding those closest to a response through decentralized government funding for municipalities and local authorities.

- **Funding together: meeting and reducing needs**

Two-thirds of international humanitarian assistance goes to long-term crises, many characterized by a mix of chronic vulnerability, conflict, and state fragility. Throughout the study's field visits, interviewees expressed the view that humanitarian or development labels, often influenced by donors, create tension between actors and obscure the interrelationship between types of need.

*“At the World Bank, we are not involved directly in humanitarian activities, such as managing refugee camps, but **our job is to improve the readiness and capacity of a country to face shocks.**”*

Bertrand Badré, World Bank,
Aid: It's Complicated. IRIN. July 2015

Many noted that in protracted crises, donor fatigue and shrinking budgets contributed to a reluctance to continue funding social services that are the government's responsibility. While this reluctance may be merited, funding was described as often decreasing from one budget cycle to the next in line with funding priorities, without considering how to transition chronically vulnerable groups to the care of non-humanitarian actors.

In advance of the Financing for Development Conference in July 2015, pressure increased for governments to invest in social safety nets to reduce vulnerability overall, with some proposing government spending targets.

Financing for coherence requires funding for preparedness and prevention, as discussed above, as well as for longer-term outcomes. According to the InFoRM Index for Risk Management, countries at the greatest risk of crises, such as Afghanistan, DRC, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia and Yemen, routinely feature as top recipients of humanitarian aid. However, apart from Afghanistan and DRC, none was included in the top 20 recipients of official development assistance. Efforts to counter these trends emphasize tools like multi-year planning and financing, and joint appeals for humanitarian and development

actors such as the HAP in Haiti. More than half of all OECD-DAC donors now provide multi-annual funding, though in most cases, it only makes up a small proportion of their humanitarian portfolios.

- **Increasing diversity and visibility**

Even with improved efficiency and other adaptations, funding needs are expected to rise beyond what traditional humanitarian financing can manage. A number of initiatives, such as the Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Financing, are considering ways to diversify funding streams beyond government donors. However, as noted in the Future Humanitarian Financing dialogue, bringing in “as yet unfamiliar sources of public and private humanitarian financing” will need to consider “differences in language, culture, ethics and objectives.”



Broadening engagement will likely require the formal humanitarian system to cede control to unfamiliar actors and, at the same time, find politically and culturally acceptable means of sharing and promoting hard-won lessons on principled, effective, and efficient humanitarian financing.

*Looking Beyond the Crisis,
Future Humanitarian Financing, 2015*

Interviewees consistently noted the need for greater awareness about funding available outside traditional channels, where it is allocated, and for what purposes. Information is not always accurate, and is often reported bilaterally rather than analysed comprehensively to find gaps. For example, reviews of the Ebola response in West Africa in early 2015 found that resources were not tracked in a centralized manner, leading to confusion about the allocation of resources received bilaterally through the Secretary General's fund, from CERF and as direct funding to NGOs.

- **Increasing direct funding for national and local actors**

Numerous local actors emphasized that little funding reaches them directly. Many acknowledged that the need to disburse large amounts of funding with limited technical staff and over-

sight capacity encourages large grants to international actors. However, particularly in protracted crises, local actors pointed out that this structure has been in place for years with little effort to build capacity or shift the balance over time. In addition, local actors feel that the bulk of funds are spent on their own operating costs, not directly on communities. In the DRC, for example, an affected person reported, "Nothing much is transferred to the community; projects end up in air conditioned offices." Actors across the board acknowledge that the transaction costs of subcontracting reduces investment in local actors and affected communities, while also noting local capacity to manage and report on funds is not always present. This issue is also explored in the element on coherence.

Among government actors, there was similar frustration that while international humanitarian appeal figures ballooned, some governments were unable to finance their own responses. In 2014 only 3 per cent of international humanitarian financing went directly to affected governments. Following Cyclone Pam, the Vanuatu Government spent significant funds on logistics and private sector operators to clear streets, restore electricity, and transport water, shelter and medicines, very little of which was funded

through the Flash Appeal. Donors tend to support their own national NGOs and international agencies first, in some cases regardless of their absorptive capacity or how much they also receive from public appeals. The first direct support was from Vanuatu's neighbours (Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji), amounting to \$2 million, a small sum in relation to the response but a significant contribution for those nations. There is also discussion underway on direct budget support from development actors such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, with clarity on when humanitarian assistance and protection give way to development aid.

SUMMARY: To enable effectiveness, humanitarian resources must be timely and flexible enough to support relevant programming in rapidly changing environments. Effective funding must also align coherently with longer-term goals, including development, as well as be available to national and local actors. To assess the impact of investments outside the international humanitarian system, including from affected governments, there must be greater visibility and alignment of existing resources.



Information and Evidence: The best available data and analysis of capacities needs, risks, and drivers of need are made available to responders and to affected people themselves. Evidence of which tools and approaches are most effective is systematically captured and openly shared.

How do information and evidence enable effectiveness?

In any context, humanitarian responses will be guided by basic data: who has been affected, where are they, and what do they need? This information drives the content of the response and clarifies who should respond and when, in addition to establishing a baseline against which impact can be measured and actors held accountable for results. There are particular weaknesses in data and evidence disaggregated by sex and age, which limits humanitarian actors' ability to ensure accurate targeting and relevance of inputs, and to measure results for women, men, girls and boys. Information also enables decision making by governments and local leaders and can form the basis of advocacy where responsible action falls short. As noted in the 2015 Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action, when good information is “fed up the food chain,” it can be used to highlight problems ranging from gaps in services to collective failures of political will and violations of IHL.

Interviewees also emphasized the need to capture, triangulate and share information, not only feeding it “up” to political decision-makers but also “out” to affected communities. Data and analysis over time can also highlight areas at greatest risk, driving preventive action that saves lives, while forming the evidence base to evaluate which approaches and tools are working, which are not, and where innovative thinking is needed. Finally, evidence is seen as a vital basis for providing flexible funding for innovative approaches. With an increase in experimentation and emphasis on

In order for UN and NGO humanitarian agencies and governments alike to hold themselves accountable to the commitments they have made to gender equality in humanitarian action in various policies and resolutions, it is essential that they work together to build the capacity of available statistical apparatuses to compile Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) and make it available at all administrative levels.

The effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes.
UN Women, 2015.

innovation, donors and investors need sufficient baseline information to assess the types of products and processes that will have the most impact.

What we heard about information and evidence

- **Enabling data sharing**

A growing range of actors is undertaking diverse roles in data collection and dissemination, each with its own perspective, tools (from surveys to mobile-based mapping), capacity, and standards. In order to manage this wealth of data and sources, humanitarian actors are increasingly promoting open formats like the Humanitarian Data Exchange, which was started in 2014 and now has 165 organizations sharing data that has been accessed from over 200 countries and territories. At a recent meeting on health information management during the Ebola crisis, participants from the

region called for open data sharing and analysis among national and international peers, while also raising concerns about the growing pressure on national actors for “data surrender” to international actors.

In many cases, data is not shared due to an absence of trust, established partnerships, standards to validate data, and clear guidelines. Actors may guard information for good reasons, but they often do so on an ad hoc or arbitrary basis. Numerous actors are working to expand existing data exchange efforts and adopt responsible data policies, while investing in improved data collection and analysis. Many of the policies emerging among humanitarian actors promote cybersecurity measures and ethical frameworks to reduce risks to affected people, pre-positioned humanitarian stock, or aid workers. Finally, it was emphasized that while standards and security were essential, relationship management requires human investment and shepherding, because “people share data with institutions that they trust.”

- **Proving what works**

The lack of rigorous research and evidence standards in the humanitarian system has contributed to the dominance of established ideas and modes of operating, without clear evidence that they work. A 2014 report by DFID found “we do not have sufficient evidence about the scale and nature of disaster risk, nor about which elements of humanitarian response are most effective,” contributing to “remarkably little innovation

A recent study of evidence-based learning and innovation in the humanitarian system found that “There have been some positive developments to systematise front-line operational learning, but, as with processes for operational learning, these tend to be focused on ‘doing things right’ and less so on questioning the viability or otherwise of existing standard operating procedures – that is, ‘Did we do the right things?’

Strengthening the Humanitarian Innovation Ecosystem, 2015. Brighton University

in humanitarian response and disaster risk management over the past twenty years, limiting efforts to increase coverage, quality and value for money in the sector.” Similar gaps in data exist across sectors of the humanitarian system, where better evidence is needed to stimulate, develop and disseminate new ideas, and to build credibility to support disruptive and transformative approaches.

While a range of actors talked about piloting new ideas, they highlighted obstacles to a clear evidence base: a lack of skills and capacities to manage research while delivering in crises, lack of funding for longer-term studies and strategic research and development, lack of channels to share data and information on good practice, and lack of an open knowledge management facility to provide a “historical record” on what works among highly-mobile practitioners. It was noted that communities of practice were filling this gap in some areas, but that structural factors were lacking to bring good ideas to scale.

The need to balance evidence and knowledge with risk-taking can be difficult to manage, particularly where resources are inadequate to meet all life-saving needs. Innovation funds, such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund, which requires robust methodology but incorporates a high appetite for risk, can be effective ways to balance this tension.

Information also enables affected people to react to risks and access resources, and to demand accountability. In numerous contexts affected communities noted that data used to advocate on their behalf should also be accessible so that they can meet their needs and demand a response. A first step is to better understand how affected people communicate and what their information needs are as part of context analysis.

SUMMARY: In a more diverse and connected landscape of actors, data and information must be governed by standards and privacy guidelines to promote trust and enable responsible sharing. Data should enable risk-based planning and investment and be fed up to leaders and out to affected people as a basis for relevant decision-making at all levels. Incentives should be created and resources invested in strengthening the evidence base for humanitarian tools and approaches.



Governance: The affected government prepares for and manages responses to crises, engaging productively with local, national, international and regional actors.

“I think any other country that was faced with a devastating earthquake, a cholera epidemic and a hurricane occurring within a ten-month period would struggle. We struggled. But we also strengthened. And we are far more capable now.”

Haitian Government official,
OCHA field visit 2014

As noted in the element on complementarity, governments hold the primary responsibility to respond to, manage and coordinate humanitarian crises. However, the international provision of humanitarian assistance and protection, in the language of the Sphere Standard, “reflects the reality that those with primary responsibility are not always able or willing to perform this role themselves.” Indeed, much of today’s humanitarian need is found in environments where institutions of government are weak and inequality is widespread, or where there is active engagement in conflict and violations of human rights and often involve limitations on the safety and mobility of humanitarian actors.

This section describes some key roles of government noted during the study as fundamental enablers of effectiveness and some examples of progress made by governments. The section also highlights areas that require deliberate investment and planning by governments and international partners to enable effective humanitarian assistance and protection, with an emphasis on leadership, vulnerability and risk reduction, and the fulfilment of legal obligations and commitments.

How can investing in good governance enable humanitarian effectiveness?

- **Preparing for and managing crisis**

Before, during and after a crisis, government has the core responsibility to establish the legal and regulatory frameworks, activate resources from within the country or externally, and prepare for the next crisis. Based on feedback received during the study, the leadership role of governments as enablers of effectiveness should not be simply measured by direct crisis management, but also by the environment created for other actors to contribute, and the degree to which affected people could hold their governments accountable.

Leadership is in part reflected by the investment and structural commitments the government has made before a disaster. An example of such leadership is the successful structural reforms and investments in Indonesia include the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2005 and the National Agency for Disaster Management in 2007, which created a legal framework for disaster management and risk reduction within development plans. These efforts led to minimal damage and loss of life in the wake of severe natural disasters, including the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that hit Aceh in January 2012. A SIPRI study comparing crises in Mozambique in 2000 to those in 2007 found that “the need to rely on foreign assistance, in particular foreign military assets, was greatly reduced due to the enhanced institutional capacity of the National Institute for Disaster Management (IGNC) in terms

of disaster preparedness and effective contingency plans at the national provincial and district levels.”

Almost any country may be faced with a crisis whose magnitude overwhelms even the best preparations. In these cases, governments can facilitate the legal and logistical elements of an international emergency response through actions such as expediting visas, adopting standard operating procedures for job sharing, undertaking scenario planning, and engaging business, diaspora, and regional actors effectively. After Typhoon Haiyan, the Government of the Philippines set up a “one-stop shop” under the International Humanitarian Assistance Network, developing and managing protocols for the entry, processing, and accommodation of relief teams and supplies. Visa waivers allowed 700 aid workers to enter the Philippines in the first month.

National governments have increasingly flexed their muscles controlling the nature and the type of NGO activities by putting in place civil society laws, in part to bring some order to what appears to be a chaotic, uncoordinated and unregulated rise of NGOs. At the same time, unless further discussed, it can lead to unintended severe restriction of humanitarian work which undermines access to populations in need.

Humanitarian Challenges: Perspectives from the South and Islamic Countries.
Bakhit. Organization of Islamic Cooperation. 2014.

*A preliminary 2015 study by OCHA found that in chronic vulnerability settings where humanitarian spending increases over time, the corresponding investment by government tends to decrease, while indicators in the Humanitarian Development Index improve. **Humanitarian actors end up providing the bulk of basic social services, while government engagement in combatting vulnerability tends to decline.***

Understanding Humanitarian Need from a Financing Perspective, OCHA 2015

- **Providing social services and safety nets**

The primacy of government leadership in humanitarian action is the basis of multilateral engagement. However, in chronic vulnerability settings and protracted crises, these roles have often broken down. In the DRC, community members overwhelmingly discussed the root of the crisis as a governance issue. Many felt the government should protect citizens from violence and provide basic services, and expressed a palpable frustration with a government they viewed as “deaf” to their needs or a “non-existent” actor. The adoption of rights frameworks and the delivery of basic social services and safety nets were seen as fundamental actions governments must make to reduce vulnerability.

A recent global report found a strong correlation between a government’s protective legislation and services and the status of IDPs. However, as of 2014 only 40 per cent of countries monitored by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre had national laws or strategies on displacement. The report also found a strong correlation

between displacement, poverty and weak governance.

As noted above in the section on complementarity, new approaches to chronic vulnerability provide a way out of humanitarian gap-filling. For example, African Risk Capacity is an AU-initiated project that combines risk pooling and risk transfer tools to enable African countries hit by natural disasters to maintain food security for their populations.

- **Fulfilling obligations in conflict**

As regularly recalled by the Security Council, in situations of armed conflict, parties to conflict have “primary responsibility ... to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian personnel.” Parties to conflict also have primary responsibility under IHL to provide for the basic needs of civilians who are under their control. Humanitarian organizations are supposed to act upon invitation from the host State and as secondary actors only, in order to assist the parties in fulfilling their primary responsibilities. At a practical level, the acceptance and goodwill of parties to conflict is fundamental for any humanitarian actors to achieve results commensurate with the needs of conflict-affected civilians.

However, that some parties to conflict see no interest in complying with their international obligations, including those in Security Council resolutions, is a persistent phenomenon of great concern. Not only do they fail to take proactive measures to protect civilians and provide for their basic needs, but there have also been acts intentionally targeting civilians as a tactic of war and impeding access to humanitarian

“The most important thing that must be addressed is accountability for leaders who don’t care about the wellbeing of their people.”

Nancy Lindborg,
Former Assistant Administrator, USAID,
OCHA Global Humanitarian Policy Forum 2014

assistance. As described by the former Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, “countries are increasingly using their sovereignty as a way to prevent neutral humanitarian aid from getting to the places where it needs to go.” In these situations, parties to conflict, including host States, and humanitarian organizations, have fundamentally different goals. In some resolutions, including on Darfur, Syria or South Sudan, for example, the Council condemned impediments by parties to conflict to the work of humanitarian and protection actors, and called upon all parties to facilitate the work of these actors. However, these calls have failed to change the behaviour of parties to conflict.

Further efforts are needed to prompt compliance with IHL norms, through continued dialogue with parties to conflict and effective accountability mechanisms, which are emphasized as core protection challenges defined by the Secretary-General in his reports on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The Security Council has taken a number of steps, including: the adoption of targeted sanctions against individuals and entities engaging in, or providing support for, IHL violations; its decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court; and its decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry for the Central African Republic. Such practices need to be further enhanced and followed by concrete action, in particular by States.

Current conflicts amply demonstrate violations of international humanitarian law, challenges to access and safety of humanitarian workers, and the politicization of humanitarian assistance and protection. , and. Although humanitarian actors continue to push for new strategies to ensure that legal obligations are observed, in many cases political differences, or indifference, undermines fundamental obligations. Stronger actions to implement and reinforce international humanitarian law are increasingly being called for by humanitarian actors.

- **Preparing for known risks**

Governments are increasingly investing in preparing for crises and combatting vulnerability. The Government of the Philippines, for example, established its National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) in 1978, as well as regional and local DCCs, down to the village level. According to discussions during OCHA's field visit, these efforts paid off after Typhoon Haiyan (see the section on timeliness). In contrast, some believe the lack of incentives in building codes, regulations and planning contributed to the damage caused by the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

“I have come to recognise that addressing Nepal’s vulnerability to natural hazards is first a governance problem, and only second, about funding and expertise.”

Robert Piper on the response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake

The field visit found that government, donors, and aid agencies in Ethiopia have established mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Requirements Document, to support advanced planning and resource allocation. Improvements in early warning systems, assessments, monitoring and evaluations, and clearer structures and processes in the Ethiopian government have helped people to change crop planting times and amounts, conserve soil, and sell livestock to maintain their capital during the droughts.

The development of National Disaster Management Agencies or ministries and departments handling disaster response indicates the growing investment by governments in response capacity. Even in the poorest countries, progress toward greater self-reliance has been made. An

evaluation of Niger’s response to the 2010 floods in Niamey found that the government made a timely assessment of its own capacity, identifying where international assistance was needed.

SUMMARY: The contribution of affected governments to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is fundamental. Governments should invest in preparing for known risks, including through capacity mapping and plans to engage humanitarian and non-humanitarian resources, as well as through structural and regulatory steps to create an enabling environment for effective response. Governments must continue to observe obligations under international humanitarian law and seek to fulfil domestic obligations to reduce and meet the needs of communities vulnerable to crises. Where these obligations are not fulfilled, advocacy by international actors, including humanitarians and their development partners, is critical to advancing positive change.



Niger: A child benefiting from Save the Children feeding programme in Zinder. The organization reached hundreds of thousands of children in 2012 through malnutrition screening and treatment, and aid distribution.

(Credit: Save the Children/Alberto Rojas)



From Rakhine, March 2015

(Credit: XX)

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

How do we get there? Proposed Systemic Changes

As a complement to existing tools such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and the OECD-DAC criteria, performance on these elements is one means of reflecting progress in achieving outcomes for affected people, improving practice in delivery, and promoting an environment for effective assistance and protection.

Because the elements are interrelated, the analysis calls for five central changes in practice, behaviour, and mind-set to bring about better and more transformative results for affected people. Many of them are aimed at not only meeting needs, but also at reducing needs, serving as a bridge to the Sustainable Development Agenda as well as a contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit. Emerging from the findings, the proposed shifts have strong implications for the multilateral humanitarian system and donors as well as governments, national civil society organizations, and others contributing to humanitarian action such as private sector actors, militaries, and diaspora communities.

The changes demand for a more outcome-driven approach that increases connectivity among national and international actors and among humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors, reinforcing the responsibilities and capacities of each. However, a complementary approach to national and local actors cannot be adopted at the expense of the rights and protection for affected people, which are paramount. The way these shifts are carried out will be heavily reliant on the operational contexts, the role and capacities of all actors including national authorities, and the phase of the crisis. While the study does not put forward a context typology, it does suggest that each of the five policy shifts has some relevance for all contexts, but the specific tools and emphasis in the range of what is proposed will be determined by a localized and on-going analysis of context.

1. Reinforce, don't replace national and local systems

International humanitarian actors must respond to needs quickly, with relevant responses, and at the necessary scale. But their aim should always be to enable national actors and institutions, not to substitute for them. Humanitarian action should reinforce the self-reliance of affected people and invest directly in targeted capacity development for local and national actors, starting by developing the skills and providing the funding to enhance national capacities. International actors should also uphold and reinforce the rights of affected people, stressing the primary responsibilities of States and parties to conflict under relevant international law and other instruments. These efforts should include promoting accountability and supporting national institutions and local actors to protect civilians, manage risk, guide response and reduce vulnerability.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Understand and support national capacity:** Governments and multilateral actors should identify existing national capacity for response at the country level and acknowledge gaps that hinder it. Multilateral actors and donors should make direct investments in providing targeted and measurable financing and training to national partners to ensure a sustainable response capacity in the future, including the capacity to engage regional and international support when needed.
- 1.2 Promote national actors' compliance with their international obligations, including through reinforced accountability:** Humanitarian actors should systematically remind host Governments and parties to conflict of their obligations under relevant bodies of international law and other international instruments, including their primary responsibility to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and respect and protect humanitarian actors, in situations of armed conflict. The Security Council should make more systematic use of the tools at its disposal to prompt compliance with relevant international obligations and ensure accountability, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, the creation of ad hoc accountability mechanisms, or the imposition of targeted sanctions. States should consider the creation of concrete accountability mechanisms, such as regular meetings on compliance or a central register for monitoring and recording violations of international law.
- 1.3 Deliver added value:** Multilateral humanitarian actors should examine where they add value in relation to national actors and ensure the necessary skills and tools to provide support. In some more capacitated national settings, this may include a shift to technical advisory role and facilitator, with less emphasis on implementation.
- 1.4 Recognize strategic partners:** multilateral actors should encourage national and local civil society counterparts, including women's organizations, to lead on and deliver assistance engaging them as strategic partners in context analysis, needs assessment, program design and implementation. Donors should provide multi-year funding for national and local CSO consortia to enable long-term planning and capacity development.
- 1.5 Promote resilience:** Partner with local actors and development partners to better understand coping strategies and to respond more holistically to needs, using tools such as area-based, multi-sector targeting; strengthening livelihood support; and promoting cash-based programming where appropriate. A gendered analysis should always be applied to identify the unique coping strategies and capacities of women, girls, boys and men as a basis for gender quality programming.
- 1.6 Increase direct funding for capacitated national and local organizations:** Donors and multilateral institutions should review funding processes to enable greater direct funding for national and local actors and increase targeted outreach to NGOs and capacitated private sector actors at the national level. Explore local certification processes, pre-vetting, national pooled funds with joint national-international oversight, and other efforts to reduce pass-through grants from multilateral actors.
- 1.7 Make funding accessible for affected governments:** Explore more comprehensive and inclusive country appeals accompanied with financing mechanisms that help to meet requirements of affected governments, whether during crises or to as reimbursement for crisis-related expenditures.

2. Collaborate to ensure an outcome-driven approach

Acknowledging that humanitarian crises are neither short-lived nor isolated from medium- and long-term efforts, humanitarian actors must work more closely in setting context-specific targets for reducing need and improving the prospects of crisis-affected people, together with development and peacebuilding communities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a number of useful commitments to support this aim. Planning should employ multi-year compacts, bringing together capacitated actors at the national and regional levels with specific, dynamic benchmarks and outcome targets against which to measure progress.

Recommendations:

2.1 Enter with an exit strategy: Multilateral humanitarian actors and their partners must define clear scopes for their missions and define desired outcomes for their engagement, with timeframes and specific partners identified to enable a transition to national institutions and development actors when targets for reducing needs (and developing necessary capacities) have been met.

2.2 Consolidated analysis and dynamic planning: Following the immediate sudden onset period, humanitarian actors should transition to consolidated context analysis informed by feedback from affected women, men, girls and boys, and in partnership with those working on medium-to longer-term efforts to reduce vulnerability, build resilience and manage risk.

2.3 Clear outcomes for IDPs and refugees: For IDPs and refugees facing prolonged displacement, adopt clear targets for reducing the numbers of displaced and pursue

context-driven strategies such as integrated job creation, education, and health services, supporting by relevant legal frameworks.

2.4 Compacts to address drivers of need: Actors contributing to meeting and reducing needs (humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding) should adopt compacts at national or regional levels to adopt medium- and long-term results-based targets, identifying actors positioned not just to meet needs, but also to reduce them. In prolonged or protracted crises, humanitarian actors and donors should **adopt multi-year planning linked to context-appropriate, measurable results** and in line with a long-term vision for resilience building.

2.5 Investments and policies to reduce need and vulnerability: Governments, donors, and other key stakeholders like private sector actors should pursue joint compacts to reach vulnerability reduction targets for all, regardless of sector or status. This could include investment in social protection measures such as safety nets, basic social services, regulatory frameworks for insurance-based solutions and other measures to decrease vulnerability, thereby reducing the humanitarian case-load.

2.6 Collective impact evaluation: Undertake transparent, independent, multi-stakeholder evaluations of progress toward outcome and impact targets, measuring success based on whether needs were effectively met across the context, as well as individual agency performance or response to one particular group. Evaluations should examine not just the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and protection, but also the effects on the enabling environment for crisis prevention and response.

3. Intensify connectivity and strategic leadership

Coordination platforms, tools, and financing models should reflect the diversity of actors meeting humanitarian needs and the contexts in which crises happen, building stronger connections between national and international actors and between humanitarian and non-humanitarians where those added capacities will increase effectiveness. They should be designed ahead of crises, particularly in areas at high risk, aiming to recognize the range of capacities and build relationships over time in order to activate them when crises occur. Strategic leadership should be strongly supported, both among governments and international actors, reinforcing obligations and emphasizing discipline. Leadership should identify and promote crisis-wide outcomes and facilitate collaboration that cuts across traditional silos.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 Leadership for context: activate assets, align assistance.** Leadership must suit the context and phases in which it takes place, whether providing a vision, facilitating the engagement of diverse actors, or ensuring accountability. Different types of leadership should be recognized and engaged, particularly national and local leaders. Women’s leadership should be elevated at all levels: within the humanitarian workforce and through equal and equitable representation in decision-making and leadership positions at the community level.
- 3.2 Map before the crisis:** Conduct pre-/post-crisis response capacity and gap assessments to better understand existing national and local capacities and areas for regional and global support. Non-humanitarian actors, such as private sector, should organize and map their own assets and capacities in order to engage strategically in humanitarian response.
- 3.3 Connect based on comparative advantage:** Support, or where necessary create, national forums for humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors and international and national actors, to bring about greater connectivity across systems. Establish a “market place” with information about roles, comparative advantages, and ways to connect with one another.
- 3.4 Coordinate for context:** Aim for a lean coordination structures, building on best practices from the cluster system, engaging the most relevant sectors in context. Where most effective, coordination structures should be led or co-led by relevant national actors in as localized a manner as possible.
- 3.5 Promote established standards in context:** Promote quality and relevance by examining standards in context, including the Sphere, Core Humanitarian Standard, UN-SWAP and nationally-adopted humanitarian standards to ensure that they reflect the reality of needs and coping strategies and that they do not undermine coverage.
- 3.6 Inclusive financial tracking:** Reform financial tracking to allow for visibility of investments and funding beyond multilateral humanitarian actors, including domestic and bilateral funding, and other funding streams (e.g. private sector or diaspora). Increase opportunities for diverse types of funders to discuss humanitarian financing in order to identify gaps and areas of divergence, particularly on processes and principles.
- 3.7 Open, safe and reliable data:** Governments, multilateral actors, and private sector partners should continue to advance dialogues on the adoption of data standards for humanitarian purposes, with accompanying protections for the security and privacy of affected people and the adoption of shared and open data services with managed standards, such as the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).

4. Adopt a picture of needs that is complete, context-driven and informed by risk

In order to keep needs at the centre of response, all actors require consistent definition of humanitarian need and frequent analysis of its drivers, including disaggregation for the unique needs of people within the affected population. Open and safe data will be critical to advancing this, with the maximum level of sharing and access encouraged, balanced with the highest degree of protection for privacy and safety of affected people. In addition, responses to crises, whether driven by conflict or natural disasters, are consistently more effective when the groundwork to meet those needs is in place ahead of time, based on an analysis of known risks and capacities, and with investments in preparedness where risks are greatest.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 Strengthen needs and risk analysis:** Develop more accurate mechanisms to better understand the nature of needs within and across crises in order to inform outcome-driven planning to mitigate risk, meet needs and partner to address drivers of need.
- 4.2 Clarify needs of vulnerable groups:** Increase consistency of the analysis of needs at national and local levels that adopts a local definition of vulnerability and disaggregates for those populations, including women and girls and uniquely vulnerable populations (such as IDPs and migrants).
- 4.3 Put the money where the risk is:** Governments should put the money where the risk is, investing resources over time to prepare for areas of greatest known risk, including indicators of impending conflict, natural disasters, and other drivers of need.
- 4.4 Promote and uphold humanitarian principles as a tool to ensure an effective needs-driven response:** Humanitarian actors should reaffirm and observe, and Governments and parties to conflict should respect and enable, the clear distinction between humanitarian assistance on the one hand, and political or military action and goals on the other.
- 4.5 Map capacities to respond to risk:** On an on-going basis, governments at the national and municipal level should identify capacities to respond to known risks and flag areas where outside support (from regional and international actors in humanitarian and other sectors) is needed as the basis for establishing relationships ahead of crisis events.
- 4.6 Make crisis management investments public:** Civil society actors should demand that risk assessments and related investments by governments should be made public as a core measure of government commitment to prevent and respond to risks. Donors, development actors, and national actors should align to call for specific investment targets by governments in preparing for and preventing known crisis risks.
- 4.7 Remain nimble:** As crises and contexts are rapidly changing, the multilateral response should be more adaptable to changes in real time, particularly sharpening the transition between phases, including from sudden onset scaling up to medium- or longer-term strategies, as well as phasing out operations, based on strong monitoring and analysis of needs.
- 4.8 Turn data into action:** Governments and multilateral actors should strengthen and share data on risk as a driver for shared priorities and investment, particularly at the regional and national levels. (HDX, InfoRM). Member states and donors should leverage early warning data and analysis to call for action by governments.
- 4.9 Evidence-based innovation:** Encourage needs-driven innovation and partnerships outside of the humanitarian system to leverage new ideas, technologies, and approaches. Increase investment in research and development on what works. Develop a tailored knowledge management system for affected communities and humanitarian actors to exchange knowledge and build an evidence base on effective interventions.

5. Measure collective results

Collective accountability should be promoted by all actors leading and delivering on humanitarian action, including governments, international actors, donors, national actors and others. Shared benchmarks for success should be tied to real results for affected people. This will include common feedback mechanisms and aggregated data on needs and priorities of affected people, linked to decision-making processes on financing, strategy and operations. Building on tools like the IASC's Commitments on Accountability to Affected People, and the Core Humanitarian Standard, benchmarks should be linked to regularly collected and analysed feedback from affected people, with adjustments to both inputs and targets. This process will require each actor to deliver on commitments in a predictable manner, based on a clear contribution to broader outcomes, with flexible tools and structures to adapt to feedback

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Invest in accountability:** Multilateral institutions and governments should invest, both in terms of skills and management emphasis, into accountability to affected people as a driver of priorities and measure of success. Donors should **require and fund collective accountability measures** such as feedback mechanisms, wherever possible doing so in a joint or pooled manner to assess impact across sectors and organizations.
- 5.2 Systematically connect feedback to decision-making:** Common feedback mechanisms should be established so that affected people can seek recourse more easily. Feedback collected by organizations and clusters should be aggregated at the collective level and linked to decision-making processes by governments, humanitarian leaders and coordinating bodies.
- 5.3 Make data accessible to affected people:** Assess how affected people access information and what can be done to increase their access to the most relevant data and analysis to enable their protection and decision-making. Give particular attention to reaching women, men, girls and boys through the channels uniquely accessed by each group.
- 5.4 Track gender equality results:** Include the gender marker throughout all phases of humanitarian action, including monitoring and evaluation, to enhance accountability their effectiveness in accessing and addressing the needs of women, men, girls and boys appropriately.'
- 5.5 Promote and adapt standards:** Those contributing to humanitarian assistance and protection should adhere to established standards for meeting needs in a consistent manner, such as the Core Humanitarian Standard. Multilateral actors and governments should invest in promoting humanitarian standards among non-humanitarian actors engaged in response, including private sector, voluntary groups and military actors. Multilateral actors Humanitarian actors should **consider how to adapt indicators for established humanitarian standards to meet needs in urban settings, migration contexts or other non-traditional settings.**
- 5.5 Promote transparency:** Humanitarian actors should promote transparency in coordination, planning, funding and decision making to reinforce mutual trust. All actors involved in delivering assistance should publicize commitments among affected communities as a basis for enabling accountability.

ANNEX II: Highlights of “Unique Contributions” of various actors interviewed.

The Unique Contributions of the Private Sector

Rapid Response: Whether restoring infrastructure or supplying relief materials, businesses are able to quickly restore operations and deliveries. Activities include bringing telecommunications equipment to affected areas, keeping supply chains open through credit schemes, delivering boats or fishing equipment, or supplying machinery to clear debris.

Technical expertise: Larger companies like Unilever, Coca-Cola, Deloitte, and DHL are refocusing humanitarian contributions away from cash and toward in-kind and pro bono services tied to their core competencies. Larger R&D budgets in the private sector can bring benefits to humanitarian action in information and communications technology, logistics, financial services, construction, etc. As a result, compelling private sector collaborations have emerged in Lebanon and Jordan, including provision of health insurance, cash transfers and using supermarkets in refugee camps. That expertise may be delivered directly by companies, or it may be transferred to humanitarian and other relevant actors. For example, DHL leveraged its logistics functions at the Tacloban airport to help manage the flow of relief items

in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, but it also has a global program through which it trains UN and airport staff to prepare airports for disasters. As noted during the World Humanitarian Summit 2015 Regional Business Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean, “Participants overwhelmingly pointed out that the key area for collaboration between business, government, and humanitarian partners was the transfer of knowledge and capacities.” (OCHA conference report)

Capital: Businesses may have access to the up-front investment to restore their operations and reach affected staff and surrounding communities. For example, the US Chamber of Commerce “corporate aid tracker” indicates that the private sector contributed 58.9 million USD towards the typhoon response, which doesn’t count numerous soft contributions like extended payroll measures.

Data analysis: Useful analysis includes mapping of water and other natural sources (as with Coca-Cola), satellite imagery, climate-based risk analysis, and social media analytics. Souktel, a technology company based in Amman, has developed a scanning system to

verify cross-border aid deliveries using mobile phones. In Somalia they [also Souktel?] have developed hotlines for people to access information while on the move.

A long-term presence: At the time of Typhoon Haiyan, Coca-Cola had been operating in the Philippines for 102 years, Chevron for 90, and P&G for 77. They saw long-term business value in disaster response and sustainable development as a means of continuing operations and maintaining relationships with communities. In Myanmar, private sector actors explained that their effectiveness was due to their long presence, and relationships to communities and the government. One company representative said, “When you listen to people and build relationships over time, it makes it easier to respond to issues... We focus on the long-term process, and once a crisis happens we’re already in place and it’s easier to respond.”

Ear of the Government: Private sector actors have strong relationships with government and can convey advocacy messages and risk reduction measures.

Unique contributions of Militaries

Militaries engage in humanitarian action in both conflict and natural disasters. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, many Western governments have deployed their militaries in support of states affected by earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and extreme weather

conditions. In response to Typhoon Haiyan, for example, the militaries of 21 UN member states provided logistical support for services ranging from the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the establishment of field hospitals and rehabilitation of schools and infra-

structure.³The increased deployment of military assets is also motivated by political factors, including the need to demonstrate their value, their links with national and international security objectives, and the impact they have on the global image of the respective

military. In spite of the high profile nature of military action in humanitarian crises, the expenditure associated with this type of intervention is small in order to not to violate international norms about international humanitarian assistance provision by the military. For example, between 2004 and 2013, OECD-DAC donors channelled 1.2% of international humanitarian financing through military organisations.⁴

Unique contributions include:

Military actors play a crucial role in providing timely response in the early recovery phase of a humanitarian response. This is their biggest area of comparative advantage as the military is usually “on permanent standby, available in large numbers and ready to

deploy at a moment’s notice, and thus able to reach the scene of a disaster quickly”⁵.

Areas of expertise for military actors include:

Provision of assets such as air transport, logistics and coordination: military aircrafts, especially cargo planes are used in airlift operations which transport humanitarian relief supplies and personnel to places where needs are most pressing and where access to affected populations is limited.

Medical support: many countries send military support in the form of medical supplies, field hospitals, mobile clinics or hospital ships staffed

by military doctors, nurses and other medical professionals. In the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami countries like Canada, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, the UK and the USA contributed medical assistance to the response efforts.

Expert personnel: human resources contributions towards a response include personnel with expertise in needs assessment, liaison positions for civil-military operations and coordination.⁶ For example, WFP recruits individuals with military backgrounds due to their possession of logistics and transport coordination capacities and their strong understanding of military culture.⁷

The Unique Contributions of Diasporas

Some diaspora communities have loose affiliations, while others have a high level of political and financial coordination. Mobile telephones, Internet access, and social media have fostered transnational networks that mobilize human and financial resources, as well as advocacy. Faith-based institutions can also be of great importance to the mobilization of diaspora resources in response to a crisis and as contact points for international leaders and agencies.

Remittances: Diaspora involvement in humanitarian responses generally occurs through remittances or in-kind support to friends, relatives, or CSOs. After crises, these transfer flows are often restored before government or

international assistance arrives. In some cases, however, remittance flows are disrupted, leaving those dependent on financial support vulnerable. Globally and in specific country contexts, the role of diaspora communities is increasingly emphasized, though they often operate outside of any coordinated system. One aspect of their influence is financial: The World Bank estimated in 2013 that remittance flows to developing countries reach \$436 billion in 2014 and \$516 billion by 2016.^[1] It has been estimated that remittances through formal channels alone account for nearly one fifth of total international resources to the top recipient countries of humanitarian assistance. In some cases, these flows surge after disasters, as in Sri Lanka following the Indian

Ocean Tsunami in 2004, when remittances from over 1.2 million migrants provided the largest sources of foreign exchange in the country.

Volunteerism: Volunteers return to their country of origin in times of crisis to offer their expertise and skills. Haitian medical professionals took leaves of absence from American and Canadian hospitals and spent weeks in field hospitals. Diaspora members and organizations can function as intermediaries between traditional humanitarian actors and crisis-affected populations, as they are aware of humanitarian needs and the political situation. International NGOs recruit from diaspora communities, largely to access difficult environments such as

3 WHDT 2014

4 The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response, Page 32

5 The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response, Page 15

6 The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response, Page 16

7 The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response, Page 17

Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria, as well as for their connections. The Ushahidi Haiti Project engaged the affected population and diaspora to create online maps of damaged areas and aid, while Syrians in Germany are trying to deliver aid inside Syria despite considerable obstacles.

Advocacy: Diaspora groups advocate in their countries of residence, drawing media attention and pushing for diplomatic engagement or investment. Somali diaspora members have organized to ensure remittances continue in the wake of stricter banking regulations, while Haiti welcomes diaspora members in Parliament, and the diaspora

has supported recovery in that country with advocacy abroad.

Strategic Engagement: Often Diaspora groups engage on multiple relevant fronts that combine the above efforts. For example, prior to 2011 the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) was a professional organization of medical doctors of Syrian descent that primary provided continuing medical education and for members in the United States and peers in Syria. Since March 2011, however, SAMS has mobilized both individually and as part of the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations to provide emergency medical relief to Syrians affected by the crisis in their

home country, raising awareness, financial support, and donations of medical supplies and medicines, and organizing trips by medical personnel to volunteer in field hospitals and health clinics in and around Syria.

Note: The researchers did not interview diaspora communities specifically as part of the study. This information comes from literature review and key informant interviews. See <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/263.pdf>; DFID 2011; Meier 2013; Sahloul 2014; Sida 2014; Steets, Reichhold, and Sagmeister 2012; and Sahloul 2014.

The Unique Contribution of Donors

Financial contributions: The largest amount of humanitarian contributions are given by Government donors (OECD-DAC and non-OECD DAC) with US\$ 14.1 billion or 64% of total humanitarian contributions in 2013. Non-OECD DAC donors gave \$2.3 billion or 10% of total contributions⁸ and have continued to increase over the last decade with Turkey, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia amongst the top 20 government donors in 2013.

Supporting refugees and asylum seekers: OECD-DAC donors typically spend between 3% to 15% of their total ODA to support refugees and asylum seekers,⁹ In 2013, the highest amount since 2001, 612,700 people (largely from conflict zones from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Iraq and Pakistan), sought asylum in North America, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific.¹⁰ Non-OECD DAC donors such as India, also support refugees. With the help of UNHCR, India has offered asylum to and provides assistance to 200,000 refu-

gees from its neighbouring countries such as Nepal.¹¹

Early response and resource mobilisation: Donors offer a range of services: civil protection measures such as search and rescue teams, in-kind provisions from designated donor warehouse and specialised emergency response teams who can perform information sharing, mapping and co-ordination.¹² These services are usually provided in the first few weeks of a new or escalating crisis; some donors also fund their domestic civil protection personnel to build the capacity of response teams in partner countries.

Investing in risk management and resilience. Donors are increasingly funding in ways which allow operating agencies and other actors to implement a longer termed, risk-based approach to humanitarian assistance.¹³ Countries such as Australia, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are fully implementing in

multi-annual funding tools which others such as the Netherlands are piloting these tools.¹⁴

Provide military assets to support the humanitarian response. For some donors, the marginal cost of using military assets for humanitarian response – especially logistics assets and specialist personnel – is funded from the aid budget.

Investing in humanitarian research especially in reference to the new and evolving humanitarian challenges and solutions. Australia regularly invests in humanitarian research through its humanitarian futures programme which examines themes such as innovation and technology. The EU, Sweden, UK and the US are engaged in research on current and upcoming humanitarian challenges such as humanitarian response in urban contexts.¹⁵

Influence: Given their contributions, donors have significant influence over

the direction of humanitarian assistance including: upholding operational standards and program quality; championing coordination; promoting accountability to affected people, anticipatory and forward looking

approaches, leveraging development investments.

Advocate: On issues such as humanitarian access, compliance with International Humanitarian Law, on

peace negotiations. Donor participation in Humanitarian Country Teams and Humanitarian Coordination Forum in South Sudan enabled dialogue on the humanitarian situation and response efforts in the country.¹⁶

The Unique Contribution of International NGOs and UN Agencies

Needs assessments and information sharing: Actors rely on the multilateral humanitarian system to be a source of information of who and where the most vulnerable are and what will require. One private sector actor in the Philippines said, “UN reports were helpful in terms of identifying what the problems were. We based our projects on the UN reports.” Another said, “We love the UN map. I look at the map of the health cluster and see that it’s nowhere. We put our programs in those areas.”

Lobbying and advocacy: When governments are causes of and parties to conflicts, and particularly where they

may prevent access to those in need, the UN, donors and other international agencies can apply pressure on government to live up to commitments under international law. As one local NGO said in Lebanon, “Apply pressure to find a solution to the refugee crisis. The UN can add most value in advocacy or support the locals who will go in and do something. UN should lobby for human rights issues, lobbying advocacy and protection should be more in focus.”

Technical support and capacity building: Internationals are recognized for their expertise in managing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian

assistance. Local actors want to learn from this expertise and knowledge. After Typhoon Haiyan, the Philippine government looked to the international humanitarian community to provide a “stamp of approval” on their plans, as well as coordination and standard-setting.

Upholding principles and standards: The combined contribution of all the actors does not necessarily amount to a humanitarian response that is needs-based and adheres to minimum standards.”

The Unique Contributions of Civil Society

Local and national civil society actors, including community based organizations, national and local non-governmental organizations, associations, cooperatives, faith-based institutions and groups, national and local Red Cross/ Red Crescent societies and chapters, volunteer groups, activists and human rights monitors, can make the following unique contributions::

Timely, localized response: The flexibility and nimble structures of most local organizations and their knowledge of local terrain and dynamics enable them to immediately respond, including sourcing and distributing materials from local markets. Their knowledge of social norms and cultural values are an

important asset for external actors to leverage as they work to deliver assistance that is appropriate and relevant. A logbook in one of the most affected communities in Leyte, **Philippines**, listed the order of responders and offers of help. Regional and national sources such as churches and citizen’s groups, municipal aid, the Philippine Red Cross, and credit cooperatives were the first to arrive—in some cases within hours of the typhoon—later followed by international aid agencies. For example, the Fair Trade Alliance got 80,000 vegetable seed packets to coconut farmers whose trees had been destroyed in time for planting season. They explained, “We know it is planting season. Coconut farmers need short cycle vegetables. ...

We know the local legislation, history, laws and rights.”

Strengthening community capacity: Many local organizations are active in galvanizing the capacities of communities through trainings, community development, and enabling participation in decision-making. The Relief Society of Tigray in **Ethiopia** provides training, capacity building and support to communities on disaster risk reduction and preparedness, health, improved agricultural methods, and community development.

Access: Local groups are often the first to reach people in need and have access to areas where internationals cannot go for security or other rea-

sons. Local CSOs have largely led the humanitarian response in Kachin, **Myanmar**, mainly due to travel restrictions imposed by the government. National and local organizations are also providing assistance in Syria and surrounding countries. Local CSOs in the **Philippines** noted that they ended up working in areas overlooked by international players, those that were difficult to access. For example, some islands that required long boat rides in rough seas were not receiving international aid even though they had as much or more need than mainland communities. While the Syrian Government has instructed that all humanitarian assistance inside Syria is to be distributed through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), local organizations play a major role in assessments and assistance provision, including on unofficial cross-border operations and in ISIS-controlled areas.

Political influence and advocacy: National and local organizations and think tanks in many countries affected by disasters and crises also influence local, national, regional and international policies. Civil society organizations in many countries also support communities to engage in campaigns, rallies and other efforts to influence decision-makers. All **India** Disaster Management Institute facilitates discussions with policy makers, produces policy papers and works with communities and government bodies to improve disaster risk reduction efforts and the inclusion of the poor. Network leaders are often positioned to link with international players and represent the perspectives of dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of agencies at national or regional fora. In **Haiti**, to address coordination weaknesses and advocate for a stronger role for civil society, a national platform of

humanitarian NGOs (PONT) emerged in 2011 with support from OCHA. Members can directly access Emergency Relief Funds once reserved for international organizations. In **Myanmar's** Kachin State, seven local organizations established a unique mechanism called the Joint Strategy Committee to broker relationships with the international community. The JSC also put out a humanitarian response strategy to “facilitate a process of shared vision and effective coordination among National NGOs so that overlapping of activities is reduced and gaps minimized.”

Long-term presence: They are present at the time of the crisis, are positioned with fewer barriers to access affected people and are invested for the longer term, allowing them to better able to connect to longer term initiatives such as livelihoods, resilience and supporting existing coping strategies. Stating a common sentiment about international actors, a CSO representative in Myanmar said, “We were here before they arrived, and we will be here long-after.” This was noted in many cases in relation to the role of religious institutions, where the familiarity and continued presence of churches and mosques made them places of refuge and reliable, consistent response. In both North and South Kivu in the DRC, community members noted that they often took refuge in the church in times of crisis. While having only limited mechanisms to support affected communities, the church’s comparative advantage in many of the communities visited is its **existing network of members, the land it is built on, and its image as sanctuary for protection.**

References

1. Numbers derived from OCHA Global Humanitarian Needs Overview 2015 and all additional inter-agency response plans, such as Nepal, Sahel and Djibouti. This number does not include people affected by the Ebola crisis.
2. The international humanitarian system in the context of this study refers to the network of international humanitarian actors who are functionally connected through the framework for coordination established by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 and its subsequent resolutions, which includes the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members and the United Nations agencies committed to the guiding principles, humanitarian principles and international law. (As presented in the 2013 Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly on *Strengthening Coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance*).
3. See, for example, See, for example, Briscoe, *Non-conventional armed violence and non-state actors: challenges for mediation and humanitarian action*, 2013. Part of the Report Series on Non-Conventional Armed Violence, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center. (Add reference on increase in SGBV in conflict settings)
4. People remain in displacement for an estimated average of 17 years. UNCHR, Press Release, *A record 33.3 million now displaced by war worldwide, as one family flees inside Syria every 60 seconds*. May 14, 2014. Once a country has a humanitarian appeal, it will have one for at least the next three years, and more often for longer. Based on an analysis of Strategic Response Plans (SRP) and Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), 2004-2014
5. Existing tools used to measure effectiveness include, for example, the OECD-DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, the IASC Transformative Agenda, Sphere Standards, the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, and the Common Humanitarian Standards (CHS).
6. An estimated 22 million people were displaced by extreme natural hazards in 2013 alone. IDMC, 2014 Global Report.
7. All reference to economic status is based on World Bank's most recent country profiles at the time of publication (most based on 2014 data). Accessed at www.worldbank.org.
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9. See, for example, Urvashi Ajena, *South-South Humanitarianism*, Conference Report, November 2014, p. 8
10. OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch, internal policy document, *Understanding Humanitarian Need from a Financing Perspective: Drivers of Cost*. Draft preliminary findings, July 2015.
11. Michèle Griffin, *The Changing Global Landscape: Implications for the UN*, April 2015, p. 2
12. See the International Network on Explosive Weapons and Borrie and Brehm, *Enhancing civilian protection from use of explosive weapons in populated areas: building a policy and research agenda*. September 2011.
13. See, for example, Meier, *New Information technologies and their impact in the sector*. ICRC 2011; Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, *ICT and Protection: Can Information and Communication Technology Enhance Humanitarian Action?* April 2014. Accessed at <http://www.hpcrresearch.org/>.
14. Countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), many gulf nations such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar are rapidly increasing their bilateral humanitarian assistance. <http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?indepthid=91&reportid=94003>
15. In 2014 China, Brazil and India committed \$51 million, \$15 million and \$13 million, respectively. Financial Tracking System. \$55 million was committed by China, but \$4 million were listed on FTS as administered directly through an affected Government.
16. *Global Humanitarian Assistance report 2015*. Development Initiatives.
17. In addition to the Gulf nations, countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS), are rapidly increasing their bilateral humanitarian assistance. "In-depth: The rise of the 'new' donors," 19 October, 2011, at <http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?indepthid=91&reportid=94003>
18. Diversity in Donorship, HPG, p. 6
19. For example, the 2015 ALNAP *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action* found that Mega-Disasters, such as the West Africa Ebola crisis, are "a new type of disaster, and one for which the international system should prepare itself," defining these crises "of a regional dimension, affecting several countries, they tend to be of a rapid evolution and have significant impacts in the state structures in terms of disruption in the provision of services."
20. Michèle Griffin, *The Changing Global Landscape: Implications for the UN*, April 2015, p. 5
21. In addition to softer legislative and oversight measures, in 2012-2013 CIVICUS documented 413 threats to civil society groups in 87 countries. See, for example, the report by CIVICUS, *Global Trends in Civil Society Restrictions. Mounting Restrictions on Civil Society: The Gap between Rhetoric and Reality*. 2013.
22. *Global Humanitarian Assistance report*, 2015. Private donors include individuals, corporations, trusts and foundations.
23. The World Bank estimates that remittances to developing countries worldwide will amount to \$540 billion by 2016. Development Cooperation Report 2014, OECD, p. 123
24. See Donini et al. 2008; Anderson et al 2012; Taylor G et al. 2012; Lloyd R et al 2005; Turner R et al 2008; Grunewald F et al. 2010
25. While the size of the gap is troubling, the overall scale of funding is remarkable, adding further pressures to increase efficiency and to demonstrate greater impact: the 2014 gap is greater than what the UN received for all humanitarian operations in 2010. OCHA, FTS.
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28. See, for example the outcomes of the Groupe URD's 2014 Autumn School on Humanitarian Aid (www.urd.org/IMG/PDF/Key_messages.pdf) and Scott, *Imagining More Effective Humanitarian Aid: A Donor Perspective*. OECD, 2014.
29. See, for example, *DFID's Approach to Value for Money*. 2011 and *Value for Money and international development: deconstructing myths to promote a more*

- constructive discussion. Jackson, 2012.
- 30 Future Humanitarian Financing, "Looking Beyond the Crisis." 2015.
 - 31 See, for example, Bakhit, *Humanitarian Challenges: Perspectives from the South and Islamic Countries*.
 - 32 *Strengthening the Humanitarian Innovation Ecosystem*. CENTRIM, University of Brighton. 2015.
 - 33 See the work of the Humanitarian Accountability Project, including its 2014 paper for the World Humanitarian Summit, *Strengthening humanitarian response through the application of a common standard: The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*.
 - 34 See, for example, ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2015, which notes improvement in leadership and coordination, and some progress in accountability (though more at the policy level than in practice)
 - 35 See the 2013 *Humanitarian Accountability Report (HAP)*, which states "Accountability is no longer just a fashionable term, there is now a shared understanding of what it takes to be accountable. . . yet, as this report also shows, practice is not yet on par with policy." The 2015 *State of the Humanitarian System (ALNAP)* reinforced this finding, noting that advances in adoption of norms and standards for AAP have not yet been met with tangible advances in practice.
 - 36 See, for example, ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2009 and 2015.
 - 37 See, for example, the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University, *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*.
 - 38 Davey. *New Players Through Old Lenses: Why History Matters in Engaging Southern Actors*. HPG. 2012.
 - 39 *Now or Never: Making Humanitarian Aid More Effective*. Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and DARA. Report on humanitarian aid dialogues, 2013
 - 40 A number of current studies and research efforts are currently looking at the particular question of how context relates to effectiveness, such as World Vision's *Context Ready*, January 2015; ALNAP's *Responding to Changing Needs*, November 2014; Save the Children's *On Authority and Trust* study of effectiveness in South Asia; and the Humanitarian Effectiveness theme of the World Humanitarian Summit including its work with ALNAP on the *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action* in May 2015.
 - 41 The perspective builds on previous work such as the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report of 2014 (<http://www.globalhumanitarian-assistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/global-trends.gif>) and Overseas Development Institute, *New Players through Old Lenses*, 2011.
 - 42 OCHA Humanitarian Effectiveness Study, 2015.
 - 43 Forthcoming, *State of the Humanitarian System, 2015*, ALNAP. Confirm citation with final text.
 - 44 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, 2015. *Engaging with Communities in Conflict* panel.
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 - 56 Government of India, Ministry of Earth Sciences, *Very Severe Cyclonic Storm HUDHUD over the Bay of Bengal (07-14 October 2014): A Report* available at: www.rsmcnewdelhi.imd.gov.in/images/pdf/publications/preliminary-report/hud.pdf
 - 57 In 2011, the IASC Principals endorsed five commitments around Accountability to Affected People (AAP): Leadership and Governance in integrating AAP into strategies and reporting; Transparency on information with affected people; Feedback and Complaints mechanisms are established; Participation by affected people in decision making; Design, monitoring and evaluation tools which involve affected people.
 - 58 See, for example, *Time to Listen*, CDA Collaborative Learning.
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 - 69 See, for example, the official note of the Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Affairs Segment side event *Aid Effectiveness: Saving Lives Together*. 19 June, 2015.
 - 70 The OCHA visit to Jordan for this study was conducted before the Whole of Syria approach was introduced. However, collective accountability continues to be an issue of concern, as noted in the 15 July 2015 IASC Operational Peer Review, *Response to the Crisis in Syria*.
 - 71 *The unique contributions of affected governments, diasporas, civil society, private sector and military actors are illustrated on pages XX-XX*.
 - 72 Margareta Wahlström, SRSG for Disaster Risk Reduction, observed, "The real explosion in the numbers of people we are trying to help comes from conflicts. This is where the system gets the most attention and pressure. This is also where we need to sometimes build a smaller

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