ALNAP

10th BIANNUAL MEETING

RECORD

25th-26th October 2001

Hosted by USAID
Suite 200, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington DC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The 10th ALNAP Biannual Meeting was hosted by USAID/OFDA in Washington, as part of ALNAP's policy to alternate meetings between London – the home of the ALNAP Secretariat – and ALNAP's Full Member worldwide.

In response to Member requests for increased networking opportunities and discussion time, the standard Biannual Meeting format was revised, with Day 1 dedicated to ALNAP 'business' and information exchange, and Day 2 to two topics of sectorwide interest and concern – 'Coordination' and 'Monitoring'. In addition to US Member counterparts and southern invitees, invitations to participate in Day 2 were sent to selected non-ALNAP members with a view to broadening the debate and increasing awareness of ALNAP and its activities.

65 individuals participated over the two days, including 20 US and 3 southern invitees, bringing to the ALNAP table policy, field, learning and evaluation perspectives from the UN, Red Cross, NGOs, Bilateral donors, academia and the consultancy world (see Annex 2 for full list of participants).

Day 1

Session 1 provided updates on: ALNAP's current workplan activities; FY2001-02 contributions and expenditure; FY2002–03 workplan and budget; the recruitment schedule for the ALNAP Coordinator, following John Borton's resignation (to come into effect on April 1st 2002. Full Members also undertook a prioritisation exercise of proposed FY2003–04 workplan activities and debated the latest draft of *The Vision for ALNAP*.

The Vision for ALNAP set out to articulate a vision for ALNAP in its fifth year, that would confirm its relevance and inform and guide its future activities, outlining the challenges facing the humanitarian sector and ALNAP's facilitation role in helping the sector to meet those challenges. Full Member discussion focused on how to develop ALNAP's strengths; how to maintain its relevance across its 4 main target groups; the degree to which consensus should be sought; the need to emphasise its active-learning role; the dichotomy between increased inclusivity and network intimacy; and, the need for statements of outcomes against which to evaluate ALNAP's work.

An intrinsic part of ALNAP's strength would come from the shared vision of its Members, which to achieve would require time. A Full Member debate would be instigated on the ALNAP Listserv through to end November 2001 followed by consolidation of comments and a redraft including an initial implementation plan for circulation to, and comment by, members (including Observer Members) in early 2002. A final paper would be circulated to members before the 11th Biannual meeting seeking a formal adoption of the Vision at the April 2002 Biannual meeting.

Session 2 provided Full Members with an opportunity to share current or future quality, learning and accountability activities of interest to the wider ALNAP Membership and on which they may be seeking feedback or collaboration. The ALNAP Chair referred Members to the latest *Matrix of Full Members' Current and Future Evaluations of Humanitarian Action* and encouraged consideration of opportunities for collaboration.

Presentations were made by:

UNICEF on the continued development of managing monitoring and evaluation training materials;

ICRC on the 'Evaluation of Project Avenire: Strategic Change 1999-2001', the change management programme aiming to professionalise ICRC's work and bring it closer to beneficiaries;

HAP on forthcoming field trials in Sierra Leone, ongoing research and advocacy on accountability;

WFP on the Joint UN Afghanistan Evaluation of needs assessment and vulnerability analysis processes - due for completion end 2001;

EuronAid on MFA Germany's Quality Workshop which found that quality requires a holistic approach; that although agreed standards of good practice there were difficulties in application; and that meeting the cost of ensuring quality needed to be placed on the agenda and addressed.

MFA Netherlands on their 'Enhancing Quality Workshop' that indicated the importance of quality and accountability but that one did not guarantee the other.

Groupe URD on their iterative evaluations with mini-seminars process, involving a series of evaluative periods during the implementation process. The mini evaluations being complemented by learning activities such as group meetings and interagency discussion/debate at both field and headquarter level on the evaluation findings, supplemented by bilateral discussion with individual actors unwilling to engage in open debate. A process enabling a capitalisation on experience and the introduction of appropriate training. (see Annex 5)

OFDA on their Response Management Team procedure, providing HQ support to OFDA/US humanitarian field operations. Discussion focused on learning mechanisms, coordination with existing structures and lines of communication.

Cranfield reporting back on phase one of a DFID funded study 'Strategic Management: its Role in Humanitarian Aid', which had highlighted change management as the key to improving strategic management and the efficiency and effectiveness of responding to beneficiary needs. Follow-on discussions raised the importance of humanitarian principles in service delivery; the need to make research relevant to practitioners; and, the role of human resources.

ALNAP Coordinator outlined the EFQM Quality Model, and the fact that the humanitarian sector could well learn from this or other organisational quality models developed and applied by other sectors as a way to address the current lack of a holistic quality framework within the humanitarian sector. One of the proposed FY2003-04 activities proposed that ALNAP might examine the relevance existing quality models to the humanitarian sector.

Day 2

Session 1 'Humanitarian Coordination: Models, Incentives and Assessment'

The OCHA-commissioned *'Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience'* study[1] served as a background paper, with four panellists[2] invited to provide a UN, field, IASC and NGO perspective around the questions: i. What is/are the most appropriate coordination model/s? ii. What incentives are available at the organisational and individual level to improve coordination? and, iii. What tools can be used to assess whether coordination arrangements are performing well or not? Followed by open discussion highlighting:

- problems arising from the dual Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator approach given the importance of impartiality and the need for appropriately skilled staff;
- the need to create a coordination framework based on security not political considerations;
- the importance of information sharing and communication as key elements of good coordination;
- the need to clarify responsibility for coordination and to involve national/local authorities;
- the importance of humanitarian principles and the need to address coherence issues;
- the use of different coordination indicators by different agencies;
- the need to define coordination and effective mechanisms to coordinate; and,
- the importance of NGO involvement in coordination mechanisms.

[1] Reindorp, N. and P. Wiles (June 2001) *Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience. Executive Summary.* London: ODI.

[2] Panellists: Mark Bowden, Head of Policy, Development and Studies Branch, OCHA; Gerhard Schmalbruck, Secretary General EuronAid; Joel McClellan, Executive Secretary SCHR; and, Moira Reddick, SCF.

Although responsibility for developing performance indicators lay with OCHA, ALNAP offered to undertake a preliminary mapping of the coordination indicators used by ALNAP Members as a first step towards developing/refining indicators for assessing the effectiveness of coordination.

Session 2 'Strengthening Programme Monitoring Systems'.

The session included three presentations addressing the following points:

i. 'Monitoring and the ALNAP Quality Proforma' Tony Beck, Consultant;

- current thinking on monitoring in the evaluation field in general;
- coverage of monitoring in monitoring and evaluation (M&E);
- monitoring in 1999–2000 evaluation reports covered in the ALNAP Annual Review 2001;
- the 'ALNAP Quality Proforma' as a monitoring tool;

ii. 'Causal Pathway Framework' Siobhan Bracken, Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, IRC

- institutionalising M&E processes in IRC;
- measuring impact in a country without the most basic baseline data;

iii. 'The Strategic Monitoring Unit, Afghanistan' Chris Johnson, Director of the Strategic Monitoring Unit,

- reaching agreements on what to collect where, for what purpose and to what standard in a country with no governmental frameworks;
- setting up monitoring and evaluation systems in a climate of suspicion.

Plenary discussion highlighted:

- the importance of baseline data;
- the need to resolve ongoing tensions between learning and accountability – with lessons from evaluation being applied to monitoring;
- appropriate funding to support monitoring activities;
- clear objectives and the flexibility to change and adapt in a fluid situation;
- sharing monitoring data and putting in place systems to ensure the uptake of recommendation data; and,
- beneficiary participation in monitoring and of building local monitoring capacity.

ALNAP will be taking this work forward through its FY 2002-03 workplan; 'Strengthening Programme Monitoring Systems in the Humanitarian Sector' has been prioritised by Full Members as one of two new programme activities.

Closing session

Wayne MacDonald, the ALNAP Chair, welcomed the new Biannual Meeting format, which had allowed more in-depth discussions over the 2 days and extended his thanks to USAID for hosting and to the participants for their commitment.

The 11th Biannual Meeting would take place on 25th/26th April 2002 in London, hosted by DFID.

DAY 1 RECORD
25th October, 2001

Bill Garvelink, Deputy Assistant Administrator, BHR welcomed participants on behalf of USAID. ALNAP is a unique organisation bringing together all the actors involved in the humanitarian community. It provides a collegial and hence very productive environment whose discussions and outputs are very important to us. We welcome your presence in Washington at what is a difficult time and wish you a fruitful two days.

Agenda Item 1. ALNAP UPDATE

i. Introductions - Wayne MacDonald, ALNAP Chairman

The agenda for this 10th ALNAP Biannual meeting (see Annex 1) responds to Full Member requests for increased networking opportunities and discussion time. Day 1 is dedicated to ALNAP 'business': updates on the current Workplan; priorities for future Workplans; current and future budgets; Full Member pledges; and, ALNAP's vision for the future; and, to the sharing of Full Member's innovative learning, accountability and performance initiatives. Day 2 is dedicated to substantive discussion on two specific topics: 'Coordination' in the morning and 'Monitoring' in the afternoon.

ALNAP seeks not just to incorporate organisational diversity, but diversity of representation across the operations, policy and evaluation spectrum within those organisations. It aims to be relevant to practitioners, policy-makers, planners and evaluators alike.

ALNAP Coordinator Next year sees the fifth anniversary of ALNAP, one of several initiatives to emerge from the Joint Evaluation of responses to Rwanda. ALNAP as we know it today represents five years of John Borton's intellectual investment, commitment and dedication, for which we are very appreciative. We hope he will remain an important contributor to the network. The next 3 to 6 months will see a recruitment process for his successor who we aim to have in post for the 11th ALNAP Biannual in April 2002.

ALNAP/ODI Relations ODI has provided a good home from which to nurture and develop the ALNAP Network. Simon Maxwell, ODI Director, has expressed his ongoing support for ALNAP and continued interest in hosting the Secretariat. ODI has shown itself happy to respond to the changing needs of the Network. It is anticipate the Secretariat will remain within ODI for the next 2-3 years.

Current Steering Committee Members:

Red Cross Representative :	Wayne MacDonald, ICRC (ALNAP Chair)
Donor Representatives :	Norman Macdonnell, CIDA
	Ted Kliest, MFA Netherlands
UN Representatives :	Rachel Bedouin, FAO
	Andre Griekspoor, WHO
NGO Representatives :	Francois Grunewald, Groupe URD
	Matthew Carter, CAFOD /CARITAS
Consultants and Academics :	Ian Christoplos, Uppsala University

In April 2002, one of the NGO representatives (Groupe URD) will step down, following completion of their two-year terms of office. Although the Red Cross representative is also due to step down, the Steering Committee have asked him to remain Wayne MacDonald within his current post as Chair through to April 2003 to maintain a degree of continuity until the new Coordinator is in post. The Secretariat will set in motion the election process in the new year.

ii. FY2001-02 Workplan Activities

Given the comprehensive 'Briefing Notes' circulated prior to the Biannual, this slot provides an update on recent developments and an opportunity for Member representatives to seek clarification.

The ALNAP Workplan has been repackaged to help differentiate between the types of activity – 'Network Activities'; 'Programme Activities'; and 'Interest Group Activities'. Approximately 60% of the annual budget goes to 'Network Activities'; 30% to 'Programme Activities'; and 10% to support 'Interest Group Activities'.

Update on briefing notes:

Network Activities

- **ALNAP Annual Review 2002** 'Humanitarian Action: Improving Performance through Improved Learning' will be published in time for the April 2002 Biannual meeting.
- The 'ALNAP Quality Proforma', developed in consultation with Full Members in 2000-01 has undergone a further process of refinement following its application in the Annual Review 2001 meta-evaluation exercise and Full Member feedback. The latest version, circulated for Member comment in early October, has been approved by the Steering Committee for application in the Annual Review 2002.
- **Evaluative Reports Database** The collection has increased by 25% in the past year.

Programme Activities

- **ALNAP Training Modules:** AGEG and InterWorks will pilot Module 2 'How to Evaluate Humanitarian Action' in early 2002. ALNAP is still looking for piloting partners for Module 1 'Introduction to Evaluation of Humanitarian Action' and would welcome approaches from Members.
- **ALNAP's Short Training Course 'Managing the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Process':** the first piloting of the course took place in Dublin in May 2002 hosted by IrelandAid. Following further development and refinement, the course will be run a second time the week of 29th January 2002, in Rome, hosted by WFP and with John Telford as Course Director. The Secretariat is currently in discussion with RedR, who it is hoped will be involved in the Rome course as a precursor to taking it over and running it thereafter. This will ensure its continued availability to the humanitarian sector.
- **Guidance Gap Filling 'Process: How to Evaluate Against the Current Criteria'.** ETC UK was awarded the study supported by peer group of 10 experienced evaluators. A first draft of findings is due in November 2001 and the principal output, the 'Guidance Booklet', will be published internally in April 2002.
- **Improving Performance through Improved Learning.** The Battelle Memorial Institute were initially appointed but proved unable to meet contractual obligations. The commission has now gone to PARC (Performance Assessment Review Centre) who will begin work in November. This activity will form the central theme of the ALNAP Annual Review 2002.

  PARC will undertake a preliminary mapping of organisational learning mechanisms within the humanitarian sector; a literature review of organisational learning and knowledge management; and draw on the practices of other sectors. A questionnaire will be circulated followed by selective interviews and preliminary findings will be presented at a workshop in London on 7th December 2001 to which members and selected others will be invited.

Interest Group Activities

- **The Global Study on Consultation with and Participation by Beneficiaries and Affected Populations in Planning, Managing, Monitoring and Evaluating Humanitarian Action.** Three weeks after the appointment of INTRAC, Peter Oakley, the Project Director, died. Work will now be taken forward by INTRAC's Research new Research Director (tbc) and Tania Kaiser as the

core INTRAC team. Although Peter Oakley's death has led to some slippage in the schedule, it is still anticipated that the first of the five case studies will take place in early 2002.

INTRAC will continue to follow-up with Full Members to confirm their level of engagement in the study, whether financial; seconding a member of personnel to the 5 case study research teams; as in-country host to one of the research teams; or as an organisation, directly or indirectly active in one of the five case study emergency contexts, willing to be involved in the study. **The three complex emergency contexts are confirmed as Sri Lanka, Angola and eastern DRC**, the two sudden onset natural disasters will be selected as emergencies occur in mid to late 2002. It is likely that these will be in Central/Latin America and South Asia.

Full Members engagement in the study will be central to its developing a Practitioners Handbook on consultation and participation that is meaningful for operational personnel.

FY2001-02 Funding (see Annex 3) Pledges and cash flow are in better shape than at the 6-month stage last year. On current figures there is a potential shortfall of 4% of the overall budget.

Contributions in kind Groupe URD will be undertaking a translation into French of the 'Evaluating International Humanitarian Action: Perspectives from Practitioners' in 2002.

iii. FY2002-2003 Workplan and Budget

Activities included in the FY2002-03 plan are those prioritised by Full Members at the April 2001 Biannual Meeting. The Workplan seeks to maintain continuity in ALNAP's activities by building on work undertaken in the preceding years.

The training modules are now seen as an additional ALNAP dissemination tools to be used as and when appropriate to help deliver key messages emerging from ALNAP studies and improve current practice. It is likely that FY2002-03 will see the expansion of the current evaluation training modules to incorporate findings highlighted in the Guidance Booklet on 'How to Evaluate against the DAC and Complementary Criteria' to be published in April 2002. A new module will be developed in 2003 to incorporate findings from the forthcoming 'Protection: Performance Frameworks for Mandated and Non-mandated Organisations' and 'Monitoring: Strengthening Programme Systems' activities.

iv. The Vision for ALNAP (see Annex 4)

Five years on from ALNAP's inception, the Vision Paper sought to articulate ALNAP future role within the humanitarian sector and identify its key target groups. It outlines the challenges facing the sector and how ALNAP in the context of its active learning, accountability and quality mandate might facilitating the meeting of those challenges.

ALNAP needs to demonstrate its relevance to and impact on learning, accountability and quality in humanitarian action. Reciprocally, Full Member organisations needed to fulfil their roles as ambassadors and disseminators of key ALNAP messages to ensure that ALNAP meets its full potential. Increasing inclusivity is crucial since there are many key actors, most notably southern voices, not well represented within ALNAP, but this goal may conflict with Network intimacy - a dichotomy to be addressed.

Plenary Discussion: Key points

- ***Promoting a culture of quality and responsibility*** ALNAP has an important role to play in promoting and engendering a culture of quality and responsibility within the sector, and the capacity to verify quality.
- ***Building Consensus*** Although building consensus on common approaches was one of the original raison d'être for ALNAP, was it realistic to seek to build consensus on common approaches where in certain key areas - eg, quality - fundamental and philosophical differences existed. Consensus might be better built around 'What are the problems?' 'What are the issues to be addressed?' 'What is ALNAP's role?' rather than solutions. Different issues would lead to different levels of consensus and diversity.
- ***Active Learning*** Do the statement of purpose and Vision capture this key activity through which ALNAP connects to real contexts? ALNAP has been weak at engaging with field staff and much of the Active Learning objective channelled into the Interest Group Activities. If the set up and organisational difficulties encountered around Interest Group Activities can be resolved, they provide ALNAP with a very strong active learning workplan. The vision needs to reflect ALNAP as a platform to promote dialogue and foster active learning.
- ***Demonstrating impact*** The Vision needs to incorporate a statement of outcome – eg, 'by 2003 ALNAP will have….'
- ***Inclusivity*** ALNAP has a key role to play in helping southern NGOs influence the system at policy and strategic levels. In addition to increasing southern representation, ALNAP needs to consider beneficiary voices. The introduction of sub-groups may a way to maintain a degree of intimacy across the network.
- ***Structure of the Paper*** the paper covers both the mission/vision challenges and values and organisational/internal management challenges facing ALNAP. The two need to be split.
- ***ALNAP's Strengths*** ALNAP has been good at pushing and nurturing leading edge thinking and at invoking lateral thinking, drawing lessons from other sectors. ALNAP provides the space for initiatives that face inherent difficulties, particularly in the development stage.
- ***Role of Representatives*** the paper highlights the need for increased commitment from representatives at the same time as increased seniority in representation whereas there is an inherent tension between greater involvement and higher level of seniority. We need to be very clear about what the real benefits to ALNAP will be from increased seniority.

The Vision: Next steps

It is crucial to maximise agreement among members and ALNAP will gain strength from a shared vision of what we are and what our role is. Achieving this will require an investment in time..

A Full Member debate will be instigated on the ALNAP Listserv through to end November 2001 followed by consolidation of comments and a redraft including an initial implementation plan for circulation to, and comment by, members (including Observer Members) in early January. The implementation plan will seek to outline how we take some of these things forward and what it will mean. It may also be helpful to define the ALNAP vision in terms of 'what we are not', 'what we do not want to be' and 'what we should not do'.

The Steering Committee will aim to review the latest draft in early 2002 and circulate a final paper in February/March 2002. Formal adoption of the Vision paper should be sought at the April 2002 Biannual meeting (26th/27th April 2002 in London).

Agenda Item 2. Quality & Accountability: Information Exchange (Chaired by Wayne MacDonald)

This session provides ALNAP Full Members with an opportunity to highlight and discuss areas of their organisation's quality and accountability work that they wish to share or have feedback on.

The Chairman drew participants' attention to the ***'Matrix of Full Members' Current and Future Evaluations of Humanitarian Action'*** compiled from information submitted by members in the lead up to the Biannual. The matrix would be posted on the ALNAP website in early November 2001 and updated in the lead up to the April 2002 Biannual. ***Members were encouraged to consider collaboration in respect of their evaluation activities and asked to highlight those for which they were open to, or actively seeking, collaboration.***

i. UNICEF: Training (Kate Alley, Senior Evaluation Officer)

UNICEF is continuing to develop its managing monitoring and evaluation training materials, entering a second phase, with in-house testing of the monitoring and evaluation in crises and unstable contexts modules in 2002. It is produced in the form of a small CD. Phase two is also looking at electronic navigation routes for a pick and chose menu and to provide a self-directed learning resource.

UNICEF has drawn on available material and will be approaching ALNAP members asking permission to include excerpts from their manuals etc. It hopes to meet with a positive response given that the output is seen as a shared wide-ranging resource. UNICEF intends to invite someone from ALNAP Secretariat to participate to ensure a sharing across ALNAP and UNICEF training activities.

ii. ICRC (Wayne MacDonald, Head of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation)

Recent Publications *'Strengthening Protection in War'* is part of a four year NGO Workshop process, facilitated by the ICRC, trying to build consensus around definitions of what is meant by protection and a framework under which protection is carried out. *'Women facing War'* prepared by Charlotte Lindsay brings together field based reflection on specific problems associated with gender in war and conflict situations. It will underpin ICRC's elaboration of operational procedures and protocols around gender specific issues.

ICRC: 'Evaluation of Project Avenire: Strategic Change 1999-2001'
Avenire is a change management programme focused on 4 general strategic objectives and 139 change initiatives aiming to professionalise ICRC's work and bring it in closer proximity to beneficiary. It is the most thorough review ever undertaken by any humanitarian organisation of structural, policy and programme changes required in light of post-cold war conflicts. The project has had very strong implications for ICRC's culture. The recent decision to launch a formal evaluation of Avenire came from the Donor Support Group exchanges (the 12 largest donors to ICRC).

2002 will see the end of the project, which will be followed by a formal termination documentation process. The evaluation itself will focus on higher-level strategic implications that result from the implementation of the Avenire Project. It will be launched in early 2002 to complete in June 2002.

iii. HAP: Brief Update of Activities (Agnes Callamard, Co-Director HAP)

Field Trials. 3 field trials in 3 different emergency settings are to be launched with Sierra Leone as the context for the first trial, to start in late November. HAP is in the process of contracting a real-time evaluator and finalising the recruitment of the teams for Sierra Leone and for the second trial (location to be confirmed). Each team will have as the international recruits a team leader, an expert on methodology, a field officer and an expert on community development with 4 local experts.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Southern Sudan are possible contexts for the second trial and we aim to have a team ready to respond to a natural disaster as appropriate.

Research.

- ***'The Accountable Organisation'*** Sara Davidson will undertake a preliminary study reviewing six organisations and the literature, to be followed by a Workshop on 14th December 2001 to which a broad group will be invited to discuss the preliminary findings and next steps.
- ***'Medical Ethics in Humanitarian Contexts'*** Andre Griekspoor and myself are in the process of identifying a consultant to draft a discussion/briefing paper on the ethical principles behind medical intervention in humanitarian crises. This will be followed by a brainstorming meeting with medical practitioners from within the humanitarian system to discuss the relevance of those principles and whether the ethics of medical work in other settings are applicable/transferable.
- '*Legal Obligations Resulting from Humanitarian Interventions?'* Do international and national humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies' have legal obligations and responsibilities as a result of their humanitarian interventions? The research covers international human rights and humanitarian law and also certain aspects of domestic law to ascertain whether certain concepts – eg, duty of care – can be applicable to an international humanitarian setting. Again the paper will be followed by a brainstorming workshop to discuss the findings.

Advocacy HAP has undertaken advocacy on accountability through briefing papers, reports, and articles now on the HAP website. The Co-Directors have attended numerous meetings to identify commonalties between various organisations and projects, and the problems associated with putting forward an accountability message. It has also worked closely with several other initiatives/projects that have accountability in common and a meeting to bring them together is scheduled for November 2001 to exchange workplans and how we might work together and ensure there is no overlap.

iv. Update on Joint UN Afghanistan Evaluation (Susanne Frueh, WFP)

The initiative began in May 2000 with UNHCR/UNICEF/WFP coming together to agree to undertake a joint evaluation of their needs assessment and vulnerability analysis processes as a valuable way to maximise individual efforts. The Christian Michelson Institute was contracted in September 2000 to do the evaluation in the context of Afghanistan. A debriefing workshop was held in Afghanistan In March 2001 to mixed feedback. The first draft report was delivered in May 2001 and a process of discussion and redrafting has been underway ever since, reviewing agency comments and the report analysis in an attempt to sharpen the focus of the report and clarify misunderstandings in relation to agency specific approaches. At this time, a mid-draft has been submitted and each agency has had internal working groups reviewing and commenting. The final report is in December 2001.

Lessons will be drawn not only from the report's findings but how the four agencies worked together in this interagency effort. It has been a lengthy and difficult process. We shall be meeting shortly to review the next possible topic, how to approach it and who should be involved. This process is not exclusive to these four UN agencies.

v. Feedback on Two Recent Quality in Humanitarian Aid Workshops

MFA Germany 'Quality Workshop', Gottingen, 12th September 2001 (Gerhard Schmalbruch on behalf of Erich Riedler, MFA Germany representative to ALNAP)

Germany has a 'Coordination' group, not a standing entity but a process that brings together German NGOs, Red Cross, the German Government and other interested parties (academics, consultants etc). It has no formal impact on German policy and is co-governed by the NGOs (Gerhard Schmalbruch) and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Erich Riedler) who take turns to chair meetings. They hold an annual workshop, which this year focussed on quality.

Participants had different expectations. Presenters included John Borton, Wayne MacDonald, Koenraad van Brabant - a key message was quality in humanitarian aid requires a holistic approach.

Although the meeting concluded that there are agreed practical good practice standards in humanitarian aid there is lots of arguments as to how these should be applied and monitored. Humanitarian aid projects require consultation with evaluators rather than an ex-post control. Quality monitoring is not just undertaken at the end. Standards should be monitored and could become selection criteria in respect of funding, an important issue for donors.

A major issue is less how to enhance quality but who will bear the cost. Nobody wishes to meet the operational costs associated with ensuring quality, such as additional staffing, better quality management or full time individuals dedicated to issues of quality. The most important outcome of the workshop is to have placed the issues on the agenda and have heightened awareness among German humanitarian actors.

MFA Netherlands Workshop 'Enhancing the Quality of Humanitarian Assistance', 12th October 2001 (Ted Kliest, Senior Evaluator, MFA Netherlands)

This workshop was organised by the Humanitarian Aid Unit in the context of the Utstein Group of Ministers – four female ministers (UK/Netherlands/Norway/Germany) for development cooperation working together to influence the humanitarian aid agenda. The workshop involved participants from the four countries amongst which many ALNAP Full Member representatives.

Disaster Studies Group, Wageningen University, was commissioned to undertake a survey across humanitarian organisations (the study was introduced by Georg Frerks, Head of the Disaster Studies Group at the ALNAP April 2001 Biannual) to form the basis of a background paper by Thea Hilhorst on quality issues for the sector. Key points made:

- quality enhancement is a political and policy issue as well as a technical issue;
- there are four (not mutually exclusive) approaches to enhancing the quality of humanitarian assistance: i. 'Organisational/management approach'; ii. 'Rights based approached' grounded in human rights standards; iii. 'Contingency approach' each emergency phase requires an adjustment in standards – ie, no uniformity of standards; iv. 'Ownership approach' focussing on local capacity for peace building, disaster preparedness and coping mechanisms;
- use of standards is complicated by the inherent rigidity of standards, the danger of abusive use of standards and inequalities between beneficiaries and local populations resulting from their use;
- quality and accountability – one does not guarantee the other;
- there are different levels of accountability – internal and external/upward and downward;
- there remains a thin line between humanitarian policy and foreign policy;
- the paper asks if there should be an accountability 'system' or 'culture' in an environment where there are many different actors with partly conflicting interests, different organisational forms and work-styles, and suggests that an all-encompassing system of accountability may not be feasible, and proposes several approaches to enhancing accountability: beneficiary participation; complaint handling; monitoring and evaluation; application of codes of conduct; inter-agency peer review; and, accreditation.

Two speakers: Austin Davis, Director of MSF Holland and Nick Stockton, Deputy International Director of Oxfam UK, were invited to present on quality from their own perspective. Both indicated the importance of quality and accountability but each approached the issues from different angles.

Issues that emerged from discussions:

- Common theme in looking at the donor perspective is that quality is described in terms of relationship between NGOs and their governments. What is missing is responsibility of donors to interact themselves in respect of inter-donor coordination. A major expectation of agencies on the

ground is that they work together to ensure a shared common strategy and avoid overlap. If you translate that responsibility to donors – how do they see that being put into practice? eg, common reporting requirements to ease the workload for NGOs funded by several donors; an analysis at donor level in respect of resources required to deal with a particular crisis. Dilemmas of humanitarian aid in the face of lack of political response to the crisis

- Ethical and methodological problem of the use of standards;
- weaknesses in organisational quality/accountability among donors or implementing agencies;
- Issue of good 'donorship' quality and accountability an issue for all within the system
- Development of a voluntary accreditation system among a coalition of the willing
- Discussion on issues of quality and accountability should further developed by existing accountability initiatives such as Sphere, People in Aid, HAP and ALNAP
- The 'Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct' should be operationalised.

The Disasters Studies Group will produce the proceedings of the workshop and a revised paper in the light of discussions at the workshop and issues arising, to be made publicly available.

Plenary Discussion: Key Points

- ***Codes of practice*** a funders (central government/local government and grant giving bodies) code of good practice was developed in the UK applying very similar terminology to that which we apply in evaluation and broader quality initiatives: Effectiveness; Accountability; Standards; User involvement; Governance; Voluntary action; Equality and fairness; Staff management.
- ***Accountability in OFDA*****:** OFDA now has guidelines for identifying quality in its grantees, decisions are based strongly on past performance of grantees and guidelines can be flexible in these cases. OFDA established the Evaluation and Planning Unit a year ago - undertakes after-action reviews; every grant written up for Congressional Record; OFDA is very transparent primarily because of better planning. Not clear how accountable we are to those on the ground other than we try and evaluate what we have done in the past.
- ***Costs***: very clear that if you want enhanced quality in performance it comes with a price tag. CIDA have been trying to work with the Canadian humanitarian NGO community to help them improve their capacity to respond – eg, organised with WV Canada and RedR UK to run security training workshops – a major area of concern where the NGOs needed to increase their standard. As a funding organisation we are looking for better quality performance and professionalisation in the organisations we fund, but the onus is on us to recognise that we need to bear some of the cost.
- ***Quality***: As part of the major evaluation by Danida of its implementing agencies, we conducted capacity studies, facilitated SWAT analyses of a number of NGOs and we have since heard that the NGOs were very happy about it because they were forced to think about their own quality of work. There was no imposition from Danida but the process forced them to look at themselves and improve their performance. This has led to a set of guidelines for programming and planning and project proposal for humanitarian assistance, prepared by the NGOs in collaboration with Danida – setting out standards for programming, including use of Logframes which is now a consistent part of planning in Danish humanitarian agencies. It is the NGOs themselves doing most of the work.
- ***Donor coordination*** Common theme in looking at the donor perspective is that quality is described in terms of relationship between NGOs and their governments. What is missing is responsibility of donors to interact themselves in respect of inter-donor coordination. A major expectation of agencies on the ground is that they work together to ensure a shared common strategy and avoid overlap. If you translate that responsibility to donors – how do they see that being put into practice? eg, common reporting requirements to ease the workload for NGOs funded by several donors; an analysis at donor level in respect of resources required to deal with a particular crisis.

- OFDA has tried to meet twice a year with PRM and ECHO to discuss a country and topical issue. The reality is that we manage it once every 14 months it is so difficult to get it set up in advance. However, we now undertake the seemingly banal exercise of exchanging phone lists so that those in OFDA responsible for say Afghanistan now know who their counterparts are in ECHO. OFDA senior management actively promote that personnel stop in. OFDA decides what area it are interested in funding and passes around proposals from one donor to another with a message that important but that 'my people have decided they would rather fund in this other sector.'

Harmonised Reporting requirements

- In the OECD DAC there is a group working to harmonise reporting and monitoring in structural aid. That could also be taken up in humanitarian aid. Within the EU context there are attempts to harmonise donor approaches for greater coherence, led by ECHO but still ongoing.
- Re the question of consistent reporting requirements across governments is difficult as donors have systems across all their departments and these requirements are passed on to the recipients of funding. There are ways that it can be made easier for the NGOs – DFID started with the Logframe, OFDA requires exactly the same information. The type of proposal you need to write and how you report has standardised drastically in the past five years.

Politics of transparency:
We need to be realistic about the political influence, and the lobbying impact we can have in changing the political environment in which we work. Which agency a donor funds is political decision as well a decision based on criteria. Political agendas cannot be overruled by such criteria – limited transparency a reality.

vi. Iterative Evaluations with Mini-Seminars (F. Grunewald, Groupe URD)

Donors at the table were invited to lobby the French Government to participate actively in ALNAP.

The Quality Project, a multi-step process, locates the issue of quality at the heart of the project cycle, adopting an approach borne of holistic reflection. The Quality Project Partners are: Action contre la Faim; Aide Medicale Internationale; Bioforce; Care France; Coordination SUD; Croix Rouge Francaise; Handicap International; IUED; Medecins du Monde; Premiere Urgence; and Solidarite. Groupe URD is charged with technical coordination of the project.

Step 1. Mapping of NGO Thinking on and Approaches to Quality. 15 NGOs participated by responding to a detailed questionnaire and in-depth interviews to identify different approaches to quality in relation to ethical, decision-making, managerial, learning and political considerations, including accountability mechanisms, the project cycle and institutional changes undergone as a result of evaluation - each aspect requiring an in-built evaluative component

Step 2. Define critical factors affecting quality through field research in three contexts: acute emergency, protracted crisis and a context in immediate post-crisis phase.

The idea of iterative evaluation with mini-seminars, is to have several evaluative periods during the implementation process, complemented with specific learning activities such as group meetings and interagency discussion/debate at both field and headquarter level on the findings of the evaluative exercise; and bilateral discussion with individual actors less willing to discuss issues raised in open debate. This enables capitalisation of experience and introduction of appropriate training.

Cost was a major consideration so the approach was to go for small teams, small structures. Two case studies: Post Mitch and 2001 El Salvador earthquake. **See Annex 5 for the full paper.**

Q&A Session

Q. How does the quality project relate to a country like Nicaragua, where there is an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with civil society still in theory engaged? How does the Quality Project address the issue of bringing jobs to the people?

A. We have been working very closely with the Social Forum and our mini-seminars have been organised with, and hosted by, them. They are very critical of the PRSP. Most of the dynamic civil society networks don't buy into the PRS. There are very few jobs in the city and if you create suburbs where people can't survive they become prey to those who don't respect the ILO framework, whereas if you maintain them in their rural settings they at least have a quite high level of food security. PRS programmes often leave beneficiaries more vulnerable.

Q. What you have presented is very close to what I would see as an accountability mechanism. Two methodological questions: 'How long does each evaluation take?' and 'How do you assess the impact of the mini-seminars or any other interaction with the aid agencies in respect of their actions?' Is there evidence of immediate programme changes as a result of the iterative evaluation process?

A. Each 'mission' lasts one month and involves a multi-sectoral 3 person team. There are two visible changes evident as a result of the mini seminars: changes to the existing project and the thought that results in respect of future programmes can respond to the lessons. Most effective tool for project evolution comes from bilateral discussion.

In respect of institutional changes, we have seen major changes as a result of the evaluation findings on El Salvador. Constraints to change sometimes results from donor inflexibility in respect of making amendments to project lines. In respect of a refugee repatriation operation in Afghanistan, we encountered a case where getting approval to change what was original conceived as a nursing input into that of a midwife, took 18months.

Q. You highlight the issue of inappropriate housing – it is a story that is so familiar. So where is the guidance that is stopping agencies making those mistakes yet again. To some degree the Sphere Standards do give guidance on standards around shelter that would enable you to ask fairly obvious questions about where to build shelter, what materials to use, how to do needs assessment. What were the benchmarks they were using to avoid these crass programme initiatives? What is the role of local consultants? Is it really flying in British or French consultants that will bring about social or political change to really address the needs of people on the ground? An alternative strategy would be to try to get the government to take greater accountability of the social dynamics around housing, would have been a more effective strategy to avoiding these problems that you identify post fact.

A. Yes, you can engage with governments but the local civil society is extremely sceptical about such engagement.

Q. 'What can be done to make sure these learning mechanisms are sustainable?' and 'How do you ensure that the knowledge you have captured is not lost?'

A. The information is being captured through 3 means: i. Dissemination of the different reports to interested parties; ii. A series of training sessions, as was done following the post-Mitch evaluation; and, iii. Broad dissemination to South American networks through an extensive publication of findings by one of the leading research NGO networks with which a partnership is being formed.

vii. Interim Report on How to Evaluate Humanitarian Action (Phil O'Keefe, ETC UK)

The output for this study will be a Guidance Booklet on: 'How to Evaluate Humanitarian Action using the DAC and Complementary criteria'

The Study Dataset – The dataset for the study is 140 evaluations held on the ALNAP Evaluative Database – inevitably biased since they are only those that have been made available to ALNAP.

Uptake of Criteria - What we have seen following a review, primarily of executive summaries of the dataset, is that from the start of 1994 there was a sudden big uptake of the OECD/DAC 'common' criteria: effectiveness/efficiency/impact and relevance. The complementary criteria (the 4 Cs) have not, however, seen such a strong uptake, although not surprising since there appears to be a 5-year time lag between publication and uptake. The OECD/DAC Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance Evaluation were not published until late 1999 so would not have been applied before 2000.

Coordination - Danida's large-scale evaluation is the only example that has addressed coordination. The issue of coordination is problematic because we are not seeing a lot of multi-donor or at least from a donor perspective asking the questions of coordination. It is much more difficult for a multi-lateral or a large NGO.

Study Questionnaire & Initial Findings

Understanding of the criteria A questionnaire was devised and sent out to all Full Members, who responded fairly consistently in respect of their understanding of the criteria with similar definitions.

Evaluation Process The first apparent division came between the donors, some multilaterals and the ICRC, the evaluation process was largely about a broad 'social audit' – ie, the value to society in general. There were some multilaterals and NGOs who emphasised learning.

The value of the Evaluation Process to Learning To those who emphasised learning we asked what was the value of evaluation to the learning process? They responded that it was not the most important learning tool, which has significant implications in respect of the relative emphasis between social audit and learning in evaluation.

Use of standards Donors were very strong on the importance of standards for planning and evaluation. Although not necessarily upset if standards are not reached as long as the context can be explained as to why they were not reached.

Evaluation Perspectives The Danida Evaluation Handbook has clear instructions about how to proceed on evaluation, but the striking thing is not the definitions but the perspectives.

- Sustainability = Connectedness in disaster mode – time linkage – the perspective of society
- Effectiveness is looking at the target group, the beneficiaries
- Efficiency deals with implementers

Planning and Evaluation Links The problem here is lack of link between the planning and evaluation processes. Very little of the former is outward/activity focused, tending to be supply side/input focused. You cannot expect to make an evaluation judgement if you only have input data. It is essential to marry the two.

Location of the Evaluation Function In general it is located – particularly in donors – at the policy function level, the highest executive level and likewise in some of the multilaterals. It is extremely difficult therefore to tie that high-level policy evaluation function to the kind of project planning, monitoring and evaluation that we as professionals are requesting as levels of accountability.

vi. Response Management Team (Greg Garbinsky, Manager of the Disaster Assistance Support Programme[3], OFDA)

Introduction We are always talking about learning and one of the things I find paradoxical is that a lot of time we talk about evaluation and monitoring and yet again and again you get the same findings – this gap between relief and development. However, one thing that has created a watershed of

[3] The Disaster Assistance Support Programme is a collaborative effort between USAID/OFDA and the US Dept. of Agriculture and Forest Service

difference in the way OFDA responds to sudden-onset, is the way we internally organise to respond. We often talk about these very highly theoretical issues when in the end it boils down to who is doing what and information management.

The Response Management Team (RMT) is the Washington/US side of support to a field operation of humanitarian assistance for disaster response that the US Government or OFDA might be involved in.

The field operations guide and the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) concept was developed in support of OFDA for field deployment of teams, modelled after what we use in the US domestically to respond to forest fires – the incident command system.

The parallel is the need to move a number of people to a remote location frequently required to be self-sustaining. DART + RMT provide a framework arranged around functions – management, operations, planning, logistics, administration and communications – that will allow individuals from different organisations and agencies that have never necessarily worked together before but with a common purpose to do so.

Every team will cover those 6 different functions whether their number vary between 66 or 3 people. It provides flexibility allowing for expansion and contraction in parallel with need, providing a functional approach to disaster response.

The RMT was developed after Hurricane Mitch following an after action review which found that many of the problems encountered might have been avoided through better communication and coordination – as a response to the identified need for better systems and protocols.

More frequent responses and proactive responses are required, and the high visibility of contexts and the responses to them requires greater transparency. Sometimes the media or political interests would overwhelm the operational component of the response – through external attention. RMT is a totally transferable management system whatever the nature of the disaster – natural or complex.

It provides a clear definition of roles and responsibilities; clear lines of authority and chain of command, including a written delegation of authority from the OFDA Director to the Disaster Response Team Manager: and, clear lines of communication for the DART team on the ground. It is based on the 'Incident Command System' for domestic wild fires and was being instituted about the time of the two Taiwan and the Turkey earthquake, providing the opportunity to test it live.

An RMT policy document was disseminated following the testing and employees trained. The RMT is continually refined following use and the policy document is currently being updated.

- Role and Responsibility of the RMT:
  - Support on site relief activities
  - Acquire and transport supplies
  - Develop/distribute information to those cooperating with OFDA (NGOs, UN agencies etc)
  - Coordinate the USAID response. *This may at the request of the President of the United States (POTUS) include coordination of the US Government response.*

- Criteria and Conditions for Activation (not necessary to have all):
  - Crisis beyond the scope or ability of the regional team to handle their day job
  - High political or media interest
  - Involvement of multiple agencies
  - Significant technological event - eg, Chemical/Nuclear/Radiological/Biological (BNRB)
  - Disaster covering multiple regions
  - Major displacement of civilian population

- 8 Core RMT Positions – teams are pre-identified from among OFDA/USAID staff and from co-operators (eg, State Department, Dept. of Defence). Teams can be active for up to 21 days in row when they rotate with other teams.

- Response Manager is the direct link to the OFDA Director for the duration.
- Deputy Response Manager for Response
- Deputy Response Manager for Coordination
- Planning Coordinator
- Logistics
- Communications and Records
- Administration
- Information Officer

Support to the teams can be added to as required (eg, Staffing and Travel Officer) or individual team members stood down if particular skills are not required. Double shifts may also be required, or triple shifts for overlap depending on where in the world the crisis is. Provides for great flexibility.

Q & A Session: Key Points

- ***Learning Mechanisms in the RMT*:** There are two types of 'learning' mechanisms: i. 'After Actions' involving the development of a core set of questions used to evaluate the RMT's performance – eg, how well it deployed, how well it implemented, how well information was gathered and disseminated; and ii. the OFDA Evaluation and Planning Team which looks at results of programming funded by OFDA.
- ***Lines of Communication*:** The introduction of the RMT resolved several recurring problems within OFDA – eg, Clarified lines of communication and authority; Regional Coordinator at the time of the crisis would have increased profile and increased funds to manage, therefore an increase in responsibility but a decrease in their ability to influence decisions because the Director of OFDA or BHR or of USAID or the President wanted to make them.
- ***Coordination with existing structures:*** Experience of interplay between the outsider (DART) teams coming in and existing local structures and the decision-making between them. Interplay between local knowledge before, during and in reconstruction and the outside experts who may have less knowledge about local circumstances? The DART teams can't go in uninvited or without the blessing of the host country and national government. It is ultimately the national country that is responsible and stressed in the DART training that we try to coordinate, cooperate, integrate with the existing players including local communities and NGOs.
- ***Weak Government Contexts*:** The DART does not take the lead and believe, to the extent possible, responsibility for responding to the disaster lies with the affected country.

vi. Strategic Management: its role in humanitarian aid (Derek Neal, Cranfield) - Annex 6

Background to project
A number of people at Cranfield found they shared a common interest in the humanitarian sector. An initial literature review in respect of the delivery of emergency relief and development aid highlighted the increased frequency and complexity of humanitarian disasters and a wide range of issues being debated, including: the continuum, accountability, autonomy, and coordination.

To a great extent the continuum debate has allowed a fudging of areas of responsibility. Actors often find themselves moving between different roles without a clear end state. All are aware of the arguments made for coordination in humanitarian aid but the overriding question remains 'What do we do about it?' Our hypothesis is that coordination is a subset of management, and that the humanitarian sector should be searching for better ways of managing the delivery of humanitarian aid leading to better coordination and results in the field.

Although we recognise inherent differences in humanitarian aid delivery, nevertheless it has commonalties with organisations, both public and private sector. Some things do map across directly

while others may provide starting points for adaptation. For example stakeholder analysis is at the heart of any strategy formulation the business/process whatever the activity you are in.

Peter Raynard produced an excellent paper highlighting the significance of accountability in the delivery of humanitarian aid, and that to achieve accountability requires meaningful performance matrices that should sit within the organisation overall strategy. He also points out that the organisation must sit within an even larger system where the organisation sits beneath some statutory body with the authority to take action against non-performance. HAP goes further, recognising that standards such as Sphere require independent assessment from a beneficiary perspective.

Structure of the Project

- Phase 1 (6 months) to scope the problems and issues within the humanitarian arena from a management perspective, trying to identify the management tools used and which do or don't work. Co-funded by Cranfield University and DFID
- Phase 2 (12 months) aims to take the output from Phase 1 and develop strategic management tools and techniques that may have a role to play in this area.
- Phase 3 (12 months) identification of a trial site(s) to apply the outputs from Phase 2.

Phase 1 Methodology

- Desk research – identification of issues coupled with informal discussions with individuals from amongst other organisations DFID, ECHO, VOICE, Red Cross and People in Aid
- This led to the development of a small questionnaire that formed the basis of semi-structured interviews – our primary research methodology. The selected sample was stratified to provide representation from a range of levels within the humanitarian aid delivery chain and secondly representation from a range of levels within the organisations involved in the study. Some involved to date: DFID, ECHO, ALNAP, AIDCO, UNDP, UNOCHA, USAID, CIDA, OXFAM, UNHCR, MSF H, Tearfund, HAP, InterAction, SDC.

Initial Findings: Generic Areas that Emerged

- Divergent emergency and development culture. Emergency relief sections within the parent organisation seemed to be growing in isolation and finding that the tactical tools used are no longer applicable in operations.
- Rigidity of planning frameworks – eg, Logframe, RBM, Management by Results – the main criticism is that they were too rigid.
- Dissemination of lessons learned. Concern over quality of information and processes of analysis and feedback in a lessons-learned, user-friendly format were poor. The World Bank and Tearfund have taken active steps to embrace a knowledge management approach to strategy and operations.
- Lack of general management backgrounds. Recruitment focused more on those with aid experience than those with management experience. Requisite skills required for office management often absent.
- Lack of recognition of change management issues. Although there was recognition that aid agencies operated in an environment of rapid change, organisations were not responding to this well internally. Positive examples of good change practice were: DFID, Tearfund.
- Structural anomalies. This occurs in all industries. However, those slower at dealing with change find it increasingly difficult to interact with the better adjusted organisations. Those slow to respond or who fail to see the need for change become a problem within the industry. In a commercial setting they go out of business but in a public sector they remain inefficient.

Reframing the Issues

- Change management.
- Lessons-learned and meaningful feedback loops
- Culture

- Strategic decision-making

Second Round Interviews

- Underlying issue is Change Management. There is resistance to humanitarian aid being portrayed as the operation of a system and also to the notion of aid agencies as competitors. A preferred alternative is that of a network of actors with a common goal. We would make the case for the humanitarian aid sector as a system, aimed at delivering aid to the right place at the right time in the right form in the right context. The weakness of the idea of a 'system' is that it is easily perceived of as rigid and top down driven. What we suggest is that there are a number of subsystems that have to operate effectively and efficiently - a system of systems. This provides tremendous scope for flexibility both within the system and the organisation.

Conclusions

- Humanitarian aid actors are still confronting constant change. Change management is the key. Most of the aid agencies are still struggling with change management. There needs to be recognition of the relationship between strategy and change management and that it is the process of implementing strategy.
- When organisations are being assessed on their ability to deliver and provide services in a manner that meets beneficiary needs it is important to be efficient and effective. Change management has a central role to play.

	Management	**Responses to trends**	**Drivers**	**Resistance**
Change Management				
	Evaluation	**Information and Knowledge**	**Formal Channels**	**Informal Channels**
Lessons Learned and Meaningful feedback loops				

	Splits	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Culture & Change**
Culture				
	Decision Making Dynamics	**Policy Implementation Gap**	**Project-Strategy Relationship**	**Trends**
Strategic Decision-Making				

We are currently conducting a final analysis of data from second round interviews and see our work as sitting alongside the accountability projects (Sphere, People in Aid, HAP etc) and the work of ICRC, IRC and ALNAP. The Phase 1 report is due out in mid-November 2001.

Q & A Session: Key Points

- ***Humanitarian Principles and Service Delivery***

- Humanitarian aid is about values, protection of dignity and helping affected populations deal with calamities they cannot deal with. Good delivery and service provision, is only part of the chain.
- Evidence shows that if the pendulum swings too far away from humanitarianism towards professionalism, the organisation runs the danger of losing sight of itself.
- It isn't just values but a lot to do with the institutional architecture. The entire organisational systems around humanitarian and development are different and the gaps are in many respects growing. Fewer and fewer development agencies are dealing with service delivery.

- ***Individual performance management*:** The work is weak on how organisations are reflective of individual performance. Performance management is a key activity that should take place in all organisations. IFRC have introduced a performance management process but it was a challenge to convince staff to embrace it. It would be very valuable to look at the individuals' influence.
- ***Planning Frameworks***

- The study recognises the diversity of planning frameworks, which should not be seen as strategic, but as project oriented/project management tools. This study sought to identify whether strategy was driven from the project level up or from the strategic level down. In some cases – eg, OXFAM – organisations going through turbulent change have had to decentralise to tighten things up before they can generate effective strategy from the top.
- ERDP is a good example of rigid planning frameworks that have an unknown background. The Emergency Relief Departments grow in isolation from their parent organisations. Looking at the roots of planning frameworks and tactical tools in ERDP, they came from the sustainable development part of the organisation with no utility for the Emergency Relief Section.
- In addition increasing concern particularly in relation to the Multilaterals in respect of the 'grey' zone – not relief/not development – so as a reaction they are repositioning themselves, retreating back to their core competencies – eg, ECHO returning to emergency relief and expecting their development counterparts, AIDCO etc to come closer to them.

- ***Human Resources*:** There are issues relating to the hierarchy of the negotiation of aid that the study misses entirely. In reviewing humanitarian assistance you have to recognise the importance of leadership and staffing issues. The level of responsibility tends to be at a low level if there is a presence of the bilateral donor. General absence of a level of middle management between the ages of 35 and 50 which you would normally expect to see in all organisations.
- ***Research Focus**:* It may be better to focus on institutions that cover both humanitarian and other aid related work. It is difficult to separate the humanitarian field from the other organisational dynamics. It would be beneficial to us as practitioners if the research was focused within the boundaries of the institutions themselves – case study work that is highly detailed looking at particular institutions over a reasonable period of time, and then focus on some of the key issues around values and mission or organisational culture and the environment, whatever are the most powerful issues that need to be thought about to help us move forward.
- ***Theoretical Frameworks*:** As academics, I would have imagined a slightly stronger set of arguments, theoretically underpinned with stronger evidence to back up the supposition being argued. The theoretical framework, organisational theory and strategy theory needs to be defined to give credibility to the work.
- ***Phases 1 and 2:*** A lot of academic and theoretical underpinning sets the tone for this work, Phase 1 is purely a feasibility study to find out what is out there. One of the things we found out right away is that people were coming up with these various frameworks and plonking them down without understanding the holistic problem. We did lots of work with academic models and this will be dealt with in the next phase. This has been a very simplified presentation but there has been a lot of micro analysis behind those general topics to allow us to look at leadership, who the change agents are and where the power brokerage cells are in the organisation.

vii. EFQM Quality Model (John Borton, ALNAP Coordinator)

Over the last 15 years quality models such as the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model have been developed to help organisations assess and improve the quality of their management and processes as a means of ensuring quality in their products and services. Though such models often originated in the private sector, their subsequent development has sought to address the needs of all organisations, indeed PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) have been developed specifically to address the needs of NGOs. Many public sector organisations and non-governmental organisations use one or more of these models in their efforts to improve the quality of their management and processes and there is a rapidly

developing body of experience in the use of the different models (see for example the work of the Quality Standards Task Group on www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/main/about/does/qs.html).

Within the international humanitarian system efforts to improve quality have so far tended to focus on the improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems; the use of contracts as a means of ensuring adherence to requirements set by the contracting organisation; the development of codes, benchmarks and standards; and the exploration of third-party mechanisms for ensuring accountability to the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Apart from People in Aid's use of social audit methods, little if any use has so far been made of the various quality models. Whilst some adaptation of the models may be necessary to make them more appropriate to, or at least more accessible to, humanitarian organisations, in principle the models should be applicable to humanitarian organisations. In a study of the EFQM Excellence Model André Griekspoor[4] concluded that the model can be applied to humanitarian organisations and would provide a useful tool to make integral quality diagnosis of the entire organisation and enables managers to set priorities for improvement. He did note some shortcomings with the model from the perspective of humanitarian organisations but concluded that these could be overcome by making adjustments to the model and the sub-criteria.

One of the recommendations that emerged from the MFA Netherlands Conference 'Enhancing the Quality of Humanitarian Assistance' held in the Hague on 12th October was that ALNAP would be an appropriate forum to take forward the task of identifying the quality model/s most appropriate to humanitarian organisations and encouraging their use. The activity has been included as a Proposed New Activity for FY 2003-04 workplan. For any work to commence before then would require the setting up of a new Interest Group Activity.

A Selection of Off-the-Shelf Quality Systems in use in the UK public and voluntary sectors: (reproduced with some modifications from Barclay and Abdy)[5]

- **EFQM Excellence Model (www.efqm.org)** An over-arching framework for self-assessment and continuous improvement, enabling organisations to address all aspects of their work in a systematic way, including drawing together work on other quality initiatives. There is a recognition and award scheme, but the model is based on self-assessment rather than external accreditation (see next page for a more detailed description).
- **Investors in People (www.iipuk.co.uk)** A standard that aims to improve an organisation's performance through their people. Individual training and development objectives are linked to overall business objectives, tying investments in people to organisational results. It is externally accredited and is currently the most commonly used quality system in the UK voluntary sector. It has recently been updated.
- **PQASSO (www.ces-vol.org.uk/pqasso.htm)** Designed for small voluntary organisations, this provides a system for them to assess and improve their work at one of three levels in relation to 12 quality areas: planning for quality; management; staff and volunteers; managing money; managing activities; monitoring and evaluations; governance; use-centred services; training and development; managing resources; networking and partnership; results.
- **Social Auditing (www.neweconomics.org)** A system designed to enable organisations to measure, report on and improve their social performance and ethical behaviour, and to strengthen accountability to different stakeholder groups. It involves understanding the organisations' social benefit and impact, as well as understanding the stakeholders' expectations.
- **ISO 9000 (www.iso.ch and www.iqa.co.uk)** A group of externally assessed standards which help organisations achieve customer satisfaction by preventing problems in the products or services they produce. It focuses on how things are done and is process oriented. Of all the models/systems

[4] Griekspoor A. (2000) 'From Doing Good to Doing Good Things Right: An analysis of the applicability of the EFQM model for quality management to humanitarian organisations' Masters of Public Health Program Dissertation, Amsterdam: Netherlands School of Public Health.

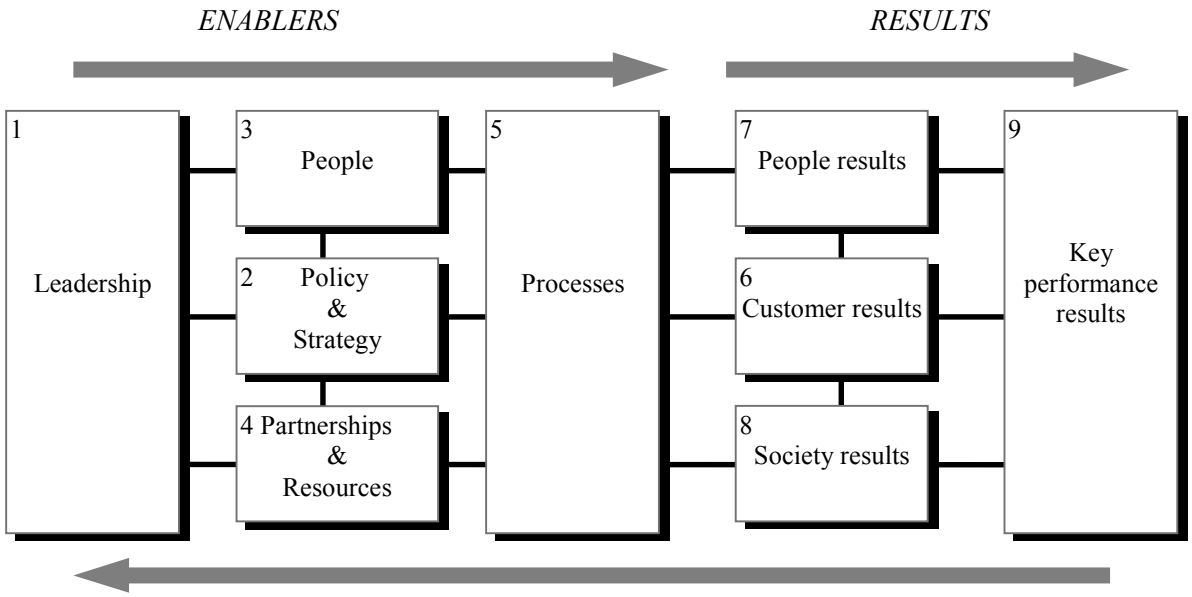
[5] Barclay, J and M Abdy (2001) Quality Matters: Funders and Quality in the Voluntary Sector, Quality Standards Task Group, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, London.

this is probably the least applicable one for humanitarian organisations though it may be applicable to those processes such as agencies' logistics systems.

A Description of the EFQM Excellence Model

The model can be used as a diagnostic self-assessment tool for organisations enabling them to identify strengths and weaknesses and set priorities for improvement actions. The model sees quality as being the product of a combination of customer satisfaction, people satisfaction and impact on society ('Results') which are achieved through leadership driving policy, strategy, people management, partnerships and resources and processes ('Enablers'), leading ultimately to organisational excellence. The model is dynamic in that innovation and learning can improve the 'Enablers' and thereby lead to improved 'Results'.

The EFQM Excellence Model



Each of the nine criteria has a definition, which explains the high level meaning of that criterion. To develop the high level meaning further each criterion is supported by a number of sub-criteria. Sub-criteria pose a number of questions that should be considered in the course of an assessment. Finally below each sub-criterion are lists of possible areas to address. The areas to address are not mandatory nor are they exhaustive but are intended to further exemplify the meaning of the sub-criterion.

1. Leadership *Definition* How leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours, and are personally involved in ensuring that the organisation's management system is developed and implemented.
Sub-criteria Leadership covers the following four sub-criteria that should be addressed.
1a. Leaders develop the mission, vision and values and are role models of a culture of Excellence
1b. Leaders are personally involved in ensuring the organisation's management system is developed, implemented and continuously improved
1c. Leaders are involved with customers, partners and representatives of society
1d. Leaders motivate, support and recognise the organisation's people

2. Policy and Strategy *Definition* How the organisation implements its mission and vision via a clear stakeholder focused strategy, supported by relevant policies, plans, objectives, targets and processes.
Sub-criteria Policy and Strategy cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.
2a. Policy and Strategy are based on the present and future needs and expectations of stakeholders

2b. Policy and Strategy are based on information from performance measurement, research, learning and creativity related activities
2c. Policy and Strategy are developed, reviewed and updated
2d. Policy and Strategy are deployed through a framework of key processes
2e. Policy and Strategy are communicated and implemented

3. People *Definition* How the organisation manages, develops and releases the knowledge and full potential of its people at an individual, team-based and organisation-wide level, and plans these activities in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its processes
Sub-criteria People cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.
3a. People resources are planned, managed and improved
3b People's knowledge and competencies are identified, developed and sustained
3c People are involved and empowered
3d People and the organisation have a dialogue
3e People are rewarded, recognised and cared for

4. Partnerships and Resources *Definition* How the organisation plans and manages its external partnerships and internal resources in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its processes.
Sub-criteria Partnerships and Resources cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.
4a. External partnerships are managed
4b. Finances are managed
4c. Buildings, equipment and materials are managed
4d. Technology is managed
4e. Information and knowledge are managed

5. Processes *Definition* How the organisation designs, manages and improves processes to support its policy/strategy and fully satisfy, and generate increasing value for customers and other stakeholders.
Sub-criteria Processes cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.
5a. Processes are systematically designed and managed
5b. Processes are improved, as needed, using innovation in order to fully satisfy and generate increasing value for customers and other stakeholders
5c Products and Services are designed and developed based on customer needs and expectations
5d Products and Services are produced, delivered and serviced
5e Customer relationships are managed and enhanced

6. Customer results
Definition What the organisation is achieving in relation to its external customers.
Sub-criteria Customer results cover the following two sub- criteria that should be addressed.
6a. Perception Measures
6b. Performance Indicators

7. People results
Definition What the organisation is achieving in relation to its people.
Sub-criteria People results cover the following two sub- criteria that should be addressed.
7a. Perception Measures
7b. Performance Indicators

8. Society results
Definition What the organisation is achieving in relation to local, national and international society
Sub-criteria Society Results cover the following two sub-criteria that should be addressed.
8a Perception Measures
8b. Performance Indicators

9. Key Performance Results
Definition What the organisation is achieving in relation to its planned performance.

Sub-criteria Key Performance Results cover the following two sub-criteria that should be addressed. Depending on the purpose and objectives of the organisation some of the measures contained in the guidance for Key Performance Outcomes may be applicable to Key Performance Indicators and vice versa.
9a Key Performance Outcomes (financial and non-financial)
9b Key Performance Indicators

Although the humanitarian system has developed monitoring, evaluation, tools, codes and standards they relate primarily to programmes and projects. What is strangely lacking within the system are quality models that apply to organisations and link to those aspects of the quality framework that the humanitarian system has been developing around monitoring, evaluation, codes and standards.

Other sectors have been developing and applying organisational quality models, providing quite a wide body of experience in relation to the use of these models within the voluntary sector.

Plenary Discussion: Key points

- ***Capacity Building*** **-** The EFQM is very similar to models in the capacity and institution building literature looking both at the level of organisation and system. It has allowed UNICEF to look both at how it can engender greater capacity building in its work, as well as allowing it to look at capacity building within UNICEF. It was initially used to look at the capacity building of national partners and now to be used to look at own organisation.
- ***Change Management*** **-** Observation: In 1980s 'TQM' followed by 'BPR' (Business Process Reengineering); 'Lean Thinking'; 'Balanced Score Card'; and, now 'EFQM'. While each of these models has a particular focus, whether quality or efficiency, they are also used as change management models, the vehicle one uses to implement strategy. So EFQM is predicated on excellence and quality but also a vehicle for change management.
- ***Evaluation*** **-** One of the limitations of evaluations is that there are no systems for feeding back into planning or leadership decisions. This model has the potential to help identify enabling factors required to ensure there is fertile ground to allow lessons from evaluation processes to go all the way back to leadership and policy changes that will lead to improved practice. The EFQM has the potential to provide organisations with a holistic perspective
- ***ALNAP's Role*** should be to examine the relevance of those quality models to the humanitarian sector. The Steering Committee did not agree that ALNAP would develop its own quality model.

Agenda Item 3. Prioritising Activities for ALNAP's FY2003-04 Workplan

The purpose of the prioritisation exercise is to inform the Steering Committee's final deliberations on which activities to include in the ALNAP FY 2003-04 Workplan. However, the Steering Committee will also take into consideration budgetary and Secretariat resource constraints when finalising the Workplan. ***(see Annex 7 'ALNAP Rolling Workplan' and Annex 8 'Prioritisation Results')***

Day 2 Meeting Record
26th October, 2001

Session 1 'Humanitarian Coordination: Models, Incentives and Assessment'
Chaired by Norman Macdonnell

Presenters/Panellists:
Mark Bowden, Head of Policy, Development and Studies Branch, OCHA; Gerhard Schmalbruck, Secretary General EuronAid; Joel McClellan, Executive Secretary SCHR; Moira Reddick, Independent Consultant.

Presenters were asked to address each of the following three questions:
- What is/are the most appropriate model/s?
- What incentives are available at the organisational and individual level to improve coordination?
- What tools can be used to assess whether coordination arrangements are performing well or not?

Presentation i. Mark Bowden, Head of Policy, Development and Studies Branch, OCHA

Background
Following the ODI Study (see Annex 9) OCHA is now looking at how to move forward and incorporate the study's findings at policy level, to create a more coherent approach to coordination.

UNOCHA has no definition of coordination within OCHA – key elements of coordination. OCHA's role in coordination defined in Resolution 46182, is now 10 years old. In 1997 greater emphasis was placed on coordination and OCHA's role therein. However, coordination is not OCHA's only role and looking at its other roles helps to inform its coordination role.

OCHA is there to represent and advise the Secretary General on humanitarian interests and concerns, with specific responsibilities in natural disasters, including preparedness and the legal framework for natural disasters and is also responsible for humanitarian issues within the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council. But, coordination is very much at the heart.

OCHA is not an operational agency and so it sees its role in coordination in terms of where it provides value added. The stress is on defining the value-added by coordination rather than to see it as a directive or operational role.

Under Resolution 46182 the Head of OCHA is defined as the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The structures/framework the Emergency Relief Coordinator has to work with have become clearer: a Deputy Relief Coordinator and OCHA structure in New York and Geneva and IASC, a body that brings together all the humanitarian agencies/actors, including NGOs, highlighting the inclusivity of coordination. It is now widely accepted that we work in the field through the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator system.

Usually, the Resident Coordinator – the former UNDP ResRep – will be designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator, but there are occasions when there will be a separate Humanitarian Coordinator, particularly when there is a Special Representative of the Secretary General in a complex emergency or where there is a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. The Humanitarian Coordinators, report directly to the Under Secretary General, Mr Oshima in that role. In the cases of natural disasters, all Resident Coordinators have designated humanitarian and emergency responsibilities and also report to Mr Oshima.

The issue for OCHA is that it lacks an OCHA-wide conception in respect of coordination as its main product - with each field-presence conceiving and approaching coordination differently and OCHA staff often posted to the field without prior coordination experience. The lack of a coherent OCHA-wide conception has four major operational drawbacks:

- Lack of consistent 'coordination' product, means that partners can't be sure what to expect from an OCHA field presence. Relationships are frequently reinvented as a result of a lack of set pattern.
- The lack of a set pattern means that much is left to the Humanitarian Coordinator and the local agency heads. This does not always include OCHA.
- Reduced accountability due to lack of understanding of core elements of coordination.
- Without a clear definition of coordination, OCHA lacks the basis for monitoring and evaluation

Definition of Coordination - not just the concept, but what the deliverables are.

The ODI study highlighted that there was not a single accepted UN definition of coordination. The study uses Larry Minear's definition:

> Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.[6]

Although a useful articulation, questions remain:

- Does it require further elaboration?
- Who are OCHA's partners in coordination?
- Coordination on behalf of whom? Crucial in respect of accountability.
- Why coordination? What is to be achieved through coordination?
- How does one undertake coordination? Issues of leadership?

A crucial factor, not explicit in the above definition, is the negotiation of humanitarian space/access, the importance of delivery of humanitarian relief in an effective and timely manner, and the need to consider issues of efficiency and non-duplication.

Different Coordination Models

UNOCHA is also looking at the lessons learned from other coordination studies. There are two further studies, one just completed on *Lessons of Coordination from East Timor* by Margareta Wahlstrom The other will be undertaken in the coming months on *Regional Coordination in the Horn of Africa*. These different studies underline different styles of coordination appropriate to different types of emergencies – complex or natural. There may be core elements but the approach may be very different in different circumstances. East Timor suggests that a strong leadership role was very effective and important in the success of coordination there. Regional coordination however requires a far greater consensual role.

Transitional Model – eg, East Timor provides a transitional model moving towards state building where the tasks of coordination are defined by that role.

Chronic Model – eg, Angola and Somalia, which require a far stronger institutional basis to coordination. The SACB model is an interesting approach making sure that there is a high level of inclusivity and joint decision-making.

Regional Coordination Model – eg, Horn of Africa, where the Regional Coordinator plays the role of catalyst to ensure a common set of information, a common perspective of the situation with increased emphasis on a consensual model of coordination.

OCHA is seeking to identify the core elements of coordination, the products required to achieve that as a basic minimum and how the core elements should be modified to respond to different circumstances, to ensure the right people and approaches are in place.

[6] Minear, L., Chelliah., U, Crisp, J., Mackinlay, J. and T. Weiss (1992) *UN Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis 1990–1992* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 13.

Presentation ii. Gerhard Schmalbruck, Secretary General EuronAid

This view is provided from an NGO perspective. There is a political dimension to coordination. It should not be imposed, nor should it impose strategies and policies on organisations for whom such strategies and policies may not be compatible. But coordination is a political activity.

Recognition of the diversity of actors within the humanitarian sector and the contexts in which they operate. With such diversity you cannot adopt a single approach to coordination. One of the secrets of successful coordination is to bring together different perceptions into a single concept.

The interests of UN Agencies, policy makers, and different NGOs are very different. Pluralism has to be recognised as a strategic advantage, particularly in long-term emergencies.

The UN needs to be clear about what they want internally before they attempt to coordinate externally. Non-UN players need to understand the UN approach.

Local structures have to be integrated in coordination wherever possible – an important ingredient to successful coordination.

Reality around 'power' of UN and NGOs. Should not pretend all equal partners. Coordination models need to recognise the different types and levels of diversity that exist within the sector providing clarity and transparency in respect of

- scope of coordination in a given situation – eg, to avoid duplication of delivery? to ensure complementarity of deliveries? political aspects? military or security aspects?
- whose interests coordination seeks to serve? eg, Single agencies? Increase coherence within the UN system? For donors to see where their funds are flowing smoothly? National/local/regional structures? Beneficiaries? International/regional policies?

Participation of all the different interest groups is fundamental to successful coordination and its credibility.

If assistance is the purpose of coordination then political agendas need to be separated out. Difficult for the UN system as a political body to claim coordination is impartial and humanitarian given the Security Council where political decisions are taken. Independence of humanitarian intervention by other players can be guaranteed. One has to accept possible contradictions within the humanitarian system.

NGOs need a space to act independently for their identify and fundraising. This recognises different mandates, cultures, constituencies etc. Goes against the single concept model.

Avoid implementation of monolithic systems.

What are the most appropriate models? Those in which participation is demanded under a credible leadership and where self-commitment is predominant.
What incentives are available? The added value for the beneficiaries and the NGO operations.
What tools can be used? Beneficiaries should be asked how successful our coordination efforts were.

Presentation iii. Joel McClellan, Executive Secretary SCHR

SCHR is often introduced as an NGO coordinating body – 9 humanitarian networks. Francois's zen definition, appreciated, how to say what it isn't and then working one's way back.

SCHR at its best facilitates cooperation among its member agencies, in the less illustrious moments probably better described as damage control.

Most recently in discussion with the CEXs of the SCHR members in respect of its role, highlighted the importance of its participation in the IASC process, the point of focus for today.

Inter Agency Standing Committee needs to be described as a process rather than a series of meetings, complementary to the ODI work at field level. The IASC interacts in Geneva almost on a daily basis.

The IASC is important because it brings together all of the actors in the humanitarian field. The only forum in which there is that regular interaction between UN and non-UN agencies at policy level.

The added value of the IASC process?

- A chance to bring our concerns together, based on field experience, and bring to the attention of others and the UN in particular field issues that need to be dealt with on an inter-agency level – eg, visas in Sudan, field coordination, choice of Humanitarian Coordinator or Resident Coordinator.

  The UN benefits from the fields of experience of non-UN agencies – eg, Missions of the senior IDP Network have all benefited from a non-UN presence in their team able to use their contacts in the country able to fill out the picture of the problems faced in trying to deal with IDPs in countries including Burundi, Angola, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

- IASC, when non-UN agencies are able to raise issues that UN personnel find difficult to raise themselves – Brahimi Report provides a perfect example – the initiative in the IASC for discussion on the gaps in the report in respect of humanitarian response and the shocking attempt to redefine what impartiality meant, was raised in the IASC working group and in the IASC meeting itself and discussed because it was initiated by non-UN agencies who felt a great deal of pressure from the Secretariat – this is still an on-going discussion.

- Ability to share advocacy strengths - eg, UN Conference on Small Arms, where the IASC was able to get an advocacy position and paper, giving a speech at the conference pushing on the fact that small arms is not a disarmament issue but a humanitarian issue and that there needs to be a humanitarian input.

- Sharing and jointly addressing issues of common concern – eg, the development of the Interagency Security Task-Force, which broke the log-jam around the UN attempt to impose a memorandum of understanding on security of NGOs. The Task Force, chaired by WFP had a series of meetings, produced a checklist to be used in the field to facilitate cooperation on security issues between the UN and non-UN agencies.

Problems?

- The expansion of the IASC has raised real problems in respect of its ability to react quickly in response to breaking emergencies. This led to several attempts within the IASC, beginning with the Secretary General's reform proposal, to streamline the process by setting up a Steering Committee made up of the front line operational UN agencies, one representative from the NGO community and one from the Red Cross family. The Steering Committee proposal floundered due to UN difficulties, so IASC remains unwieldy, leading to many decisions being made on the basis of informal consultations among those frontline operational agencies in emergencies and on the whole, SCHR finds it difficult to participate in that process. It has also changed the nature of Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) in which SCHR does not participate. ECHA was originally set up to deal with UN matters within the humanitarian community but has adopted a wider role partly due to the perceived unwieldiness of the IASC.

- The enthusiasm of agency representatives for the IASC process is not always shared by their bosses at HQ, so agencies continue to by-pass the IASC process and have to be regularly reminded that the inter-agency process exists and is working well and that they don't need, as individual agencies, to duplicate existing inter-agency provisions such as the Security Task Force. Within the IASC Working Group there is a strong esprit de corps built around daily contact

- Involvement of NGOs in Consolidated Appeals process (CAP) process. On the whole CAP is still viewed by NGOs as a UN fundraising instrument that has little relevance for them and therefore don't engage in the process. However, if the CAP is a planning tool setting priorities and strategies, the

Comprehensive Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAPs) need an input from the humanitarian community as whole if they are to be effective. Great progress has been made in OCHA in developing the CAP tools and there is an ability to use the CAP as a planning tool. But the issue that confronts us is the fundamental issue that the CAP process is driven almost entirely by the UN Country Team, an entity that comes from UNDP not the humanitarian community as a whole. One of the challenges is to see how that process in the field can be made more integrated, reflected that taking place at the international level. It is further compounded when the Resident Coordinator (RC) is also the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), a fundamental problem, but we are moving more and more towards the default position that the RC is appointed as HC. A situation even more exacerbated when you have an Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in addition in the field who wants to follow the tendency of the UN Secretariat to see coordination as coherence.

Presentation iv. Moira Reddick, Independent Consultant

From a field perspective, the key points that I wanted to make were:

- There is no set pattern for coordination in the field.
- The pattern of coordination depends on its role/function – eg, administrative; information sharing; diplomatic; negotiating.
- There is no accountability for the coordinating team or the Coordinator and those participating in the coordination function.
- There is no point of comparison between different models and mechanisms in different situations.
- There is no shared understanding of what leadership is and consequently it is difficult for people to judge whether they wish to follow that leadership.
- Poor coordination leads to paralysis of action.

In essence from a field perspective, coordination is an 'undefined discipline'. A key issue is that coordination and the model that might be adopted is very rarely addressed in emergency preparedness.

Those who will participate in a coordination process, particularly in a rapid onset situation, from the Resident Coordinator down, don't have a predefined understanding of their role nor of the desired outcomes of the coordination.

The best coordination process that I have ever participated in was in Sierra Leone in 1998. A very exclusive INGO forum, which responded to a very specific highly-politicised, insecure situation, limiting actors to a very distinct geographic area. Those involved knew each other well and the benefits of increased security and a greater understanding of the situation, provided clear incentives to participation in coordination. There was also a shared understanding of the purpose and nature of the mechanism and because of the nature of the context, the mechanism had time to grow and develop out of our shared needs. Quite unique in my experience.

In the past year I have been involved in 4 emergency contexts in the field where rapid change has been a central characteristic with consequent rapid change in needs. In all four situations the mechanism that was in place failed while I was there.

- **Guinea (end 2000)** – The UN presence on the ground, accustomed to dealing with a relatively stable situation, was ill-equipped to deal with the changing context and received no additional support to undertake appropriate analysis or deal with the emergency teams arriving from outside with different agendas, funding mechanisms and priorities.
- **Palestine (end 2000–early 2001)** – There was at the time an incredibly sophisticated, complex coordination mechanism on the ground, and with the escalation of the crisis at the end of 2000, OCHA sent in a team to assist the coordination mechanism. The team appeared peripheral to the existing UN coordination mechanism and, because of the lack of participation they engendered, the mechanisms the team developed to improve matters failed to meet the increased need for information sharing and analysis or to benefit the delivery of assistance.
- **Gujurat (Feb–March 2001)** – The initial UNDAC team informed those on the ground that their role was one of facilitation rather than leadership. I have never heard that description of coordination

before and it didn't work very well. The purpose of the UNDAC facilitated meetings was unclear, and by the end of week two, as Programme Coordinator for an NGO, I was expected to participate in 8 different coordination mechanisms – those led by two different UN agencies, those led by the Government, those led by two different donors (participation in the latter being mandatory if you wished to receive funds), that led by my own INGO where its 4 different bodies. None had the same body of actors, none were inclusive, and all were in different geographical areas.

- **Pakistan (Oct 2001)** – With the increased needs, the coordination on the ground has both been reinforced by an influx of different actors to coordinate but has also fractured and splintered. There is a lot of confusion in respect of who is leading the coordination and its different parts. Whether we are looking at an overall situation that should be led by the Regional Coordinator or whether we are looking at specific parts of the situation which should be led by those who led pre-September 11th. I sat in meetings and listened to MSF object to a sighting of the camps on the basis that it would make Sphere Standards impossible to implement.

Pakistan was the conclusion of a year during which I had witnessed coordination and coordination practices become more and more complicated and confused and where I watched the actors on the ground become increasingly paralysed. I do believe that NGOs and others do have a desire to coordinate because they understand the benefits both as individuals and organisations, and because increasingly there is a need to be seen to coordinate should you wish to benefit from donor funding and good standing in the community.

I hope that as this work develops it doesn't increase the gap in understanding between the academics, those who participate in ALNAP Biannuals and those seeking to implement in the field.

Plenary Discussion: key points

Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) dual role

- **Impartiality:** There is clear evidence that there are major problems when the UN RC becomes the HC in situations of crisis. The dual RC/HC role is a problem in respect of belligerent parties who don't necessarily distinguish beyond the UN label. Before the killing of UN colleagues in Burundi, the UN Coordinator there was also the UNDP Resident Representative; by adopting both roles she was placing her staff in danger. Because the UNDP Resident Representatives get their credentials from governments and appear in the media on a daily basis shaking hands with ministers, when you have a conflict, that person cannot be seen as an impartial humanitarian. The ambiguity of the relationship with the Government was highlighted in the Congo where a two-hat coordinator was not thought appropriate because a large part of the country was controlled by non-government entities. You needed a certain freedom of movement allowed by disassociation from the Government.
- **Human resource implications:** A key issue for OCHA is to look at the key skills required to make better selections for the post of RC/HC. There is a lot of debate on the process of selection within OCHA and what say OCHA has in it. OCHA has already changed selection procedures for Resident Coordinators and is closely monitoring and evaluating these, to identify precisely the competencies required of Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators and to get more appropriate coordinators into the system. Qualification is of course critical, but the failure of the Jakarta-based Resident Coordinator in respect of the problems in Indonesia would not have been solved if he had had better skills.
- **Issue of separation of roles:** A principal point is that an RC is the head of a UN Team and an HC must be head of an Interagency team, which is more than the UN, that is what humanitarian response is about. The RC doesn't have those instincts, the UNDP has the least experience of any of the organisations working with NGOs. The humanitarian response is an interagency response and it is really important that these two roles are separated. Separation between the RC and HC is really key. Where humanitarian coordination has been good, it has been led by someone with those specialist skills. OCHA isn't necessarily wedded to the combined role in all circumstances and it will be important to identify when it is or isn't appropriate.

Security and coordination

- There is a need to use the UN to try to create an appropriate framework for protection of all humanitarian workers in the field – eg, Secretary General report on humanitarian security, where one of the issues they are trying to address through a General Assembly Resolution is to ensure there is no climate of impunity. The member states are responsible for follow up on security issues and incidences as well and we need NGOs to participate in that in terms of information sharing and involvement in order to get effective protection and security.
- NGOs have resisted having their security coordinated by the UN. Most of the time the UN Security Coordinator in the field is a former member of the special military forces. NGOs manage their security through acceptance, principles, negotiation etc. They don't function on deterrence, protection and defence.
- Representing the UN as militaristic in this respect is not quite accurate, UNSACORD may well be led by ex-military, but the way in which they function is very similar to that of NGOs. Negotiation is the only real option available. In addition, a lot of NGO security personnel are also military.
- The basic principle that security decisions need to be based on security considerations not political ones is crucial. Separation of roles has been a major problem in Afghanistan, particularly in relation to security, where the UN dealt its credibility a major blow when it caved in to pressure from the UK and US in 1998 not to allow their nationals to serve inside Afghanistan for the UN – a decision that UN staff in the field were very unhappy about as well as NGOs, and it has made a major difference to the UN being seen as an impartial body in Afghanistan. Donors lent very heavily on the NGOs, primarily DFID, and withdrew funds from NGOs that sent international staff into the field (the US told NGOs to make their own security decisions and funding would still flow).

Communication

- **'**Coordinating with' or 'coordinated by'? Afghanistan last year, 3 different groups, the Islamabad crowd (NGOs, UN agencies, politically top heavy structures), the Peshawar crowd (NGOs, UN agencies), the Kabul crowd, and a total lack of understanding between the three groups. Difficult to communicate with those in Peshawar, they aren't in their office; those in Islamabad, they are at cocktails or at the swimming pool. It was impossible to communicate let alone coordinate – not only between institutions but also due to the distance between the different players and where the action is going on.
- A lot of what has been discussed today has been articulated extremely well in Koenraad van Brabant's publications, particularly the 'Black Box' idea he wrote about two years ago, as well as in some of the ODI publications. I haven't seen any constructive efforts towards benchmarking best practice of both formal and informal information channels.
- This discussion has highlighted areas of acceptance – eg, Information sharing is widely accepted where there is assurance that such information will not be abused.
- There has been strong improvement in coordination particularly in the field and particularly by sector - WFP and increasingly FAO. What coordination is for these is trying to establish a shared policy platform, based on their ability as lead agency to coordinate, collate and share information. There are many examples where people set out to evaluate by asking the question: did the coordinating agency enhance its reputation by the way it played out that information function in such a way that those who shared the platform had a clear idea of what they were doing, could share what they had achieved, and could get a sense of where they were going next – coordination does not seem to be much more than that.

Coordination Structures

- Managing coordination: It has been mentioned that OCHA's role is not to be directive or operational but then the East Timor evaluation credits the directive approach taken by OCHA. So there are certain circumstances where coordination by command rather than coordination by consensus may be legitimate. The coordinating role is not just OCHA, some of the NGO platforms also have that role.
- Lines of command: Once you fall outside the UN system, where clear lines of command can be defined, and try and integrate local government structures, NGOs and others you can no longer impose lines of command.

- IASC: Comments on the IASC bring us back to the report observation that it is essentially a HQ level discussion forum with precious little relevance to the problem that people are facing in the field. The report also flags the resistance to changes in coordination structure and the lack of lesson-learning culture within the UN and some other agencies.
- The politics of coordination: Are agencies willing to cede some of their authority to act relatively autonomously in the interests of increased coordination in complex humanitarian emergencies. The jury is still out on that.
- Donors*:* Donors also have their agendas and are insistent on coordination, but the structures and requirements whereby that coordination is imposed or sought create problems at operational level.

NGOs and Coordination:

- NGOs don't want to be coordinated but concede that in order to develop effective programmes at the local level you need more collaboration by the NGO family. Should the NGOs be involved in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA)?
- NGOs can't have it both ways – they can't have coordination and effectiveness on the ground, and the kind of independence that they would normally want in most situations – an issue addressed by the ODI report.
- My experience is that NGOs have no clearer an understanding or definition of coordination than OCHA. There have always been multiple coordination models, but I recognise that a fundamental weakness is when coordination models don't go up the chain to the planning level so that in the long term decision-making isn't being influenced, but better ways to cooperate are being found.
- Without their autonomy NGOs have no raison d'etre, and cannot therefore simply deliver themselves up to an external command structure. They do not wish to be coordinated but they do wish to participate in coordination - its very difficult to maintain a balance.
- NGOs do coordinate; where they have problems with coordination is where there is no transparency about the different levels of coordination, the different issues – political and strategic – and the extent to which they take priority over operational issues. Participation in operational coordination meetings is not a problem – NGOs do have a problem where those meetings are being guided by political issues.

Coordination models/mechanisms

- Access: Coordinating when you have access is clearly much easier than when you don't have access. Need to think of models in the political and military context in which you are operating not just in relation to the type of disaster you are facing.
- Regional/Cross-border coordination: The other level of coordination that has not been talked about so far is cross-border coordination. In many of the situations we have examined, cross-border coordination is key. Coming out of the Georgetown University project case studies looking at humanitarian response to complex forced migration, is the fact that a lot of those interviewed look back fondly at the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) 1980s as one of the most effective coordination mechanisms. A case where very strong leadership did help to forge a regional coordination mechanism that operated, because strong leadership can allow for individual autonomy and the ability to respond to different national situations.

  - **CAP**
  - One of the main problems with the CAP is that it has to be launched on a certain date at which point it has been prepared and issued to the donors. A fundamental problem is that famine in the northern-hemisphere does not match famine in the southern-hemisphere, so that December/January is not the right time to present an analysis of the global famine situation as well as failing to accommodate sudden crisis.
  - The predictability of its publication is incredibly important for donors. Donors don't wait for the UN to tell them when the next drought will happen and reserve funds for those not in the CAP.
  - CAP is not a process where NGOs can see any consistency. Sometimes the Red Cross is part of it sometimes not. It is a very long process and takes much too long for NGOs.

- CAP is clearly emerging as an issue, and despite the improvements that have been made, it still needs to move from a compilation to a strategic planning process, in which people not only talk to each other about what they plan to ask for but identify the gaps and make sure that some responsibility is taken to address those gaps.

➢ **CHAP**

- There is some confusion over the role of CHAP, which by and large NGOs and others buy into, and the financing mechanism. OCHA is in the process of trying to clarify that position.
- The question needs to be asked whether the CHAP is an effective strategic planning tool or whether we need other strategic planning tools.

Long-term impact of coordination mechanisms

- The Sierra Leone Code of Conduct emerged from that process building on the Liberian Code of Conduct. It has influenced thinking within NGOs and engendered a lot of discussion at HQ about how to manage in such situations. Both the work of NGOs and others in Liberia in the mid-90s and then the work of the INGO group in Sierra Leone in 1998 led to a certain mode of operating and adapting of systems in that kind of context. There was a lot of influence on thinking at policy level and a lot of interaction between those like Nick Leader at ODI and input into policy development. However, the experience on the ground was that once the situation changed and the group disbanded there was no residual effect in the way the organisations functioned together.

Obstacles to Coordination

- A question of power brokerage between competitors in the field – re funds, media coverage etc. this has to be addressed openly. The issue of power brokerage can only be addressed and resolved if done so openly and it involves all – eg, local structures, NGOs, UN and sometimes also beneficiaries.
- Another reason why coordination fails is down to meeting mania. We need to find coordination models that are not overly time consuming. In some operations, there has been a mapping unit attached to OCHA, a reporting mechanism to allow regularly updating of implementing agencies.

Measuring Coordination

- How do we measure whether coordination is happening or not? What are the incentives for coordination?
- What we want coordination to do is to allow us to better achieve humanitarian aims through humanitarian principles. What we want is equity of access and coverage of all those humanitarian activities, effectiveness of our work and efficiency of use of our resources. Taking those incentives/purpose we should be able to develop the tools to measure the effectiveness of coordination from a beneficiary, provider and other perspectives.
- Coordination is not an end in itself but a means to an end, a means to improve process. It can be measured in terms of reducing unnecessary redundancies, filling gaps, ensuring more effective early response to situations, a variety of things that a coordination mechanism should help with. There also needs to be some type of outcome measures, but if the beneficiaries have not benefited in many ways then the coordination is useless – that is why so many of us have focussed on the security issues because you can have a great coordination mechanism that comes to nought if you don't gain access to beneficiaries.

Indicators and definitions

- There is a view that if you can't measure it you can't manage it. Within coordination the situation has two extremes – we know when it is poor and when it is excellent but that tends to be context specific and often down to a particular group of individuals in a particular situation. The key challenge is how to do it reliably in the big middle ground where there is opportunity for coordination but also opportunity for improving the degree of coordination. The difficulty there is that you never know whether you could have done it better. This raises the issue of how do you benchmark a quality coordination framework and put it into some sort of framework or system that allows you to apply it repeatedly albeit in very different form given different contexts.
- Work needs to be taken forward on developing a performance framework for assessing performance and what is good coordination. USAID has a list of process indicators that they use, and judging from other comments round the table, I suspect that others have formal or informal lists of indicators that they use or have at their disposal.

- What is needed is for OCHA to develop a common understanding on coordination and on procedures and then you can have performance indicators – there is a danger in drawing up performance indicators in a vacuum without relating them to the agencies and what they are trying to achieve.
- It might help to identify indicators of good performance currently in use as a way of defining what coordination is. For example, USAID's include: i) Minimising duplication, ii) Maximising joint assessments; iii) Maximising coverage.
- A mapping of current indicators can be used to frame your definition and then if it results in different definitions for different levels or for different types of coordination in different contexts, that will be part of clarifying the process – with some indicators not necessarily specific to an overarching definition but to a series of context specific definitions – a matrix.
- The task is not a definitional one, but one to identify the purposes of coordination which might vary enormously, but once these are identified, we can identify the associated activities and see how far those activities have gone in the delivery of those purposes, allowing a measure of their success.
- Important to refer back to the full ODI report, which covers in great detail coordination tools; what coordination means and the associated activities. Any attempt to look at performance indicators should start with the main report, which holds an enormous amount of information.
- If you are going to chose indicators perhaps you should chose measures of the negative aspects of coordination so that you can figure out when priorities shifted in a manner they weren't happy about. Look at the aspects that are stopping people from wanting to be coordinated.

Inclusiveness of Coordination mechanisms

- When you look at the policy coordination platform the first thing you have to say is who is not on it. There is no place on a policy coordination platform for beneficiaries, no place for NGOs not directly involved with the funding agencies (bilateral or multilateral). It is important to realise how limited the policy platform is. We know that most of the activities that go on as humanitarian assistance go on beyond the agencies who proclaim themselves to be the cavalry riding over the hill to the rescue. We know that local coping mechanisms are much more significant but not represented on the policy platform. We know that particularly because of the role of the US and the size of its contribution that significantly more money has come directly from NGO fundraising than we see through bilateral and multilateral donors. One of the spectacular successes for the humanitarian community was the ability in the resettlement of Kosovo to put on a winter wheat programme when the humanitarian agencies only went in July. In respect of the seed inputs, less than 20% came in through the UN agencies, 22% came in through NGOs, but the 58% came in through the markets. We need to consider coordination not just of supply inputs, but coordination of a policy framework that addresses the humanitarian problem is going to have to be much wider than it is at the moment.

Humanitarian principles

- Impartiality and neutrality are very problematic areas in Afghanistan. Increasingly we are worried about the whole issue of coordination in Afghanistan in relation to the military effort and humanitarian aid being used within that framework, and particularly where the US is becoming overwhelmingly the largest donor in that country. The UN's ability to stand separate from that with clearly defined lines, making sure that it actually stands on humanitarian principles in terms of its coordination will be crucial. And unless we manage to maintain that separation, whatever structures we have for coordination, ultimately we will still fail.
- OCHA needs to be very clear about its humanitarian mission, because one of the issues arising, as the UN rightfully takes a greater political role in these difficult contexts, is how OCHA takes care that its humanitarian role is very distinct from other UN actors also involved in the context. If they don't do that then agencies like the ICRC will simply step aside. The consequences of OCHA's engagement in the political arena will compromise it and will weaken its ability to be part of the coordination system.
- The impasse in coordination requires concession on the part of UN agencies, NGOs etc. There is common ground that can be found for some new and more effective coordination arrangements, but for the NGOs to commit themselves to being coordinated by the UN before the UN resolves this question of the interface between the humanitarian and political sides of the UN would be suicidal, so

these things have to happen in tandem. The ODI report opting for the Humanitarian Coordinator alone option, as distinct from the Resident Coordinator and in preference to the Lead Agency option, can be interpreted as a way of affirming the principles of humanitarian independence and impartiality and neutrality within the UN family. There is concern regarding the comment as to whether or not that approach is going to be adopted in the situation evolving in Afghanistan. Brahimi has two deputies, a political and humanitarian deputy, but I am not sure how much independence the humanitarian side would have.

- If you look at the full text of the ODI report, there is a very timely section on coherence that responds to the issues that we are facing right now related to this push for coherence. The question has been raised of Ambassador Brahimi in his new role and his two deputies - in fact the two deputies were in place before Brahimi - but it was made quite clear at the Afghanistan forum where he made his first appearance that the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator would report to him, as well as the previous personal representative of the Secretary General who now takes on the political side. This in the hands of a very competent experienced person, but someone who in his commission showed very little sensitivity to the need to maintain an independent humanitarian response. It was all about coherence and very little about the special role of the needs of an effective humanitarian response. If this continues we are going to find a split that coordination will not paper over, because certainly a number of our agencies are not going to buy coherence, because it runs contrary to their commitment to the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct to which they are held accountable.
- Humanitarian action is frequently political and some of the solutions put forward by humanitarians are also political. Issues of separation are far more difficult to manage, and at the very least there needs to be coordination within the political structures to ensure that humanitarian principles are upheld in a way that is sensitive to the political environment taking place – that is the idea behind Brahimi's structure.
- OCHA is doing a lot of work to argue within the UN framework, ECHA, Executive Committee for Peace and Security (ECPS) etc the importance of maintaining humanitarian integrity and impartiality, particularly at this time. However, it may also be a time when there is a congruence of interest on the political side, because Brahimi himself does not want the UN to be dragged into a role as the transitional government for Afghanistan. There is a recognition of the need for the UN to maintain its impartiality if it is to retain its mediating role. So there can be a congruity of interest and I don't think it should always be viewed as a conflicting situation.

Who should be responsible for coordination?

- Responsibility for coordination under ideal circumstances lies with the national/local authorities – the fact that in that they are weak and in many emergency situations do not exist, has given rise to this proliferation of coordination mechanisms. We need to involve the national authorities.
- Although not in the current rolling workplan, at the April 2001 meeting there was a proposal to include a new activity on developing an incentive framework for coordination and it scored very poorly. There was a comment by a UN agency, that if ALNAP went down that road it might have to withdraw from ALNAP, which highlights the territorial sensitivities, that the UN sees coordination as their responsibility.
- UN has as many problems of coordination between UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF as there are between UN agencies, NGOs and the rest. Each agency has its own responsibilities, in the case of UNHCR it is still not certain whether they will deal with IDPs or refugees, UNICEF has its own responsibilities, UNDP lives in its own world with a single mission. It should be understood that there is a complex within the UN itself which makes the coordination issue even more sensitive than it is otherwise.
- Natural disasters require different sorts of coordination due to their rapid onset. UNDAC is not the coordinating mechanism, and not designed as such. There has been a very interesting study on the lessons from Gujurat, discussed in the IASC, which highlights the problems experienced in Gujurat and led to quite heated discussion about the role of UNDAC in Gujurat. What didn't emerge was that coordination responsibility lay with the RC and there is an issue as to how far that responsibility was taken currently under discussion.

Coordination: Next steps

- **Resolving the coordination problem:** RC/HC dilemma is such an old story. ALNAP should consider the problematic of change rather than repeatedly highlighting the problem. What has been the block to change? Where is the problem in the system? What type of advocacy has been attempted by donor governments? What other advocacy has been attempted by NGOs to unblock the system? And why have these advocacy initiatives failed? What type of initiatives will engender change? Because until this is unblocked, humanitarian coordination will not have good leadership and the UN will continue to become less relevant. I sense a lack of creativity around how we should move ahead. Evaluation another evaluation. … What about peer reviews, and lighter inclusive processes involving NGOs, UN, Red Cross, donors, looking at events in particular contexts trying to find other mechanisms to promote better practice in humanitarian action?
- **Follow-up to the ODI study:** A lot of work is already going on in different areas. The more detailed report refers to OCHA's change management process and that is already underway and some of the recommendations on the staffing side and on continuity in humanitarian staffing, in particular, are being enacted. The other way is to distil the case studies and key issues into our training procedures, already being used in CAP training. There will be movement on standard operating procedures to try and provide far clearer guidance for humanitarian coordinators, both on lessons learned on coordination and in respect of minimum requirements for recruitment.

ALNAP's role

- *There is a role for ALNAP to play in taking evaluations like this ODI one and producing discussion among the various stakeholders in the international system to move these recommendations forward – a future agenda for ALNAP.*
- *In respect of addressing the question 'What tools can be used to assess whether coordination mechanisms are performing well or not?' Is there some scope for joint work between OCHA and ALNAP members to take that forward? Should we establish an Interest Group in which OCHA has a central role? ALNAP could start the mapping followed by an OCHA led working group?*
- *ALNAP can draw out the indicators, collating them and feeding them back to members as the basis for discussion and development and refinement of indicators for assessing the effectiveness of coordination. It is really the responsibility of OCHA to develop performance indicators but the ALNAP Secretariat could do this preliminary work using the Listserv.*

Session 2: 'Strengthening Programme Monitoring Systems' Chaired by Francois Grunewald

Presentation 1. 'Monitoring & the ALNAP Quality Proforma' Tony Beck

Summary

1. Current thinking on monitoring
Current thinking on monitoring falls into two camps, between those who put more emphasis on accountability, and those who emphasise lesson-learning. The relative attention given each of these organising principles to a large extent determines who carries out the monitoring, and the methods used. Those more interested in lesson learning and application of lessons learned focus on understanding social relationships and the reasons for intervention results. Those more interested in accountability focus on whether results are being achieved or not. Examples of lessons-learning include utilisation-focused evaluation, and process monitoring.

Humanitarian assistance has not learnt from the good practice developed in the general evaluation field over the last ten years, and development agencies are not good at either kind of monitoring, whether accountability or lessons-learned focused.

2. Monitoring in agency monitoring and evaluation guides
Agency guides tended to focus on questions of accountability, although at the same time attempting to include lessons-learning and participation. The potential contradiction in combining the two approaches is not for the most part considered.

3. Current state of monitoring in humanitarian action
Despite some good practice, current monitoring of humanitarian action is poor. Reasons for this are usually not provided in evaluation reports, but may include lack of technical capacity and funds, lack of follow-up on recommendations by agencies, and "political" issues such as the need to negotiate objective statements among many parties and the aversion of agency staff to being held individually accountable for results.

4. The ALNAP Quality Proforma
The ALNAP Quality Proforma was developed for assessment of evaluation reports to feed into the ALNAP *Annual Review* of evaluations of humanitarian assistance. It could potentially be developed for monitoring purposes, and some examples of how this might be done are provided below. Before more work is done on generic monitoring tools, however, it is recommended that an assessment be made of current monitoring tools, why they are not more effective, and what the needs of donors are; and that the development of additional tools be done with the active participation of future users.

Introduction
This short paper was commissioned by the ALNAP Secretariat for a session on strengthening programme monitoring systems, as part of a larger project on the development of tools for the assessment of evaluations of humanitarian action. The paper first reviews current thinking on monitoring in the evaluation field in general; second it analyses coverage of monitoring in monitoring and evaluation guides; third it reports on results of an analysis of monitoring in 1999-2000 evaluation reports covered in the ALNAP Annual Review 2001 *Humanitarian Action: Learning from evaluation*; and fourth it examines whether the ALNAP Proforma, developed to assess the quality of evaluations of humanitarian actions for the ALNAP *Annual Review*, can be adapted for use as a monitoring tool.

1. Current thinking on monitoring
Views on monitoring fall into the same two camps as do attitudes to evaluation – basically there is a division as to the emphasis to be put on accountability as opposed to lesson learning, that is between an emphasis on determining what happened as opposed to determining why it happened. At the two extremes

those more interested in accountability tend to be economists/planners and those in lessons learning social anthropologists; but there is almost always some overlap in perspective.

There is agreement in the evaluation field that monitoring can be a useful process, but there does not appear to be agreement on who should carry out the monitoring, how it should be carried it out, and what use should be made of the results (see eg, Chen, 1996).

Historically in the US there were two monitoring approaches, one carried out by external evaluators called process evaluation, which focused on results through the implementation phase; and the other carried out by programme staff, focusing on monitoring for management purposes (Rossi and Freeman 1993). Over time as evaluations have become more user-friendly, these two functions have blended together. The difference between these two approaches appears to be use made of information – process evaluations tend to focus more on making judgements on the interim results of the intervention as well as understanding why these results have occurred – eg, for reporting to funders; and monitoring for management purposes seems to focus more on incorporating corrective measures as a regular part of program operations, ie, an internal corrective mechanism.

But there is also currently different emphasis in the different evaluation process on the types of information that should be collected. Those interested in lesson learning and application of lessons learned focus on understanding social relationships and the reasons for intervention success or failure. Those interested in accountability focus on whether results are being achieved or not.

One of the strongest proponents of lesson learning and lesson application is Michael Patton, for example in his discussion of "implementation evaluation" and "process evaluation", where he argues for a focus on utility: "The problem with pure outcomes evaluation is that the results give decision makers little information to guide action. Simply learning that outcomes are high or low doesn't tell decision makers much about what to do. … Process evaluation focuses on the internal dynamics and actual operations of a program in an attempt to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Process evaluations ask: What's happening and why? How do the parts of the program fit together? How do participants experience and perceive the program?" (Patton, 1997, p199, 206).

One variant of implementation evaluation from the development field is termed "process monitoring". The focus here is on understanding the process that takes place, seen as "an important shift away from the focus on project inputs and outputs and the assumed mechanical link between them" (Mosse, 1998, p4). It criticises the "formal" approach of monitoring and evaluation – that is the testing of a given project hypothesis by measuring output and impact in terms of pre-defined indicators, because "this approach leaves little room to describe unplanned impact or the unexpected change; nor does it help explain *why* or *how* particular outcomes were achieved." (ibid, p5).

The relevance of this current thinking for monitoring of humanitarian action is as follows:

- There is a disjuncture between work on monitoring in the evaluation field and work on monitoring in development agencies. Development agencies are not learning from good practice in evaluation outside of the work of others in the development field. Subsequently they are about ten years behind evaluation practice and research in the US.
- Development agencies are not good at either kind of monitoring, whether accountability or lesson learning focused.

In addition, the Development Assistance Committee study on the experience of the institutionalisation of results based management in development agencies notes that the introduction of results based management into agencies has broken down traditional boundaries between monitoring and evaluation:

- The idea that performance monitoring focuses on implementation while evaluation focuses on results is fading. Performance monitoring now emphasises measuring results, and evaluations focus on a broad array of performance issues, including implementation.
- The idea that monitoring is an internal function whereas evaluation is an external, independent function is diminishing.

- Both performance monitoring and evaluation are increasingly being viewed as management decision-making tools whose timing should be geared to decision making needs. (DAC, 2000).

2. Monitoring in agency monitoring and evaluation guides

I looked at CIDA (1999), DFID (2001), ECHO (1999), IRC (2001, to be covered in a presentation in this session), UNDP (1999), USAID (2001) and the World Bank (1996) guidelines for their guidance on monitoring. Except for ECHO, all were development related guides. It was not possible from agency websites to determine if separate guides are available for the monitoring of humanitarian action, and there wasn't time available to search further than websites, but it would certainly be worthwhile in an attempt to strengthen monitoring systems to analyse guidance and forms specific to humanitarian assistance where these exist.

Definitions of monitoring were fairly similar in the agencies, eg: "Monitoring in the field is a continuous process coinciding with the implementation of the programme and is intended to correct any deviation from the operational objectives. Monitoring will often yield information which can be used during evaluations." (ECHO, 1999, p26).

The most common features of the guides to monitoring were that they:

- focused on accountability and ensuring that interventions were on line to meet their objectives;
- were based on linear planning, such as the Log Frame;
- emphasised the importance of performance indicators;
- focused to a lesser degree on lessons learning and the need to feed back into the planning process;
- emphasised the need for participation of relevant stakeholders in monitoring;
- noted that somewhere between 3 and 10 per cent of project costs should be spent on M&E functions (reality is probably less than 1 per cent); and
- were full of exhortations (objectives must be clear and measurable) and generally earnest and boring in style and presentation (ie, they were not user-friendly and didn't make monitoring sound as if it could be an enjoyable process).

A good example is DFID's definition

> "Project monitoring, reporting and reviews are management tools that help ensure that all DFID project funds are used effectively and efficiently, within the agreed time frame and budget; ensure continuous learning and quality control for DFID during the specific project and into new project; BUT they are not DFID "policing" activities; mechanisms for participatory monitoring should be developed during the project design stage in partnership with the recipients." (DFID, 2001)

In general the guides and definitions were attempting to be all encompassing and to meet the needs of different uses and to try and bridge the gap between the need for accountability and the need for lesson learning. The potential difficulties or contradictions involved in carrying out both a lessons learning and accountability approach at the same time were not dealt with, for example the fact that different methods and data sources might be used with each of these approaches. Nor were the potential contradictions involved in promoting participation in monitoring while at the same time attempting to ensure impartiality discussed. This may not be the most useful approach for staff carrying out the monitoring, who need to know: why to collect data, how much information is it useful to collect, in what form, how often, with what reliability, and the purposes for which the information will be used. As Borton and Macrae noted (1997, p55) "A balance clearly needs to be struck in terms of the reporting demands placed on relief staff working in often difficult situations, and ensuring that information flows are of sufficient quality to inform future decision-making and to facilitate institutional learning. Central to this balancing act will be donors identifying their priority information needs….". I think in most cases priority information needs are not being identified.

But as I suggest in the next section, lack of clear guidance is probably not the most important factor in the generally poor quality of monitoring of humanitarian action.

3. Current state of monitoring in humanitarian action

This section presents some findings from the ALNAP Annual Review 2001, which aims to provide the humanitarian sector with a means to reflect, annually, on its performance, and to raise awareness of the principal findings of evaluations of humanitarian action published over the previous year. One part of the Annual Review analysed a set of 55 evaluation reports from 1999-2000 (that is most of the evaluation reports in English published for those years, including 17 related to Kosovo). Given that the Annual Review assessment included 5 synthesis reports that covered some 250 evaluations through the 1990s, it is probably one of the most comprehensive assessments of the content and quality of evaluation reports of humanitarian action to date. I also went back over 20 of the evaluation reports which are in the public domain which were covered in the 2001 Annual Review to re-check findings on monitoring.

Findings were not for the most part encouraging. Findings on the 17 Kosovo reports were that (ALNAP, 2001, p93):

All the reports agree that, for whatever reason (they never address why): "Uniform tracking, monitoring and evaluation systems and approaches were not applied in the emergency, nor was adequate capacity available for these functions."

The assessment of the 38 non-Kosovo evaluations came to the same conclusion (ibid, p51): "Most agencies and partners were found to be weak in this area with considerable consequence."

Individual reports lamented the lack of monitoring, which meant that it was impossible to draw conclusions about impact. Typical of many others is Danida (1999, p13): "Due to deficient monitoring systems there is little systematic information on how far the activities achieved their purpose." And Danida (1999a, p147): "In general, agency monitoring and evaluation systems do not allow for an assessment of programme impact to be made."

This is not to suggest that there was not some good practice in monitoring found, only that good practice was in the minority. There were a number of cases of good monitoring which was then used to fine tune programmes. I had meant to highlight some examples of good practice but the problem I came up against was that while the evaluation reports describe these examples of good practice, and in some cases the results of the good practice, they don't explain why some agencies were able to do well where others couldn't. While they determine that a significant problem exists concerning lack of monitoring, they do not for the most part explain in any systematic fashion the constraints to better monitoring and how these constraints might be overcome. Nor do they compare interventions where there was both good and poor monitoring. With one or two notable exceptions, we don't learn for example if greater participation in monitoring activities by the affected population would have improved monitoring performance, and even in the exceptions details of process are few. In other words, most of the evaluation reports focus on accountability rather than lesson learning, that is what happened rather than why it happened.

One of the potential means of improving monitoring is through recommendations made in evaluation reports. But in consequence of lack of general analysis, the recommendations that monitoring should be improved are quite general, eg, better training or more staff, and these recommendations are not for the most part tied into in-depth analysis; because of this they are unlikely to be feasible. If one of the responsibilities of an evaluator is to make feasible recommendations, you could say that most evaluators have failed in the respect of attempting to improve monitoring. This in turn results from a failure of commissioning agencies and evaluation offices to ask for more detailed analysis. Evaluators attention to monitoring thus needs to be much more detailed and sophisticated, examining why good practice works when it does, how it might be replicated, why monitoring is general doesn't work, and what can be done about it.

Let me summarise under generic headings some of the findings in the evaluation reports, and venture a few thoughts, based on some of the evaluation reports and also general experience of results based management in general, as to why monitoring is not better:

i. **Technical issues:** such lack of clear reporting requirements; donors not prioritising the information they need; too few staff and lack of capacity among staff (eg, how to use indicators); and lack of good

existing data on which to build monitoring. Staff may also not be given adequate reasons for collecting data in the middle of an emergency or natural disaster.

ii. **Funding issues**: unwillingness to allocate adequate funds to monitoring. There do not appear to be standards across the humanitarian system as to funds required for monitoring.

iii. **Follow-up issues**: recommendations in monitoring reports do not appear for the most part to be followed up.

iv. **Political issues**: the need to negotiate and renegotiate objectives and goals among different partners (government, agency, NGO) and to be flexible as an intervention is ongoing, making monitor a changing situation more complex than matching inputs to outputs and outcomes.

v. **Accountability and incentive issues**: project managers may not be keen to be held accountable for results, and incentive structures in agencies do not encourage this. Examples are promotion of participation and gender equality, required by most agencies in policy statements, but with little enforcement.

Despite the fact that getting points 4 and 5 right is central for a performance management system to work, most guides, guidance as well as recommendations in evaluation reports focus on point one – technical capacity, and more or less ignore the last two. Monitoring is unlikely to improve unless political and accountability issues are taken into account. While these are often wider institutional issues, evaluators need to factor them in when making recommendations on monitoring for the recommendations to be feasible. Otherwise responsibility shifts from institutional factors at HQ to project managers in the field.

4. The ALNAP Quality Proforma and monitoring

The ALNAP Quality Proforma was originally developed for the meta-analysis of evaluations of humanitarian action for the 2001 ALNAP Annual Review. The idea was to combine current thinking on key areas that need to be included in evaluations of humanitarian action with current good practice in the evaluation field. For the 2001 Annual Review the Proforma was sent to ALNAP Full Members for comment, and then pre-tested and blind tested by two assessors. The version used for 2001 is included as an Annex in the Annual Review. For the 2002 Annual Review, Peter Wiles and I have been revising the Proforma along with the ALNAP Secretariat, and comments on the latest version have been requested again from ALNAP Full Members and I believe the latest version was presented for comment to the ALNAP Steering Committee earlier this week. Much of the discussion around the Proforma has been on its purpose and uses, what it should contain, and the system we developed for rating the individual Proforma elements.

As a part of its workplan, ALNAP is focusing on monitoring, and in response to comments from some Full Members, ALNAP asked if I could do some further work on the Proforma and assess its potential value as a monitoring tool. As the original use was primarily for internal ALNAP purposes, the Proforma has unfortunately taken on the earnest tone found in many evaluation guides, which is something I think would need to be corrected if it is to be used externally. In addition, it doesn't deal with the political issues and accountability issues that I highlighted as central constraints to better monitoring. But, it may have some modest uses as a practical monitoring checklist and reminder about areas such as affected population participation, gender equality and international standards which appear to be missing from most current monitoring processes.

The current Proforma divides into six sections as follows:

- Evaluation Background
- Evaluation Planning
- Contextual Analysis
- Approach and Methods
- Good Practice
- Report Findings and Presentation

As much of the information that is gathered for evaluations is similar to that gathered in monitoring, parts of the Proforma could be developed to support monitoring functions, particularly in areas such as needs assessment. For example, the current sections on contextual analysis and good practice could be adapted for monitoring as follows:

Contextual analysis: Organisational Considerations	
Area of enquiry and guidance notes	**Potential changes for a monitoring focus**
Quality of information on, and analysis of, organisational guiding principles? The report should include an analysis of the organisational factors that may have a direct or indirect influence on the performance of the intervention being evaluated including mandate and policies, codes and/or standards adhered to.	Organisational guiding principles Monitoring should include an analysis of organisational factors that are having a direct or indirect influence on the performance of the intervention, including assessment of whether organisational policies, codes and/or standards are being adhered to.
Quality of information on, and analysis of, organisational human resource policies, procedures and practices? The report should demonstrate an understanding of the human resource factors that might have impacted on the performance of the intervention being evaluated (eg, management systems throughout the emergency; release of senior managers to the field; level of experience/expertise of field staff; recruitment procedures; staff turn over; field/HQ relations; incentive structures; briefing and debriefing procedures; training).	Organisational human resource policies, procedures and practices. Monitoring should analyse the human resource factors that are impacting on the performance of the intervention (eg, management systems; release of senior managers to the field; level of experience/expertise of field staff; recruitment procedures; staff turn over; field/HQ relations; incentive structures; briefing and debriefing procedures; training).
Quality of information on, and analysis of, programme considerations? The report should demonstrate an understanding of the planning, assessment, monitoring procedures and learning practices that might have shaped and developed the intervention being evaluated (eg, partners used and selection criteria; indicators used and selection criteria; reference to reports from similar interventions; reference to international standards including international law; in-house learning; field reports, interim evaluations).	Analysis of programme considerations. Monitoring should consider planning and implementation procedures and learning practices that may have shaped the intervention (eg, choice of technique; partners used and selection criteria; indicators chosen and selection criteria; reference to international standards, including international law; in-house learning).

Good practice: International Standards	
Area of enquiry and guidance notes	**Potential changes for a monitoring focus**
Reference to international standards? The report should make reference to appropriate international standards (eg, International humanitarian and human rights law; the Red Cross/ NGO Code of Conduct; the Madrid Declaration) and developing standards such as Sphere.	Reference to international standards Monitoring should assess whether international standards are being adhered to (eg, International humanitarian and human rights law; the Red Cross/ NGO Code of Conduct; the Madrid Declaration and developing standards such as Sphere).

Good practice: Social Differentiation	
Area of enquiry and guidance notes	**Potential changes for a monitoring focus**
Consideration given to gender equality? The report should demonstrate consideration given to gender in the evaluation process itself, as well as commenting on the intervention's performance (eg, did the intervention conform with the implementing organisation's gender equality policy). The effect of the intervention on gender equality should have been visibly addressed and integrated throughout the report.	Consideration given to gender equality. Monitoring should consider attention given to gender equality in the implementation process (eg, is the intervention conform to the implementing organisation's gender equality policy? Is the intervention likely to promote gender equality or the special needs of women and/or men?).
Consideration given to the vulnerable/ marginalised? The report should demonstrate visible and meaningful consideration given to vulnerable and marginalised groups (eg, elderly, disabled, children, HIV sufferers) by the evaluation process itself, as well as commenting on the intervention's performance (eg, identification of needs; targeting; consultation; overall impact).	Consideration given to the vulnerable/ marginalised. Monitoring should analyse whether the intervention is giving adequate attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups (eg, elderly, disabled, children, HIV sufferers).

Good practice: Stakeholder Consultation	
Area of enquiry and guidance notes	**Potential changes for a monitoring focus**
Consultation with affected population? The report should outline the nature and scope of evaluation consultation with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries within the affected population (eg, how sampling was carried out; number consulted; breakdown by relevant characteristics such as sex, ethnic background). The report should also comment on the quality of consultation and participation of the affected population in the intervention.	Consultation with affected population. Monitoring should consider whether the nature and scope of consultation with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries within the affected population is adequate (eg, how sampling is being carried out; numbers consulted; breakdown by relevant characteristics such as sex, ethnic background).

Similarly, other areas in the Proforma might be adapted, although the focus would need to be more on assessing whether a baseline is in place, the quality of needs assessment, levels of participation, the choice of technique, and implementation and targeting questions, than in the current Proforma.

Could the current ALNAP Quality Proforma be adapted for monitoring, and would it support the requirement of donors identifying their priority information needs? Clearly given the poor state of monitoring to date, user-friendly tools need to be developed, possible systemwide, to support monitoring, although as I noted above this will only solve part of the problem. It's difficult to say without reviewing more carefully the monitoring guidance that exists and identifying more clearly what donor needs are whether it would be better to adapt the Proforma or to develop a new tool. At some point a decision would also need to be made whether such a tool was primarily for accountability or lesson learning purposes. Either way, any further work on development of generic monitoring tools would best be done with potential users (Patton 1997).

Presentation 2. 'The IRC Causal Pathway Framework' Siobhan Bracken, Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, International Rescue Committee

Context IRC's activities include: Emergency response; Shelter; Food Aid; Water and Sanitation; Medical; Protection; Children in armed conflict; Sustainable development; Local NGO capacity building; and Resettlement

IRC's human resources: Field offices in 28 countries; 7000 staff of which 300 expatriate, the majority of IRC staff being nationals – generally refugees or IDPs themselves increasing our sensitivity to many of the issues; 120 HQ staff to provide the necessary technical support; and 400 staff in the resettlement programme – we have resettled over 400,000 people in the US

Budgets are slim and resources, including time, scarce.

IRC sees monitoring and evaluation as a major priority and started a process about 4 years ago in collaboration with Columbia University to develop a framework that combines both academic rigour and operational accessibility. The draft framework was taken to the field via three Country Director Conferences engaging approximately 120 people. Key messages were keep it simple, logical, easy to understand and use, remembering that the majority of users are national staff with a variety of cultures and educational levels – a very diverse user group.

The Causal Pathway Framework The essence of the Causal Pathway Framework is the identification of changes in the population – eg, with a shelter programme or return project you measure how many people are living in the house and in particular how many young families; for a micro enterprise project, the number of people paying back the loan provides an indication of how many made a profit; for an HIV prevention project you need to record how many people are using condoms etc. The approach is to try and identify what has changed in the population.

IRC's M&E tools were designed to facilitate and encourage creative and innovative thinking at all levels of the organisation. Our attempts to make the IRC a thinking organisation has met with an extremely positive response from staff seeking to do the best they can with available resources.

Within M&E, the focus is largely on design – members of staff are encouraged to take the time to think it through, to work out which strategy will produce the best result.

Institutionalising the Process Institutionalisation has been a work-intensive process with lots of training and you have to remember the diversity in educational levels of users. We have been developing Technical Units that are monitoring and gathering comparative information from between programmes and having joint sessions with 14 different health programmes, looking at their standards of delivery, their indicators etc.

This year we undertook a strategic plan where each country developed their own three-year strategic plan – Were they still going to be in that country or out? What were their major strategic objectives for the coming three years? This field driven approach led to the development of a regional plan that absorbed the relevant country plans and then each of these was absorbed by the seven or so departments in New York which drove our planning process – how would we support the strategic objectives of the individual programmes.

Next step was performance evaluations based achievement of objectives. The final step in the institutionalisation of the process being a review of the field presentations allowing pertinent questions to be raised: Did you do what you intended to do? Did you achieve what you intended to? Were there any unintended consequences? What were the effects?

The IRC programme in Bosnia offers a good example of the thinking going on in the field, indicating the institutionalisation of good M&E practice. They developed a three-year strategic plan in a participatory way and now have a system where the concept papers are coming in from the areas of need and being reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team that is despatched to the area in which the programme is to be designed, adding technical capacity to the staff that provided the original concept in response to identified areas of need.

Supervision and support during the implementation stage has also been introduced through 5-monthly multidisciplinary team meetings in the field. This has met with a very positive response from the field and an increased sense of ownership leading to greater probability of project success, defined as having met the identified needs.

Ongoing Challenges to Institutionalising Good M&E Practices The mindset of donors and NGOs in general is when the grant is finished, the project is done and we move on to the next one, with little or no time to reflect. Managers have a special role in reflection.

Managers need to be very responsive to the data needed to understand cause and effect, which helps with data collection. Still working through best practices. In general IRC has been able to make a go at breaking down every aspect of the work from the original need within the affected community, to the country level strategic objective with the sectors fitting in to this strategic objective, the terms of reference fitting into the different sectors sufficiently disaggregated to allow monitoring at all levels from HQ to the beneficiaries.

As we monitor and move forward with this process we can identify strengths and weaknesses and how we allocate resources and make future management decisions. This will also lead to an easier external evaluation process since the core data will be available.

Next Steps A second annual M&E Conference will be held in London in a couple of weeks and with one of the special sessions on early warning and early response the idea being to discuss how to keep refugee work dynamic.

As part of our three-year strategic plans, we need to build in a 'checks and balance' flexibility mode and towards this aim, we are hoping to develop indicators outside of their stated strategic objectives, that our Country Directors can monitor – to ensure early warning on changes in the environment – developing a sensitivity to the larger environment than our current programme objectives.

A recurrent theme in all the majority of strategic plans from Country Directors was emergency preparedness in anticipation of a worse case scenario.

The Conference will also have a special sessions on participatory monitoring and evaluation which will improve our ways of listening to the refugees and develop impact indicators to measure such things as dignity, psycho-social well-being, economic self-reliance, quality of life, sense of security etc.

Due to the limited resources IRC has to dedicate to this area of work, it has sought to develop a commitment to the process from each and every one of the IRC staff, creating a self-motivated desire to gather the information to help see the impact of their work.

Presentation 3. 'Strengthening Programme Monitoring Systems – experiences from Afghanistan' Chris Johnson, Director, Strategic Monitoring Unit

The Strategic Monitoring Unit (SMU)

The reason for starting here is not as a background but because the nature of the organisation is crucial to how it is seen by the assistance community and thus to what we can do. The SMU is an inter-agency project with a management board of three donor, three UN and three NGO representatives. As such it is independent from any of the stakeholders; that independence lying not just in the personal characteristics of its director but in the structure of the organisation and its accountability mechanisms. It was set up 18 months ago. The original idea came from UNOCHA but the consultant who undertook the feasibility study stated very clearly in his report that the Unit would only work if it were independent. This genesis did lead to some initial suspicion, not just from NGOs but also from other parts of the UN system, but it has proved possible to overcome this. However, whilst the independence of the Unit is one of its greatest strengths it also contains within it two weaknesses. One lies in the need to set up an independent legal structure - a time consuming exercise - and to struggle with a series of temporary finance and admin arrangements until that is operational. The second is that none of the big players are rooting for your cause. That has always been something of a difficulty in an environment awash with meetings, most of which do not take place in Afghanistan but in Islamabad/Peshawar – invisibility can easily happen, ideas disappear. It has become even more critical in the current situation where we are looking at rapid change in the aid environment and the onset of more money than the assistance community can absorb and use well.

The terms of reference of the Unit state:

> 'The Unit's main objective is *to undertake research and analysis in order to help the aid community gain a better understanding of the broad impact of its programs in Afghanistan in terms of improved livelihoods, access to basic services, progress on human rights issues, and progress towards peace building.*
>
> *It will help the UN, NGOs and donors answer the questions: are we doing the right things; in the right places; in an appropriate and timely way; and with what results?*
>
> *The Unit will not focus on individual projects, the monitoring and evaluation of these should remain the responsibility of individual agencies and their donors. Rather, the Unit would focus on broad strategies and overall impact of the assistance effort, including work with refugees in neighbouring countries; this will include looking at the impact of the Strategic Framework & PCP.'*

The process of agreeing these ToRs involved many meetings with NGOs, donors and various parts of the UN system and was inevitably the subject of much negotiation. Particularly important was the final paragraph, as there were strong feelings that the SMU should not move into the area of evaluating

individual agencies work. There is of course a problem in how you evaluate overall impact without evaluating the parts – unless, that is, the parts are already involved in a process of evaluation, which in many cases they are not. But we side-stepped this leaving it for later when the Unit had some credibility and was seen as useful, as otherwise we would never have got started.

Key issues

In its monitoring and evaluation work the Unit faces 3 key issues:

- trying to measure impact in a country without even the most basic data on the baseline situation;
- getting agreements on what should be collected where, for what purpose, to what standards, in a country that has no governmental frameworks;
- trying to set up monitoring and evaluation systems in a climate of suspicion between agencies, UN, NGOs and donors.

To understand why these are so critical it is necessary to how the situation in Afghanistan developed.

Background Situation in Afghanistan

i. Lack of data

Two decades of war have not only left the infrastructure of Afghanistan shattered, its economy in shreds and its people displaced, they have also left it with virtually no recorded information base. The last census was more than 20 years ago and was aborted because of the start of the war against the Soviets. Since then we have seen the exodus of millions of refugees, followed by return in some areas and more migration in others. Land that was once rangeland is being farmed, forests have been destroyed, smuggling has increased enormously. The changes are many and none of them have been mapped in any consistent way. Agencies collect data for their own purposes, but each has its own methods making it impossible to compare over different geographic areas or over time. Quality of data is very variable.

ii. The Governance Situation

Between the end of the Najibullah government in 1992 and the Taliban's takeover of most of Afghanistan (which really happened in 1998 when they took Mazar and the north and centre of the country), different parts of the country were ruled over by different groups. During this time Afghanistan came to be viewed as a 'failed state' and a 'complex political emergency'. There was seen to be a complete lack of governance, and the UN (or at least an influential part of it) felt it had a role to play in filling this gap. At the same time there was a recognition within the UN of some of its own failings and of the need for reform. Out of this came the development of the Strategic Framework (initially a HQ idea) and alongside it Principled Common Programming (PCP). The Strategic Framework was essentially a framework that tried to bring greater coherence to the political and humanitarian assistance activities of the UN. Human rights were seen as integral to this and later were conceptualised as a third pillar of the framework. PCP was to be the mechanism for developing an effective and coherent assistance programme, through adherence to a set of principles and with a whole architecture of thematic groups and regional structures (RCBs and RCOs) to take forward the work on the ground. Although originally conceived of as essentially about UN reform the process, particularly in the shape of PCP, came to embrace also the NGOs. Donors also saw greater coordination through the Afghan Support Group and Afghan Programming Board. It was envisaged that the thematic groups (dealing with issues such as the return of refugees or sustainable livelihoods) would have a role to play in developing policy whilst the RCBs would perform a planning function at a regional level.

The thematic groups as a mechanism for developing policy suffered from a number of problems:

- With the exception of the Human Rights thematic group there was no real technical input into them;
- They met in Islamabad/Peshawar and this privileged those with headquarters there (especially, but by no means only, the UN agencies), over those based in Afghanistan, and those agencies who were well resourced (usually the UN) or who had small field programmes (some NGOs) over those running major programmes off slim budgets;
- With no legitimacy other than consent they often ended up at lowest common denominator solutions, or foundered on disagreements

Whilst the Strategic Framework and PCP were linked to the notion that the UN had to perform a planning function in the absence of an effective state, there was no real mechanism to legitimate the UN in this role. Both NGOs and other parts of the UN questioned the motives behind increased coordination and the idea of a common fund, envisaged in early versions of Strategic Framework, was quickly rejected as an (unacceptable) control mechanism. At the same time the Taliban were also starting to try and exert more control over NGOs and the UN, although they had minimal interest in, and no capacity to develop, policy in areas such as health, education and support to livelihoods.

The result of all this was that there was simultaneously:

- A recognition of the need for better coordination (despite the problems, agencies in Afghanistan probably coordinate better than in many countries) and shared strategy;
- No legitimate way of deciding what this strategy should be and a suspicion of the motives of many players.

Hence the second and third of the key issues identified earlier and challenging, though potentially very rich, working situation.

Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation System

The unit has begun work on three levels: area studies; sector based work; and a major review of the Strategic Framework, which is in its final draft. However both in terms of methodology and relevance to this session the most interesting thing to look at is the sector-based work, particularly in rural livelihoods as this is the most developed. A similar model is being used in the education sector but its development is less advanced.

This programme has been developed with NGOs, as they are the key implementing partners in the field, and with the involvement of key donors and UN agencies, particularly the VAM unit at WFP. It will eventually provide the NGOs with data of direct use to their programmes, and SMU and other agencies with a wider interest will benefit from a countrywide data set. The process of careful negotiation in setting up the programme, coupled with both a process (the training and support to data collection and analysis) and a product (the data itself and the analysis from it) that is of direct value to the participating agencies has removed the problem of suspicion. It should also enable evaluation to become a tool for learning rather than something, which is seen as a means of criticism and of laying blame.

The process started with many discussions and a long field trip (almost a month) to get a good sense of the country and the issues. A parallel piece of work with an NGO in yet another part of the country provided added depth. The next phase is a three week training course, the middle week of that being data collection in the field. That should have been in progress at the moment but, of course, has had to be put on hold. This will be a pilot course evaluated with participants to inform the substantive programme. This is important because most of the existing data is not reliable and 20 years of war have deprived Afghans of the opportunity to develop good research skills. There will also be a thorough review of all the existing data and of organisations' existing monitoring and evaluation practices.

The sample framework will be carefully constructed so that we can build a reliable national picture, and it is recognised that this may involve our doing survey work in areas not covered by NGOs but important to the overall picture. It is also likely to include the undertaking of special studies, for example on the nomadic population.

The work is planned as a three-year programme whose overall objective is to contribute to 'the empowerment of Afghans, both women and men, to build sustainable livelihoods'. It will develop monitoring and evaluations systems that will improve understanding of the impact of current interventions in Afghan livelihoods and provide direction to future strategies and practices. It will build agency capacity through training and support (recognising here that training on its own is of limited value) and will promote analysis and debate on policy and practice at agency and inter-agency levels.

The purpose of this project is to ensure that the design of future strategies and interventions by various agencies in this sector are better informed by:

(a) the strategic choices made by individuals and households in rural Afghanistan to cope with the conditions and circumstances in which they currently live
(b) their efforts to maintain and build RNR based assets, and construct more robust and secure livelihoods and
(c) the consequences and impacts of current agency interventions.

For NGOs and other agencies there will be direct feedback, not only about the specific consequences of the interventions that they are making but also about the context into which those interventions are inserted and how that is changing. For organisations working at the national level, the use of field level evidence from contrasting locations and contexts within Afghanistan should:

- help refine or develop existing and new interventions;
- identify geographical and socio-economic needs and gaps;
- promote consistency of practice and action;
- develop appropriate policy directions;
- and mobilise appropriate programme support.

Information will be shared through publications and a series of seminars and workshops in different locations.

Crucial to the development of this work has been having a highly experienced and skilled livelihoods adviser. Afghanistan is a difficult country to recruit to, particularly if one needs experienced people who are older and often have families. What we did therefore was not try to get a full time person at this level but to go for an adviser who has a bases outside Afghanistan/Pakistan (in this case in the UK) but who spends a significant amount of time each year working with us in Afghanistan. The arrangement also enables us to link into wider debates and to benefit from insights from related work going on elsewhere. In this case the adviser has an institutional base at the University of Norwich and strong links to the livelihoods in conflict situations work going on at ODI and at IDS (Sussex University).

Plenary Discussion: key points

Accountability

- Picking up on a point in respect of accountability made by all three presenters: Tony criticised the agencies for their focus on results based management accountability; Siobhan saw the Causal Pathway Framework as a learning rather than accountability tool, whereas the framework includes a lot of results measuring and targeting relevant to accountability; and, Chris said the SMU agencies did not want an independent unit assessing their programmes and did not wish to be accountable to any independent unit. As an evaluator, a tax-payer and a donor, that is not acceptable. We have to be accountable to those we try and help and to those who foot the bill.
- We should be open and accept that we can be measured and judged by ourselves, and if we don't the journalists will do it for us which is not usually desirable.
- Accountability tends to be viewed by donors as reporting. If the proposal looks good it is more likely to be funded, if the report looks good it is more likely to be accepted by auditors or whoever else evaluates it.
- In defence of the SMU organisations, they weren't saying they didn't want to be subjected to an independent evaluation process, rather that they felt they should be in control of that process in respect of terms of reference and recruitment of an external evaluator.
- The discussions on accountability were entirely focussed on upward accountability. The question is on what basis can we establish downward accountability. The understanding of livelihoods might be the key. We often have so little understanding of how aid impacts on the ongoing lives of those affected that we have no basis for even a conversation with them about the impact of the project. Ideally that should go into the design phase but it is not always practical so developing an understanding of livelihoods through monitoring might be a pragmatic way to deal with this and to develop ongoing accountability downwards in the course of project implementation.

Learning

- In respect of change as a result of SMU's work, it is still early days. SMU acts as an additional resource to capture baselines, not just livelihood baselines but the kind of monitoring and evaluation practices participating agencies have at the outset. In 18 months and again in 3 years we will look at how these and the programmes themselves have changed. By buying into that process which will be very transparent among participating agencies, there will also be an incentive to learn and change.
- We talk about lessons learned but I was taught that we measure learning by changed behaviour, and I see lots of lessons identified but I don't often see resulting change.

Tensions in the dual accountability and learning objectives

- A lot of discussion about learning and accountability maintains a distance from accountability. Some try not to be accountable while others try to be accountable but try to gloss it over. We need to be open and honest about the need to be accountable and there is no conflict between learning and being accountable. You ask what happened and why did it happen. One is accountability and the other learning – very different from an audit that asks what happened and who did it.
- UNICEF has been grappling with this issue, and thinks it is reaching greater clarity by looking at what evaluation systems it has and how different types of evaluative activities fit for learning or accountability purposes. Also we are looking at the extent to which activities are more appropriate for accountability or learning at programme and project level evaluation; at country programme level evaluation and at organisational/strategic level evaluation and whether they should be different at different levels. Those distinctions might be useful in monitoring.
- WFP is also struggling with the tensions. Like IRC it is coming at evaluation from a learning perspective, trying to make it useful to those being evaluated. But, the reality is that we also have to provide accountability to the donors. We believe utilisation focus is the right way to go and try to tie evaluations into events at country level to allow the country office to feed findings straight into planning for the next phase. As well as a learning process, the end result is a report that provides accountability and recommendations, presented to the WFP board at the same time as the evaluation report. This provides the necessary accountability but reduces the tension between the two objectives.
- Regarding accountability and lesson learning tensions and distinction made between accountability and audit. The problem arises when monitoring and evaluation come across as threatening for the subject organisation. You can remove the threat and emphasise the lesson learning objective.

Linking monitoring and evaluation

- Linking monitoring and evaluation is often not very helpful. Monitoring exists most importantly at a project level, a very disaggregated level, where you are trying to gather substantial data. Evaluation can exist at that level but can have much higher levels of function. It relates to the problem of where programme planning and identification, monitoring and evaluation sit in different levels of bureaucracy. There are many types of monitoring and of evaluation and therefore of methodology.
- How do we measure the impact of monitoring systems. How to make a difference in programme re-orientation. Need to develop evaluative/monitoring ideas around impact.

Programme design

- We may be looking at this the wrong way round starting with evaluation before looking at monitoring. Maybe the root of the problem lies in project design. How do we put projects together? What are the objectives? Are they measurable? What are the indicators? Many times the indicators we put in are output indicators – commodities moved/people trained – but we tend not to look at the outcomes of the programmes we design. This may be partly due to the short-term environment in which we function but many times it is because we haven't placed enough emphasis on collecting the initial baseline data against which to measure change.
- There should be a strong link between the assessment analysis and programme design phase, and the monitoring and evaluation phases.

Objectives and Logframes

- In this type of fluid situation we often change objectives but it doesn't mean that we can't change the indicators or the data we use as baselines.

- WFP's new results-oriented evaluation guidelines use a logical approach, mainly because we feel that there is a lack of coherence and understanding within WFP in terms of strategy. WFP feels there is a merit to a more logical approach but you have to start much earlier, if you start designing a M&E system not knowing clearly what you want and with very vague objectives, you are in trouble. The more logical approach is trying to promote an earlier approach.
- I disagree fundamentally with Tony's view that "There is no need to have clear objectives, because objectives are negotiated". You have to have a clear objective, whether development or humanitarian – it has to be clear enough to allow you to formulate it for yourself and those you are working with. You should however also be able to change your objectives as the situation changes. The danger, experienced with the early use of Logframes, is that they became a straight-jacket that you couldn't change even where your assumptions changed.
- If you use Logframe, what you have to keep your eyes on is that right hand column re your assumptions and your risks, that is where changes occur and it should induce you to review what you are doing. It may not induce you to change your overall objectives, but to change the means by which you plan to achieve them. So clear objectives but with flexibility.
- Reviewing over the last five/six years grant aid proposals for OFDA and other USAID units, one of the weaknesses of those proposals is problem analysis. Given scarce resources we like to prioritise, the objectives statement reduces the problem analysis into something clear to understand, but this doesn't mean that everything has to be objectivised rather you need to demonstrate that you understand the problem and what you intend to do in response. Most of the proposals attempt to resolve everything so that the question raised is "what is your expertise?" Crystallising the problem you are trying to solve, you are able to measure your accomplishments and the objectives play that role. Monitoring is an integral part of that planning process. OFDA requires quarterly reports to help you evaluate progress and whether circumstances have changed.

Resources

- Another aspect that might be beneficial is looking at the amount of resources dedicated to monitoring. A typical programme design usually includes a good level of resources for monitoring, but the first thing to go when looking at cutting expenditure is the monitoring line. Maybe a key programme indicator should be to look at the level of resources that go into programme monitoring.
- Several donors require monitoring and should therefore be willing to pay for it and introduce a budget line that recognises the activity with a cost on it. Donors don't usually mind paying for real costs.
- There are different levels of resources to support the data collection process. Big international NGOs have a dedicated monitoring and evaluation person and resources in regional offices to support them. As long as they have agreed to commit to a core data set, which the SMU can use, we will also provide the expertise to help them design how to collect other data for their own programme needs.
- One way to strengthen programme-monitoring systems would be to think in respect of each of these monitoring functions and others as they arise, what is the cost-benefit relationship to the effort put into monitoring.
- Monitoring what? Is it only what the donors pay for that gets monitored? Do the activities that the agencies fund themselves get monitored? Is the way we are funded affecting the nature of the monitoring process? It is as important for agencies to monitor the way they treat their local staff and try and promote a capacity in the field or the way they work with their local partner. Those don't get monitored. What gets monitored is how many health clinics are being built and whether the people happy with the clinic? I would suggest that the way we are funded leads to some distortion in what is being monitored.

Sharing monitoring data/information

- In many contexts, there may be poor data or absence of data, but also everyone is collecting without sharing the information. We need to encourage monitoring reports that often tell a much richer story than those reports sent to donors at the end of the event. We need to encourage more transparency through a sharing of monitoring reports in the field – sectorally, geographically – to avoid duplication.
- An initiative that furthers this idea of core data and shared data, and it is in the last *Humanitarian Affairs Review*, is the concept of Standard Humanitarian Assistance Reporting (SHARE). It is a way for people collecting various data to put it into one pot in a coordinated way and you can then pull out

of it what you want. The idea is that data is collected, date stamped, geographically referenced and you provide meta-data on how they were gathered – available electronically. Agreement is that you agree to collect and share certain types of data as a community, very locally focused, and you create whatever data you think is important for that. It is phenomenally simple concept, which has met with resistance because some feel that if you give a geo-coordinate that you are giving too much information. However, this sharing needs to start before, bringing in local NGOs and looking at layering data maps, because it is a little too late when the international community turn up to 'discover' long-known factors.

- This appears to be an area where OCHA has improved in its setting up of information and communication systems, ie, providing an anchor for the SHARE system, used in East Timor.

Data collection for monitoring

- Types of data for monitoring: From SDC's perspective there are three main reasons for monitoring, each having their own principles and methods and their own costs:
  - *Steering Relevant Data* – Data required to steer your project, to allow you to be aware during the project execution to allow for changes as necessary
  - *Accountability Data* – Everything that goes in to the classical reporting, we don't have fixed templates or reporting requirements but funded agencies will be expected at the end of the programme to be able to say what has been delivered what has been attained based on the set of objectives held at SDC. Reporting format has to be agreed on between headquarters and the field.
  - *Context Data* - Monitoring in respect of security, political and strategic considerations during the project implementation

- SMU and data collection: In Afghanistan different organisations are collecting data to different extents as well as collecting it in different ways. Some are very advanced and it is clearly on their radar screens. Other organisations recognise the need but have done very little and yet others have yet to conceive the need, but have bought into the project. What we are asking them to collect is still a matter for negotiation, but we shall not expect them to collect anything that is not of use to them.
- Data relevance: Donors should not enforce NGOs to collect data that is not relevant to their work. Need to stick to relevant data collection and avoid core data cemeteries.
- Baseline data: I never cease to be amazed by proposals from agencies that have been working in a country for 10 years, that do not have baseline data. It is very difficult to monitor without a sense of where you started. The issue of monitoring isn't how you are going to measure, but what sort of data is readily available from the start.

Using recommendation data

- Clearly there is a tremendous amount of data being gathered in the area in which we work and we tend to work in an area where we look for impact, but we are sometimes very slow at looking at our own internal effect and impact. An issue the IFRC is trying to address at the moment is in respect of information available to people and how it is shared - ie, what management process structures or systems are in place to optimise use of information generated. We are producing hundreds of evaluation reports on an annual basis and we now have an excellent proforma, but a weakness is that it only goes a certain distance – as far as dissemination – but it doesn't address how the recommendations or the outputs from monitoring and evaluation are actionable and that is where the accountability for evaluators, monitors and managers, lies. How can we translate recommendation data into action?
- There are improvements in how we look at the performance of different technical aspects of sectoral programmes (health, watsan etc). At a technical level we are learning whether interventions are really appropriate at certain stages of the crisis. There is uptake of recommendations and we try and get groups to work together on the internet more conferences and a greater exchange of information to avoid isolation and encourage learning.
- Regarding uptake of recommendations, there is something called Ross' Law in the evaluation field which says that the more thorough the methodology of the evaluation the less likely it is that there will be uptake of recommendations. There is a general realisation that approx. 80-90% of evaluation recommendations generally are not taken up, which is why it has moved away from an accountability

focus to more of a utility focus. Another of Ross's Law which followed a big study on homelessness – "No good evaluation ever goes unpunished".

Results-based mechanisms and tools

- There has been a lot of criticism in respect of emphasis on results but it is here to stay and donors insist on. In order to look at improving the results, most management paradigms will tell us we need to look at the process with which we implement, so basic process indicators are also an important part of looking at programmes. If we are looking at trying to improve our evaluations and trying to improve our monitoring, we need to start with how we design and implement processes as well.
- What I am critical of is the unthinking mechanical use of results-based mechanisms and tools. In a lot of agencies' guides/manuals, advice is framed as you must have a clear objective and you must have indicators to measure the objective, and you must go along this chain from inputs to outputs, to outcomes to impacts, and the focus is on defining what those terms mean within a particular agency and then going along the chain. It is not obvious how useful those doing the monitoring find that mandate to set a clear objective. Also many examples given in the guides are not very good, many are not gender sensitive, so that a lot of the objective statements and indicators are not that useful. It would be more useful if those producing guides and handbook could recognise some of the constraints that are faced.
- Maybe some of Tony Beck's critiques result from a focus on Anglo-Saxon guidelines – I think there might be some difference with those produced in continental Europe. Results-based management (RBM) has not really caught on the continent in the way that it has on this side of the Atlantic.

ALNAP Quality Proforma

- The Quality Proforma is assessing the evaluation reports rather than the evaluation process. Using the reports as the source data, it isn't possible for it to cover the question of follow-up, unless it starts being used as an internal mechanism by agencies.
- I found the first version of the Quality Proforma more useful than the second because it was simpler. It is a useful tool for those reviewing a report, but the way it has developed now, its too complex.

Beneficiary Participation in Monitoring

- IRC's experience of beneficiary participation in monitoring: an example where we were responding to the returnee issue in Bosnia, looking at registration of those in Belgrade who wanted to go back to Krajina International NGOs were saying they were ready and unwilling to fund whereas local NGOs were expressing a clear desire to return – finally we did 10 focus group discussions, all across Croatia, Banja Luka right into Belgrade, asking why they weren't going home if they wanted to and were registered. It was a case of a bus fare, a bridge across the river etc issues we were clearly able to respond to. However, very labour intensive.
- UNHCR example around repatriation: standard go and see visits pre return; prospective returnees appoint leaders to go and monitor the situation for themselves – a participatory monitoring system that is used quite a lot.
- IRC has just finished an evaluation of the IRC Kosovo women's initiative using a very participatory model for regional women's councils channelling US money through projects. The project quality is variable, but what IRC has done is made it into a very active monitoring process whereby the women's councils are tasked to go and monitor these projects and you can see a very good example of the feedback learning process. The problem is that the participation in the councils when the money is on the table and the projects are being reviewed is a 100%, when it comes to monitoring which is unpaid - if you get three people you are lucky.

Building local monitoring capacity

- Local NGOs have a direct understanding of realities on the ground that International NGOs struggle to attain and maintain with staff moving in and out. What are we doing proactively to help those local structures have a capacity to write objectives and have a monitoring system that allows them to have direct access to resources and helps them to be more transparent and accountable.

ALNAP's Role? *ALNAP will be taking this work forward through its FY 2002-03 workplan which has identified 'Strengthening Programme Monitoring Systems in the Humanitarian Sector' as one of two new programme activities.*

DAY 2 - Final Session

Wayne MacDonald - Chair of ALNAP
Greater time has been allowed to focus on discussion during this Biannual meeting – a small lesson to build on regarding the new structure. Day 1 focusing on process and Day 2 focusing in-depth on two particular subjects.

Next Steps
Monitoring is part of ALNAP's workplan so today's debate will be moved forward. ALNAP's raison d'être emphasised on Day 1, its uniqueness as a systemwide forum for discussion makes it a key forum to share and dialogue. It is also important to bring new faces to the table and so we support the rotation of these meetings around the membership.

Thank you to USAID – we also owe you a huge debt of gratitude, to the Secretariat personnel and to the Steering Committee Members. To the presenters also our thanks – you provoked, you inspired, you criticised, we criticised back – and, an additional thanks to the participants and to ALNAP Members for your continued commitment to ALNAP, financial and other.

The next ALNAP Biannual meeting is to be held in London in April 2002 and the October meeting will be held at a venue as far south as possible – CARITAS Germany, Caritas Vatican, DMI India, Tufts University, Groupe URD Provence and MFA Netherlands have all offered venues.