LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND:

HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS IN THE AGE OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OCHA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of July 2015, an estimated 114 million people in assessed countries were in need of humanitarian assistance, compared to 40 million just over ten years ago.[1] Needs are not only growing, but their drivers and time horizons have also changed: most people in crisis live in contexts of fragility, where existing vulnerabilities due to causes like poverty, food insecurity and exclusion are compounded by conflict and violence, intensifying natural disasters, and unplanned urbanization. The international humanitarian system[2] was set up to address exceptional circumstances, but for people in these environments, crises and insecurity are the norm. Cycles of conflict and disasters are displacing millions, leaving people vulnerable and in need of humanitarian action for decades, and in some cases, for generations.

Alongside these challenges are positive trends: local, national, regional and international capacity to prepare for and manage crises continues to grow. Actors from all backgrounds are increasingly taking initiative, joining forces, and getting more organized to address growing needs, beginning with affected people themselves. The international humanitarian system also continues to play a fundamental role in providing assistance and protection in times of conflict, when local systems are depleted by crisis, and where resources or technical knowledge are insufficient.

International actors have also made significant progress in strengthening humanitarian coordination, professionalizing and establishing standards for delivery, managing crisis risk, building resilience and promoting accountability to affected people.

Despite these gains at all levels, the complexity and volume of crises means that many people still do not receive the assistance and protection they need, while others may be trapped in a humanitarian holding pattern that offers no clear path to better their circumstances. Conflict continues to drive the bulk of humanitarian action, but those responding to chronic vulnerability, climate-driven shocks, rapid urbanization, and a host of other hazards now coexist with conflict-driven crises in a complex and interconnected picture. Protracted crises are the norm, and humanitarian actors have taken on a wider range of roles: addressing prolonged displacement; filling gaps in social safety nets; promote preparedness; coping with the changing nature of violence and new hazards; and facing urbanization and climate-driven crises. In this environment, clarifying effectiveness requires an understanding of the expectations against which humanitarian assistance and protection are now measured.

This study echoes the view that progress in addressing these challenges can be triggered, in part, by the adoption of a shared understanding of what humanitarian effectiveness means in today's world, and through collective efforts to incentivize and measure progress toward achieving it.

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) marks a rare opportunity to advance an agenda around this kind of shared understanding. The Sustainable Development Agenda, which has just been adopted, provides another opportunity: a global results framework that must benefit everyone, regardless of circumstance. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the most vulnerable people,

> *"The pace of change is accelerating; what used to take a generation now happens in five years. Humanitarian organizations need to be in a constant state of review, adapting and reinventing ourselves, if we are to remain relevant and do the best to deliver quickly and effectively for people in need."*
>
> **Stephen O'Brien**,
> UN Under-Secretary- General
> and Emergency Relief Coordinator

$19.44 billion

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

> *"The question is not what you can do for us, but what can we do together."*
>
> **Community leader**, Tacloban, Philippines

including those in crisis, must be a particular priority. For humanitarians to contribute to that vision, meeting basic needs in crisis will remain critical, but it is no longer enough. The 2030 Agenda calls on humanitarians locally, nationally, and internationally to work differently with one another and with counterparts in development, peace operations, climate change, and gender equality to move people out of crisis: reducing vulnerability, doubling down on risk management, and tackling root causes of crises and conflict.

The 2030 Agenda includes a vision for global solidarity with people in fragile environments, a renewed commitment to resolve or prevent conflict and the recognition of the important role of migrants, internally displaced people, and refugees in achieving development goals. By recognizing that many of the drivers of humanitarian crises "threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades," the Agenda opens a formal bridge to greater cooperation that will "leave no one behind."

In light of these factors, this study highlights 12 of the elements that are critical to effective humanitarian assistance and protection, and describes five overarching shifts in mind-set and approach that can contribute to improvements in supporting people in crisis, as well as moving people out of crisis.

The tools and approaches needed to deliver effective humanitarian action differ based on a number of factors, but the most prominent one is context. In the aftermath of rapid-onset, climate-related disaster, for example, the emphasis may be on providing rapid, quality aid where the crisis has overwhelmed existing capacity to cope. It could also mean supporting the response of actors such as national military or local businesses, in providing the immediate logistics support to enable others to save more lives. In a conflict environment, where some actors may be compromised by or implicated in fighting, international humanitarian engagement plays a unique role in delivery, protection, and advocacy. In still other contexts, such as situations of chronic vulnerability, effectiveness has a different dimension, requiring collaboration beyond the humanitarian community, away from cycles of short-term delivery and toward a sustainable framework of human rights and social protection.

While every context is different, as we reflect on what it means to be effective, it can help to consider the profile of a person most commonly facing humanitarian needs. Based on today's humanitarian landscape, we now know that this person is likely to be a woman. She and her children are likely to have fled their home, and to be living without the right to work or schooling, and without basic services like water and health care. She is likely to be fleeing from or living in conflict, where she faces an increased risk of violence in her home and in the community around her.[3]

She and her family are more likely to live in these circumstances of displacement, insecurity and chronic vulnerability for more than a decade,[4] meeting their needs through community networks, diaspora support, and, in some cases, through actors in the international humanitarian aid system. When aid is available, it may not offer what is most important to her and her family, such as education for her children,

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

António Gutteres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, August 2015

In addition to the Sustainable Development Goals, **a number of post-2015 global reform processes propose new ways to reduce humanitarian need, resolve conflict, and prioritize the most vulnerable.**

They include the peace and security reviews (Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) report on the Peacebuilding Architecture, the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the Global Study on Security Council Resolution 1325); the World Humanitarian Summit and the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing; the High-Level Panel on Global Response to Health Crises; Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda); the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR); and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. In addition, Habitat III will define a new global urban agenda later in 2016.

safe housing or a source of livelihood. As years pass with limited improvement in her prospects, the systems designed to protect her and her family, and to meet their needs, are unlikely to transform her circumstances. This study considers how humanitarian action can contribute to more effective results for this woman and others in crisis.

The study is based on extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders to understand whether affected people feel their needs are being met, who is meeting them, and what more can be done to move people out of crisis *(see page 12 for details on the research approach)*. The findings are based on a 1,600-person global survey, six country visits that included hundreds of interviews, and other consultations.

The study begins with a description of *the Humanitarian Land-scape,* which details the global trends that shape humanitarian needs, risks, and expectations for response. It then situates the study in context of concurrent global change agendas and recent trends in the dialogue on humanitarian effectiveness by exploring the question, *"Why effectiveness, why now?"* The *Findings,* which summarize what we heard in the course of the study, are organized around 12 elements of effectiveness, which have been grouped into three tiers, as follows:

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS

Relevant   Timely   Accountable

RESULTS: these elements describe the desired results for crisis affected people

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Complementary   Connected   Coherent   Nimble

PRACTICE: these elements describe the desired behaviour and approach for any actor involved in achieving results for crisis-affected people

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

Respect for Principles   Leadership   Resources   Information and Evidence   Governance

ENABLERs: These are some of the essential enablers that must be part of the operating environment in order to achieve results for crisis-affected people.

As noted above, any model for effectiveness should be applied and evaluated in context: some elements of effectiveness will naturally be more important and feasible in some contexts, while others make take precedence or add more value in others. This is not a framework solely for the United Nations (UN) or international actors, but should contribute to the effort to advance effectiveness by all actors contributing to humanitarian action.

The study summarizes the proposed changes in the *"How do we get there"* section, presenting *five overarching shifts* in mindset and practice that will contribute to greater humanitarian effectiveness. These shifts also contribute to advancing areas of shared interests with change agendas such as the Sustainable Development Agenda and those for peacebuilding, climate change, and gender equality. The proposed shifts have strong implications for international humanitarian actors and donors as well as governments, national civil society organizations, and others contributing to humanitarian action such as private sector actors, militaries, and diaspora communities. Achieving them will require a commitment, among humanitarian actors and other key stakeholders, to examine incentive structures and overcome persistent barriers to ensure their advancement.

Those shifts are as follows:

- ***Reinforce, don't replace* existing capacities and coping strategies**
  International humanitarian actors must respond to needs quickly, with relevant responses, and at the necessary scale. But their aim should always be to enable and empower national actors and institutions, not to substitute for them. In order to reinforce the self-reliance of affected people and undertake targeted capacity development, humanitarian actors must have a strong understanding of the operating context, ideally before a crisis happens, and be informed by local actors and development partners with an established presence and network. These efforts should include supporting national and local actors and institutions through appropriate political engagement, partnerships, and financial investment to protect civilians, manage risk, guide response and reduce vulnerability. The primacy of national and local institutions cannot come at the expense of people themselves: where national and local actors undermine or compromise the rights and safety of crisis-affected people, international actors should also uphold and reinforce the rights of affected people, stressing the primary responsibilities of States and parties to conflict under relevant international law and other instruments.

- ***Enter with an Exit:* collaborate to reduce and end humanitarian need**
  Acknowledging that humanitarian crises are neither short-lived nor isolated, humanitarian actors must work more closely with others to set context-specific targets for reducing need and improving the prospects of crisis-affected people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This must include concrete partnerships with governments, development and peacebuilding communities, and other relevant actors in order to: identify shared interests and clarify roles in reducing the risk of chronic shocks, strengthen social protection measures, prevent prolonged displacement, and promote sustainable solutions for internally displaced people and refugees. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a number of

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

Rachel Scott, OECD, 2014

useful commitments to support this aim, including support for displaced people to return to a path to dignity and safety. Planning should employ multi-year compacts that bring together relevant actors at the national and regional levels to clarify how they will contribute to specific, dynamic benchmarks and outcome targets against which to measure progress.

- *Leverage comparative advantage*: **strengthen connectivity and strategic leadership**
  Coordination platforms, tools, and financing models should reflect the diversity of actors meeting humanitarian needs and the contexts in which crises happen. This requires: building stronger connections between national and international actors and between humanitarian and non-humanitarians. These coordination structures should be designed ahead of crises, particularly in areas at high risk, aiming to recognize the range of capacities needed. Strategic leadership should be strongly supported, both among governments and international actors: reinforcing obligations, calling for accountability, and emphasizing discipline. Leadership should identify and promote concrete outcomes and specific positive results for crisis-affected people, facilitating collaboration that cuts across traditional silos.

- *See the whole picture:* **360-degrees of risks and needs**
  To keep needs at the center of humanitarian action, all actors require consistent definition of humanitarian need and frequent analysis of its drivers, including disaggregation for the unique needs of people within the affected population. Open and safe data will be critical to advancing this, with the maximum level of sharing and access encouraged, balanced with the highest degree of protection for privacy and safety of affected people. In addition, responses to crises, whether driven by conflict or natural disasters, are consistently more effective when the groundwork is in place ahead of time to prevent crises or attenuate their impact and prepare for residual risks, based on an analysis of known risks and capacities, and with investments in preparedness where risk of disasters is greatest.

- *Measure shared results* **for collective accountability**
  Collective accountability should be promoted by all actors leading and delivering on humanitarian action, including governments, international actors, donors, national actors and others. Shared benchmarks for success will mean bringing together a range of actors based on shared interests and comparative advantage in order to achieve real results for affected people. Common feedback mechanisms and aggregated data on needs and priorities of affected people will be critical enablers of this, linked to decision-making processes on financing, planning and operations. Building on tools like the IASC's Commitments on Accountability to Affected People, and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, benchmarks should be linked to regularly collected and analysed feedback from affected people, with adjustments made to both inputs and targets as a result of that feedback. This process will require each actor to deliver on commitments in a predictable manner, based on a clear contribution to broader outcomes, with flexible tools and structures to adapt to feedback.

80%
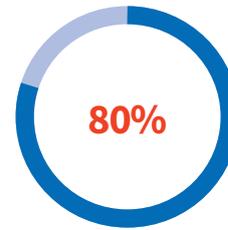
As of 2014, an estimated 80 per cent of those affected by crisis were women and children, and many of the core development indicators for women are at their lowest in crisis- and conflict-affected locations.

70%
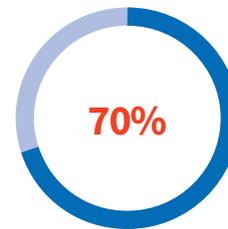
Unplanned urbanization and the pace of climate change are among the major causes of vulnerability. By 2050, 70 per cent of the population will be living in cities.

Given the urgency of undertaking these shifts deliberately, actors responsible for making them happen must be held accountable. The study proposes that a global accountability framework be formulated to track progress on improving specific aspects of humanitarian effectiveness, used to inform interagency and intergovernmental processes as well as operational and policy options in crises. **As a contribution to this accountability framework, the study proposes a set of "guiding principles" that highlight the main changes in relation to the study's 12 elements of effectiveness.** These are meant as a starting point for discussion, not as a definitive list. Once adopted, such a framework would serve as the basis for periodic progress reviews to highlight successes and best practice, barriers to progress, and areas of new or on-going concern that require adaptation or change in course. It would aim to build on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), and other relevant frameworks.[5]

What sets this study's effectiveness elements apart from many others is the inclusion of the "enablers." In many crisis environments, the weaknesses or gaps in enablers such as governance and respect for principles are the very reason for a humanitarian crisis. In some contexts, however, there is significant progress that can be made on addressing some of them, and analysing these factors often forms the basis of the humanitarian advocacy agenda to tackle persistent challenges. Some of them, such as leadership and resources, will be required in any environment and should be included in the full picture of effectiveness. The enablers also represent some of the connecting points with other agendas including human rights, peace and security, and development. The study does not suggest that these enablers must be perfectly intact to realize an effective result, but it does recognize that a forward-looking agenda must continue to tackle these systemic considerations.

60%
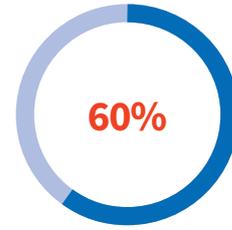
60% of the 60 million displaced people worldwide originated in countries categorised on the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index as 'alert' and 'high alert'.

SOURCE: HPG: Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9855.pdf

Goma, North Kivu, DRC. During its six case studies, researchers consulted a wide range of stakeholders, starting with affected people themselves.
(Credit: OCHA / Naomi Frerotte, 2014)

RESEARCH APPROACH

RESEARCH APPROACH

In addition to a detailed literature review, the study used a mix of methods for data collection, including key informant interviews, six country visits by OCHA and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, a global survey by OCHA, and global and regional consultations led by OCHA and other actors.

The research was guided by four core assumptions, which informed the research locations, the actors consulted, and the analysis of the results. These assumptions are as follows:

- **Needs at the Centre:** The exploration of effectiveness must put people, their needs and capacities at the centre and consider how to identify, build on and leverage all available capacities to meet them.

- **Context matters:** The priorities for humanitarian assistance and protection depend on the context and phase of a crisis, and the pre-existing factors that shape needs and capacities. The context will shape what tools and approaches are needed, and which actors can and should be engaged. Contexts are not monolithic: in a country or region there may be pockets of instability and varying degrees of economic development and risk. Contexts are also not fixed: the first phase of an emergency has a unique set of demands that evolve in the subsequent month, year, or decade.[6] While many elements are common to effective responses in different contexts, the prioritization and means of pursuing those elements will differ.

- **Perspectives matter:** Effectiveness is not a neutral concept, but depends on factors such as beliefs, motivations, positioning, and goals. For many crisis-affected people and governments, effectiveness is related as much to the "how" of humanitarian action as to the "what." Some humanitarian actors may prioritize a combination of building trust, relationships and capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters, while others may place greater emphasis on aspects of delivery such as efficiency or "value-for-money", coverage, and timeliness. For others, effectiveness means improved flexibility and capacity to align tools and services with needs, requiring greater understanding of the needs and capacities of affected communities. None of these factors are mutually exclusive, but differences in priorities can result in a broad array of expectations for what humanitarians should achieve.[7]

ACTORS CONSULTED AND KEY QUESTIONS*

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

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

For example, **we asked people affected by crisis:**
- How are you meeting your own needs in times of crisis?
- What do you expect from others?
- What kinds of inputs and actions do you consider to be the most effective at meeting your needs?

We asked those responding to needs:
- What does "effective humanitarian action" mean to you?
- What do you prioritize in order to effectively meet the needs of people?
- What do your priorities imply about how you conceptualize your role, responsibilities, and measures of your effectiveness?

Consultation does not imply formal endorsement of conclusions.

Context matters, and to a certain extent, typologies count. There is nevertheless an overemphasis on the trigger (the type of disaster/crisis and how to respond) and not enough on analysing what is there already to respond to the crisis.

Making the Links Work, IASC 2014.

- **Capacities matter:** As much as expectations and definitions of effectiveness influence humanitarian action, so too do the available capacities to pursue it. Each actor's role should be understood based on its goals, drivers and comparative advantage. The "humanitarian system" is actually a number of different systems, each with its own capacities, motivations, and incentive structures. Some actors' contributions tend to be undocumented and undervalued, even when they play the dominant role in delivering on the ground. To explore this diversity, the study spoke to a broad range of actors.

The field visit locations were selected in order to consider humanitarian assistance and protection in a range of types and phases of crises, in light of diverse coping strategies, expectations for assistance and protection, and resources and capacities for response. Field visits lasted up to two weeks and were conducted by mixed teams from OCHA and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. Individual interviews and focus groups – some separated for women and men - were organized with consideration for the involvement of equal numbers of men and women and to ensure marginalized groups were included.

Teams visited very different contexts, including the Philippines (sudden onset natural disaster in a middle-income country); Myanmar (protracted conflict and displacement in a lower-income country); Jordan and Lebanon, focused on the Syria regional crisis (protracted displacement in middle-income countries); Eastern DRC (protracted conflict and chronic vulnerability in lower-income country); Ethiopia (cyclical drought and chronic food insecurity in lower-income country); and Haiti (sudden onset natural disaster and chronic vulnerability in a lower-income country).[8] In total, more than 1,500 people were consulted throughout the field visits.

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

The study also drew upon a number of consultations dedicated to the issue of humanitarian effectiveness and the related subset of issues in 2014 and 2015, including those organized for the World Humanitarian Summit process.[9]

A local NGO fed members of a community for 15 days following the April 25, 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

(Credit: OCHA / Orla Fagan, 2015)

THE HUMANITARIAN LANDSCAPE

GLOBAL TRENDS SNAPSHOT

Food security

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

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

Gender violence

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

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

Pandemics

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

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

Climate change

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

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

Diaspora

BASELINE: Remittances constitute the second largest source of foreign capital (after foreign direct investment). In 2014, 245 million migrants sent half a trillion dollars to their countries of origin, supporting on average 4.5 people each and affecting over 1 billion people worldwide.

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

Economy

BASELINE: In 2014, global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was $77.87 trillion, with an annual growth of 2.6 per cent. Inequality has reached unsurpassed levels: the richest 1 per cent of people own 48 per cent of global wealth. Of the remainder, 94.5 per cent is owned by the world's richest 20 percent, leaving 5.5 per cent of global wealth to be distributed among 80 per cent of the world's population.

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

Health

BASELINE: Since 1990, the mortality rate for children under age 5 has declined by approximately 50 per cent. Maternal mortality has declined by 45 per cent. Pneumonia and diarrhoea account for 70 per cent of deaths in 15 countries, all of them in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Pneumonia kills 2,600 children a day.

PROJECTION: Unless early action is taken, preventable diseases will continue to be the main causes for the deaths of children under age 5.

Urbanization

BASELINE: In 2014, approximately 3.8 billion people lived in urban areas. Fifty-three per cent of the world's urban population lived in Asia, followed by Europe (14 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (13 per cent).

PROJECTION: By 2050, 66 per cent of the world's population could live in urban areas, adding 2.5 billion people to urban populations. China, India and Nigeria are expected to account for 37 per cent of the world's urban population growth between 2014 and 2050.

Population

BASELINE: In 2014, the world's population was 7.2 billion people. Global population is increasing at a slower rate than 10 years ago, by 1.18 per cent annually, or 83 million people a year.

PROJECTION: By 2050, the world's population will increase to 9.7 billion people. More than half of the global increase will be in nine countries: DRC, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda and the USA.

Migration

BASELINE: In 2014, over 22,000 migrants died en route to Europe. Of the 232 million global migrants, 72 million live in Europe. Youths aged between 15 and 24 account for approximately 12 per cent of international migrants.

PROJECTION: Family migration is the main and largest channel of entry for migrants, and it has great impact on human and economic development. Greater attention to coherent policy is necessary to assess the potential of the family unit in international migration, as well as protection challenges.

Technology

BASELINE: In 2014, there were 6.9 billion mobile telephone subscriptions. For every Internet user in the developed world, there are two in the developing world. However, two-thirds of the population living in developing countries remain offline. Seventy-seven per cent of Twitter accounts were for users outside the United States.

PROJECTION: By the end of 2015, there will be 7 billion mobile telephone subscriptions, 5.5 billion of which will be from developing countries. There will be 3.2 billion Internet users, 2 billion of which will be from developing countries.

Increasing concern ▲

No change in concern ❚❚

Decreasing concern ▼

Sources: World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2015

THE HUMANITARIAN LANDSCAPE

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

Despite these developments, reviews of international humanitarian engagement continue to point out persistent challenges, along with newer calls for adaptation to a changing landscape of needs. Affected people and governments are among those questioning the effectiveness and sustainability of the current international humanitarian system, as are many within the system itself. Southern actors in particular are challenging global normative frameworks and the universality of humanitarian assistance and protection, calling for recognition of self-reliance and context-specific programs and standards.[10] International actors are increasingly being called to demonstrate their comparative advan-

tage among a diversified set of actors, capacities and opportunities. These include not only the capacities of governments, but also of civil society, private sector, diaspora, military and others contributing to humanitarian effectiveness. The following section examines global trends influencing the nature of humanitarian need and humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to the implications they have for the international humanitarian system. While not all of the trends described below are dramatically new, taken together, they present a different operating environment from that of 25 years ago.

Complex and Protracted Crises

The dramatic impact of conflicts and climate-related natural disasters, coupled with major trends such as water scarcity, population growth and urbanisation, are expected to affect a greater number of people for longer periods of time. Meanwhile, growing expectations are moving the goalposts for success, challenging humanitarian standards, and driving up costs. Given the protracted nature of many of today's crises, humanitarians can end up providing basic social services for decades.

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

now relate to peacebuilding partners, development actors, and those working on political and mediation processes. Despite economic development in Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa, vulnerability and exposure to hazards are increasing due to climate change,[11] water scarcity, rising inequality, population growth, urbanization and other demographic

shifts, and additional needs are predicted as a result of complex crises similar to the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa.

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

Conflict and Violence

Most humanitarian work takes place in countries and regions affected by conflict. Under international humanitarian law (IHL), parties to conflict have primary responsibility to protect civilians from the effects of hostilities, to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance, and to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. Parties to conflict also have primary responsibility under IHL to provide for the basic needs of civilians who are under their control. In practice, however, many parties to conflict not only fail to uphold this responsibility, but deliberately attack civilians and humanitarian actors and arbitrarily deny access to humanitarian assistance. Calls for adherence to IHL alone are not sufficient to address these violations. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), such domestic violence, trafficking and sexual slavery, are also aggravated by conflict and used as tools of war.

In many recent and on-going conflicts, parties have consistently shown disregard for the most basic human rights of civilians and for their obligations under IHL and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Humanitarian actors are under even greater pressure to respond to the consequences of violent conflict as a result of a lack of political solutions to conflict and the failure of parties to comply with their obligations.

At the international level, existing tools to promote the responsibilities to protect civilians and humanitarian actors and to facilitate humanitarian assistance are not universally effective for several primary reasons. First, a vast majority of current conflicts do not have an international character, and hence are not resolvable through traditional state-state negotiations.[12] Secondly, accountability mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, Security Council-mandated commissions of inquiry, or national or ad hoc tribunals, remain limited, largely for lack of capacity and political will to refer situations and individuals to those mechanisms. Thirdly, compliance tools, such as Security Council sanctions or diplomatic pressures, are not systematically implemented.

Within conflicts, far from being "collateral damage," civilian deaths or suffering are often the very purpose of attacks, sieges and other forms of denial of access to humanitarian assistance. They have become a common part of warfare. In addition to directly targeting civilians for strategic purposes, parties to conflict knowingly resort to indiscriminatory tactics, such as the use of explosive weapons with wide-ranging effect in populated areas.[13] Sexual violence and gender-based violence (SGBV) remain critical concerns affecting whole communities, with women and adolescent girls being disproportionately affected. Humanitarian crises, both conflicts and natural disasters, exacerbate and intensify various forms of SGBV including trafficking, early marriages and domestic violence.[14] In addition, while humanitarian organisations hold a commitment on zero tolerance on sexual exploitation and abuse,[15] its continued occurrence remains a major barrier to progress for protection and gender equality outcomes.

The operating environment has also become increasingly insecure for aid workers. Extreme levels of violence against civilians and aid workers mean that, with some notable exceptions, international humanitarian workers can no longer operate safely in many conflict-affected countries. Meanwhile, developments in information technology over the past decade raise questions about whether new ways of sharing and gathering information can trigger obligations and accountability measures for those mandated to protect civilians in conflict.[16]
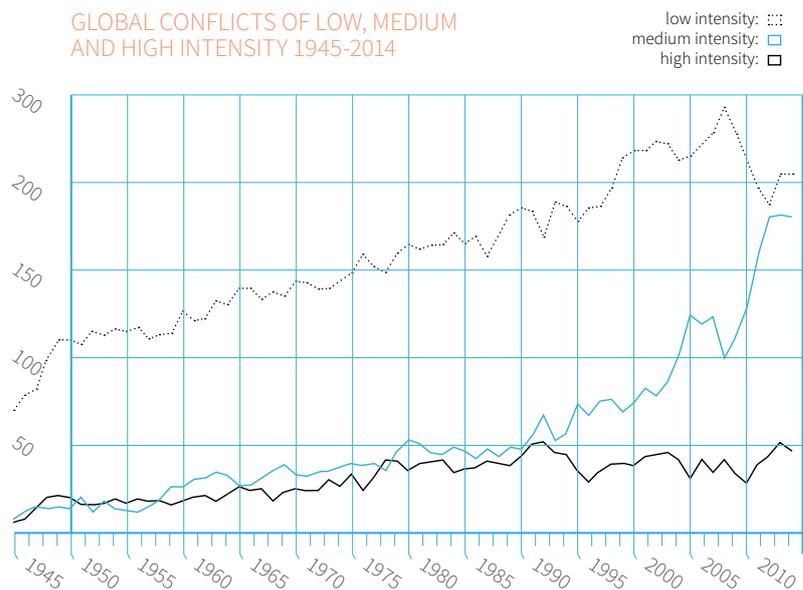
GLOBAL CONFLICTS OF LOW, MEDIUM AND HIGH INTENSITY 1945-2014

low intensity:
medium intensity:
high intensity:

Response environments with multiple centres

Despite these challenges, opportunities are arising from the growing recognition and capacity of national and local actors in many contexts. Multi-polarity in international power, combined with economic growth, has led to investments in humanitarian assistance from a wider range of actors, with increases in bilateral and regional assistance. These trends offer the opportunity for more global and regional cooperation in resolving and responding to crises, but may also contribute to further fragmentation of humanitarian assistance and protection efforts.

While historically a small number of Western governments dominated humanitarian funding, policy debates, and delivery, a growing number of countries are now more engaged.[17]

Many countries continue to support multilateral assistance,[18] but the majority of funding is bilateral and within regions, especially among donors outside the OECD-DAC.[19] For example, the South African Development Partnership Agency was launched in 2011 to manage, administer and coordinate aid. Regional dynamics have been particularly evident in the Syria crisis, with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates all significantly increasing funding to countries in the region, while Kuwait has organized pledging conferences, the latest of which helped raise $3.8 billion in early 2015.[20] China was one of the first and largest contributors to the international response to the West Africa Ebola crisis, including contributions to the UN multi-trust fund for Ebola.[21] Saudi Arabia recently established the King Salman Center for Humanitarian Aid in

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

Catherine Bragg, Centre for Humanitarian Action, University College, Dublin, 2014

an effort to provide greater coherence and oversight to its sizable investments in humanitarian assistance.[22] A growing number of countries are also shaping the international humanitarian agenda, such as Brazil's proposal of a "Responsibility while Protecting" at the 2011 General Assembly. These trends are already broadening strategic partnerships within and beyond the multilateral humanitarian framework.

A woman's community group in the Sahel Region.

Greater national ownership

The growth in the number of middle-income countries has allowed many governments that were formerly aid recipients to increase their own investment in disaster preparedness and response capacity and to place greater emphasis on the primacy of government leadership in managing humanitarian assistance.

Many governments are meeting needs through their own response capacities, including National Disaster Management Agencies, domestic militaries, civil society and the national private sector. Many countries are taking a greater role in global decision-making and coordination around humanitarian issues, emphasizing paragraphs three and four of General Assembly Resolution 46/182 concerning state sovereignty.[23] The international humanitarian system is considered by some as overly-focused on supporting parallel governance, which has led to some countries requesting assistance less frequently or requesting select skills or services rather than a large-scale international presence.

While the increase in domestic capacities is a positive trend, in many of the most persistent crises the capacity to manage response and coordination lags behind the desire to play a leading role. Regardless of national capacities, complex and large-scale crises will continue to require the international humanitarian system to provide surge response capacity and to promote protection in times of conflict, which was its original purpose.[24] The role of international humanitarian actors must be suited to the risks and drivers of need in each context, complementing the existing capacities to meet them. Some are suggesting that international humanitarian actors should transition over time, and in a more deliberate manner, to a more facilitative role, working with affected governments to act on areas of greatest risk and to increase disaster preparedness and crisis response capacity. The nature and timing of that process will be necessarily driven by the context, and will be less feasible in many conflicts. While the international system can still provide global leadership and reinforce norms and principles, the changing landscape calls for what one United Nations official described as, "recognizing where our norms and principles need to evolve to take into account new realities."[25]

Capacity and diversity in response

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

State authority and central decision-making are in some cases less critical to humanitarian assistance than local government, the private sector, civil society, diasporas and communal networks. The reach of social media, coupled with growing income gaps, is spurring popular demands for representative government and inclusive economic growth. However, in many contexts the space for civil society is shrinking due to prohibitive laws and other obstacles.[26] These limits on civil society space also have an impact on local crisis response capacity and local efforts to call for accountability.

While government donors still provide the vast majority of funding for humanitarian assistance, private donors play an increasingly important role, contributing about a quarter of all international humanitarian funding in 2014.[27] Remittances constitute an estimated 21 per cent of international resources available to the largest humanitarian recipients.[28] There are also under-recognised capacities at

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

Jan Egeland,
Norwegian Refugee Council 2014

the civil society level, including women's organisations and associations, youth groups, religious organisations and national and local civil society actors, as well as diaspora networks.[29]

Technology-enabled shifts

Developments in technology and communications have dramatically changed humanitarian assistance, giving many more people the means to question approaches, provide feedback, and seek assistance from different sources. Moreover, tools to capture and analyse data and meta-data allow crises to be predicted more accurately, risks better assessed, and needs analysed more rapidly.

The 2015 earthquake in Nepal demonstrated how new technologies such as social media, direct giving, SMS fundraising and crowdfunding are making it easier for people to contribute to directly meet needs. Innovations such as real-time mapping based on crowdsourcing, and the use of remote sensing technology such as unmanned aerial vehicles and satellites are providing novel perspectives on developing crises. Data platforms, such as the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), increasingly provide real-time access to data for needs assessment, coordination and response, and the INFORM Index for Risk Management is the first global, open-source tool for sharing and presenting predictive data on the risk of crises. Innovation in technology and information management offer opportunities for remote monitoring, needs assessments, protection, delivery of assistance and other aspects of field operations.

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

**EBOLA IM/GIS SKYPE WEEKLY MESSAGE COUNT DURING WEST AFRICA EBOLA CRISIS
(2 MARCH 2014 - 31 MAY 2015)**

Legend: Skype Message Count — New Ebola Cases
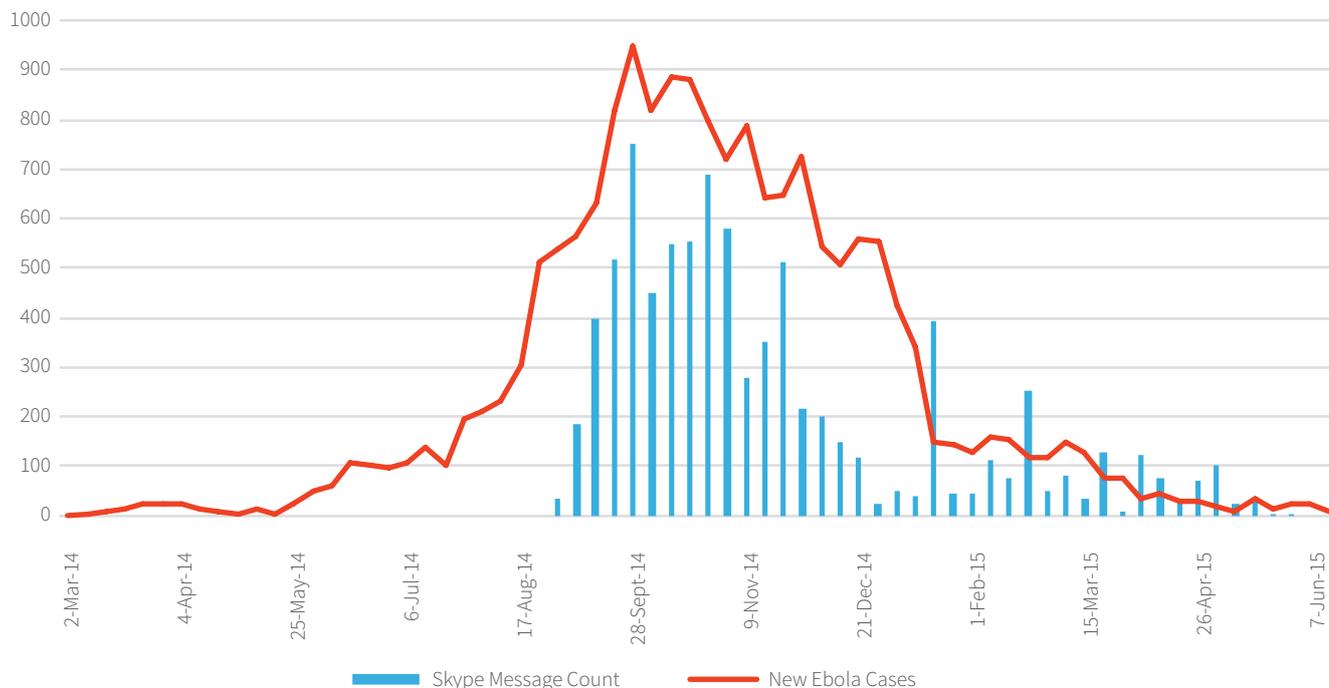
Overall Skype message counts were highest during the months of September, October and November 2014, which correlates with peak disease transmission. The day with the highest individual message count was 24 October 2014; this was the day Ebola was detected in Mali. Data collected on that day shows the round-the-clock nature of online collaboration, as well as the breadth of different organizations collaborating as digitial humanitarians. On that day, 23 unique organizations participated in information exchanges.

SOURCE: Digital Humanitarian Network, World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2015

In Haiti there are more than 5 million women. Of those, 61.7 per cent are living under the poverty line of US $1.25 a day. 60 per cent are illiterate. Only 29 per cent of women attend secondary school. 1 in 83 women die during childbirth. And yet they are considered the backbone of Haitian society.
(Credit: Logan Abassi UN / MINUSTAH, 2014)

International humanitarian organizations were among those providing life-saving treatment to those infected with Ebola in West Africa.
(Credit: International Medical Corps / Stuart J. Sia, 2014)

WHY EFFECTIVENESS, WHY NOW?

WHY EFFECTIVENESS, WHY NOW?

Building on the broader contextual realities described in the previous section, this section explores some of the key drivers, challenges, and expectations that shape the debate on humanitarian effectiveness, such as value-for-money, accountability and standards, operational challenges, and the acknowledgment of diverse – and sometimes conflicting – expectations for humanitarian action. This study adds to a debate that has been intensifying in the last several years.The scoping for the study began in 2013, and since then there has been a dramatic increase in discussions on this topic through the World Humanitarian Summit and concurrent processes around the world.

Changing expectations

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

As a result, humanitarian actors have taken on a wider range of roles and challenges: addressing prolonged displace-

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

South-South Humanitarianism Conference Report, 2014, Jindal University

ment; filling gaps in the social safety net; contributing to response preparedness; contending with the changing nature of violence and new hazards; and facing global trends like urbanization and climate-driven crises. In this environment, clarifying effectiveness requires understanding the expectations against which humanitarian assistance and protection are now measured.

Building on the development effectiveness debate

Many of the humanitarian effectiveness debates closely mirror the themes of those in the development community, such as calls for greater quality, accountability, efficiency, and other measures explored later in this section.

However, the humanitarian community has not matched the development sector in clarifying how to define and measure "aid effectiveness". The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Busan in 2011, for example, were the product of lessons learned over decades from develop-

ment efforts in conflict, post-conflict, and fragile environments. The gatherings leading up to this event, which span nearly a decade, reflect underlying shifts in power, wealth, and capacities, which influenced donor-recipient relationships in the development sphere and led to a more inclusive discussion.[30] In 2012, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States cemented a new framework for development assistance, reflecting many of the themes of earlier meetings: inclusivity and ownership, national ownership of development goals, and the need to develop strong government institutions while acknowledging the diverse actors delivering development results.[31] These themes mirror many of the underlying currents in the humanitarian effectiveness debate.

Value-for-Money

One primary driver of the humanitarian effectiveness debate is the gap between the available resources and the growing financial requirements associated with meeting needs: in 2014 there was a US $7 billion gap between what the global humanitarian appeal requested ($18.4 billion) and what was received, a gap that has continued into 2015 and which donors will not realistically be able to fill.[32] While the gap is daunting, donor giving has grown along with needs. Humanitarian financing has increased year-on-year since 2010, and the rising levels of global contributions have led to a greater emphasis on cost-effectiveness over the last five years.[33] However, the drive for easily quantifiable, input-oriented measures of success – tents distributed, vaccines supplied, or schools constructed – are increasingly recognized as half measures, with inconsistent connections to medium- and longer-term outcomes for crisis-affected people.

This emphasis on aggregate results (...) has resulted to priority being given to the kinds of result that can be measured and delivered within short programming cycle. It has focused the attention at the lower end of the results chain - on spending, activities and outputs - at the expense of long-term and sustainable impact.

International Commission for Aid Impact, 2015

The desire to eliminate the transaction costs and perceived waste of channelling funds through the international system has also been a frequent component of humanitarian effectiveness discussions, with "value for money" arguments focused on reducing inefficiencies, including through direct financing for national actors and affected communities.[34] The increased presence of international media, particularly in sudden-onset natural disasters, also contributes to greater scrutiny of the use of public funds.

Qualitative measures
Much of the discussion about measuring humanitarian effectiveness has been driven by a desire by humanitarian actors themselves to continue to do better, as well as by donor pressure. Independent evaluations of international responses over the past 20 years have launched successful reform efforts, even as they highlight lingering challenges. This is, in part, because reforms are often driven by an evaluation of past performance, so humanitarian actors can sometimes seem to be catching up to fix what failed the last time.

Following the widely recognized failures of the international humanitarian response to the 1994 Rwanda genocide and subsequent refugee crisis, humanitarians (*see box at right*) have worked to increase and better measure the effectiveness of humanitarian action. These efforts reinforce the importance of adopting a shared definition of what it means to be effective. To hold actors accountable, one must ask what are they accountable for, and how to measure whether they have fulfilled their obligations. The answers affect the incentive structures and priorities of humanitarian actors.

Pressures from within and outside of the international humanitarian system have encouraged greater accountability to affected people, with widespread agreement that effectiveness would improve if humanitarians worked more closely with affected people to design assistance and then adjust it based on regular feedback. Promotion of standards and certification has been another important approach to increase humanitarian effectiveness and hold humanitarian actors accountable.[35]

While these initiatives have resulted in significant improvements in many areas,[36] concerns remain: the voluntary nature of most standards, with inconsistent incentives; limited success in prioritizing the views of affected people against

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

Médecines Sans Frontières,
Where is Everyone. 2014

Some recent **efforts to improve and monitor humanitarian effectiveness** include:

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

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

competing pressures for speed and scale[37]; inconsistent attention to context-specific aspects of effectiveness[38]; and limited emphasis on outcomes over time due to short-term planning and financing. Through informal and formal dialogues around effectiveness leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit, there is a growing view that some positive changes can be triggered through the adoption of a shared understanding of effectiveness and collective efforts to incentivize and measure progress toward achieving it.

> *"Actors from the South and Islamic countries are providing new perspectives, opportunities and resources; some of them conflicting with the values and modalities of the established humanitarian system."*
>
> **Atta Al-Mannan Bakhit,**
> *Humanitarian Challenges: Perspectives from the South and Islamic Countries,* 2013

Widening the debate

Many past reform efforts approached the problem of effective humanitarian action primarily from the perspective of the international humanitarian system, with less emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of crisis-affected people or national and local institutions. Some operational reviews, for example, focus on feedback from humanitarian actors, "to the neglect of insights and ideas from *direct* operational counterparts such as national governments, implementing partners or disaster-affected communities."[39] While tools like Operational Peer Reviews have deliberately sought to consult with national counterparts, the links between community engagement and performance evaluation remain inconsistent. Research has shown a disconnect between the priorities of humanitarian actors and those of affected populations for what determines effectiveness.[40]

Recent processes such as the adoption of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, the World Humanitarian Summit Consultations and the Future Humanitarian Financing debates[41] have begun to broaden discussions beyond international policy-makers and donors. Some governments continue to associate the international system with the political and economic interests of particular States that remain dominant in some of the organs of the UN and related institutions.[42] The private sector, military, and emerging donors have also expressed differing views about which actors are defined as "humanitarians" and what their roles and responsibilities are.

Challenging traditional approaches

Technology is enabling new approaches in aid delivery, as well as ways for people to push for change and communicate their needs. Technology-enabled social movements allow people to advocate for themselves and articulate their own needs, rather than to receive information passively. The growth of cash-based programming, with proven gains in efficiency and flexibility, is reframing the traditional conception of humanitarian action along sector lines. Cash allows a more integrated approach and provides a tool to meet individual priorities. As a result of this and the increase in national response capacity in many contexts, components of humanitarian action, such as logistics and sectoral expertise, are receding as drivers of effectiveness in some settings.

A multi-faceted concept of humanitarian effectiveness

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

> *"As beneficiaries have increasing access to information and communication technologies and can better evaluate, compare and ultimately rank the 'performance' of various humanitarian actors, the more the latter will have to prove their worth and earn their reputation through relevant, effective action."*
>
> **Yves Daccord,** *International Committee of the Red Cross Directorate,* 2014

A Somali girl walks down a road at sunset in an IDP camp near the town of Jowhar, where fighting between clans has displaced thousands of people.
(Credit: AU UN IST PHOTO / Tobin Jones)

A Syrian woman waits her turn to cross the Jordanian border, as she arrives at a crossing point with her family.
(Credit: UNHCR / O. Laban-Mattei, 2013)

FINDINGS

After reviewing the field studies, surveys, and related research, the study's findings are organized around 12 elements of effectiveness. They are presented below arranged in a three-tiered framework.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS

Relevant

Timely

Accountable

RESULTS: these elements describe the desired results for crisis affected people

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Complementary

Connected

Coherent

Nimble

PRACTICE: these elements describe the desired behaviour and approach for any actor involved in achieving results for crisis-affected people

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

Respect for Principles

Leadership

Resources

Information and Evidence

Governance

ENABLERs: These are some of the essential enablers that must be part of the operating environment in order to achieve results for crisis-affected people.

This section explains each element, providing a brief definition of the term, an explanation of why it matters for effectiveness, and a summary of "what we heard" on this element in the course of the study.

Defining "need" and measuring coverage

Before exploring effective humanitarian action, it is important to note the overarching challenge of assessing "coverage": the extent to which all of those vulnerable to crises and in need of humanitarian action are reached. Need is context-specific, it is often prolonged and it is not always easy to measure. Yet the ability to deliver effective humanitarian action is fundamentally linked to achieving a shared means of determining and measuring humanitarian need. As the former United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos explained in a 2014 interview for this study, "Yes, 5 million people a month receive aid in Syria, but what is that compared to the 12 million who need it?"

This study did not evaluate the performance of humanitarian actors in achieving coverage, but those interviewed confirmed recent findings that the relationship between the reach of humanitarian action and overall need is difficult to measure, inconsistent and often politicized. As noted in the 2015 *Global Humanitarian Assistance* Report, "There is no exact data on how many people

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

United States Ambassador Samantha Power, *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action,* 2015.

were affected by crisis and where: many people go unreached and uncounted, situations change quickly, and population data is often lacking in the most crisis-prone settings"[43]. Interviewees for this study attributed poor coverage to a number of factors, including weak data, increasingly limited access to people in crisis, gaps in response capacity on the ground, or differing views about what

constitutes need and who is responsible for reaching which groups. Analysis conducted by ALNAP for the 2015 *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action* found that coverage was further constrained by the nature and amount of funding available, political considerations, and by limited reach to particular groups such as migrants and displaced people.[44]

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda calls for a more integrated way of responding to needs of the most vulnerable, including refugees, internally displaced people, and those affected by natural disasters, conflicts, climate change and forced displacement. Humanitarian actors must work toward a shared framework for defining needs that contributes to this vision of "global coverage." Partnerships with development and peace building actors and national institutions including public and private sector, as well as affected communities and local leaders, will be critical to identifying and strategically reducing vulnerability and pave the way for more sustainable solutions.
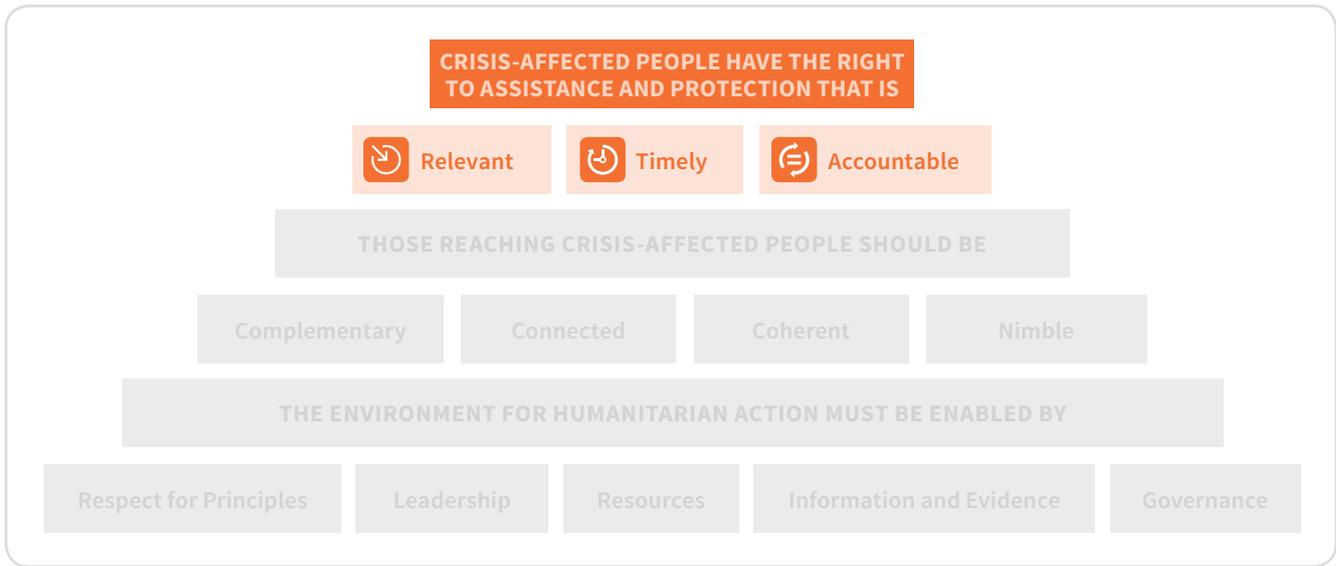
CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS		
Relevant	Timely	Accountable

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Complementary	Connected	Coherent	Nimble

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

Respect for Principles	Leadership	Resources	Information and Evidence	Governance

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

In this study, relevance focuses on how humanitarian assistance and protection can address needs holistically, measuring success not only in terms of what was delivered, but in terms of how the overall package of assistance matches up against the totality of needs.

We heard consistently of the need for humanitarian action to be more flexible, informed by local consultation and regular context analysis, and aligned with coping strategies. In all settings, the inputs that were considered most relevant were those that analysed the needs of people and households holistically. Flexible inputs like cash-based programming are examples of support that allow people to determine their priorities, while community or area-based approaches can also address a range of context-specific needs with greater relevance.

Where is relevance most emphasized?

The importance of relevance was noted across all contexts, though in sudden onset emergencies it was less emphasized than in complex crises, recovery or protracted settings. In protracted settings in particular, the efforts viewed as most relevant were those that recognized the long-term and often cyclical nature of the crisis, going beyond traditional humanitarian outputs to include prevention, resilience, or development programming that encompassed education, health services, financial services, or livelihood support.

What we heard about relevance

- **A broader view of meeting needs**
  As one local NGO staff member in Indonesia put it in OCHA's 2014 Humanitarian Effectiveness survey, "aid is effective when provided right on target and appropriate to the needs." However, as noted in an interview with

an international humanitarian actor, "we are still giving people what we have, not what they need," comparing the humanitarian system to a "cargo cult." In shifting from a supply-driven model to one motivated by relevance, the need to listen to people's real priorities, including those not on the "humanitarian menu" was consistently emphasized.

*"despite talking constantly about consultation and needs assessment, we were not really hearing what people needed. **We went in asking about water and food, which of course they needed, but they spent the most time talking about education and security, which we weren't offering."**[45]*

International NGO staff member, Yemen, 2015

- **Breaking down silos: adaptable humanitarian inputs**

It has been widely documented that cash is one example of an input that can bring greater flexibility and ownership to affected people, allowing them to direct resources to the most pressing needs and to meet their needs holistically.[46] A local humanitarian actor working with Syrian refugees noted, "people don't need just health or water or food. They need all three. Cash breaks down the artificial silos across these sectors that the humanitarian community has created, and cash allows people to spend it on what they determine most important for their and their family's survival." The flexibility of cash-based programming is also demonstrated in its ability to meet the needs of specific groups within a broader population, such as women, migrants and other uniquely vulnerable groups in a given context. In the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, for example, cash based interventions targeted women working in the fishing and coconut farming sectors, who had been previously been working as unpaid labourers. Through a cash-for-work program, they gained new skills and an equitable wage, as well as specific cash grants for pregnant and lactating women.[47]

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

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

Like several recent studies,[48] the research found that a nuanced understanding of context, informed primarily by local actors, is fundamental to ensuring relevance. Field visits found that actors in the international humanitar-

Families in Eastern Samar were badly affected byTyphoon Haiyan and had a range of needs met with different kinds of interventions.
(Credit: OCHA / Eva Modvig)

ian system sometimes overlooked the importance of cultural traditions and social structures and noted the lack of involvement of national actors in context analysis and planning. One international NGO staff member noted "our staff regularly establish networks of national actors to implement programs and support us on security issues, but we fail to capitalize on them as strategic partners in helping us to prepare for the future and recognize broader factors like political economy and geographical exclusion." The ALNAP *State of the Humanitarian System* 2015 report found, particularly in chronic crises, "a need for more joint, system-wide monitoring, with genuinely independent, transparent and critical analysis that incorporates the perspectives of affected people."[49]

This study reaffirmed recent documentation[50] that humanitarian actors have been slow to adapt models from rural, camp-based environments to urban settings with dispersed populations.[51] The 2010 earthquake in Haiti highlighted the limitations of humanitarian response in urban settings, and 2014 field visits to Lebanon and Jordan found the humanitarian community forced to rethink what services were truly relevant to "the preservation of dignity" of

Syrian refugees, which often included housing, livelihoods and education.

Understanding context was also seen as critical to reinforcing coping strategies. In the DRC, for example, some displaced people noted that assistance clashed with local culture and coping strategies, and did not consider "traditional solidarity". Residents of Mugunga camp near Goma, for example, noted that because they were not consulted in the factors contributing to their vulnerability, the vulnerability-based distribution system that was adopted was undermining existing coping strategies. Specifically, familial structures call for the youth to provide for the elderly, but when aid is distributed directly to the elderly, the youth abandon elderly family members in order to fend for themselves. In a different example, evaluations of the Ebola response in West Africa found international actors slow to recognize that cultural norms, such as burial rites, conflicted with public health protocols, requiring additional outreach to encourage compliance. The WHO noted the importance of "working within the existing context of cultural beliefs and practices and not against them. As culture always wins, it needs to be embraced, not aggravated."[52]

"We have humanitarian standards, like Sphere, but we've had to adapt them to recognize local standards and expectations . . . we're continually challenged to adapt our traditional standards to this context."

International NGO staff member, OCHA field visit, Jordan, 2014

SUMMARY: The relevance of humanitarian action is increased by a deep understanding of context, including local risks, open-ended analysis of needs, coping strategies, and culture. In many settings, this understanding is heavily reliant on local and national actors playing a strong role in informing program design and guiding implementation. Relevant assistance requires flexible tools that consider needs holistically, in context, and in light of the predominance of need in protracted crises and, increasingly, urban operating environments.

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

Timeliness is fundamental to reducing suffering and saving lives. Affected people mentioned timeliness as a priority in every field visit, and it was ranked in the top three elements of effectiveness by all categories of survey respondents in all contexts. In field visits, informal community groups and networks, followed by diasporas and local businesses, were said to have the timeliest response initially, in some cases surpassing local government and the international system. In some cases national military were among the first responders after this initial wave of community support. Very often women play a critical role in these first response networks at the community level, one that is commonly overlooked. Recognizing the value of local actors does not mean de-valuing international efforts, but rather, thinking about them in a complementarity manner. The speed and volume of local responses, and the need for technical delivery in areas such as health services and logistics, can require international support as crises are prolonged, particularly in large-scale and protracted crises. In many humanitarian environments, resource and capacity gaps persist, calling on regional and international actors for the timely delivery of technical expertise in areas such as health services or logistics. This can include foreign military assets, which can be rapidly deployed to fill targeted gaps. In the Philippines in 2013, for example, the first Foreign Military Assets (FMA) arrived less than 48 hours after Typhoon Haiyan made landfall.

Where is timeliness most emphasized?

The importance of timeliness was linked more to the *phase* of a crisis than to the nature of the event that triggered it. Re-

A log book reviewed during a 2014 OCHA field visit in one of the communities most heavily affected by Typhoon Haiyan, in Leyte, Philippines, showed the first offers of help came from local churches and community groups, municipalities, the Philippine Red Cross, and credit cooperatives, later followed by international actors.

spondents considered it most important early in a sudden-onset crisis, whether natural disaster or conflict. In contexts of prolonged displacement and protracted crises, timeliness was less associated with sheer speed than it was with the timing of particular inputs to match priorities, in line with the shift from life-saving to recurrent or cyclical needs.

What we heard about timeliness

- **Proximity and Solidarity**
  Affected communities and local institutions are typically present in a crisis first, due to proximity, relationships, trust, and awareness of needs. In natural disasters, most early search

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

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

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

Local NGO Leader, Myanmar, OCHA Field Visit, 2014

and rescue efforts are carried out by survivors. After Typhoon Haiyan, one community rescued 40 people in the first two days, while also clearing roads and organizing security.[53] After the Haitian earthquake, local civil society quickly mobilized, using food and medical supplies donated by businesses and individuals. Port-au-Prince residents described a neighborhood committee system springing up within 48 hours and mirroring the UN cluster system: women cooked for local responders, a trained nurse cared for the non-critically injured, and a logistics team located water and supplies, while an armed team provided security.

Initial responses by affected people are often closely followed by extended networks, including diaspora communities. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Rotary Club and faith-based networks mobilized assistance for private clinics from abroad, including an airlift of food and medical supplies on members' private jets. Diasporas and migrants are also often the first to inject cash into affected communities: after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, 1.2 million Sri Lankan emigrants were the largest source of foreign exchange.[54]

Local and national branches of businesses are also crucial. After Typhoon Haiyan, the private sector in the Philippines restored infrastructure

and communications, restarted supply chains through credit schemes, and provided heavy machinery to remove debris, often faster than humanitarian agencies. A community leader stated, "The most effective partner is the private sector. They were fast. The Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, they energized our people and pumped something into our economy that wasn't there." Interviews emphasized that good private sector relations with government facilitated these critical operations. Despite this association of private sector actors with speed and efficiency, in other contexts visited, particularly those characterized by conflict or where commercial interests were at odds with humanitarian concerns, the role of the private sector was less visible or viewed with greater scepticism.[55]

It is worth noting that, depending on context, those closest to a crisis may be more limited in their ability to sustain a prolonged response or to scale up a response necessary to meet evolving needs. Extended communal and social networks and targeted engagement by international actors were seen as critical to the timely delivery of a scaled-up response in areas devastated by crisis.

- **Timeliness: preparation, mitigation, and response**
A timely response is also made possible by recognizing an impending crisis, and preventing or mitigating it, particularly on the part of the government. The 2012 IASC Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis in So-

malia, Ethiopia and Kenya noted that Ethiopia's sophisticated food security and humanitarian system saved thousands of lives.

In the Philippines, the official response to Typhoon Haiyan was facilitated by preparedness and risk awareness due to frequent natural disasters. Local governments had ordered evacuations and the stockpiling of relief goods and food. Within 24 hours of the typhoon's landfall, they were receiving reports from communities and within 72 hours they had sector reports for Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction authorities to consolidate and send to the Governor for response.

Preparedness is not always in the form of pre-positioning assets, but also being ready to receive relief goods. A DHL manager who was in Haiti's Port-au-Prince Airport days after the earthquake observed, "There was no-one to coordinate this unprecedented flow of people and supplies. As a result, assistance was slower than it needed to be in getting to those affected."[56] DHL now has a new program to train airport staff ahead of disasters, as one element of its contribution to preparedness.

- **Actionable Data**
The targeted collection and analysis of data is a preparedness measure that is critical to a timely response, particularly when widely shared with relevant actors to contribute to shared response.[57] For example, in India, the 13,000 member National Disaster Response Force is complemented by an INSAT-3D sat-

ellite and other technologies to predict natural disasters. In 2014, this system predicted Cyclone Hudhud's strength, track, location and time of landfall five days in advance. The government partnered with mobile phone providers, texting approximately two million warnings across seven states to vulnerable populations such as farmers and fisherman. Airports were shut down and approximately 150,000 people were evacuated to safety and cyclone shelters. While a comparable cyclone in 1999 killed 10,000 people, Cyclone Hudhud caused just 46 deaths.[58]

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

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

As humanitarian actors have grown in number and influence, there have been calls for greater accountability to affected people.[59] Accountability is primarily being called for in two areas:

1. the process by which needs are assessed and affected people engaged in designing and shaping the response;
2. and the extent to which those responding deliver in a transparent manner on the commitments that they have made. Evaluations note insufficient effort by international actors to listen to affected people and be guided by their priorities,[60] even as accountability is increasingly recognized as part of effectiveness.[61]

Many organizations have adopted voluntary standards and guidelines to promote accountability to affected people, as well as predictability and quality, the most recent example being the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountablity (CHS).[62] Both one-off and system-wide initiatives promote two-way communication with affected people, inclusive planning and program design, and consequences for failing to uphold commitments or meet standards.[63]

However, there is still significant room for improvement in these areas.[64] Furthermore, existing mechanisms do not create adequate checks and balances for affected people to engage with humanitarian actors; this lack of influence, as well as the tension sometimes created by competing lines of accountability to others such as donors, remains a key challenge.[65]

Where is accountability most emphasized?

Accountability was a priority in all contexts, although strategies and challenges in promoting accountability differed due to access constraints, time pressure, and pre-crisis conditions. In protracted crises, accountability discussions focused more on governments and senior international officials, and on political resolutions and legal accountability for violations of IHL. In all contexts and phases, interviewees emphasised the importance of two-way communication, predictability, and linking feedback to action at the highest levels.

What we heard about accountability

- **Active engagement and feedback loops**
  Recent reports note that effective feedback mechanisms and continuous two-way communication improve trust and strengthen relationships between affected communities and humanitarian providers, forming the basis for accountability.[66] But mechanisms have tended to be passive, waiting for beneficiaries to raise issues and focusing on what was distributed to whom, instead of measuring perceptions or gauging

results. Newer approaches, such as the model developed by Ground Truth in Ebola-affected Sierra Leone, ask affected people about their satisfaction with the response over time, feeding results to senior officials to inform decisions. Given that existing mechanisms vary widely in quality and consistency, some have called for shared tools or standard operating procedures to generate comparable, traceable feedback. As an OCHA representative noted during the 2015 Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Affairs Segment, "community feedback is fundamental and not up for discussion; the question is how to do we do it. We as a community still haven't come up with a standard operating procedure and that's absolutely something we need."[67]

- **Data for transparency and adaptation**
  With improved data and analysis on needs and perceptions of humanitarian action, the barriers to accountability increasingly lie in making those findings public and incentivising leaders to call for change as a result.[68] It is

OCHA staff interviews a Sudanese refugee in Chad to better understand his needs and views on assistance he has received. (Credit: OCHA, 2013)

easier than ever to share information with communities, with fewer excuses not to do so.[69] In addition, crisis-affected people are using social media to share views and call for changes in humanitarian action. Analysis of this engagement can also be used to strengthen accountability and improve effectiveness.

- **Predictability and standards**
  With so many actors, including private sector, military, and a diverse set of national and international actors, there is a need to ensure minimum standards. Sphere, the Core Humanitarian Standard, the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empow-

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

Mike Penrose,
Action Against Hunger, 2015

erment of Women and the IASC Gender Marker represent significant strides in this area. Standards play an important role in clarifying expectations of what

humanitarian assistance is and can achieve, and in holding humanitarian actors to a shared metric. There is wide agreement that standards are positive, setting shared expectations for what humanitarian assistance can offer and creating a space for dialogue and accountability of humanitarian actors to affected people. However, in some contexts, their relationship to effectiveness is complex, with some concerned that they can discourage actors from operating in more challenging environments due to reluctance to be seen as failing. Some pointed out that standards can also have unintended consequences that can work against effectiveness; when they are used to

select which actors can operate in a given areas, they can exclude local and national actors, particularly when used as a basis for funding. A range of other actors stressed, however, that standards are meant to promote inclusion, forming the basis for developing capacity and expanding the pool of actors who can deliver on them. When adapted appropriately to context, standards can also initiate dialogue about the function of humanitarian assistance and what is to be expected, forming a basis for measuring performance and holding actors to account.[70]

- **Accountability to donors**
Because most humanitarian action relies heavily on public funds, accountability for use of those funds remains central. This is often referred to as "value for money," but not in the pure sense of efficiency and reducing waste. Most donors interviewed focused instead on the need for greater rigor in determining which approaches deliver the best results. Many donors are pushing for a more tangible "return on investment", promoting evidence-based research and economic modelling.[71] This aspect of accountability calls for evaluating an actor's contribution to overall results, not just

*"Particularly in protracted settings like these, which we find ourselves in more and more, **we need to get smarter about what we are really trying to achieve in the long term, and clarify what evidence we plan to gather to show that we've done it.**"*

Donor, Democractic Republic of Congo, OCHA field visit, 2014

whether the original commitment was fulfilled. While humanitarian actors are accountable for how they spend donor funds, donors are also accountable to demonstrate that funding has had an impact and is aligned with identified needs.

- **Collective accountability**
Humanitarian actors tend to look at accountability to the population or sector in which they work, or to their donors. Many actors noted too much focus on the performance of individual actors or agencies in delivering outputs, rather than the impact on people's lives. With a growing number and diversity of actors, many are encouraging more integrated feedback mechanisms and joint accountability frameworks that highlight individual

responsibilities to achieve collective results for affected people. Regardless, institutional obligations for accountability remain, as does the need to employ internal measures that reflect a clear accountability framework for all humanitarian actors, particularly senior leaders. Some suggested that performance measures for humanitarian leaders be more closely linked to accountability to affected people. For many organizations, this will require high-level champions and clear incentives to adapt ways of working.

SUMMARY: Despite progress, most humanitarian actors still falls short in systematically linking decision making to feedback from affected people. There is room for continued improvement in accountability through stronger feedback loops with affected people, better analysis and use of data, the propagation of effective and inclusive standards, and balancing the need for collective results with accountability for delivering on individual commitments.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS

| Relevant | Timely | Accountable |

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Complementary   Connected   Coherent   Nimble

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

| Resources | Governance | Leadership | Information and Evidence | Respect for Principles |

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

UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 affirms that each State has "the primary role in initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory."[72] This frames the basic concept of complementarity, reinforcing the responsibility of national actors to meet needs within their borders, with international action as an exception in times of unwillingness and to support capacity development as necessary. However, particularly in complex crises with weak or compromised national institutions, or where States are parties to a conflict, international actors can create parallel systems to meet short-term needs that may linger for many years.

Where national capacities are present, inadequate attention to complementarity can create role confusion and a diversion of resources to international efforts, rather than contributing to the long-term self-sufficiency of local actors and national institutions. In the context of this study, complementarity also recognizes and reinforces the range of local capacities, including self-reliance measures at the household and communal levels and local civil society, including women and their extended networks.

Where is complementarity most relevant?

Where governments play a role in perpetuating conflict, the international role in protection, delivery, and advocacy remains critical. In settings where capacities of national institutions have been devastated by years of conflict and instability, humanitarian provision of basic social services may be essential to serving the most vulnerable for some time. As crises become prolonged, a complementary approach places increasing emphasis on laying the foundation for a rights-based frameworks, risk management, and social protection. Such approaches require not only complementary engagement with local actors to better reach the most vulnerable, but also stronger connectivity with

development, peacebuilding and human rights actors at the international level, an issue explored in more detail in the "connected" and "coherent" elements of this study. In sudden onset crises, the emphasis may be placed more squarely on reinforcing the national and local preparedness and response capacities for crisis management and providing surge support or targeted technical capacity where needed.

What we heard about complementarity

- **Be humble and build trust**
  Governments and civil society actors emphasized the need for greater humility on the part of international actors, and for them to build trust before crises strike through more frequent interaction, to enable a better understanding of the national and local strengths and capacities.

A Filipino CSO leader urged, "Don't go into an area as if you know everything.

Through training, community health workers now provide primary health care in the remote Mae La Mong Nua village, which is inaccessible in the rainy season. (Credit: FAO)

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

Local NGO leader, Haiti, OCHA field visit, 2014

You know a lot, but you can complement what you know by consulting us on how aid is delivered in our villages. We want to solve problems together."

- **Complement, don't substitute**
The researchers heard frequently that the international humanitarian system tends to create parallel structures that can overwhelm or side-line national institutions and local actors and can become entrenched (*see examples from evaluations in text box on next page*). In order to complement what exists, humanitarian actors must have strong analysis of context and reliable sources of data on coping strategies, and existing capacities to reduce and meet needs. In addition to international actors adapting their approach, complementarity requires commitment by governments to invest in the

necessary preparedness and response systems, and to create an environment that enables collaboration.

In March 2015, the Vanuatu Government noted that inadequate recognition of national coordination efforts caused delays in the response to Hurricane Pam. National Disaster Committee Deputy Chair Benjamin Shing stated of UN and international NGOs, "We have seen this time and time again. In nearly every country in the world where they go in they have their own operational systems, they have their own networks and they refuse to conform to government directives. We had to spend the first three days trying to get some form of coordination in place. That was much precious time that could have been spent doing the assessments instead."[73]

In the DRC, government officials placed an emphasis on the need for investment in capacity building, stating that, "what we really want is to build capacity here so that we can be the ones responding the next time."[74]

While humanitarian actors are increasingly called to understand and assess capacity in order to complement it, they are not always best positioned to undertake institutional capacity development themselves. Humanitarians may engage more quickly in partnership with development actors to set targets for capacity development in the context of governance and disaster management programs. The level of stability and overall context will be critical to determining what approach is feasible.

There are numerous positive examples of international actors supporting and complementing national institutions, particularly on preparedness measures and vulnerability-reduction. The joint coordination structure in Ethiopia, for example, was viewed as a successful model of complementarity in coordination with the Strategic Multi-Agency Coordination Group co-chaired by an Ethiopian official and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator.[75] Also in Ethiopia, the humanitarian community has worked over more than a decade to gradually wind down operations while the government's Productive Safety Net Program was built up over time. In Mauritania, the government is working with development and humanitarian actors to provide social services to meet humanitarian needs in the short-term, while also targeting vulnerable households with social protection programs that will transition them out of humanitarian need over time.

1.6%

1.6% percentage of humanitarian assistance directed to national NGOs, 2009-2013

Evaluations that found national capacities were not adequately recognized:

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Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (2006)

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

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

——

Haiti Real-Time Evaluation (2012)

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

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

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Typhoon Haiyan Evaluation (2014)

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

Red Cross volunteers in Guinea visit communities to sensitise people to practices that could spread Ebola. (Credit: IFRC / Moustapha Diallo / 2014)

- **Develop civil society capacity**

In any humanitarian crisis, life-saving efforts must be the priority. However, in many contexts visited, particularly protracted settings but also the transition out of sudden onset natural disasters, it was noted that capacity development with local NGOs and other community-based institutions could be introduced earlier and more deliberately.

Community groups and local networks are at work nearly everywhere. They should be a greater focus of strategic partnership and sustained investment in the development of their capacity. For example, in some of the most difficult areas of the Ebola response in West Africa, including the slums of Monrovia, locals have taken up community-led monitoring where international actors would not venture.

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

Leader of Regional CSO network, Philippines, OCHA field visit 2014

The United States-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team leader in Liberia explained, "Communities are doing things on their own, with or without our support. Death is a strong motivator. When you see your friends and family die, you do something to make a difference."[76]

While many local and national civil society actors acknowledged they could

often not meet all humanitarian needs alone, some expressed concern that internationals were using humanitarian funds for their own operations with no capacity development investment from the outset, and that nothing was "left behind" when international engagement ended.

In Myanmar a local NGO representative explained, "We should be the targets for technical capacity support. We will be living here forever with the community, even though the UN and other organizations will go home." While many international humanitarian actors are increasingly focusing on capacity development, there is recognition that it requires additional partnerships and funding beyond the humanitarian system.

- **Direct funding and strategic partnership**

Many local organizations reported that international actors viewed them as local "implementers" and "subcontractors" for international actors. They were frustrated by their exclusion from strategic decision-making processes, where they could help ensure a sustainable response and recovery after internationals leave. Excluded from funding opportunities, they were often reliant on sporadic and short-term contracts with international organizations.

As one local NGO leader in Lebanon put it, "We have a vibrant civil society and institutions that could be more effective at delivery – it's about partnership, not contracting." The director of a local Congolese NGO director noted, of international NGOs, that "They know all of the funding mechanisms and appeals and they can get funds immediately after they arrive, even if they have no knowledge of the country. This proportion should at least be balanced, if not in favour of national actors." He emphasized that the current system spends time and money sending internationals to remote areas, when local actors already have a trusted presence.[77]

- **Reinforce obligations**

Affected communities and other actors emphasized the importance of the international community's role in protection and meeting needs in conflict. For example, when asked what would be most effective in meeting her needs, a Syrian refugee woman in Lebanon said, "apply pressure to find a solution to the refugee crisis. The UN can add most value in advocacy and supporting the locals who will go in and do something. Ensuring our safety and solution to our problems should be more of a focus." While advocacy was seen as critical, it was also noted that international humanitarian actors play a critical role in direct delivery for people living in conflict.

SUMMARY: The focus of complementarity will depend on context and capacities, but the end goal should be one in which the international system recognizes and supports, rather than replaces, relevant national and local actors, including various levels of government as well as civil society. International actors should recognize and support the roles and responsibilities of those actors, investing in their staffing and skills to support capacity development and building strategic partnerships, while advocating for governments to fulfil their obligations.

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

"There is not one single way to do humanitarian work, and a space will need to be defined that gives room to the 'many faces of humanitarianism.' After all, many are the players who will need to work together to make aid count in the future."

Now or Never: Making Humanitarian Aid More Effective. AECID and DARA, 2013

A connected approach draws on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, identifies new capacities, builds trust, and clarifies roles and responsibilities. Interviewees reinforced the understanding that humanitarian action is the result of the efforts of many systems and actors, and many different centers of coordination and leadership. There were numerous calls for stronger linkages among those systems in order to bring in each actor's critical contribution.

In field visits, motivations and expectations for connectedness differed among the actors consulted. Different actors emphasized a range of priorities, but those below are examples of just a few:

- *Some governments and Regional Organizations* emphasized the importance of national platforms for information exchange and systematic integration of lessons learned.
- *Some military actors* prioritized standards and procedures for information sharing.
- Local organizations emphasized inclusivity in coordination.
- *Some private sector actors* sought greater awareness of humanitarian needs, as well as guidance on technical standards.

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

- *Some international humanitarian organizations* stressed that greater connectivity contributes to efficiencies, better coverage, and wider adoption of principles and standards.[78]

Connectivity is challenging in part due to a range of disincentives: each organization's need to demonstrate institutional results to donors, pressure to respond to the appetite of the broader public for highly-visible interventions, adherence to internal guidelines, and the lack of dedicated space to build practical connections across institutions. The challenge of leadership was also consistently raised, specifically the kinds of leadership are needed to increase connectivity, and the question of who should set the strategic direction in circumstances that lack clear or reliable authorities.

Where was connectedness most emphasized?

Connectedness was most emphasized for natural disasters, preparedness, and chronic vulnerability. In conflict environments, questions arose as to who humanitarian actors can work with while maintaining integrity and neutrality. Others pointed out that conflict can also force greater reliance on national partners, pointing to environments like Syria and Ukraine where international actors face limits on access, thereby increasing the importance of connectivity.

What we heard about connectedness

- **Inclusiveness and diversity**
Field visits confirmed that in many cases, more can be done to include local actors in coordination mechanisms. Local actors interviewed reported that the humanitarian cluster system requires them to fit logistically and linguistically into an international system, often in a supporting role. Language and volume of meetings can be a barrier to local actors, often requiring at least one dedicated staff member able to engage with international coordination systems.[79] It was also noted that greater effort should be made to systematically include women and women's organizations in coordination bodies and leadership roles, which has been shown to contribute to improved humanitarian outcomes. A 2015 UN Women study found, as just one example of many, that in Nepal "women reported an increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and pride when working to build their communities, and when taking lead-

A Somali woman hands her severely malnourished child to a Ugandan medical officer of the African Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom) to be taken for emergency medical treatment in Mogadishu. (Credit: AU-UN IST PHOTO / Stuart Price / 2011)

ership positions in their villages. They demonstrated self-confidence and a new capacity to collectively organize."[80]

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

One member of a Lebanese NGO asked, **"Why should we come to your coordination meetings – why don't you come to ours?"** *The NGO runs a humanitarian database that connects up to 1,400 local organizations, but often struggles to get accurate data from international agencies.*

OCHA field visit, 2014

• **Coordination for context**
Interviewees emphasized the importance of working through national and local structures for coordination where they exist, rather than creating parallel ones. Despite progress,[81] some

familiar challenges of coordination persist: duplication of effort, heavy staff time requirements, and challenges in strategic decision-making for cross-sectoral program delivery.

The study found that different forms of coordination can add value in different ways, depending on the context, phase of crisis, and available capacities on the ground. For example, during field visits it was noted that the United States military's centralized model was seen as effective in initial relief coordination and recovery of critical infrastructure in Haiti, but as hindering joint planning with the Haitian government and communities later.

Of particular note was the value placed by respondents on coordination models led by neither governments nor international actors, such as

~ In Myanmar's Kachin State, local CSOs formed a Joint Strategy Committee to broker relationships with multilateral actors, coordinate effort, and conduct joint advocacy.
~ In Haiti, to enhance coordination and the role of civil society, a national platform of humanitarian NGOs (PONT) emerged in 2011 with OCHA's support. Members can directly access Emergency Relief Funds once reserved for international organizations.
~ During the Ebola response in Liberia, ArcelorMittal led a group of international private sector actors to share information and good practice.[82]

In some cases, there may be multiple centers or "hubs" of coordination for different groups, which can be more efficient if the connections among them are strong, and the areas of common interest are clearly articulated.

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

Individual institutional policies may create barriers to collaboration, such as policies that restrict private sector pro-bono support or secondments between organizations. A 2015 study on humanitarian innovation identified institutional barriers to collaboration as a key factor slowing the inclusion of new ideas, tools, and technologies into the humanitarian systems.[83] Greater interaction among diverse players will also require new standards and rules of engagement to clarify roles and procedures.

> "*. . . normative standards could be the uniting force, which help the aid agencies and private sector, business and commercial organisations find a common ground in the humanitarian endeavour. But dialogue will need to be held with these new actors not just during a response but before (in contingency and preparedness planning) and after (in recovery periods) to ensure that these normative standards unite and do not become divisive.*"
>
> **David Hockaday,** START Network, *Humanitarian Interoperability: is humanitarianism coming of age?*, 2014

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

DIVERSE ACTORS, DIVERSE ROLES

Connecting different actors and systems requires an understanding of drivers, limitations, and unique contributions. Based on this, added value can be clarified and leveraged to respond effectively to needs. While the particular roles and capacities will depend on the specific context of each crisis, this image is meant to illustrate what the researchers for this study heard about how different systems can contribute to humanitarian effectiveness.

CRISIS-AFFECTED GOVERNMENTS

Drivers and motivations: Governments hold the primary responsibility to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters that affect their people. Some are particularly motivated to undertake reforms in the aftermath of a major disaster, or to reduce the impact and cost of recurrent crises. Politicians and officials may also be motivated to visibility respond in order to garner political favor , or by public or legislative pressure. National militaries are frequently first responders, but governments overall may lack capacity, whether due to the crisis itself; lack of pre-existing crisis management systems and infrastructure; or lack of investment and prioritization. Some governments, particularly in times of conflict, may actively restrict access to aid, target civilians, or otherwise undermine humanitarian principles.

GOVERNMENTS DONORS

Drivers and motivations: Government donors support humanitarian responses based on commitments to end suffering and save lives, in alignment with national policies and priorities. Frameworks such as the Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid also clarify priorities. Governments are also influenced by historical, religious and cultural ties as well as economic, security and political priorities as well as popular domestic pressure. These pressures and interests can lead to preferential funding of certain humanitarian sectors and emergencies over others.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Drivers and motivations: The core motivation is to relieve suffering and save lives, and to fulfill a particular mission or mandate. This motivation is reflected in adherence to humanitarian principles, standards and codes of conduct, and in organizational mandates. Multi-lateral actors are also motivated by the desire to advocate on behalf of those in need and to bring an end to conflicts and other crises with political solutions. Though they all operate within the IASC system, the unique and well-articulated roles of the UN and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent make them distinct from international NGOs and from one another. International institutions and actors are, by their nature, more removed from a deep understanding of national and local dynamics and capacities that drive and manage crises. Some international actors may also struggle to reach those in need due to security constraints.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE

Drivers and motivations: Crisis-affected people are highly motivated to meet their own needs and to support friends, family, and neighbors in recovery. They may be similarly driven to participate in prevention, preparedness and risk reduction as an investment in their own futures and those of future generations. Social support networks may be stretched beyond coping capacity during large-scale or protracted crises.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Drivers and motivations: Local and national actors are motivated by the humanitarian imperative, the desire to ensure that their communities' needs are met and are treated with dignity and respect. CSOs in some contexts may struggle to scale up in major crises, in some cases due to more limited financing and capacity development opportunities.

SERVING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE

DIASPORAS

Drivers and motivations: Diasporas cite solidarity with family and friends as the primary driver to act. They may also be driven by religious or cultural affinity or national pride. Some also wish to return at some point to their countries of origin, and therefore want to promote stability. Real or perceived ties that some members have to particular communities or political parties may be a barrier to neutrality and delivery on the basis of assessed need.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Drivers and motivations: Businesses are often directly affected by crises. In a 2014 survey of private sector actors in North and Southeast Asia conducted by OCHA and the World Humanitarian Summit, 96 per cent reported being affected by a disaster, noting staff casualties, disruptions in supply chain, loss of revenue, and impact on customers. These are strong motivations to help restore basic services and infrastructure. Businesses are also motivated by good citizenship, reputational concerns and community relations. At the same time, private sector actors are ultimately motivated by profit, not necessarily by principled action. Companies may have mixed legacies and motives that undermine trust and compromise neutrality.

FOREIGN MILITARIES

Drivers and motivations: As a core government asset, military deployment is heavily influenced by political and security interests, diplomatic and historical ties and reciprocity. Logistics requirements and proximity of assets and related cost-benefit considerations will also heavily influence the use of military assets. Political and diplomatic considerations, as well as wariness of putting military assets at risk for civilian responses, have also led to the deployment of assets that may not match needs and can even reduce efficiency.

Coherent: Humanitarian action is driven by the pursuit of context-specific outcomes that strengthen resilience and reduce systemic drivers of need in alignment with development, peacebuilding and other longer-term approaches.

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

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

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

Particularly in protracted crises and post-conflict environments, reviews and reforms in the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development sectors have highlighted the value of closer collaboration in analysis, risk identification, and joint planning among different actors.[84] Where common interests are identified, this kind of collaboration is expected to lead to more effective responses during crises and a more effective and responsive development effort after crises. Partnerships beyond the humanitarian system tended to lead to a stronger understanding of pre-existing vulnerabilities and capacities and how those are exacerbated by crisis.

In addition, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and peacebuilding and climate change global agendas have identified many of the same global challenges as humanitarian actors, and all have called for stronger collaboration to tackle them. These strategies are opening new opportunities to work more closely together in practice.

Where is coherence most emphasized?

Coherence was raised most prominently in contexts where complex and protracted crises have led to prolonged displacement and chronic vulnerability. It was relevant in contexts with pockets of instability or dramatic underdevelopment, or those where legal status and conditions varied, particularly between refugees or Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and host communities. It was also noted in relation to the climate change agenda and shared aims with risk management.

What we heard about coherence

- **Shared narrative, shared action**
  The OCHA field visit to the DRC illustrated the challenge of finding common ground where competing agendas and concurrent funding streams – such as those for stabilization, development, and humanitarian action – can lead to incoherent efforts to serve the same population. While some felt urgent humanitarian needs were falling off the radar due to a perception of increased stability, others felt development and resilience investments were too limited due to the fears of a recurrent crisis. In that instance, many felt that conflicting views were

not brought together into a complete picture of need, but instead were left to compete.

The challenge in achieving coherence was also reflected in the disconnect between humanitarian and development efforts to address gender inequalities, and the distinct needs of women, girls, men and boys. Understanding the pre-crisis and post-crisis circumstances and particular vulnerabilities of affected people, disaggregated by sex and age, has largely been a task of development actors. Bringing this analysis together with humanitarian actors during various phases of humanitarian response has the potential to strengthen the relevance of the humanitarian phase of response, and also to ensure greater continuity with development programs and those that follow. For example, conflict and crises have a marked negative impact on gender equality, as reflected in performance on development indicators like maternal mortality, education, and health. Yet as of 2014, according to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marker, out of the total resources, only 4 per cent was invested during crises and recovery periods in programming for which "the principal purpose is to advance gender equality."[85]

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

Access to education in the DRC has gone from bad to worse in recent years. Helping children return to school is crucial for their development, and helps ensure their safety in a country plagued by violence and exploitation. Getting displaced children back to school is vital to their protection. (Credit: OCHA/Gemma Cortes / 2013)

government ministries, the Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General, 20 UN entities, NGOs and local civil society partners.

The process provides a positive model for integrated planning, as the multi-year appeal involved both humanitarian and development agencies and donors and addressed acute and urgent needs, as well as chronic deprivation.[86] However, as it was rolled out, the leadership needed to get the TAP funded fell between the humanitarian and development communities, and financial tracking tools did not acknowledge the TAP as a humanitarian instrument. The resulting gap in funds forced humanitarian actors to issue an additional appeal for Haiti. The process has pointed to the need to update the partnership approaches and systems in order to realize greater coherence among humanitarian and development actors during assess-ment and appeal phases, but also during implementation.[87]

Actors are also encouraging coherence at the program level in numerous ways, such as the *Do More Good* network in the DRC. One international NGO representative in the network explained, "There's a terrible humanitarian situation, and we need to address it, but we can't stay in that gear. In order to shift up, we need to address root causes with a division of labour." That NGO has shifted its focus in the DRC to durable projects such as water systems and a program to reach the mobile displaced population with cellular-based cash transfers and livelihood opportunities.

There are additional examples of efforts to promote coherence at the global level: initiatives like the Solutions Alliance have sought to address displacement systemically through greater integration with development planning, while groups like the Political Champions for Disaster Resilience have launched initiatives to promote risk-based investments and partnerships outside of the humanitarian system to strengthen resilience in contexts prone to natural disasters. These high-level efforts to invest on the basis of risk and to expand partnerships to promote resilience will require continued political commitment and stewardship. They must also be matched by operational tools, financing, and skills to analyse and respond to needs in a more integrated manner.

- **Tools for the Task**
In Haiti, a mismatch was noted between short-term humanitarian tools and skills and the longer-term, structural nature of needs. Despite efforts like the TAP, many interviewees expressed frustration at the artificial boundaries between planning and programming for relief, recovery, and

development efforts. A local NGO leader describes Haiti as a place "where traditional humanitarian interventions meet their limits and where sustainable solutions are needed to meet residual humanitarian needs."[88]

Achieving coherence is further complicated where displaced people are living with host communities that are also in need of basic social services. A study by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) found that nearly 90 per cent of the countries monitored are home to people displaced for ten years or more. At the same time, services provided to those communities were typically designed and funded on a short-term basis, usually by NGOs and international actors in parallel to government services for neighbouring communities.[89] The study found more limited involvement of host governments, development actors, and the private sector in meeting those needs.[90]

Where public institutions are strained by refugees in urban settings in middle-income countries like Lebanon and Jordan, humanitarian actors described efforts to deliver what is effectively development assistance: improving water systems, expanding basic health services, and ensuring livelihoods. As local NGO employee in Lebanon put it, "Why are humanitarians still trucking water? They should be building a reservoir and putting

money into building the system. Otherwise you won't leave anything sustainable behind. The collective thinking needs to be stronger among humanitarians and others."

Humanitarian actors noted that short-term tools persist due to several factors. Short-term planning and funding cycles do not invest in infrastructure, livelihoods, capacity building, or structural reform. Operationally, many humanitarian and development actors at the local level recognize the need for longer-term planning, but these are not translated into systemic changes throughout their organizations. Still others feel that they are already stretched in meeting their essential humanitarian roles, and taking on medium- and long-term efforts would require additional staff with a different set of skills and experience and may end up competing with core deliver efforts. In addition, many donor reporting systems measure results on a short-term, output-oriented basis, while efforts to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience take longer.[91]

Despite these challenges, governments and local and international humanitarian actors are beginning to engage development and humanitarian actors in integrated planning. The Jordanian government has led development of a three-year national resilience plan, while in Lebanon efforts are underway for a government-led response plan integrating emergency response and resilience. One UN-led model that aims for greater coherence is the Transitional Solutions Initiative in Colombia, a joint programme between the UN Development Programme and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees with funds from World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The program addresses

some of the mismatch noted above by combining community awareness, training and income generating programmes to help the most vulnerable displaced communities meet their needs, while building the capacity of local authorities.[92]

At the field level, collectively agreed Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) have also made progress in more clearly defining the scope and boundaries of humanitarian action, articulating intended outcomes and establishing corresponding monitoring frameworks to track progress. Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) are increasingly focused on analysis of vulnerability, severity of need and risks.

SUMMARY: Achieving coherence is not simply a matter of identifying a point of "handover" between different actors, such as humanitarian and development. Rather, it requires simultaneous short- and long-term interventions, shifting between service delivery and programme investment to contribute to better outcomes for affected people. These approaches can broaden the focus on short-term needs to working with a range of actors over the long-term to achieve lasting impact, particularly in chronic vulnerability settings and complex emergencies.

The study found that the phases of a crisis shape needs and capacities, requiring humanitarian actors to scale up or down, shifting roles with agility. The increasing presence of refugees, IDPs and other affected people living outside camps is one trend that requires adaptation in rapidly changing contexts. As reported in June 2015 by an international NGO in Northern Iraq, "Only 16 per cent of the IDPs we are trying to reach live in camps – the rest live with family members and others outside of an affected area. Unique kinds of remote communication and delivery are needed to reach those groups."[93] For international actors in particular, rigid planning and funding structures can limit the ability to adapt to changing needs, circumstances, and coping strategies.

Flexibility is largely reliant on a strong and continuous analysis of context and needs, undertaken in partnership with local and national actors, particularly community groups and local leaders. Programs are sometimes designed on the basis of initial assessments and analysis, but with limited flexibility to adapt on the basis of changing needs and response capacities. As noted in a recent report, "the humanitarian community still tends to see assessments as 'one off' events, rather than as on-going processes, and effective assessment suffers from the same constraints as programme monitoring as a result – notably a lack of funding and institutional support."[94] This trend is even more pronounced in terms of determining the unique needs women, girls, men, and boys within the larger group. For example, a recent review of the link between gender equality programming and humanitarian outcomes found the use of gender-focused baselines is limited, and even where tools such as the IASC Gender Marker have been introduced, they have been limited to gender equality programming at the design phase, not in terms of the results.[95]

Syrian refugee children clean dishes outside of their family's tent in Domiz refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Needs ranged from water to winterized housing and education as seasons changed and displacement became more prolonged.   (Credit: UNHCR, 2012)

The ability to react to new analysis could be supported by a greater openness to innovation and a higher tolerance for risk, bringing in new ways of thinking and approaches from other sectors that will allow humanitarian action to respond more quickly to changing needs. Flexibility is also influenced by recruitment and administrative procedures, technical skills, and openness to changing roles.

Where is being nimble most emphasized?

This element was most prominent in transitions from sudden onset emergencies to other phases of crisis, such as prolonged displacement or the end of a humanitarian presence. In protracted crises, which can often be seen as more "fixed" because of political stalemates, affected people are constantly adapting to the changing economic, social, and political factors that influence their needs and capacities, and the humanitarian response is often not structured to recognize or adapt with these changes.

What we heard about nimbleness

- **Customising response: from *prix-fixe* to *a la carte***
  As needs and capacities shift during a crisis, humanitarian actors must have the flexibility and incentives to adjust accordingly. The research reinforced the desire for the international humanitarian system in particular to be customised to each unique context, an approach that some have called "modular." In a customised approach, different aspects of humanitarian response can be delivered individually or in varying combinations, rather than as a set package, and the scale and scope of response is more closely dictated by the demand for expertise and the ability to scale up, scale down or phase out. For example, a govern-

ment might request predictable and well-defined modules of assistance in needs assessments or information sharing, but no additional services. Where strong national capacity exists, this will mean more of a technical advisory role for international actors, with the associated shift in skills and tools.

- **Changing with phases**
  In the wake of sudden onset natural disasters, the transition to a medium- or longer-term approach can be slow, with few triggers to signal transition. As one local NGO staff person responding to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines put it, "Disaster response should last only a few weeks and transition quickly to development aid with a focus on getting people back on their feet through livelihood support."

However, shifting from a large-scale humanitarian response where needed to a recovery phase is complex and requires strong data and a high level of flexibility. Valerie Amos, then Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, explained, "people don't live their lives in a linear way, moving from 'relief' to 'development'. In the morning they may be in a relief situation, and later in the day be thinking about livelihoods and recovery. Often by the time we have arrived, people have moved on from the initial crisis and they need something else from us. We have to track needs very closely."[96] In protracted crises, changes may be especially subtle, with the international humanitarian system overly-focused on response. Describing the IDP situation in Myanmar, a UN staff member stated, "There is no finality about how long the humanitarian response will go on. But we are still treating it as if it's a fresh emergency."

Challenges were also noted in pivoting back to emergency operations in con-

> *"In circumstances where there are ongoing humanitarian situations, like in Colombia, **organizations do what they have always done and beneficiaries adapt to what they get.** They don't make any sustainable transition . . . In such contexts, a lot of programmes respond to realities that existed 3, 5, 10 years ago, not to the realities of today or tomorrow."*
>
> **OCHA staff member,** Colombia, 2014

texts where longer-term development programming has been the norm. This phenomenon was described in the 2014 Médecins Sans Frontières report *Where is Everyone?* in Maban, South Sudan, where "particular agencies came under withering criticism from others for not being ready to respond to predictable crises and being too focused on their long-term programmes to spot coming storms."[97]

SUMMARY: As needs and capacities shift, actors must adjust accordingly. A more nimble approach is partly reliant on offering customised combinations of response "modules" that fill targeted gaps and complement the needs and capacities available in each context. This approach would be supported with flexible tools for planning and risk analysis, and strong context monitoring that can trigger adaptation to new phases, needs, and capacities.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS

Relevant	Timely	Accountable

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

Complementary	Connected	Coherent	Nimble

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

Respect for Principles	Leadership	Resources	Information and Evidence	Governance

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

Respect for the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence remains essential to humanitarian action, not only for normative reasons, but also as an enabler of overall effectiveness. Especially in protracted conflicts, in order to establish and sustain safe and timely access to humanitarian assistance and protection, organizations must be recognized by parties to conflict and communities as pursuing a purely humanitarian purpose, in a neutral and independent manner.[98] A number of factors have, however, made it more difficult for humanitarian organizations to adhere strictly to these principles and be seen as doing so.

The distinction between parties to conflict and civilians, including humanitarian actors, is increasingly undermined by the changing nature of violence and political factors. A 2014 United Nations University study noted that civil wars and battle deaths have been on the rise, and that those conflicts are becoming more intractable due to the influence of organized

crime and the internationalization of civil conflict.[99] In these contexts, civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, continue to be targeted.[100]

Some counter-terrorism laws and policies have also, over the past decade, negatively impacted on the ability of humanitarian actors to act in a principled manner, or to be perceived as principled.[101] Some counter-terrorism measures have conditioned funding for humanitarian operations on due diligence exercises that might jeopardize recipients' real or perceived neutrality. Militarized assistance, including so called "humanitarian" military interventions and associated "stabilization" or "hearts and minds" campaigns have blurred the line between neutral, needs-based humanitarian action and politically or strategically motivated assistance.

The deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers is also changing the nature of response, with greater reliance on delivery by local actors and remote

management. Some humanitarian organizations have been hard pressed not to compromise humanitarian principles in order to be able to operate and achieve immediate results. While inevitable in some circumstances, and despite some possible gains in the short term, such compromises have made access to humanitarian assistance and protection more uneven over time and throughout affected areas.

How can respect for humanitarian principles enable effectiveness?

- **Principles in context: enabling acceptance**
  International humanitarian actors are increasingly facing challenges to humanitarian principles, as they balance neutrality and impartiality against the obstacles outlined above. As a former Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria has written, "to work on humanitarian issues in Syria is to walk an ethical tightrope. The humanitarian principles which underpin the Western aid system

SECURITY FOR AID WORKERS

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014

— Number of security incidents against aid workers   — Number of aid workers killed
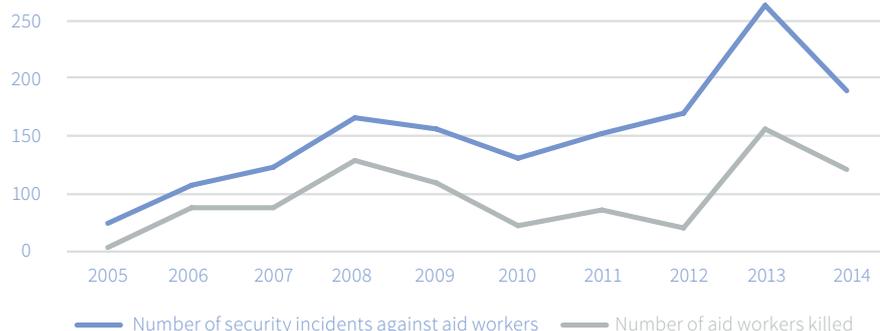
SOURCE: Aid Worker Security Database, as featured in World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2015.

are under extraordinary pressure**.** Independence, neutrality, impartiality and humanity are under continual strain due to murky – if necessary – compromises and accommodations."[102]

Still, humanitarian principles provide a fundamental tool for building acceptance between humanitarian actors and communities, as well as other actors. In some contexts, humanitarian actors must pay particular attention to demonstrating commitment to these principles on a daily basis to maintain acceptance and access, particularly in highly politicized environments. As one humanitarian worker in Yemen noted, due to communal, clan, and security considerations, any movement needed to be planned and cleared with more than two dozen actors to demonstrate neutrality, "not just to say the words."[103] In other environments, the perceived neutrality of humanitarian actors may be less essential to effectiveness, but the importance of needs-based, impartial delivery remains fundamental. While humanity and impartiality constitute the very essence of humanitarian action, neutrality and independence are essential tools to achieve these goals.

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

- **Supporting principled local action**
  As space narrows for international humanitarian actors to operate in conflict, reliance on local actors and others with better access has increased. Some studies show that half or more of international NGO projects are conducted remotely, largely in response to the increased targeting of aid work-

ers.[104] Those interviewed emphasized the importance of reinforcing humanitarian principles with local partners, particularly humanity and impartiality. In the DRC, for example, it was noted that local actors have far greater access to some remote and conflict-affected communities through informal channels, playing a critical role in front-line humanitarian response. However, community members noted that local responders can leave out some communities or individuals due to limited capacities, divisions created by conflict, and pre-existing local dynamics and weaknesses in rights frameworks that can leave women and girls in particular more vulnerable to violence and other gender-related protection concerns.

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

A camp committee leaders in the resettlement village of Pa La Na in Kachin, Myanmar.
(Credit: OCHA / Z.Nurmukhambetova, 2015)

Leadership: Effective leaders and leadership teams are supported with adequate capacity and authority to achieve results for crisis-affected people.

How does leadership enable effectiveness?

This study did not examine the effectiveness of any given leader or model of leadership within the institutions consulted, but numerous interviewees made a strong link between the importance of different types of leadership and the effectiveness of a given response. It was acknowledged that government leadership is critical to effective response, and this is explored in some detail in the sections of this study on "complementarity" and "governance."

The discussions reinforced the recent finding in ALNAP's *Between Chaos and Control*, that while many humanitarian agencies focus on the challenge of finding good individual leaders, in fact good results emerge from leadership teams and from organizations committed to supporting leaders, not as the results of individual performance alone.[105] The need for institutional and system-wide support for leadership, and for the teams and skills needed to provide context-appropriate leadership were also noted. Interviewees described an environment in which individuals find success because they are, as one NGO observer noted, "personally willing to take risks despite their institutions, not because of backing from them."[106]

Considering leadership as an enabler, it was noted that there is no single leader in a humanitarian response, but rather, there are multiple nodes of leadership for the various systems involved in response, each managing its assets and pursuing its desired outcomes. Researchers observed these various types of leadership from the local to international levels, some more acknowledged than others, but all critical to achieving results. There was agreement that the role of humanitarian leaders should suit the context in which a crisis happens, and in pursuing coherence, a core aspect of leadership should be to ensure connections among relevant actors to contribute to shared results. The links between leadership and accountability were also strongly made, with a call for those in international humanitarian lead-

ership positions to have the institutional backing to demand accountability, and that leadership teams should be held accountable for results.

What we heard about leadership

- **Multiple nodes and styles of leadership**
  With different styles and centers of coordination bringing in new capacities, the importance of leadership was consistently emphasized as central to connecting different actors and systems around shared goals. In terms of enabling complementarity to national and local actors in particular, there was an emphasis on bringing forward the role of local and national leaders and reframing international engagement to a more a supporting role or in partnership.

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

- **Strategic leadership**
  Some interviewees noted that humanitarian leaders at various levels can face tremendous expectations but may not be given a clear picture of the specific results they are meant to achieve. One noted that unlike in

peacekeeping missions, which are tied to a dedicated process of achieving a set of goals in a given country before engaging, "humanitarians do not have a collective process of defining a problem statement and setting a clear goal that all are bound to uphold in order to engage in the response. This is a critical, and sometimes missing, kind of authority that must be given to senior humanitarian leadership." This comment echoed a common theme of the need for strategic leadership that sets clear outcome targets, backed by incentives and requirements for humanitarian actors to work toward those shared targets. Engagement with local leaders is critical to understanding needs, facilitating connectivity and producing improved outcomes, and outreach from international actors to local leaders should continue to be strengthened.

- **A Voice of Accountability**
  It was noted across the contexts that one aspect of the leadership role is to highlight weaknesses, gaps, and failures, and to take risks on behalf of an institution or the overall system in order to ensure that these issues are addressed. This includes acknowledging critical feedback from affected people, and being an advocate for their views. Many felt that humanitarian leaders should play a greater role in linking systematically to feedback received from affected people as a guide for adapting response and measuring results, that leaders should "balance the competing forms of accountability" among donors and others to ensure that affected people are given primacy in setting priorities.

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

Resources: Funding for humanitarian action is efficiently deployed to allow for coverage on the basis of need and to deliver results for crisis-affected people.

Recent studies and intergovernmental processes have explored the effectiveness of humanitarian financing, examining tools and political challenges in great detail.[107] This study looks at resources as an enabler of effectiveness, considering how the timing and type of resources, and the incentives created by donors and funders can contribute to achieving effective results, as defined by the elements presented in this study. As these other in-depth dialogues and research have pointed out, effectiveness relies on financing and the broader role of donors in delivering results for affected people, but financing alone cannot deliver those results. The study joins others in calling for a change in the way that resources are considered and used, leading to: greater alignment between assessed needs and the allocation of resources; better visibility of what is invested globally; more financing of prevention and preparedness; and greater alignment among development and humanitarian donors to address vulnerability and achieve shared outcomes.

How can resources enable effectiveness?

- **Reaching those in need**
  Despite international funding for humanitarian assistance and protection reaching another record high in 2014,[108] there is still inadequate alignment between funding and assessed needs across and within crises. The 2015 *Global Humanitarian Assistance* Report found a 78 per cent difference between the best and worst funded humanitarian appeals, the largest gap since 2008.[109] Natural disasters receive more funding initially than conflict situations due to the challenges of

data collection and publicity, as well as political considerations.[110] In order to assess whether or not resources contribute to effectiveness, humanitarian actors must make progress on adopting a consistent way to define and assess need as the basis for humanitarian appeals, and to find reliable measures of whether the outcomes of a well-funded appeal were better than those that were underfunded.[111]

The strong relationship between funding levels and media attention was also raised in a number of settings, with one INGO representative in Myanmar stating, **"If you want funding, you will be tempted to exaggerate the needs. Donors could be the ones to correct this situation."**

OCHA field visit, Myanmar, 2014

Field visits revealed the extent to which some communities or areas received greater spending than others, despite similar levels of need. This discrepancy was due in part to the challenge of assessing the needs of crisis-affected people living alongside others who were chronically vulnerable, but also due to inconsistent investment. For example, there was an influx of donor money and engagement by international actors after the M-23 incursion in Eastern DRC in 2012. In 2014 there were over 140 NGOs in M-23's primary target area in North Kivu, but only 44 in Katanga, a vast province home to an area referred to by UNHCR as "the triangle of death", with tens of thousands displaced by extortion, torture, forced labour, and forced recruitment.[112] The disparity was attributed, in large

part, to the funds available for each region. Indeed, quantitative surveys of press coverage of humanitarian crises have shown that, "in terms of column inches, acute disasters attract significantly more attention in proportion to their actual severity than long-term crises, with a strong correlation with the amount of money donated by the public."[113]

Recent data show that the speed of funding varies widely across crises as well. For example, the percentage of appeal fund requirements met in the first month of the 2013 Haiti appeal (49 per cent) was more than double that at the same point following the Pakistan floods (24 per cent) that same year. By the fifth month, response began to level out.[114] While acknowledging the progress made by UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and numerous rapid funding windows, those consulted for this study encouraged funding arrangements that would allow for more consistent, timely release of funds. Many placed an emphasis on increasing localizing funding windows in countries with known risks or recurrent crises and funding those closest to a response through decentralized government funding for municipalities and local authorities.[115]

- **Funding for coherence: meeting and reducing needs**
  Two-thirds of international humanitarian assistance goes to long-term crises,[116] many characterized by a mix of chronic vulnerability, conflict, and state fragility. Throughout the study's field visits, interviewees expressed the view that humanitarian or development labels, often influenced by

A Syrian man tries to warm himself as snow falls in the Terbol tented settlement in the Bekaa Valley, on 11 December 2013. By early 2015, Lebanon was hosting nearly 1.2 million refugees, representing about a quarter of its population. (UNHCR, April 2015, UNHCR chief meets struggling Syrian refugees in Lebanon) .   (Credit: UNHCR / A. McConnell)

donors, can create tension between actors and obscure the interrelationship between types of need.

Many noted that in protracted crises, donor fatigue and shrinking budgets contributed to a reluctance to continue funding the equivalent of social services, which are the government's responsibility. The reluctance led, in some cases, to decreased funding, without considering how to transition chronically vulnerable groups to more permanent sources of support. In advance of the Financing for Development Conference in July 2015, pressure has increased for governments to invest in social safety nets to reduce vulnerability overall, with some proposing government spending targets.[117]

Financing for coherence requires funding for preparedness and prevention, as discussed above, as well as

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

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

for longer-term outcomes. According to the INFORM Index for Risk Management, countries at the greatest risk of crises, such as Afghanistan, DRC, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia and Yemen, routinely feature as top recipients of humanitarian aid.[118] However, apart from Afghanistan and DRC, none was included in the top 20 recipients of Official Development Assistance.[119]

Efforts to counter these trends emphasize tools like multi-year planning

and financing, and joint appeals for humanitarian and development actors such as the TAP in Haiti. More than half of all OECD-DAC donors now provide multi-annual funding, though in most cases, it only makes up a small proportion of their humanitarian portfolios.[120]

Increasing diversity and visibility
Funding requirements are expected to rise in the coming years beyond what traditional humanitarian financing can manage. A number of initiatives, such as the 2015 UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Financing, are considering ways to diversify funding streams beyond government donors. However, as noted in the Future Humanitarian Financing dialogue, bringing in "as yet unfamiliar sources of public and private humanitarian financing" will need to consider "differences in language, culture, ethics and objectives."

UNDERSPENDING ON INNOVATION:
HUMANITARIAN R&D COMPARED TO OTHER SECTORS

Investment in Research and Development (R&D) is closely tied to innovation. Based on figures for 2013, the humanitarian sector would need to spend $74.7 million annually on R&D to match the average of the lowest levels in other industries.

SOURCE: "The Humanitarian R&D Imperative: How other Sectors Overcame Impediments to Innovation." Deloitte. March 2015.

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

- **Increasing direct funding for national and local actors**
Numerous local actors emphasized that little funding reaches them directly. Many acknowledged that the need to disburse large amounts of funding with limited technical staff and oversight capacity encourages large grants to international actors.[121] However, particularly in protracted crises, local actors pointed out that this structure has been in place for years with little effort to build capacity or shift the balance over time. In addition, some local actors reported feeling that the bulk of funds are spent on the operating costs of international actors, not directly on communities. Actors across the

board acknowledge that the transaction costs of subcontracting reduces investment in local actors and affected communities, but also acknowledged that local capacity to manage and report on funds is not always present.

Among government actors, there was similar frustration that while international humanitarian appeal figures ballooned, some governments were unable to finance their own responses. In 2014 only three per cent of international humanitarian financing went directly to affected governments.[122] Following Cyclone Pam, the Vanuatu Government spent significant funds on logistics and private sector operators to clear streets, restore electricity, and transport water, shelter and medicines, very little of which was funded through the UN Flash Appeal. Donors tend to support international NGOs affiliated with their own countries and international agencies first, in some cases regardless of their absorptive capacity

or how much they also receive from public appeals. The first direct support was from Vanuatu's neighbours (Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji), amounting to US $2 million, a small sum in relation to the response but a significant contribution for those nations.[123]

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

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

How do information and evidence enable effectiveness?

In any context, humanitarian responses will be guided by basic data: who has been affected, where are they, and what do they need? This information drives the content of the response and clarifies who should respond and when, in addition to establishing a baseline against which impact can be measured and actors held accountable for results. There is a critical need to systemize the collection and analysis of data and evidence disaggregated by sex and age, which limits humanitarian actors' ability to ensure accurate targeting, which has an impact on the relevance of inputs and the ability to measure results for women, girls, men and boys.[124] Information also enables decision making by governments and local leaders and can form the basis of advocacy where responsible action falls short. As noted by a speaker at the 2015 ALNAP *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action*, when good information is "fed up the food chain," it can be used to highlight problems ranging from gaps in services to collective failures of political will and violations of international humanitarian law.[125]

Interviewees also emphasized the need to capture, triangulate and share information, not only feeding it "up" to political decision-makers but also "out" to affected communities. Data and analysis over time can also highlight areas at greatest risk, driving preventive action that saves lives. Evidence-based research and analysis can also be used to evaluate which approaches and tools are working, which are not, and where innovation is needed. Finally, evidence is

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

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

seen as a vital basis for providing flexible funding for new approaches. With an increase in experimentation and emphasis on innovation, donors and investors need sufficient baseline information to assess the types of products and processes that will have the most impact.[126]

What we heard about information and evidence

- **Enabling data sharing**
  A growing range of actors are now undertaking diverse roles in data collection and dissemination, each with its own perspective, tools (from traditional surveys to mobile-based mapping), capacity, and standards. In order to manage this wealth of data and sources, humanitarian actors are increasingly promoting open formats like the Humanitarian Data Exchange, which was started in 2014 and now has 165 organizations sharing data that has been accessed from over 200 countries and territories.[127] At a recent meeting

on health information management during the Ebola crisis, participants from the region championed open data sharing initiatives like HDX, and emphasized that data sharing must continue to be a two way street, moving away approaches that push for "data surrender" by national actors to international actors.[128]

In many cases, data is not shared due to an absence of trust, established partnerships, standards to validate data, and clear guidelines. Actors may guard information for good reasons, but they often do so on an ad hoc or arbitrary basis. Numerous actors are working to expand existing data exchange efforts and adopt responsible data policies, while investing in improved data collection and analysis. Many of the policies emerging among humanitarian actors promote cybersecurity measures and ethical frameworks to reduce risks to affected people, pre-positioned humanitarian stock, or aid workers.[129]

- **Proving what works**
  The limited body of rigorous research and the inconsistent evidence standards in the humanitarian system have contributed to a dominance of established ideas and modes of operating in some areas, without clear evidence that they work. A 2014 report by United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) found "we do not have sufficient evidence about the scale and nature of disaster risk, nor about which elements of humanitarian response are most effective," contributing to "remarkably little innovation in humanitarian response and disaster risk management
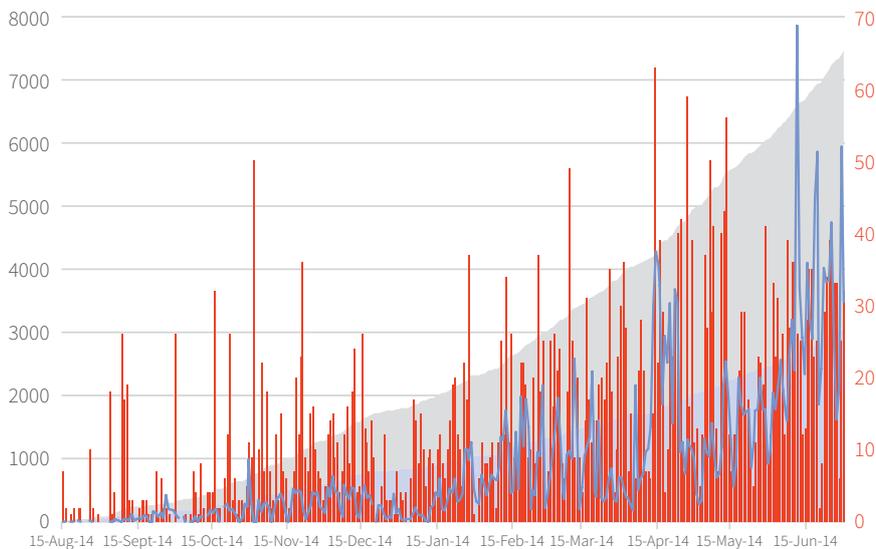
KoBoToolbox: OVERVIEW OF USERS, PROJECTS AND SUBMISSIONS (AUG 14 - JUN 15)

The dramatic increase in the use of opensource data tools like KoboToolbox highlight the importance of good, timely data for humanitarian action.

- Cumulative total users
- Cumulative total projects
- Projects created per day
- Submissions per day

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

Strengthening the Humanitarian Innovation Ecosystem, 2015. Brighton University

over the past twenty years, limiting efforts to increase coverage, quality and value for money in the sector."[130] Similar gaps in data exist across sectors of the humanitarian system, where better evidence is needed to stimulate, develop and disseminate new ideas, and to build credibility to support disruptive and transformative approaches.[131]

While a range of actors talked about piloting new ideas, they highlighted obstacles to building a strong evidence base: a need for skills and capacities to manage research while delivering in crises, a need for funding for longer-term

studies and strategic research and development,[132] and a need for channels to share data and information on good practice, such as an open knowledge management facility to provide a "historical record" on what works among highly-mobile practitioners. It was noted that communities of practice were filling this gap in some areas, but that gaps in knowledge sharing and limited risk tolerance were keeping good ideas from going to scale.[133]

The need to balance reliable delivery methods with the necessary risks involved in innovation can be difficult to defend institutionally. Particularly where resources to meet urgent needs are already limited, the case for investment in research and development can seem too daunting, despite its proven link to innovative results. Innovation funds, such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund, which requires robust methodology but incorporates a high appetite for risk, can be effective ways to balance this tension, though their available resources are limited.[134]

Information also enables affected people to react to risks and access resources, and to demand accountability. In numerous contexts, affected

communities noted that data used to advocate on their behalf should also be accessible so that they can meet their needs and demand a response. A first step is to better understand how affected people communicate and use information to make decisions, and what their information needs are as part of response.

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

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

Haitian Government official,
OCHA field visit 2014

As noted in the element on "complementarity," governments hold the primary responsibility to respond to, manage and coordinate humanitarian crises. However, the international provision of humanitarian assistance and protection, in the language of the Sphere Standard, "reflects the reality that those with primary responsibility are not always able or willing to perform this role themselves."[135] Indeed, much of today's humanitarian need is found in environments where institutions of government are weak and inequality is widespread, or where there is active engagement in conflict and violations of human rights that may involve limitations on the safety and mobility of humanitarian actors. Indeed, humanitarian response and international engagement and advocacy by humanitarian and other actors will continue to be critical to advancing positive changes in those contexts. In still other contexts, there are opportunities to strengthen aspects of governance that are particularly critical to humanitarian effectiveness.

This section describes some key roles of government noted during the study as fundamental enablers of effectiveness, and selected examples of progress made by some governments in these

areas. The section also highlights areas that require deliberate investment and planning by governments and international partners to enable effective humanitarian assistance and protection, with an emphasis on leadership, vulnerability and risk reduction, and the fulfilment of legal obligations and commitments on protection.

How can governance enable humanitarian effectiveness?

- **From managing crises to managing risk**
  Before, during and after a crisis, governments must establish the legal and regulatory frameworks, activate resources from within the country or externally, and prepare for the next crisis. The leadership role of governments as enablers of effectiveness should not be simply measured by direct crisis management, but also by the environment created for other actors to contribute, and the degree to which affected people can hold their governments accountable for obligations.

Effective governance in humanitarian terms is in part reflected by the investment and structural commitments the government has made before a disaster. In Indonesia, for example, the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2005 and the National Agency for Disaster Management in 2007 created a legal framework for disaster management and risk reduction within development plans. These efforts led to minimal damage and loss of life in the wake of severe natural disasters, including the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that hit Aceh in January 2012.[136] A study by the Stockholm

International Peace Research Institute comparing crises in Mozambique in 2000 to those in 2007 found that "the need to rely on foreign assistance, in particular foreign military assets, was greatly reduced due to the enhanced institutional capacity of the National Institute for Disaster Management (IGNC) in terms of disaster preparedness and effective contingency plans at the national provincial and district levels."[137]

The development of National Disaster Management Agencies or ministries and departments handling disaster response indicates the growing investment by governments in response capacity. Even in the poorest countries, progress toward greater self-reliance has been made. An evaluation of Niger's response to the 2010 floods in Niamey found that the government made a timely assessment of its own capacity, identifying where international assistance was needed.[138]

Almost any country may be faced with a crisis whose magnitude overwhelms even the best preparations. In these cases, governments can facilitate the legal and logistical elements of an international emergency response through actions such as expediting visas, adopting standard operating procedures for job sharing, undertak-

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

Robert Piper
UN Humanitarian Coordinator 2015

June 2014, Almaty,Kazakhstan: The course participants included staff members from the Ministries of Emergency Situations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
(Credit: OCHA / Z. Nurmukhambetova)

ing scenario planning, and engaging business, diaspora, and regional actors effectively.

For example, after Typhoon Haiyan, the Government of the Philippines set up a "one-stop shop" under the International Humanitarian Assistance Network, developing and managing protocols for the entry, processing, and accommodation of relief teams and supplies.[139] Visa waivers allowed 700 aid workers to enter the Philippines in the first month.[140] Many of these issues are being advanced through the Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and regional and national risk management initiatives.

- **Increasing social protection**
In chronic vulnerability settings and protracted crises, the willingness or ability of governments to provide basic social protections within their borders have often broken down. In the DRC, for example, community members discussed the root of the humanitarian situation there as a governance issue, with many calling for greater capacity building and investment in government resources to provide basic services. The adoption of rights frameworks and the delivery of basic social services and safety nets were seen as fundamental actions governments must make to reduce vulnerability.

This includes the delivery of services and protections to displaced people living within a government's borders. An essential step in fulfilling this responsibility is the adoption of protective legislation and services to support those displaced by conflict or disaster. However, as of 2014 only 40 per cent of countries monitored by the IDMC had national laws or strategies on displacement.[141]

New approaches by government and private sector partners to decrease chronic vulnerability and increase social protection are providing a way out of humanitarian gap-filling. For example, African Risk Capacity (ARC) is an AU-initiated project that combines

risk pooling and risk transfer tools to enable African countries hit by natural disasters to maintain food security for their populations. The ARC is structured in two parts, which come together to provide insurance for predictable risks: a development finance institution, the ARC Agency, overseen by a governing board of African heads of state; and a mutual insurance company that issues insurance policies to participating governments and transfer aggregated risk to the international market. While 26 African countries are now members, many have limited national coverage due to resource constraints. For humanitarians operating on an appeal-driven financing model in chronic vulnerability environments, a more complementary approach would involve working more closely with institutions like the ARC and governments to understand the role of insurance and other financial tools, to support capacity development to manage risk, and to work together to increase international and domestic investment in risk insurance coverage over time.[142]

In addition to risk insurance, a growing number of governments are adopting other forms of safety nets and social protection schemes as a way to protect their populations from shocks and increase livelihood opportunities. Through multilateral financing instruments, public-private partnerships, and domestic commitments to invest national resources, many low- and middle-income countries are now offering some form of social protection. These investments are expected to decrease the levels of vulnerability and humanitarian need as they become increasingly universalised.[143] In addition to reducing vulnerability, the data and infrastructure established to support social protection programs can also be used to facilitate targeted resource transfers in times of crisis.[144]

Conceptual model of risk management
Adapted from the World Development Report 2014

Risk Transfer
To share risks with people, government or markets

Understanding Risk
To understand shocks and potential humanitarian impact

Residual Risks
To cope with residual risks that were not sufficiently reduced in advance

Risk Reduction
To reduce the probability, size and impact of humanitarian crises

Preparedness ⟷ **Response**
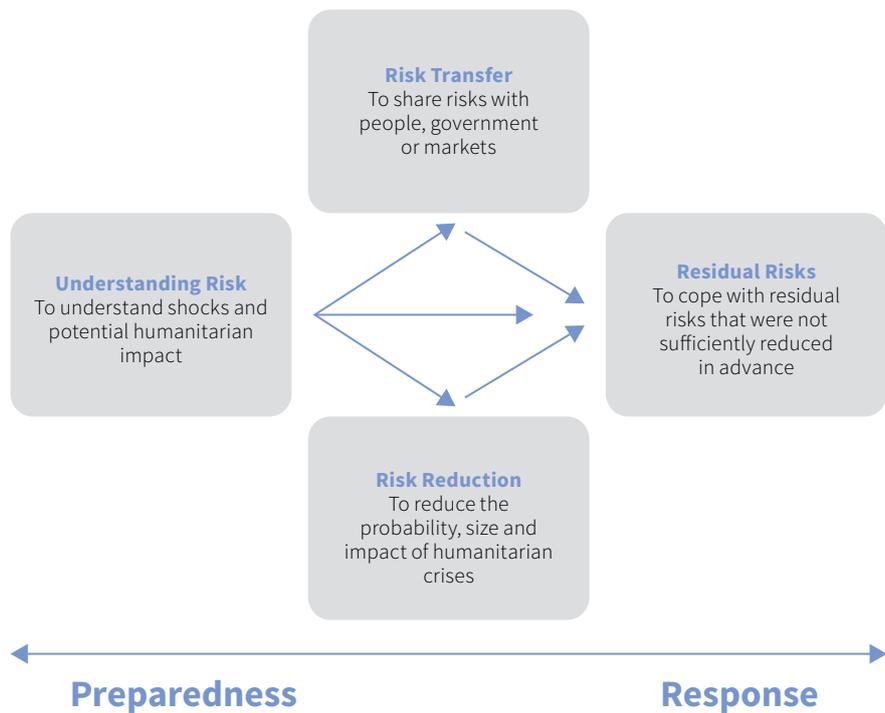
SOURCE: The World Bank's 2014 *World Development Report*

- **Fulfilling obligations in conflict**
As regularly recalled by the UN Security Council, in situations of armed conflict, parties to conflict have "primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian personnel."[145] Parties to conflict also have primary responsibility to provide for the basic needs of civilians who are under their control. At a practical level, the acceptance and goodwill of parties to conflict is fundamental for any humanitarian actors to achieve results commensurate with the needs of conflict-affected civilians.

However, some parties to conflict see no interest in complying with their international obligations, including those in Security Council Resolutions.

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

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

These actors fail to take proactive measures to protect civilians and provide for their basic needs, in some cases even intentionally targeting civilians as a tactic of war and impeding access to humanitarian assistance. Further efforts are needed to prompt compliance with norms of international humanitarian law, through continued dialogue with parties to conflict and effective accountability mechanisms, which are emphasized as core protection challenges defined by

the UN Secretary-General in his reports on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.[146] The Security Council has taken a number of steps, including: the adoption of targeted sanctions against individuals and entities engaging in, or providing support for, IHL violations[147]; its decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court; and its decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry for the Central African Republic.[148] Such practices need to be further enhanced and followed by concrete action, in particular by States.

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

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

Feb. 2013, Dungu, Orientale: A woman carries water containers in Dungu in eastern DRC. Outbreaks of cholera, a water-borne disease, affected more than 30,000 people and killed hundreds across the country in 2012. The Pooled Fund is supporting chlorination points, providing free treatment to contain the outbreaks and promoting good hygiene in affected provinces.
(Credit: OCHA / Gemma Cortes)

HOW DO WE
GET THERE?

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The study describes five overarching shifts in mind-set and practice that will contribute to more effectively meeting needs in crisis and to moving people out of crisis. They are not presented in a prescriptive manner, but rather, they are meant to signal a new direction. Many of the shifts are aimed at reducing vulnerability and paving the way towards more sustainable solutions, serving as a bridge to the Sustainable Development Agenda and other major change agendas in areas such as peace operations, climate change, and gender equality. Emerging from the findings, the proposed shifts call for action by international humanitarian actors as well as donors, governments, national and local actors, and others contributing to humanitarian action such as private sector actors, militaries, and diaspora communities.

The way these shifts are carried out will be heavily reliant on the operational contexts, the role and capacities of all actors including national authorities, and the phase of the crisis. While the study does not put forward a context typology, it does suggest that each of the five policy shifts has some relevance for all contexts, but the specific tools and priorities will be determined by a localized and on-going analysis of context.

1) *Reinforce, don't replace* **existing capacities and coping strategies**

International humanitarian actors must respond to needs quickly, with relevant responses, and at the necessary scale. But their aim should always be to enable affected people and local and national actors, not to substitute for them. Humanitarian action should reinforce the self-reliance of affected people and invest directly in targeted capacity development for local and national actors, starting by developing the skills and providing the funding to enhance national capacities. These efforts should include supporting national and local actors and institutions through appropriate political engagement, partnerships, and financial investment to protect civilians, manage risk, guide response and reduce vulnerability. The primacy of national and local institutions cannot come at the expense of people themselves: where national and local actors undermine or compromise the rights and safety of crisis-affected people, international actors should also uphold and reinforce the rights of affected people, stressing the primary responsibilities of States and parties to conflict under relevant international law and other instruments.

Some examples of how to make this happen:

1.1 Understand and support national and local capacities: Governments and international actors should identify existing national capacity for response at the country level and acknowledge gaps. International actors and donors should make direct investments in providing targeted and measurable financing and training to national and local partners to ensure a sustainable response capacity in the future, including the ability to engage regional and international support when needed.

1.2 Promote compliance with international obligations, including through reinforced accountability: Humanitarian actors should systematically remind host Governments and parties to conflict of their obligations under relevant bodies of international law and other international instruments, including their primary responsibility to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and respect and protect humanitarian actors, in situations of armed conflict. The UN Security Council should make more systematic use of the tools at its disposal to prompt compliance with relevant international obligations and ensure accountability, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, the creation of ad hoc accountability mechanisms, or the imposition of targeted sanctions. States should consider the creation of concrete accountability mechanisms, such as regular meetings on compliance or a central register for monitoring and recording violations of international law.

1.3 Deliver added value: International humanitarian actors should examine where they add value in relation to national actors and ensure the necessary skills and tools to provide support. In settings where national capacity is more developed, this approach may imply a shift to a role of technical advisor and facilitator, with less emphasis on implementation.

1.4 Partner with those closest to the crisis: international actors should support national and local civil society counterparts, including women's organizations, to lead on and deliver assistance engaging them as strategic partners in context analysis, needs assessment, program design and implementation.

1.5 Promote resilience based on needs analysis: Partner with local actors and development partners to better understand coping strategies and to respond more holistically to needs, using tools such as area-based, multi-sector targeting; strengthening livelihood support; and cash-based programming that can transition from emergency response to social protection as needed. A gendered analysis should always be applied to identify the unique coping strategies and capacities of women, girls, boys and men as a basis for gender quality programming.

1.6 Increase direct funding for national and local organizations: Donors and other international actors should review funding processes to enable greater direct funding for national and local actors and should increase targeted outreach to civil society organizations and first responders. Explore local certification processes, pre-vetting, national pooled funds with joint national-international oversight, targeted capacity development in grants management and other efforts to increase direct funding.

1.7 Make funding accessible for affected governments: Explore more comprehensive and inclusive country appeals accompanied with financing mechanisms that help to meet requirements of affected governments, whether during crises or to as reimbursement for crisis-related expenditures.

2) *Enter with an Exit*: collaborate to reduce and end humanitarian need

Acknowledging that humanitarian crises are neither short-lived nor isolated, humanitarian actors must work more closely with others to set context-specific targets for reducing need and improving the prospects of crisis-affected people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This must include concrete partnerships with governments, development and peacebuilding communities, and other relevant actors in order to: identify shared interests and clarify roles in reducing the risk of chronic shocks, strengthen social protection measures, prevent prolonged displacement, and promote sustainable solutions for internally displaced people and refugees. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a number of commitments to support this aim, including support for displaced people to return to a path to dignity and safety. Planning should employ multi-year compacts that bring together relevant actors at the national and regional levels to clarify how they will contribute to specific, dynamic benchmarks and outcome targets against which to measure progress.

Some examples of how to make this happen:

2.1 Form compacts to address drivers of need: work together with development, peacebuilding and other relevant actors, formulate compacts based on shared results that move people out of crisis. Compacts should identify relevant actors to meet—and reduce—needs using multi-year planning and supported with multi-year financing, with an emphasis on leading with national capacities.

2.2 Deepen needs analysis and adopt dynamic planning: Following the immediate sudden onset period, humanitarian actors should deepen needs and context analysis informed by voices of affected women, girls, men and boys, and in partnership with those working on medium-to longer-term efforts to reduce vulnerability, build resilience and manage risk.

2.3 Adopt outcome targets for IDPs and refugees: Adopt clear targets for reducing the numbers of displaced and protracted refugee situations by pursuing context-driven integration and sustainable coping strategies such as identity registration and rights frameworks, integrated job creation, education, and health services.

2.4 Adopt national policies to reduce need and vulnerability: Governments, donors, and other key stakeholders like private sector actors should increase investment in social protection measures such as safety nets, regulatory frameworks for insurance-based solutions and other measures to decrease vulnerability, reducing the need for humanitarian engagement in chronic vulnerability settings over time.

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

Some examples of how to make this happen:

3.1 Map before the crisis: Conduct pre- and post-crisis response capacity and gap assessments to better understand existing national and local capacities and areas where regional or global support are needed. Non-humanitarian actors, such as the private sector, should organize and map their own assets and capacities in order to engage strategically in humanitarian response.

3.2 Connect based on comparative advantage: Support, or where necessary create, national forums for humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors and international and national actors, to bring about greater connectivity across systems. Establish a "market place" with information about roles, comparative advantages, and ways to connect with one another.

3.3 Coordinate for context: Aim for lean coordination structures, building on the cluster system and engaging the most relevant sectors in context. Where most effective, coordination structures should be led or co-led by national actors in as localized a manner as possible.

3.4 Leadership for context: activate assets, align assistance. Leadership must suit the context and phases in which it takes place, whether providing a vision, facilitating the engagement of diverse actors, or ensuring accountability. Different types of leadership should be recognized and engaged, particularly national and local leaders. Women's leadership should be elevated at all levels: among

national and local leaders and the humanitarian workforce and through equal and equitable repre-sentation in decision-making and leadership positions at the community level.

3.5 Promote established standards in context: Promote quality and relevance by examining standards in context, including the Sphere, Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, UN-SWAP the IASC Gender Marker, and national standards to ensure that they reflect the reality of needs and coping strategies and do not undermine coverage.

3.6 Inclusive financial tracking and planning: Reform financial tracking to allow for visibility of investments and funding beyond multilateral humanitarian actors, including domestic and bilateral funding, and other funding streams (e.g. private sector or diaspora). Increase opportunities for diverse types of funders to discuss humanitarian financing in order to identify gaps and areas of divergence, particularly on processes and principles.

3.7 Open, safe and reliable data: Governments, multilateral actors, and private sector partners should continue to advance dialogues on the adoption of data standards for humanitarian purposes, with accompanying protections for the security and privacy of affected people and the adoption of shared and open data services with managed standards, such as the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)

4) *See the whole picture:* 360-degrees of risks and needs

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

Some examples of how to make this happen:

4.1 Promote and uphold humanitarian principles: Humanitarian actors should reaffirm and observe, and Governments and parties to conflict should respect and enable, the clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and political or military action and goals.

4.2 Strengthen needs and risk analysis: Develop more accurate mechanisms to better understand the nature of needs within and across crises in order to set desired results, increase the demand-driven nature of response, and partner to address drivers of need.

4.3 Clarify needs of vulnerable groups: Increase consistency of the analysis of needs at national and local levels that adopts a local definition of vulnerability and disaggregates within those populations, including women and girls and uniquely vulnerable populations such as IDPs and migrants.

4.4 Put the money where the risk is: Governments and donors should commit to investing resources over time to prepare for areas of greatest known risk, tracking indicators of impending conflict, natural disasters, and other drivers of need.

4.5 Map capacities to respond to risk: On an on-going basis, Governments at the national and municipal level should identify capacities to respond to known risks and flag areas where outside support (from regional and international actors in humanitarian and other sectors) is needed as the basis for establishing relationships ahead of crisis events.

4.6 Make crisis management investments public: Risk assessments and related investments by Governments should be made transparent as a core measure of government commitment to prevent and respond to risks. Donors, development organizations, and national actors should support investment targets by governments in preparing for and preventing known crisis risks.

4.7 Remain nimble: As crises and contexts are rapidly changing, the international response should be more adaptable in real time, particularly sharpening the transition between phases, including from sudden onset scaling up to medium- or longer-term strategies, as well as phasing out operations, based on strong monitoring and analysis of needs.

4.8 Turn data into action: Governments and multilateral actors should strengthen and share data on risk to identify shared priorities and investments, particularly at the regional and national levels. Member states and donors should leverage early warning data and analysis to call for action by governments.

4.9 Promote evidence-based innovation: Encourage needs-driven innovation and partnerships outside of the humanitarian system to leverage new ideas, technologies, and approaches. Increase investment in research and development on what works. Develop a tailored knowledge management system for affected communities and humanitarian actors to exchange knowledge and build an evidence base on effective interventions.

5) *Measure shared results* **for collective accountability**

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

Some examples of how to make this happen:

5.1 Invest in accountability: International humanitarian actors and governments should invest in accountability to affected people as a driver of priorities and measure of success. Donors should require and fund collective accountability measures such as feedback mechanisms, wherever possible doing so in a joint or pooled manner to assess impact across sectors and organizations.

5.2 Systematically connect feedback to decision-making: Common feedback mechanisms should be established so that affected people can seek recourse more easily. Feedback collected by organizations and clusters should be aggregated at the collective level and linked to decision-making processes by governments, humanitarian leaders and coordinating bodies.

5.3 Make data accessible to affected people: Assess how affected people access information and what can be done to increase their access to the most relevant data and analysis to enable their protection and decision-making. Give particular attention to reaching women, girls, men, and boys through the channels uniquely accessed by each group.

5.4 Track gender equality results: Include the Gender Marker throughout all phases of humanitarian action, including monitoring and evaluation, to enhance accountability their effectiveness in accessing and addressing the needs of women, men, girls and boys appropriately.

5.5 Promote and adapt standards: Humanitarian action should adhere to established standards for meeting needs in a consistent manner, such as the Core Humanitarian Standard. International actors and governments should invest in promoting humanitarian standards among non-humanitarian actors engaged in response, including private sector, voluntary groups and military actors. Humanitarian actors should consider how to adapt indicators for established humanitarian standards to meet needs in urban settings, migration contexts or other non-traditional settings.

5.6 Promote transparency: Humanitarian actors should promote transparency in coordination, planning, funding and decision making to reinforce mutual trust. All actors involved in delivering assistance should publicize commitments among affected communities as a basis for accountability.

Guiding Principles: A Framework for Accountability

Why a framework for accountability? This study is the product of significant research, and it echoes many of the views on the agenda for change also being put forward toward the World Humanitarian Summit. Given the urgency of strengthening humanitarian effectiveness for people in crisis, and moving people out of crisis, we must provide incentives for change and measure whether we are making progress. The actors responsible for realizing a change agenda for humanitarian effectiveness must be held accountable for making it happen.

What is the framework and how would it be used? The study proposes that a global accountability framework be formulated to track progress on improving specific aspects of humanitarian effectiveness, used to inform interagency and intergovernmental processes as well as operational and policy options in crises. Tracking progress on the accountability framework would highlight successes and best practice, barriers to advancement, and areas of new or on-going concern that require adaptation or change in course. As a contribution to this accountability framework, the study proposes a set of "guiding principles" that highlight the main changes in relation to the

study's 12 elements of effectiveness. These are meant as a starting point for discussion, not as a definitive list. The framework would build on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, among others.[149]

The bottom tier of the study effectiveness framework includes a set of "enablers." In many crisis environments, the weaknesses or gaps in enablers such as governance and respect for principles are the very reason for a crisis. In some contexts, however, there is significant progress that can be made on addressing some of them, and analysing these factors often forms the basis of the humanitarian advocacy agenda to tackle persistent challenges. The enablers also represent some of the connecting points with other agendas including human rights, peace and security, and development. The study does not suggest that these enablers must be present for humanitarian action to contribute to effectiveness, but it does recognize that a forward-looking agenda must continue to tackle these systemic considerations.

CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION THAT IS
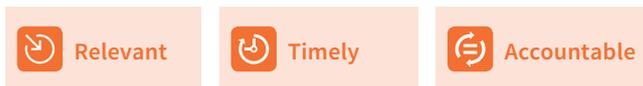
| Relevant | Timely | Accountable |

RESULTS: these elements describe the desired results for crisis affected people

THOSE REACHING CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE SHOULD BE

| Complementary | Connected | Coherent | Nimble |

PRACTICE: these elements describe the desired behaviour and approach for any actor involved in achieving results for crisis-affected people

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION MUST BE ENABLED BY

| Respect for Principles | Leadership | Resources | Information and Evidence | Governance |

ENABLERs: These are some of the essential enablers that must be part of the operating environment in order to achieve results for crisis-affected people.

	I. Crisis-affected people have a right to assistance and protection that is relevant, timely, and accountable to them.	
Element	**Definition**	**Principle**
Relevant	Goods, services, and other assistance reach those in need in a manner consistent with their holistic set of needs, while reflecting awareness of local risks, priorities, cultures and coping strategies.	**Consider the full picture of needs:** adopt a complete, localized analysis of need and coping strategies as a basis for formulating response and evaluating impact.
		Maximize flexibility for crisis-affected people (*such as use of cash-based approaches and integrated card-based delivery where appropriate*) by delivering response that gives recipients more choice.
		Disaggregate and update needs analysis: differentiate needs based on sex and age and conduct continuous analysis, based on regular feedback from crisis-affected people and informed by risk and vulnerability as a means of clarifying the drivers of need.
		Deepen context analysis by establishing early and continuing ties to regional, national and local actors, development and peacebuilding actors and others with a broad understanding of drivers of need and local dynamics.
Timely	Crisis preparedness and humanitarian response are conducted in a manner that produces the fastest possible effort to relieve suffering and meet needs.	**Support and prepare those closest to crisis** and their extended networks, including affected communities, businesses, local authorities and diasporas.
		Invest in risk mitigation and preparedness as well as analysis of gaps in response capacity.
		Pre-position targeted regional and international assets, particularly where risks and national capacity gaps are greatest, to ensure continued timeliness.
Accountable	People affected by crises are able to influence decisions about how their needs are met, and humanitarian action delivers on commitments predictably and transparently.	**Build trust and predictability** by spreading and upholding standards at the institutional level, such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and established local standards.
		Advance collective accountability by promoting common feedback mechanisms and aggregated data on priorities of affected people that are meaningfully linked to decision-making structures.

II. Those reaching crisis-affected people should be complementary, connected, coherent, and nimble.

Element	Definition	Principle
Complementary	Humanitarian action recognizes and supports the capacities and accountability of national and local actors, and reinforces the coping strategies of affected people.	**Reinforce and invest closest to crisis and risk,** including capacity development and direct financing for first responders, local and national civil society actors, and authorities at local and national levels.
		Enter with humility and build relationships, recognizing the existing knowledge and capacities and understanding where international engagement can reinforce them.
		Leave something behind following international engagement, particularly by linking with development programs and developing capacity where needed.
		Facilitate and advise as national and local capacities are built or restored, and shift incrementally away from direct implementation using clear benchmarks to signal adequate capacity to meet needs, particularly in high-risk contexts.
		Where international actors are called to take a leading role, **engage in strategic partnerships with local actors,** recognizing them as true partners in every stage of the program cycle.
Connected	Mutual awareness, communication, and leadership trigger the assets, capacities, and unique contributions of actors based on their comparative advantage.	**Connect before the crisis:** map capacities and building relationships at the national and regional levels before crises happen, particularly in areas that face a high risk of crisis.
		Leverage comparative advantages by increasing reach to a diverse set of actors with a unique contribution to effectiveness, including local, national, regional, and non-humanitarian to maximize the relevant assets available for humanitarian action.
		Coordinate for context, including the scale and phase of the crisis and connections to all relevant actors meeting needs. Coordination should be nationally led where feasible and will increasingly have multiple centers to reflect diverse capacities.
Coherent	Humanitarian action is driven by the pursuit of context-specific outcomes that strengthen resilience and reduce systemic drivers of need in alignment with development, peacebuilding, and other longer-term approaches.	**Collaborate to cut humanitarian need** within time-bound results through emphasis on risk reduction, social protection, and lasting solutions chronically vulnerable people.
		Increase strategic partnerships with governments, development and peacebuilding actors, including advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to fragility, protracted crises, displacement, and conflict.
		Adapt the tools to the task by recognizing the long-term and cyclical nature of crises and promoting multi-year planning and financing.
		Leverage early warning and analysis of risk and vulnerability to guide investment, and increase partnerships with development actors to development national and local capacity to manage risks.
Nimble	Humanitarian action adjusts to changing dynamics and local priorities and fills targeted gaps.	**Customise response,** particularly in international engagement, by filling gaps in capacity or technical skills, in a manner that can be re-sized and adapted as contexts and change.
		Adapt standards such as Sphere to fluid environments (eg. urban settings; migration and displacement contexts) in order to ensure relevance as contexts change.

III. The environment for humanitarian action must be enabled by respect for humanitarian principles, leadership, resources, information and evidence, and governance		
Element	**Definition**	**Principle**
Respect for humanitarian principles	People in need have safe, rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and protection on the sole basis of their needs.	**Uphold humanitarian principles,** including respecting and enabling the clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and protection, and political or military goals.
		Promote centrality of humanitarian principles among local and national actors and those outside of the formal humanitarian system, including private sector, military, and diaspora networks.
Leadership	effective leaders and leadership teams are supported with adequate capacity and authority to achieve results for crisis-affected people.	**Provide authority to deliver results** by increasing donor and management incentives for collaboration by emphasizing collective results.
		Lead for context recognizing the type and phase of crisis and the style of leadership needed to bring together actors and assets necessary to achieve results.
		Recognize diverse leadership roles by catalyzing leaders and influencers locally and internationally, as well as in business and other relevant agents of change in context.
Resources	Funding for humanitarian action is efficiently deployed to allow for coverage on the basis of need and to deliver results for crisis-affected people.	**Support flexible and multi-year** financing arrangements to adapt as contexts and responses evolve.
		Diversify financial tools such as loans and risk insurance and blended short and long-term financing to spread risk and increase donor base.
		Increase visibility and volume of funding, particularly beyond multilateral donors to meet demands as well as better understand resource flows and their impact.
Information and evidence	The best available data and analysis of capacities, needs, risks, and drivers of need are made available to responders and to affected people themselves. Evidence of which tools and approaches are most effective is systematically used to support innovation.	**Invest in data** for results by increasing data analysis capacity and training for humanitarian professionals and linking data sources practically to decision-making.
		Prove what works through increased knowledge management and rigorous research and evidence standards to document what is effective and where innovation and adaptation are needed.
		Keep data open and safe: universally promote common tools and safeguards for open and reliable data with managed standards for humanitarian purposes and accompanying protections for the security and privacy of affected people.
Governance	Governments prepare for and manage responses to crises, uphold obligations, and engage productively with local, national, regional and international actors.	**Manage risk** by investing in national and localized systems for preparedness, risk reduction and risk transfer on the basis of strong analysis.
		Enable humanitarian action by adopting a regulatory framework and national disaster management structures to manage domestic processes and engage regional and international actors effectively.
		Uphold obligations to fulfil commitments under international humanitarian law.
		Adopt universal social protection measures to reduce vulnerability to crisis.

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6 A number of current studies and research efforts are currently looking at the particular question of how context relates to effectiveness, such as World Vision's *Context Ready*, January 2015; ALNAP's *Responding to Changing Needs*, November 2014; Save the Children's *On Authority and Trust* study of effectiveness in South Asia; and the Humanitarian Effectiveness theme of the World Humanitarian Summit including its work with ALNAP on the *Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action* in May 2015.

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142   See case study on the Africa Risk Capacity and multi-year planning in *An end in Sight: Multi-year planning to meet and reduce humanitarian needs in protracted crises.* OCHA Policy Branch. July 2015.

143 See, for example, *Managing Risk, Promoting Growth: Developing Systems for Social Protection in Africa. World Bank Africa Social Protection Strategy 2012-2022.* World Bank, June 2012.

144 See an analysis of the case of Lesotho in Niang and Ramirez, "Using social protection systems to implement emergency cash transfers: the case of Lesotho." *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, Humanitarian Practice Network. September 2014.

145 See for e.g. S/RES/1975 (2011) on Cote d'Ivoire, paragraph 9 of the preamble

146 Most recently, Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. 18 June 2015. S/2015/453.

147 Six UN sanctions regimes provide that individuals and entities determined by the relevant sanctions Committee as engaging in or providing support for violations of international humanitarian law may be subjected to sanctions. See S/RES/1572 (2004), operational paragraph 9 on Cote d'Ivoire; S/RES//1591 (2005), operational paragraph 3(c), on Sudan; S/RES/1970 (2011), operational paragraph 22(a), on Libya; S/RES/2140 (2014), operational paragraph 18(c), on Yemen; S/RES//2196 (2015), operational paragraph 12(b), on the Central African Republic; and S/RES/2206 (2015), operational paragraph 7(c), on South Sudan. Five UN sanctions regimes provide that individuals and entities determined by the relevant sanctions Committee as engaging in or providing support for acts that obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance, or access to, or the distribution of, humanitarian assistance, may be subject to sanctions: S/RES//1844 (2008), operational paragraph 8(c) on Somalia and Eritrea; S/RES/1857 (2008), operational paragraph 4(f), on the Democratic Republic of the Congo; S/RES/2196 (2015), operational paragraph 12(e), on the Central African Republic; S/RES/2206 (2015), operational paragraph 7(f), on South Sudan; and S/RES/2219 (2015), operational paragraph 19, on Yemen.

148 See S/RES/2127 (2013), operational paragraph 24

149 In 1992, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee put forward a set of criteria for managing and measuring aid effectiveness that have been widely used by a range of actors since then, including as the basis for ALNAP's annual *State of the Humanitarian System* report. (www.oecd.org) The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) was launched in 2015 as a tool for individuals and organizations to guide their efforts to increase quality and effectivness of humanitarian action by any actor. It includes nine commitments that are meant to be monitored by individual organizations in order to track their progress over time. The CHS "describes the elements of principled, accountable, and high-quality humanitarian action."(www.corehumanitarianstandard.org)

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