

Outcome Statement of the 2nd Global Disaster Response Dialogue

Manila, 13-14 October 2014

Findings

- **A lack of trust between national authorities and international humanitarian actors** has been a major challenge in some response operations. Negative perceptions and a lack of transparency were highlighted as important drivers for this problem.
- The current **“one-size-fits-all” approach to international humanitarian responses** was identified as problematic, as it does not sufficiently take into account the specific nature and context of a crisis and the capacity of national actors, including national and local government
- **Emergency preparedness** remains insufficiently supported and ad hoc. Roles and responsibilities between national coordination structures and international actors are rarely defined prior to disasters and should be part of preparedness and risk reduction activities.
- The **overall lack of regulation of humanitarian action** was raised as an important concern. This is the primary role of national governments, yet they often lack the capacity to regulate international assistance.
- **Humanitarian financing** from OECD/DAC donors is overwhelmingly channelled via international humanitarian actors, with very little direct support to national governments and local civil society, even though they are expected to play a primary role in disaster response.
- The **“humanitarian - development divide”** was noted as impacting on affected governments as well as within the international community. The gap of clear responsibility for funding disaster preparedness was noted as a casualty of this.
- **The growing role of regional institutions** is a positive trend, but more clarity is needed about how their emerging role can efficiently interact with those of global and national actors to add value to existing arrangements.
- The **private sector is a key stakeholder** in disaster preparedness and response, but it is not fully engaged in most national or international coordination arrangements.
- **Greater cross-fertilisation** between the post-2015 development agenda, the post Hyogo framework for action process, and the World Humanitarian Summit is required. The recommendations from the DRD global conference will make a particular contribution to these processes, particularly the World Humanitarian Summit.

Recommendations

National, regional and international stakeholders should build preparedness and relationships prior to a disaster. Local and national capacities should always be the first resort for responding to a disaster; regional and international actors should complement their efforts, carefully avoiding the potential to undermine or displace them¹.

The following recommendations are offered to achieve this:

1. International responders and donors can and should do more to support national capacities to respond to disasters by: (a) respecting the central role of the national government in organizing the response; (b) maintaining the apolitical character of humanitarian aid, consistent with humanitarian principles; and (c) ensuring international responses are in line with national disaster response plans.
2. National governments are encouraged to include in their national disaster preparedness rules, plans and procedures: (a) procedures for the solicitation, management and facilitation of international assistance, drawing on guidance such as the IDRL Guidelines and past successes such as the “one-stop-shop” approach² and (b) when not already done, a comprehensive assessment of national vulnerabilities and domestic capacities in order to be in a position to determine and articulate their likely needs for international support.
3. International responders should support the development of national disaster preparedness plans with a mapping of key external actors and assets likely to be available in disaster situations. In addition, agencies such as OCHA, NGO networks and the IFRC may usefully provide advice to national governments on the roles of various agencies.
4. Greater understanding is needed of the different tools and capacities available at national, regional and international levels, and on how they may be made “inter-operable” in situations of disasters. This may include considerations for embedding international surge capacity within interested domestic institutions.
5. International disaster responses and coordination systems must be contextualized and tailored to the domestic system and context of each affected government. As a means to achieve this, consideration should be given to developing a typology of disasters and domestic capacities in order to develop more context-sensitive approaches for international disaster responses.

¹ It is worth noting that the Disaster Response Dialogue is primarily focused on natural disasters

² The One-Stop-Shop approach is meant to expedite custom clearance, as described in the “Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance”, IFRC, OCHA and IPU, March 2013 (using the term “single window international facilitation teams”)

6. National and international actors should put greater emphasis on multi-stakeholder simulations, training exercises, and more inclusive coordination structures as concrete ways to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation.
7. National governments should work with the private sector to encourage and institutionalise its engagement in disaster preparedness and response. Regional and international actors should support national governments in this respect, including through gathering and sharing information on good practice in public-private partnerships and in developing arrangements such as regional compacts with private sector actors.
8. Donor signatories to the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles should ensure that principle n° 8 which calls for the strengthening of the capacity of affected countries and local communities³ is implemented³.
9. More transparency on international humanitarian expenditure is needed by national governments and the public. OCHA's Financial Tracking Service and the International Aid Transparency Initiative are possible avenues for increasing transparency by all parties.
10. Domestic and international actors, including new and emerging funders such as the private sector, should work with national governments and civil society to develop financing tools and mechanisms which will provide resources directly to national responders.

ENDS

³ GHD Recommendation 8: " Strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and co-ordinate effectively with humanitarian partners"