Making the World Humanitarian Summit worth the climb

December 2014

Contents

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives.

Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty – and we believe that vision can become a reality. We urge you to join us.

christianaid.org.uk

Lead author: Katherine Nightingale

Christian Aid is a member of

actalliance

Executive summary

The countdown to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in April 2016 has begun. The aim of the process is to create the momentum and political will to make the humanitarian sector fit for current and future humanitarian disasters. This aim becomes ever more urgent as the number and complexity of crises stretch existing structures and global resources to breaking point, as new actors and new donors play bigger roles, and as lessons fail to be learned from practices that marginalise vulnerable and disaster-affected communities.

In this report Christian Aid outlines the fundamental challenges the Summit must address, the priorities for the humanitarian sector, and the need to integrate and build on these priorities with the global political processes taking place throughout 2015 on disaster risk reduction (DRR), development goals and financing, and climate change.

Following the Asian Tsunami in 2004 the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) called for a 'fundamental reorientation away from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities'. Ten years later and despite significant developments such as the Transformative Agenda, the resilience agenda, and growing recognition of the importance of local and national actors, the kind of radical reorientation the TEC called for has not yet happened. The current Ebola crisis affecting West Africa is yet another demonstration of why investing in preparedness and the national capacity to manage response is essential for preventing and mitigating crises.

The challenges the WHS must address

As we move towards the WHS the world is experiencing greater disaster risks due to aggravating factors, including climate change, rapid unplanned urbanisation, poverty and ecosystem decline. A very large number of crises experienced by communities are the everyday disasters that do not make headlines but do keep people poor and increase their vulnerability to further shocks and stresses.

Challenges to be faced are the fact that international resources and structures for providing a humanitarian response are overstretched, and that these structures fail to adapt to the integrated nature of disasters and development, maintaining instead separate, self-contained approaches to them. And while national governments are reclaiming their role in leading response to crises, efforts to strengthen accountability and disaster governance require renewed focus and investment. Above all, significant questions remain about how to strengthen accountability at a global level to address the politics and power that restrict humanitarian action, exacerbate vulnerability or enable impunity for violations of international humanitarian law.

Christian Aid believes that if the humanitarian sector is to deal successfully with the challenges it faces, the WHS must result in the following goals being achieved:

Goal 1: A shift in power towards locally owned and led response

Goal 2: Greater investment in building resilience and reducing disaster risks

Goal 3: Greater accountability to vulnerable and disaster-affected populations

Joyenda Sharma is trained by Christian Aid partner CASA to lead a team responsible for Primary Health Care from the Kalikapur Disaster Management Task Force in Bihar, India, while Mina Devi leads the Information Team.

In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, a man makes his way through the debris having received relief items from local Christian Aid partners that were on the ground and able to respond immediately.

The experience of Christian Aid staff, partners and programmes, which informs this report, shows that the WHS must agree the following areas for action aimed at achieving the three goals:

Action area 1 – Donors must reform approaches that undermine local and national capacity.

Action area 2 – Innovative and strategic financing is needed to encourage, enable and empower local-level disaster management capacity.

Action area 3 – The UN and the humanitarian sector must ensure greater political space for, and recognition of, local/national actors and encourage them to adopt a stronger role.

Action area 4 – National governments and international donors must make long-term investments in disaster management and resilience-building at local level.

Action area 5 – The development and humanitarian communities must come together to put risk management at the heart of the development agenda throughout 2015/16.

Action area 6 – The WHS must prioritise accountability to vulnerable and affected communities and support them to undertake advocacy to hold duty-bearers accountable.

Action area 7 – Women, children, the elderly and vulnerable or marginalised groups need a special focus, in both the response and the accountability mechanisms.

Action area 8 – The international community must end impunity in humanitarian crises.

Christian Aid recommendations in support of these actions include the following:

- Funding for disaster preparedness and risk reduction to increase to 10% of humanitarian aid.

- A senior staff member of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), whose sole job is to ensure effective inclusion of national non-governmental organisations (NNGOs), to be deployed for every Level 3 (L3) emergency.

- Donors, UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to provide a minimum of 15% of their humanitarian funding direct to NNGOs.

- Sector-wide adoption of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

- The World Humanitarian Summit to prioritise the participation of disaster-affected communities and their representative bodies, NNGOs and Southern actors in the consultation on and agreement of key goals. The first half-day of the WHS should be devoted to listening to the voices of beneficiaries, NNGOs and Southern actors.

- An independent, multi-donor, NGO-led global response fund.

The actions to be taken are not simple, but they are necessary if the Summit is to result in the step-change the humanitarian sector needs. If one message characterises this report it is this: the greatest risk facing the World Humanitarian Summit is that it results in a great deal of discussion, but fails to deliver substantial change on the fundamental questions of power, decision-making and accountability that lie at the heart of future disaster prevention and response structures.

Introduction: Christian Aid's perspective on the humanitarian sector[1]

Christian Aid is a multi-mandate partnership agency working in 45 countries to eradicate the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We also work with NGOs and faith-based organisations and the communities that they work with to manage disaster risks, improve disaster governance, and strengthen resilience at community level as well as to provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where the need is greatest.

Christian Aid is a member of ACT Alliance, a coalition of more than 140 churches and affiliated organisations – 75% from the global South – working together in over 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people. ACT Alliance is supported by 25,000 staff from member organisations and mobilises $1.5 billion a year for humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy. ACT Alliance uses the extraordinary reach and trust of its network of faith-based and church-based organisations to promote community resilience at grassroots level, including in hard-to-reach locations.

Over 70 years of experience in supporting communities affected by crisis, and the local actors working with them, has continued to give Christian Aid and our partners a special insight into the changing needs and challenges for the humanitarian sector over the decades. This is equally true today, and the present report draws on this experience.

The challenges the Summit must address

Current challenges faced by communities at risk of disasters and by the humanitarian sector are multiple and complex. They include:

- **Increasing disaster risks** due to factors such as climate change, rapid unplanned urbanisation, population growth, marginalisation and exclusion of social groups, and conflict.
- **Managing disasters both large and small –** large-scale or mega-disasters often dominate public perceptions of emergencies and the smaller-scale, local-level disasters go under-reported. These 'everyday' disasters wipe out harvests, homes and assets and weaken the coping capacities of already poor or marginalised communities and their hopes of development.
- **An overstretched humanitarian system,** struggling to respond with sufficient resources and systems to meet demand, and still dominated by financing that tends to be short-term and driven by donors rather than demand. This system continues to sideline local and national actors, but arguably also fails to make the most of diverse actors, including the private sector.
- **Self-contained approaches that separate humanitarian and development aid –** despite the growing understanding of the linkages between development and humanitarian issues that is encompassed within the emerging resilience agenda, models and systems of humanitarian response and development aid are still structured and understood very separately.
- **National governments and regional powers are demanding a stronger role in managing crises** in their countries, and the dominance of aid agencies is being challenged by governments, the military and the private sector.
- **Shrinking humanitarian space and the reduced safety of humanitarian workers,** linked in part to the increased role of the military in aid provision, and the possibility of a blurred mandate that can occur with differing foreign policy objectives.
- **Ensuring effective accountability for vulnerable and disaster-affected populations** remains perhaps one of the most stark challenges for the sector. There is greater recognition of the need for accountability within the humanitarian aid sector, and measures to improve accountability are moving forward through initiatives such as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard. Nevertheless, implementation of these measures on the ground is still limited.

- **Politics and power** are key considerations in preventing disasters and building resilience, as such efforts cannot ignore the fact that in many cases vulnerable groups are vulnerable for social and political reasons. The right of communities to be safe from preventable disasters and the duty of states and other actors to provide for the needs of vulnerable and disaster-affected groups in the immediate and long term will require a much clearer discussion about power and accountability within the humanitarian system.

- **Impunity and accountability for violations of International Humanitarian or Human Rights Law** remains a substantial ongoing question for all parts of the international community. While it would not be realistic to expect the WHS to resolve issues regarded as the remit of the UN Security Council or the ICC, there can be no doubt that the outcome of the WHS must be considered credible and relevant for the people of Syria, Gaza, Iraq, South Sudan or anywhere experiencing systematic violations of international humanitarian and human rights law as a key part of humanitarian crises.

This paper aims to provoke discussion around three priority goals that the WHS should target, the areas where action is needed in order to achieve these goals, and the practical implications of taking action in these areas in an integrated way. These goals and the areas for action are outlined in Sections 1, 2 and 3:

Goal 1: A shift in power towards locally owned and led response. This requires greater investment, support and recognition for local and national humanitarian capacity and leadership in humanitarian response, including in conflict contexts. It calls for a better understanding of, and greater support for, risk-sharing partnership approaches to humanitarian programming. And it needs innovative financing models that support locally led emergency response.

Goal 2: Greater investment in building resilience and reducing disaster risks. The humanitarian and development sectors need to work in a much more integrated way to ensure a coherent approach to reducing disaster risks and building resilience to cope with shocks and stresses, both within development frameworks and as part of response and recovery programmes. This means including multi-risk analysis in development planning, and adopting a more integrated approach to addressing development and humanitarian needs in parallel, including those of people at risk or affected by conflict.

Goal 3: Greater accountability to vulnerable and disaster-affected populations. This requires more accountable disaster governance structures at local, national and international levels, greater awareness of gender and other social dimensions, and better adherence to humanitarian accountability best practice. It requires greater understanding of what accountability and disaster governance structures should look like in different emergency contexts. But it also has implications for how donors ensure their funding is accountable to beneficiaries and how that funding reinforces the appropriate disaster governance structures in different contexts.

These three priorities are interrelated and mutually dependent. Shifting power towards locally owned and led response requires greater investment in resilience-building and long-term integrated financing from development and humanitarian sectors. Greater political space for local leadership to manage and respond to disaster risks must involve a much stronger emphasis on local accountability and a step-change in delivering on accountability across the sector. Such a step-change requires long-term support for strengthening disaster governance structures in ways that enable vulnerable and disaster-affected communities to hold decision-makers and aid agencies to account.

The paper draws on Christian Aid's experience of emergency response and resilience-building programmes, the experience of colleagues and partners working to deliver these programmes, and humanitarian and development policy research, such as *Building the Future of Humanitarian Aid*, and *Missed Opportunities* among others.[2] More than 30 staff members and 15 partners provided either oral or written submissions for this paper from over 15 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

The findings of this consultation process identified eight action areas where steps were needed to help achieve these three mutually reinforcing goals. The action areas are explained in more detail in the following sections, where recommendations are provided as steps towards achieving these goals.

A shift in power so that humanitarian response becomes locally led and locally owned has long been called for within the humanitarian system, but altering the structures to enable this to happen is no easy task.

Action area 1
Donors must reform approaches that undermine local and national capacity.[3]

Recent reports, *Missed Opportunities*[4] and *Missed Again*,[5] support the idea of an ecosystem approach to humanitarian response, in which local and international civil society work coherently according to the principle of subsidiarity. In some contexts, local and national actors are leading response efforts. In others they are working in partnership with INGOs or UN agencies. Such an approach recognises the important role INGOs can play, offering greater access to funding, technical specialism, superior logistics capacity and an ability to work at significant scale.

At the same time it is increasingly obvious that support to, and investment in, local capacity is critical if the humanitarian challenges of the 21st century are to be met. While greater investment must be made by donors to support local and national actors directly, where this is felt to be not possible, a combination of the comparative advantages of INGOs and NNGOs can ensure that humanitarian action is effective.[6]

The systemic problems that prevent local actors from leading or delivering response include:

- **Donor administration cost constraints have unintended consequences.** Donor administrative cost pressures lead some donors to reduce in-house capacity and to outsource transaction costs to intermediaries. This can result in preference for large-scale interventions, resulting in the dominance of small numbers of large agencies and the UN.

- **Linear thinking stifles innovation and risk.** When aid budgets are subjected to increased scrutiny in a time of austerity, donors are encouraged to emphasise outcomes, and payment by results and in arrears. The reliance on log frames as a programme planning tool implies an unrealistic linear relationship between inputs, activities and results which does not resonate with experience in implementation in the uncertain arena of humanitarian response. The need for certainty of results stifles risk-taking and innovation in programme design and delivery. These approaches suit large actors, which can manage cash flow and financial uncertainty better than smaller, local organisations with tighter margins. We focus on ensuring that the aid delivery system is working smoothly when we should be focusing on transforming lives. Donors and INGOs should be willing to accept a higher level of calculated risk if this allows faster response.

- **Compliance requirements distort capacity-building.** Meeting requirements on reporting, monitoring, evaluation and performance is resource-intensive and requires a high level of skills. This is a challenge to small NNGOs in disaster-affected countries. It can lead to agencies focusing on capacity-building for contract compliance rather than for empowerment or for improving front-line programme delivery.

- **Unequal playing fields and barriers to entry.** Although the sector recognises the importance of local organisations in resilience and response, we have not succeeded in finding ways to fund their work sustainably. Civil society and local actors play the biggest role in the first important days after disasters, but struggle to find sufficient funding for preparedness or response. Direct funding to NNGOs remains at staggeringly low levels. According to Development Initiatives, only 1.6% of all humanitarian assistance between 2009 and 2013 went directly to national and local NGOs.[7]

- **Simple practicalities block local access to funding.** A number of challenges relate to practicalities that simply block local organisations from accessing funding. Many donors fail to translate donor documents into appropriate working languages. The complexity of the language, concepts and abbreviations creates another barrier. In many cases donors do not adequately publicise funding opportunities where NNGOs will see them. Restricted time frames limit NNGO response. Minimum grant sizes preclude many smaller NNGOs from engaging.

Recommendations

Donors must reform centralised and risk-averse programmatic requirements and procedures that inhibit the ability of the humanitarian system to work with and reinforce local indigenous capacities. The Start Fund is one example of a rapid response funding mechanism that seeks to avoid some of the risk-averse pressures of traditional donor constraints by pre-positioning donor funds for rapid disbursement to emerging or low-profile crises. The Start Fund enables very rapid action in support of under-funded crises, with project selection decisions taken locally to benefit from local actors' understanding of the details of the context.[8]

The process of agreeing 'humanitarian effectiveness' criteria and indicators at the WHS must build on existing initiatives such as the Core Humanitarian Standard, be inclusive and transparent, and prioritise involvement of affected communities and local and national actors.

Humanitarian effectiveness criteria should be measured in terms of lives saved and suffering reduced following a disaster. But building a resilient humanitarian system also requires indicators that measure how effective response efforts are in aiding recovery and preventing affected populations from falling into poverty permanently. An important link should be made to indicators within the post-2015 disaster risk reduction (DRR) framework that seek to measure and reduce disaster-induced poverty.

Action area 2
Innovative and strategic financing is needed to encourage, enable and empower local-level disaster management capacity.[9]

For too long the humanitarian sector has been characterised by an aid financing model based on sudden inputs following public appeals; this encourages an emphasis on rapid service delivery, exaggeration of the agencies' own importance and understatement of the role of local people.[10] What is more, such a model can create perverse economic and political incentives that work against the investment required to prevent disasters. Countries at risk of regular hazards may come to rely on international humanitarian aid to address crisis risks instead of investing in disaster mitigation or prevention strategies that would require domestic financing.[11]

National governments, international donors and development banks must invest in strategic disaster management at the local and sub-regional level, with long-term investment, supplemented by emergency aid where needed. Disaster risk and response management requires a range of financial inputs that do not fit into the traditional classifications of humanitarian, DRR or development aid. Domestic resources and international aid should be invested in long-term, locally led disaster management and resilience approaches that help create an enabling environment and strengthen local leadership and accountability.

Two examples of strategic disaster management and response funding for locally led response are described in the box on page 9.

Recommendations

Donors, UN agencies and INGOs to provide a minimum of 15% of their humanitarian funding direct to NNGOs.

In order to channel funding more rapidly into the hands of national and local actors, including in under-funded crises, donors should support an independent multi- donor NGO-led global response fund (made up of a network of independent NGO-led, owned and managed funds, with direct access by NNGOs as equal members, aimed at the first 45 days of emergency response, along the lines of the Start Fund model).

Donors and the UN should take immediate steps to publicise funding opportunities where NNGOs will see them, and allow reasonable time frames where possible to allow NNGOs a fair chance to apply. Documents, including guidelines and contracts, should be translated into appropriate working languages. Donors should allow flexibility in minimum grant sizes for NNGOs, and they should encourage consortium applications which include NNGOs.

Donors need to engage in a longer-term strategic approach to financing disaster risk management and resilience-building that links prevention and response at the local level.

Action area 3
The UN and the humanitarian sector must ensure greater political space for, and recognition of, local and national actors and encourage them to adopt a stronger role.

Delivering aid through bilateral partnerships, through networks and a range of subcontracting arrangements has been part of humanitarian aid for decades. But until recently the visibility of local actors and the kind of power- and risk-sharing that goes on within these models has received very little attention. Instead: *'The paradigm is still viewing the affected population too much as what economist Julian Le Grand has called "pawns" (passive individuals) and the international community as "knights" (extreme altruists). This approach costs. Local capacities are not utilised, the beneficiary is not involved enough and the quality of delivery is lower than it should be.'* [13]

Traditional operational approaches and international surge models continue to fall into old traps that can lead local and national capacities in response to be sidelined or undermined. This impedes recovery in the short-to-medium term and resilience in the long term. National NGOs and Southern-based INGOs are also emerging to claim a much stronger role for response in their regions

and globally, and contribute to a much-needed change in the disaster response narrative from charity to solidarity.

Despite the efforts of the Transformative Agenda, the experience of Christian Aid and its partners is that the current UN humanitarian system is structured in a way that penalises, excludes or sidelines them. While some progress has been made, more effort is needed to ensure structures and funding streams are adequately inclusive of the local and national actors. Allocating senior roles to prioritise this in large-scale emergencies should be a minimum requirement.

The reports *Building the Future of Humanitarian Aid* (2012) and *Funding at the Sharp End* (2013)[14] highlighted the fact that the majority of UN funding streams such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) are not accessible to local and national actors. Even those funds that are available may well have requirements related to size and capacity that exclude all but the largest national actors. A main recommendation made in these reports is for UN funding systems to become much more flexible in their risk-management approaches – learning from their own models of Emergency Response Fund (ERF) and Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) in Somalia and the DRC.

Recommendations

A senior OCHA staff member whose sole job is to ensure effective coordination and inclusion of local and national NGOs and networks should be deployed for every Level 3 emergency.

UN funding systems must become much more flexible in their risk-management approaches. Particular lessons can be developed from the DRC ERF and the Somalia CHF, which have adopted more nuanced approaches to risk management, making funds accessible to national and local partners. It should be a minimum requirement that at least 15% of UN humanitarian funds be supplied directly to local and national actors.

The UN should invest in identifying innovative approaches to including national and local actors in coordination and information-sharing processes.

DFID Humanitarian Programme Partnership Arrangement with Christian Aid

For the past three years Christian Aid has received strategic humanitarian funding from DFID to implement a resilience programme in eight countries using the Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PVCA) tool, which places communities and their understanding of the risks that threaten them at the centre of their own development and risk management strategies. The PVCA provides a framework by which Christian Aid and national partners identify, together with the community, the range of stakeholders – local government authorities, climate scientists, other specialists, other INGOs, etc – to bring into the discussion and action planning at key points. It can also identify external actors at national government or regional level to be targeted with advocacy, with the aim of getting them to help carry out specific actions.

In several of the countries implementing disaster resilience programmes, the communities have had to respond to small/medium crises (Kenya, Malawi) and large-scale disasters (occupied Palestinian territory [oPt], the DRC). They have been able to do this in a much more targeted and effective way through the structures set up as part of the resilience programme.

Start Build – Shifting the Power[12]

This is a five-country, three-year project that places civil society, national NGOs and community organisations 'at the centre of humanitarian action and reform efforts'. Working in Bangladesh, the DRC, Kenya, Pakistan and Ethiopia, it builds on research conducted since 2012 by Start Network members. This research demonstrates that local actors in humanitarian response are of great importance for four reasons: 1) they are present among disaster-affected communities; 2) they have local access, knowledge and acceptance; 3) they are first responders in a crisis; and 4) the international system is becoming more and more stretched.

National partners will self-select and assess their capacity gaps in a process facilitated by the Start Network. Organisational competency frameworks will be agreed, and partners will develop learning resources, support mechanisms and training programmes informed by annual self-assessments. At the national level the project will build on existing networks as national platforms, and provide support to organisations to ensure that they are effectively represented within them. The project will support these platforms, build awareness of available funds and ability to access them, and facilitate the development of emergency preparedness plans. It will also document lessons learned through case studies, evidence-gathering working groups and workshops, and advocacy activities.

Action area 4

National governments and international donors must make long-term investments in disaster management and resilience-building at the local level.

National governments and international donors should invest in community-led programmes that support vulnerable populations to identify risk management priorities and action plans, and to engage with relevant key stakeholders. For example, they could support communities and local organisations to work with climate experts or other relevant scientists and partners, to coordinate with local government or national government, and to hold responsible actors accountable for preventing and responding to disasters. Special consideration should be given to building the resilience of local education and healthcare services to strengthen continuity during emergencies.

Christian Aid's experience over the last seven years has shown that community-based participatory approaches are crucial for bringing together communities to discuss and identify the risks they face and their capacity to manage these risks and to programme activities to address them. Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCAs) are used by numerous aid agencies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and a range of actors to support local approaches to disaster risk management and resilience-building. They can enable communities to engage with diverse actors and stakeholders, including experts,

PVCAs/community-based resilience approaches and empowerment

PVCAs in oPt. Cross-organisational analysis of the use of PVCAs in the resilience programmes across complex contexts in DRC, oPt and northern Kenya has particularly emphasised the importance of a community-based resilience approach to the programmes' effectiveness. The programme in oPt in particular showed that this approach has the potential to address the negative side effects of long-term aid and increases communities' sense of empowerment and agency to effect change on their own behalf.

A community member from Al Nwei'meh village in Jericho said: 'The PVCA was special. It let us talk about everyday risks which we were not able to do before. We co-existed with them but we did not really talk about them or identify them so accurately or systematically, or link them with other things.'

A female Bedouin participant in Al Rashayda said: 'The training was a challenge but it was interesting to see the results. I learned that people living far away in the village face the same problems as me. I was proud to be able to do something for my village. We have water and concrete floors now which keeps scorpions and mud out of the house. The whole community has benefited.'

A participant from one of the communities working with our partner YWCA said the project 'was different because this is about the community, not the donor and what they want'.

PVCAs and climate service in Nicaragua. PVCA processes with communities in Nicaragua identified a variety of climate-related risks including increased temperatures, more erratic rainy seasons, drought, floods and flood-related water problems. These came with other problems, including poor roads, deforestation, tropical storms, mercury in groundwater and fire risks.

To help respond to this Christian Aid brought climate specialists together with communities and expert national partners to tailor climate modelling for specific crops to meet farmers' needs. This information was then calibrated, using community-managed rain gauges. Involving farmer groups in generating the model ensures there is ownership of the analysis and that it isn't simply viewed as an external science project. Impact has already begun to be seen, with farmers improving their crop yields and planning. In addition, engaging with local municipalities has enabled tailored data to be integrated into community action plans.

scientists, other agencies and government actors. Christian Aid's experience also suggests that such an approach can build resilience to conflict and protracted crises.

Recommendations

Indicators of humanitarian effectiveness must capture the importance of a strong link between response and resilience and ensure that the design and implementation of humanitarian responses deliberately sets the platform for longer-term community resilience.

Much greater investment in conflict analysis will be important to ensure appropriate consideration of humanitarian effectiveness and resilience in conflict contexts.

Humanitarian and development donors and financial institutions must measure and increase investment in disaster risk management and resilience programmes, building on what works at a local level. Disaster prevention and preparedness funding should increase from 6%[15] to at least 10% of humanitarian aid.

The July 2015 Conference on Financing for Development should conclude with a significant commitment to strategic financing for resilience-building, disaster risk management and a much more integrated approach to resilient development planning.

Action area 5
The development and humanitarian communities must come together to put risk management at the heart of the development agenda throughout 2015/16.

Disasters have a devastating impact on development and can undermine progress on poverty reduction. This was certainly the experience in the Philippines, struck in 2009 by tropical storm Ondoy and typhoon Pepeng. Rizal, one of the provinces hit hardest, saw the poverty incidence almost double, from 5.5% in 2006 to 9.5% in 2009. Six years later, recovery was still far off, with 7.6% of families still living below the poverty line. Typhoon Haiyan, which hit many of the poorest areas of the Philippines in 2013, is likely to have a similar impact.

In addition, the drive for economic growth can expose countries to more risk: cities can be engines of growth, but unplanned urbanisation exposes many people to risk. The destruction caused by floods in parts of Asia and Central America has been significantly exacerbated by major development – new hotels, roads and dams – in fragile ecological systems. In this way, disasters can reveal the boundaries and limits to development.

People have a right to be safe from preventable disasters, and delivering on this requires global political agreement and coherence across several development, DRR and humanitarian spheres. Disaster mitigation and resilience-building targets must be fully integrated into global agreements on development, through the post-2015 development process; on climate change, through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and through the follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2).

Key considerations for disaster management targets at global level are that they:

- **all work to the same time frame – 2015-30**

- **are based primarily on outcome** (such as measurable reductions in disaster risk or losses), and then complemented with indicators on inputs (such as existence of legislation)

- **measure the impact of extensive disasters as well as intensive ones,** as recurrent small-scale disasters are a key driver of poverty

- **measure the quality and effectiveness of emergency response,** to measure where preparedness and response investments mitigate the worst impacts of a disaster and deliver better response and recovery

- **require states to report data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age** and other relevant criteria to ensure that risk is reduced for the most vulnerable and that response considers different needs

- **require states to report data disaggregated to sub-national and community levels,** to ensure that discrepancies are not hidden by national averages

- **stimulate greater action to reduce underlying vulnerabilities** (anticipatory or prospective risk management, such as active ecosystems and land use management) as well as corrective risk management and disaster management (early warning systems, contingency plans, etc).

Recommendations

WHS negotiations, and agreements reached on humanitarian effectiveness and addressing vulnerability and managing risk, must be integrated with and reinforce the DRR and resilience-building targets in development, climate and DRR global agreements that are being negotiated during 2015.

There should be a particular focus on commitments across these global agreements that invest in local and national capacity to manage disaster risks and deliver humanitarian response.

Section 3. Greater accountability to vulnerable and disaster-affected populations

Action area 6

The WHS must prioritise accountability to vulnerable and affected communities and support them to undertake advocacy to hold duty-bearers accountable.

Efforts to ensure that vulnerable and disaster-affected populations have a greater voice and more power must be a priority for the World Humanitarian Summit, including through its consultation process. This is not just because of the moral imperative of the sector to be accountable to the people whom we profess to serve, but also because emerging evidence indicates that greater accountability produces more effective humanitarian response (see box on page 13).

Achieving the fundamental shift in attitude and mindset required for more accountable emergency preparedness and response programming requires a lot more than a box-ticking approach to meeting donor requirements. While donors can help create incentives for greater transparency, participation and accountability, doing this within a top-down framework undermines the very structures of responsible disaster governance and leadership at local level, which are essential.

Christian Aid's experience of working with national and local partners to strengthen accountability and apply HAP standards across all programmes has revealed the importance of a long-term approach rather than a set of commitments determined by a set-term project cycle. Building principles and processes of accountability as part of resilience and response programming can help provide the accompaniment, mentoring, monitoring and evaluation that helps ensure effective accountability. But accountability to disaster-affected or vulnerable populations also requires providing support to local communities so that they can undertake advocacy themselves.

Recommendations

The World Humanitarian Summit should prioritise the participation of disaster-affected communities and their representative bodies, NNGOs and Southern actors in the consultation on and agreement of key outcomes. The first half-day of the WHS should be devoted to listening to the voices of beneficiaries, NNGOs and Southern actors.

The WHS must deliver a step-change on accountability to beneficiaries across the humanitarian sector. Donors have an important role to play in funding, enabling and ensuring accountability standards, but this should not be at the expense of local leadership and ownership. Accountability in response must be part of a long-term strategy to build accountability throughout disaster prevention and management strategies.

We should identify and invest in innovative new ways to strengthen accountability, information-sharing and participation, not least in conflict contexts, where remote management poses challenges to accountability.

The WHS should call for sector-wide adoption of the Core Humanitarian Standard (including verification and an independent certification mechanism accessible to NNGOs as well as INGOs and other actors involved in humanitarian action).

Action area 7
Women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable or marginalised groups need a special focus, in both the response and the accountability mechanisms.

Particular members within a household or community will be more vulnerable and exposed to disasters because of a range of socio-cultural dynamics. The humanitarian community has long known this and has increasingly tried to incorporate in emergency programmes the particular needs of women, the elderly, persons with a disability and marginalised groups.

Greater effort needs to be made, however, to enable marginalised affected and at-risk communities to play a stronger role in disaster prevention processes and in accountability in response. As a bare minimum, donors and national governments should support nuanced programming approaches that are sensitive to vulnerable and marginalised community members. Local and national actors that have a greater understanding of local communities and social norms can play a key role in identifying socio-cultural dynamics.

In Christian Aid's experience, working with communities and local and national partners in areas of disaster risk as part of a longer-term approach to resilience-building and risk management is the most effective way of enabling communities to discuss and identify issues of vulnerability and marginalisation. This process is sometimes even more effective if communities are brought together with a range of stakeholders, including specialists in supporting the particular needs of vulnerable and disaster-affected populations, to identify appropriate mitigation and response plans.

Recommendations

The WHS must deliver a data revolution that makes it easier to identify different community and household members, and allows better mapping of vulnerable and affected communities, so that efforts can be focused on including their perspectives in accountability mechanisms, information-sharing, programme participation, etc.

Agreements at the WHS on the concept and indicators of humanitarian effectiveness must prioritise vulnerable groups, and monitoring must allow for data disaggregation that identifies particular impacts and benefits for vulnerable groups. Disaggregation of data by gender should be the minimum requirement.

Conflict and insecurity can have a particularly acute relationship with vulnerable or marginalised groups. The WHS must support greater conflict analysis across humanitarian programming and disaster prevention strategies to ensure a more robust and tailored approach that responds to these dynamics, which must be captured and included in response plans and accountability mechanisms.

Accountability mechanisms also strengthen effectiveness

A joint research project by Christian Aid and Save the Children drew on case studies of accountability mechanisms in Kenya and Myanmar as well as wider literature, to explore whether three HAP benchmarks of information-sharing, participation and complaints-handling strengthen programme quality.

The research findings indicated that accountability mechanisms can make an important contribution to programme quality, and provided some important insights into how they do this:

Relevance. Accountability mechanisms improved targeting of assistance, the nature of supported interventions and the location of services. Community participation provided agencies with better understanding of local vulnerabilities and increased the usefulness of projects for communities.

Effectiveness. Accountability mechanisms have strengthened trust between agencies and project participants and highlighted the link between community participation and ownership. The research revealed evidence of increased empowerment and self-esteem among project participants. It also noted greater willingness of groups to demand accountability from other duty-bearers – schools, local authorities and even private companies.

Efficiency. Examples highlighted several instances where community involvement in procurement had increased a programme's efficiency. Where communities had been empowered to monitor contractors, there was greater efficiency and value for money.

Sustainability. An important link was identified between the participation of a community in a project and perceptions of its sustainability. The case studies demonstrate that participation can increase the relevance of projects to their context and strengthen a community's ownership of processes and results.

> 'If we hadn't participated in the decision-making about the project, we would not be willing to provide labour and would not take care of it in the same way. There would be a greater likelihood that it would fail to meet our need and there would be a greater risk of bringing conflict to the community.' (Programme Management Committee member, Kalawani location, Kenya)

A key recommendation of the research calls for a step-change across the sector to better support accountability in resilience-building and humanitarian programmes, and to rigorously document the contribution that accountability plays in programme quality and impact.

Action area 8
The international community must end impunity in humanitarian crises.

Humanitarian crises caused or aggravated by conflict and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) or international human rights law (IHRL) must have swift and severe consequences for the actors involved. Armed actors must be held accountable under international law for their conduct, and must be held responsible for the financial costs of humanitarian response, recovery and reconstruction. Although these issues are not comfortable ground for discussion at the World Humanitarian Summit, no credible discussion can take place without dealing with the question of impunity in humanitarian crises.

The WHS must ensure clear linkages to the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court for questions of impunity for violations of IHL and IHRL that contribute to and exacerbate humanitarian crises, and accountability of actors profiting from humanitarian disasters. The international community must unite around the need for swift independent and transparent investigations into allegations of violations of international law, support for their findings and the full implementation of all actions identified. Examples of the kind of investigations and findings are included in the box below.

Recommendations

The WHS must reinforce the centrality to humanitarian effectiveness of protection issues and adherence to humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

The WHS process must challenge impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and for actions that contribute to humanitarian crises, and must ensure accountability for actors that profit from humanitarian disasters. The governments that come to the WHS as donors and contributors to the humanitarian system must also take these same responsibilities into global forums such as the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.

Many women in the town of Bweremana, eastern DRC, reported incidences of sexual violence by army soldiers when the Congolese army fled Goma following defeat by M23 rebels in November 2012.

UN missions or investigations of IHL and IHRL violations

Gaza. The international community failed to prevent the 2014 crisis in Gaza despite clear warnings: for example, following the Israeli offensive on Gaza in 2008/09, known as 'Operation Cast Lead', a UN fact-finding mission investigated serious violations of international law perpetrated by both Israelis and Palestinians. The mission warned that if the violations identified in its report were not addressed, the climate of impunity would ensure continued violence and disregard for civilian protection. This seems to have been borne out in the Gaza crisis in 2014.

Democratic Republic of Congo. An investigation in November 2012 by the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC[16] into fighting between government and rebel forces identified serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The report documented 135 cases of sexual violence perpetrated by government forces in and around the town of

Minova as units retreated from the front lines. During the period of their occupation of Goma and Sake, M23 combatants also perpetrated serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross human rights violations. Rebel combatants of the M23 were responsible for at least 59 cases of sexual violence. The UN investigation also documented at least 11 arbitrary executions, recruitment of children, forced labour, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, and looting by M23 combatants.

Accountability for these violations of human rights and IHL was identified as a priority for the UN investigation team. 'Those responsible for such crimes must know that they will be prosecuted,' said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay. In December 2012 a judicial investigation was launched, supported by MONUSCO, the UN mission in the DRC, and other partners.

Conclusion: Making the Summit worth the climb

In this paper Christian Aid outlines the actions and recommendations it believes are essential if the humanitarian sector is to respond to key challenges facing vulnerable and disaster-affected communities and countries across the globe. In doing this it is identifying the practical measures by which the Summit itself and the process that leads to it must be judged.

Even as this report is published the Ebola crisis in West Africa is challenging the humanitarian sector in ways that were not predicted six months ago.

But as the WHS consultations move forward into 2015, it becomes ever more important to identify the priorities that need to underpin the discussions, establish how these priorities relate to other parallel processes, and ensure integration across global agreements.

There is still everything to play for, and this report is Christian Aid's contribution to making the pathway to the World Humanitarian Summit worth the climb!

Worth the climb? – Delivering at the World Humanitarian Summit

Outlined under each of the areas for action identified in the paper are Christian Aid's recommendations:

Action area 1 – Donors must reform approaches that undermine local/national capacity.

- Donors must reform centralised and risk-averse programmatic requirements and procedures that inhibit the ability of the humanitarian system to work with and reinforce local indigenous capacities.

- Agreement of 'humanitarian effectiveness' criteria and indicators at the WHS must build on existing initiatives like the CHS, be developed in an inclusive and transparent way, and prioritise involvement of affected communities and local and national actors.

- Humanitarian effectiveness criteria should be measured in terms of lives saved, suffering reduced and recovery aided following a disaster. But building a resilient humanitarian system also requires indicators that measure how effective response efforts are in aiding recovery and preventing affected populations from falling into poverty permanently. An important link should be made to indicators within the post-2015 DRR framework that seek to measure and reduce disaster-induced poverty.[17]

Action area 2 – Innovative and strategic financing is needed to encourage, enable and empower local-level disaster management capacity.

- Donors, UN agencies and INGOs should provide a minimum of 15% of their humanitarian funding direct to NNGOs.

- In order to channel funding more rapidly into the hands of national and local actors, including in under-funded crises, donors should support an independent multi-donor, NGO-led global response fund (made up of a network of independent NGO-led, owned and managed funds, with direct access by NNGOs as equal members, aimed at the first 45 days of emergency response, along the lines of the Start Fund model).

- Donors and the UN should take immediate steps to publicise funding opportunities where NNGOs will see them, and allow reasonable time frames where possible, to allow NNGOs a fair chance to apply. Documents, including guidelines and contracts, should be translated into appropriate languages. Donors should allow flexibility in minimum grant sizes for NNGOs, and they should encourage consortium applications which include NNGOs.

- Donors need to engage in a longer-term strategic approach to financing disaster risk management and resilience-building that links prevention and response at the local level.

Action area 3 – The UN and the humanitarian sector must ensure greater political space for, and recognition of, local and national actors, and encourage them to adopt a stronger role.

- A senior OCHA staff member whose sole job is to ensure effective coordination and inclusion of local and national NGOs and networks should be deployed for every L3 emergency, including in conflict contexts.

- UN funding systems must become much more flexible in their risk-management approaches. Minimum requirements should be that at least 15% of UN humanitarian funds is supplied directly to local and national actors.

- The UN should invest in identifying innovative approaches to the inclusion of national and local actors in coordination and information-sharing processes, and donors should fund evidence-gathering and support for effective, innovative peer-support structures that function as alternative and complementary models to international surge capacity.

Action area 4 – National governments and international donors must make long-term investments in disaster management and resilience-building at the local level.

- Indicators of humanitarian effectiveness must capture the importance of a strong link between response and resilience and ensure that the design and implementation of humanitarian responses deliberately set the platform for longer-term community resilience, including in conflict contexts.

- Much greater investment in conflict analysis will be important to ensure appropriate consideration of humanitarian effectiveness and resilience in conflict contexts.

- Humanitarian and development donors and financial institutions must measure and increase investment in disaster risk management and resilience programmes, building on what works at a local level.

- Disaster prevention and preparedness funding should increase from 6%[18] to at least 10% of humanitarian aid.

- The July 2015 Conference on Financing for Development should conclude a significant commitment to strategic financing for resilience-building, disaster risk management and a much more integrated approach to resilient development planning.

Action area 5 – The development and humanitarian communities must come together to put risk management at the heart of the development agenda throughout 2015/16.

- WHS negotiations and agreement on humanitarian effectiveness and addressing vulnerability and managing risk must be integrated with and reinforce DRR and resilience-building targets in development, climate and DRR global agreements being negotiated during 2015.

- A particular focus should be given to commitments across these global agreements that invest in local and national capacity to manage disaster risks and deliver effective humanitarian response.

Action area 6 – The WHS must prioritise accountability to vulnerable and affected communities and support them to undertake advocacy to hold duty-bearers accountable.

- The World Humanitarian Summit should prioritise the participation of disaster-affected communities and their representative bodies, NNGOs and Southern actors in the consultation on and agreement of key outcomes. The first half-day of the WHS should be devoted to listening to the voices of beneficiaries, NNGOs and Southern actors.

- The WHS must deliver a step-change on accountability to beneficiaries across the humanitarian sector.

- We should identify and invest in innovative new ways to strengthen accountability, information-sharing and participation, not least in conflict contexts, where remote management poses challenges to accountability.

- The WHS should call for sector-wide adoption of the Core Humanitarian Standard, including verification and an independent certification mechanism accessible to NNGOs as well as INGOs and other actors involved in humanitarian action.

Action area 7 – Women, children, the elderly and vulnerable or marginalised groups need a special focus, in both the response and the accountability mechanisms.

- The WHS must deliver a data revolution that strengthens identification of different community and household members, in order to better map vulnerable and affected communities and to focus efforts on including their perspectives in accountability mechanisms, information-sharing, programme participation, etc.

- Agreements at the WHS on the concept and indicators of humanitarian effectiveness must prioritise vulnerable groups, and monitoring must allow for data disaggregation that identifies particular impacts and benefits for vulnerable groups. Disaggregation of data by gender should be the minimum requirement.

• The WHS must support greater conflict analysis across humanitarian programming and disaster prevention strategies to ensure a more robust and tailored approach that responds to these dynamics, which must be captured and included in response plans and accountability mechanisms.

Action area 8 – The international community must end impunity in humanitarian crises.

• The WHS must reinforce the centrality of protection issues and adherence to humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

• The WHS must review and propose new measures to ensure the findings of UN missions like those described in the box on page 14 in the report feed into disaster prevention strategies and emergency preparedness work for conflict and complex crises.

• The WHS process must challenge impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and actions that contribute to humanitarian crises, and must ensure accountability for actors that profit from humanitarian disasters. The governments that come to the WHS as donors and contributors to the humanitarian system must take these same responsibilities into global forums such as the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.

Endnotes

Report

1 These priorities emerge from and link to Christian Aid's conclusions from the report written by Katherine Nightingale, *Building the Future of Humanitarian Aid: Local Capacity and Partnerships in Emergency Assistance*, 2012, Christian Aid, pp. 29-31.

2 Ibid.; Ben Ramalingam, Bill Gray and Giorgia Cerruti, *Missed Opportunities: the case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-based Humanitarian Responses*, 2013, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Oxfam, Tearfund, ActionAid; Andy Featherstone, *Missed again: Making Space for Humanitarian Partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan Response*, 2014, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Oxfam, Tearfund, ActionAid.

3 *How can donor requirements be reformed to better support efforts to strengthen local humanitarian capacity,* Start Network discussion paper for the DFID NGO Forum, David Hockaday, Sean Lowrie, Michael Mosselmans, Mike Noyes, October 2014.

4 Ramalingam et. al, *Missed Opportunities*.

5 Featherstone, *Missed Again*.

6 Ibid., p.8.

7 *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*, Development Initiatives, 2014, p.64, available at www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2014

8 The Start Fund was launched on 1 April 2014 by the 19 NGO members of the Start Network and the British and Irish governments. For more information, see www.start-network.org

9 Andrew Shepherd et. al, *The Geography of Poverty, Disasters and Climate Extremes in 2030*, 2013, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

10 Arjuna Parakrama, *Impact of the Tsunami Response on Local and National Capacities, Forced Migration Review*, 28, July 2007, p.7.

11 United Nations, *Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: the Economics of Effective Prevention*, 2010, World Bank Publications.

12 Start Network, *Shifting the Power through Developing the Capacity of Local Organizations*, available at www.start-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Start-Network-DEPP-one-pager_Shifting-the-Power.pdf

13 *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review*, 2011, p.26, available at www.dfid.gov.uk/emergency-response-review.

14 Nightingale, *Building the Future of Humanitarian Aid*; Lydia Poole, *Funding at the Sharp End: Investing in National NGO Response Capacity*, 2013, CAFOD.

15 *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*, pp.69-80.

16 UNJHRO, *Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on Human Rights Violations Perpetrated by Soldiers of the Congolese Armed Forces and Combatants of the M23 in Goma and Sake, North Kivu Province, and in and around Minova, South Kivu Province, from 15 November to 2 December 2012*, 2013, United Nations.

Annex

17 Andrew Shepherd et. al, *The Geography of Poverty, Disasters and Climate Extremes in 2030*, 2013, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

18 *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*, p.64.