

EU HUMANITARIAN AID – CHALLENGES AHEAD

CONFERENCE REPORT

BRUSSELS 20 MAY 2003

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION HOUSE



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From left to right: Costanza Adinolfi, Arne Piel Christensen, Renzo Imbeni and Kathrin Schick.

International Trade Union House. Brussels: 20 May 2003

On 20 May 2003, VOICE — with the support of ECHO - hold a one-day conference in Brussels entitled **“EU Humanitarian Aid — Challenges Ahead”**, gathering together EU policy makers and ECHO partners, governments, UN officials, the Red Cross and civil society.

Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE) is a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Europe that are active in the field of humanitarian aid, including emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness. VOICE, unique in its scope and focus, is the main NGO interlocutor with the EU for humanitarian affairs.

The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) is the world’s leading donor of humanitarian aid, implementing its projects through NGOs, the Red Cross and UN partners. Giving concrete expression to the EU’s solidarity with the most vulnerable populations, ECHO was established with the core mandate of saving and preserving life during man-made or natural disasters and their aftermath.

Recent international developments as well as reforms within the EU itself, especially those connected to the shaping of a Common Foreign and Security Policy and the EU crisis management procedures, show that support for EU humanitarian aid should be further strengthened. The need to make humanitarian aid more visible and better understood remains, in addition to the need to tackle new challenges emerging in this domain.

The current situation concerning the Iraqi crisis will most likely influence the work of the humanitarian community in the future. Within the wide-ranging theme of **EU Humanitarian Aid — Challenges Ahead**, three areas of particular concern formed the basis of more focused discussion during the Conference:

- > *Politicisation of aid: Reality or danger?*
- > *What will be the role of humanitarian aid NGOs in the future?*
- > *The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union: an opportunity for humanitarian actors?*

More than 180 participants representing 100 different organisations involved in the humanitarian field took part in the conference: ECHO; members of the European Parliament; representatives from EU member states; a wide range of NGOs, civil society and humanitarian aid practitioners; the Red Cross and UN representatives.

ACP	/	<i>Africa Caribbean and Pacific countries</i>
CAP	/	<i>Consolidated Appeal Process</i>
CFSP	/	<i>Common Foreign and Security Policy</i>
DG	/	<i>Directorate General</i>
DRC	/	<i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
EC	/	<i>European Commission</i>
ECHO	/	<i>European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office</i>
EU	/	<i>European Union</i>
ICRC	/	<i>International Committee of the Red Cross</i>
ICVA	/	<i>International Council of Voluntary Agencies</i>
IFOR	/	<i>Implementation Force</i>
IHL	/	<i>International Humanitarian Law</i>
MONUC	/	<i>United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
MSF	/	<i>Medecins sans Frontiers</i>
NATO	/	<i>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</i>
OCHA	/	<i>UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</i>
ODA	/	<i>Official Development Aid</i>
OECD	/	<i>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>
PoW	/	<i>Prisoner of War</i>
RPF	/	<i>Rwandan Patriotic Front</i>
SFOR	/	<i>Stabilisation Force</i>
UN	/	<i>United Nations</i>
UNPROFOR	/	<i>United Nations Protection Force</i>
UNSC	/	<i>United Nations Security Council</i>
VOICE	/	<i>Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies</i>

WELCOME SPEECH

> **Arne Piel Christensen**

// President

• **VOICE**

CV Mr. Christensen has been President of VOICE since 2002. He studied Theology and Philosophy at the University of Copenhagen before he became the Secretary General of The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), a position he held for 20 years. He has been involved in several international NGO organisations and networks such as International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). His areas of special expertise include conflict prevention, peace building and the role of civil society and NGOs.

Mr. Vice-President of the European Parliament, Madame Director of ECHO, honoured speakers, dear participants and guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of ECHO and of VOICE to welcome you all to this Conference, organised by VOICE in co-operation with — and financed by — the European Commissions Humanitarian Aid Office — ECHO. The title “**EU HUMANITARIAN AID — CHALLENGES AHEAD**” gives room for addressing the many issues which we, the humanitarian organisations, are confronted with today and to see whether we can together come up with some lasting answers to the questions we are struggling with — not at least during these months, when events on the global political scene have recently turned so many things upside down and placed our traditional way of structuring our work and relations in new and difficult dilemmas.

Some of the effects of these events are also influenced by too much media-focus, which could divert our efforts away from some of our basic principles and values. At the same time the risks are increasing that some forgotten humanitarian crisis become even more forgotten and hidden on the agenda of the international community and thereby increase considerably the number of victims and their plight and suffering around the world. This happens at a time when we had already been discussing among ourselves and in the EU institutions the order and interrelations between the different actors and ways to react to political complex situations in the world.

The lessons learned from the humanitarian crises during the 1990's are; many unexpected conflicts after the cold war, the creation and growth of many humanitarian agencies and institutional structures, the struggle for the most appropriate distribution of tasks and roles and for the co-ordination and development of best practice of co-operation among the traditional as well as the new partners in the fields of operation and of planning; the ongoing endeavours for more and better quality and

efficiency in the deliverance of aid to the victims of disasters and humanitarian catastrophes.

Ways and means by which we gradually managed to involve the beneficiaries in the planning and the execution of aid-programmes. The exit strategies after humanitarian interventions and the linking of relief, rehabilitation and the ongoing development process. These were all areas, where we felt we made some progress and were able to build step by step on the experiences gained from one action into the next one.

Although new crises or conflicts occurring might have few similarities with the latest ones we experienced, in our common knowledge from yesterday's activities and lessons, we were able to develop common terminology and language for joint assessments and evaluations. And if we had not succeeded yet, we knew where we had to correct the methodologies and basic framework for the evolution and to improve these instruments for an ongoing process. A process whereby we could bring the international humanitarian efforts further on the long way from mercy and charity to a professional highly specialised field of work, whereby in an exceptional partnership the civil societies and the public sectors solidarity and welfare- responsibility is channelled to the international level in the world's care for the most needy and destitute.

The constitutions for our work were founded decades ago in the Human Rights Laws, Humanitarian Laws and other international legal instruments. What we have been struggling with in the 1990s was the implementation of these instruments and principles in realities in the world of today and very often under different circumstances than what they were meant for — for instance, internal civil war and not so often inter state wars. Some few amendments had to be introduced in new situations — but it were much more the difficulties of keeping or regaining the respect for what we considered international binding instruments, where new conquests had to

be obtained and indeed were obtained — perhaps not to any degree of satisfaction but we knew what we were striving for and how progress had to be made.

And now — now the latest events on the political global scene have in many ways changed the picture and the perspective for much of our work, if not permanently then at least for the time being. We are more puzzled and concerned by a number of phenomena and violent actions, new alliances and partnerships and neglect of well-established international law, principles and regulations, than we are confident with the future and further improvement for the humanitarian order in the

world. The entrance to the scene of international terrorism. The departure away from the track of United Nations co-ordinated actions and the commitment to reach consensus in its Security Council, whereby the Humanitarian interventions on behalf of the World Community could have one master to direct and co-ordinate and give

interventions their legitimacy. The concept for our days military action and overwhelming highly developed technological dominance can only create more feelings of powerlessness and give raise to more desperation. This might particularly be the case when at the same time little interest and understanding is shown for the wish, the backing and the evolution of the involved populations own plans and gradually “ripening” to be able to take the primary responsibility of their own political future, fate and governance.

There is a need to take stock of these recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq, in Chechnya and other places and the problems we have faced by giving relevant humanitarian response, while the dramatic events are still fresh on our mind. And we still might have a chance to influence the conceptions of the decisive and most powerful actors and with strong and persuasive arguments gathered from these recent events try to find new consensus for formerly well established values and principles on humanitarian aid, humanitarian law and the distribution of roles and areas of

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responsibility in the fields. There is a need to discuss among us as humanitarian networks and organisations how conditions and lessons learned from all of the observations and mixed experiences from Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, West-Africa, Somalia and many other armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies could be compared and made most useful also for the evaluation of these recent disasters and humanitarian constraints.

Having these observations and concerns fresh on our minds we might by combined efforts and arguments also be able to influence the wording of and balance in the text from the Convention for the Future of Europe — and continue to work for changes in the draft text. It can now better than ever be illustrated with recent examples and risks, that it is wrong to subordinate EU humanitarian programmes, priorities and strategies under the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, and by doing so the principles and cultural heritage will lose some of its basic values and the fundamental interrelation between Human Rights law and the Humanitarian Law will be disregarded. We could discuss also today to what a degree we can co-ordinate our efforts and arguments in this area. The crisis management policy of the EU, and possible interrelations between the planned structures and tasks of this crisis management on the one side and the humanitarian structures and actors for implementing the Humanitarian aid programmes

on the other side should be watched with great care if not avoided.

There is more than enough food for thought, discussions and ideas for strategies and actions from the challenges confronting EU Humanitarian Aid and implementing partners, first of all the humanitarian NGOs. And the timing of a conference on these issues is most appropriate. Let me therefore end this introduction and welcome speech by thanking ECHO, through its director Costanza Adinolfi, for providing the conditions and means for this conference, for their presence, support and contribution — as for the fruitful and constructive co-operation VOICE always meets in ECHO, from its leadership and staff. Also our sincere thanks to the speakers and facilitators for their willingness to participate and their respective contributions which we look forward to. You will allow me to express my thanks and appreciation especially to the hard working staff of the secretariat of VOICE and its director for preparing this conference. I am sure, that by the end of the day many participants will join me in this gratitude to the secretariat and conference staff for a very interesting and productive conference. I will now give the floor to our director Kathrin Schick, who will chair this morning session of the conference and guide us through the speeches, deliberations, questions and answers and discussions.

Welcome again to all of you and thank you.

STATEMENT

- > **Renzo Imbeni**
- // Vice-President
- **European Parliament**

CV Renzo Imbeni has been Italian MEP since 1989 and Vice-President of the European Parliament since 1994. Being part of the Socialist Group, he participates as member of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and substitute in the Committee on Budgetary Control. Mr. Imbeni was rapporteur of the EP Resolution on the situation of Human Rights in the World 1993-1994 and the EP Resolution on the EC Communication on the assessment and the future of Community humanitarian activities (Art. 20 of Council Regulation 1257/96). Previously, he was Mayor of Bologna from 1983 to 1993.

Thank you very much to VOICE for inviting me to this relevant conference. Some years ago, I was EP rapporteur on humanitarian aid and on ECHO activities some time ago. I no longer know all the related problems very well, but I accepted your invitation because I am still interested in the three identified points that will form the basis of more focused discussion during this gathering:

- > *What will be the role of humanitarian aid NGOs in the future?*
- > *Politicization of aid: reality or danger?*
- > *A Common Foreign and Security Policy: an opportunity for humanitarian actors?*

I think that these three points are very much interrelated. We have just listened to the President of VOICE and I entirely support him when he says that we have to consider humanitarian aid as an important value in our European and humanist culture. It would certainly be a disaster to weaken such value. In any case, there is a need for reflection taking into consideration the new world situation after September 11, 2001. This new scenario makes us believe that there is a close relationship between humanitarian aid and the security and defence policies designed by the main actors in the international arena.

I would like to start my exposition from that statement. I would also like you to think about the question of a common security and defence policy. We have to consider it as a strategic need for the European Union, if the Union wants to be a global actor in the future. It is indeed an institutional requirement that must be reflected in the new Constitution. I am of the opinion that if we are able to set down in the new Constitution a common foreign, security and defence policy, we will set down the conditions for the EU to become an actor of weight. In light of the unacceptable state of poverty in many countries of the world, the EU could become a relevant security actor by adopting a common policy aiming at reducing the distance between North and South.

Such a common policy has to be agreed by majority at European level and its contents discussed further. What will be the contents of an EU CFSP? At the moment, there is an urgent necessity to have an independent European strategy, not necessarily against but definitely different from the one elaborated by President Bush on September 17, 2002.

We need to be realistic and try to understand that there is a change in history with regard to the security and defence policy of the current American administration. I am not speaking of differences between Republicans and Democrats, but a difference between the Bush Administration and American historical policies since World War II. The United States was the main actor in the creation of international organizations following World War II. The United Nations Organization would not exist without the United States. It was in San Francisco where the UN was born, with an essential contribution from the US. Nowadays, after almost 60 years and as a result of the new global scenario, there is a strategy led by the American administration to render the UN Charter meaningless.

I would like now to summarize this strategy. There are two problems to be analysed on which I believe the EU should do much more. Firstly, there is no longer an enemy represented by a State or a similar system to be combated with discouraging or precluding policies. This idea was finished with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. But today, there is a new enemy: terrorism. We could discuss further on its reasons and consequences, but we all have to recognize that after September 11 international terrorism is a reality. How can we fight terrorism? The solution adopted by the current American administration is a pre-emptive war. They say that they do not know when or how, but they are sure that the threat is going to turn into an attack. And in such circumstances, they wonder if they can wait without reacting. The answer is that they have to attack first. And this is the basis of their pre-emptive war strategy. Secondly, the American administration, as indicated in that document of

September 17, 2002, is willing to implement this strategy with its allies. In this sense, both China and Russia are mentioned, but not the European Union, taken into account by the USA only for commercial purposes. However, the American administration states that if that implementation is not possible in coalition, the US will act alone. So first, preventive war and second, unilateral war. The UN Charter approves neither preventive war nor unilateral war.

There is another issue very much related to the activity of the organizations that you represent that I would like to tackle. There are many countries, too many in the world, without democratic regimes. And that is very negative. How can we change this situation? We do not accept the statement that defends

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the lack of democracy in these countries on the basis of different political traditions. I am of the opinion that democracy is a universal value and not just part of the western tradition impossible to transport to other parts of the world. The people of these countries must fight to conquer democracy and therefore respect for human rights. The European Union must consider how to help societies from countries without democratic regimes and try to make their citizens understand that religious tradition is not the reason for their lack of democracy. I also do not accept Mr. Bush's strategy, which seems to be democratising these countries by means of war. I think this is not the solution.

But, what will be the European strategy? The EU needs to fight terrorism and promote democracy and human rights, but never by making war. Neither pre-emptive war, nor unilateral war. And definitely not contrary to the UN Charter. For that reason, there is a need for an alternative. There is a need for a European defence strategy. I saw with interest a couple of weeks ago that, under the Greek Presidency of the EU, the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs finally realized the necessity to start elaborating on a European strategy along these lines and charged Mr. Solana with the task of drafting a first document for the Thessaloniki European Council next month. Civil society,

political parties, national parliaments, the European Parliament, EU Member State governments... all need to understand that without the capacity to elaborate a European strategy, it will be very difficult to act, also in the field of humanitarian aid. As the VOICE President has very well said, how do humanitarian organisations react in case of unilateral war? What can be done in case of violations of International Law? Who is going to secure and control the activities carried out by humanitarian aid NGOs? Action is getting more and more complicated under these conditions. The future European Constitution is going to set down a CFSP. The contents of this CFSP must give the EU a real chance to play a key role at the international level.

In this situation, the role of NGOs should be greater since there will be more necessities in the future. However, it is necessary to consider the difficulties of their action. There are more needs but also more difficulties. This is the challenge on which further work is required.

At the same time, the politicisation of aid is already a major problem that needs to be addressed properly. According to my point of view, European public opinion should know that each time a humanitarian activity is carried out, this activity brings our democratic values to its recipients. In my perspective, this is not politicization of aid but a necessary process of

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information directed to the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. In countries ruled by dictators or governed by autocrats, humanitarian actions should go together with information about the sources of the aid delivered and emphasize the democratic and humane components of such action. All this is coherent with the idea of a better combination of humanitarian values with democratic and peace values.

People that work in the field of EU humanitarian aid must be clearly aware that peace is not only an objective to achieve but also a very important value. There is a different perception about

peace in American and European public opinion. European people, after having suffered brutal wars and with the Holocaust still in mind, had a clear attitude towards the last war and openly said “no”. People in other regions and countries may have difficulties to understand the suffering provoked by conflicts like the Second World War, which demonstrated the madness of trying to solve problems by fighting. Making war can solve no international conflict.

Humanitarian aid must be supported, including at political level in the European Parliament and national parliaments. The fight against terrorism and defence of democracy cannot imply a reduction of the activity of humanitarian organisations but, on the contrary, an increase in the financial and political support to them is needed.

Humanitarian Aid Office

STATEMENT

> **Costanza Adinolfi**

// Director

• **ECHO**



CV Costanza Adinolfi is Director of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) since March 2000. She has a degree in Political Science. Since 1975, she has been with the European Commission: from 1976 until 1986 in the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG I), followed by ten years (1986-96) in the Directorate-General for Personnel and Administration (DG IX), initially as Deputy Head of Unit and later as Head of Unit. From 1996 to 2000, she was a Director in the Directorate-General for Environment.

Rather than a speech on the risks and challenges ahead in the area of humanitarian aid, which we have already had the opportunity to evoke in recent months, I would like to share with you some personal reflections prompted by my visit last week to the Palestinian Territories and Israel, as part of an International Committee of the Red Cross donors mission. The crisis there exemplifies the problem of international humanitarian law and the principles which underlie all humanitarian action.

It was said at the Annual Conference of ECHO Partners last October that 2003 would be the year of all dangers, at European level in any event. The scope of the debate embraced the strategy of the Union's future and notably the approach in the area of external relations, defense and security policy. The humanitarian element, while being an important element of foreign policy, was despite everything somewhat marginal in relation to the global interests and balances at stake. There was a risk that the institutional problem would dominate the debate — which was the case — and have an important impact on the future of humanitarian aid at European level. There were also signs which pointed to the emergence of other crises, notably in Iraq. We had just emerged from the Afghanistan experience, during which humanitarian aid faced certain problems, especially as regards its operating methods in the field. We will clearly continue to be confronted with major problems of access and security in Chechnya, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and many other crises, with which you are more familiar than me because you deal with them on a daily basis.

What are the reflections that I would like to share with you as food for thought? First of all, the lack of knowledge, in our societies, about the principles, the values and rules which underlie international humanitarian law. I would like to ask a question to which I do not know the answer: how many school curricula in our States contain a reference to international humanitarian law and its related values? There is first of all a problem of

education and information in our societies, as a result of which the ignorance and a lack of knowledge among our politicians, military and a certain number of important actors of the basic principles and rules of international humanitarian law is increasingly apparent. To what extent is this knowledge taken into consideration in the training of your members of staff and is it at the centre of their training? This knowledge is important for humanitarian aid workers in the field, since their role is also to convey these messages and principles to local populations and defend them in their dealings with other parties.

Another element is the fact that there is sometimes a lack of consistency, strategy and vision among our own decision-makers, as regards international humanitarian law and its underlying principles. I regret that Mr. Imbeni had to leave, because I would have liked to ask him a question: how does he interpret the report prepared by Mr. Morillon which has just been approved by the European Parliament? This report raises questions, in particular regarding certain ideas advanced in the area of the application of international humanitarian law. Doubts have been expressed concerning the validity of the role of agencies or bodies having an international mandate and there is some confusion concerning the roles assigned to the different actors. You know my opinion on this issue.

In Europe, we are still very much influenced by the Balkans experience which has left its mark on us, and we tend to see everything in the light of that experience, as if the world was only the Balkans, as if certain things which happened in the Balkans could be reproduced or indeed that it was desirable to reproduce them elsewhere in the world. I would like an analysis, as objective as possible, to be carried out regarding the humanitarian management of the Balkans crisis by certain actors which, at a given point in time, assumed the right to intervene on humanitarian grounds. What was the impact on the populations that were helped and what damage was caused by what was done in the

Balkans, as regards a certain vision of humanitarian aid.

What are the other elements in the debate today? We are confronted with an increasingly important problem of access to victims. This is often blamed on the fact that the parties involved in the conflicts are increasingly uncontrolled groups, terrorist groups, “rough groups” rather than States. However, it would be an error to believe that these new actors are the only reason for the complexity of the crises and the difficulty of intervening in these crises. In the crises referred to earlier, there are actors from countries which have a long tradition of democracy, or which are coming to democracy, and which despite everything seem to apply a “two weights-two measures” approach. They are democrats for their own populations, but seem to have a different view of democracy when it concerns other countries, other populations. This therefore raises the question of how democracy is expressed and applied at international level, and what is our vision of it as Europeans, who claim to represent democratic values? It is shocking to think that in the international crises referred to earlier, there are two important actors involved in the management

“THERE IS SOMETIMES A LACK OF CONSISTENCY, STRATEGY AND VISION AMONG OUR OWN DECISION-MAKERS AS REGARDS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND ITS UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES”

of the possible solution to these crises; they have both been permanent members of the Security Council from the outset. What does that mean? Does it still have a meaning?

The problem of access to victims is directly related to the non-respect of humanitarian aid workers, irrespective of the

organisation to which they belong. I was particularly surprised during my mission in the Middle East, in Palestine, by the fact that an organisation such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has a universally supported mandate, which has a recognised emblem, should find itself and its workers continually exposed to aggression and violence. This demonstrates the seriousness of the situation. A few years ago, when humanitarian aid was less publicised, the workers and emblem of the International Committee of the Red Cross

were rarely targeted. However, such phenomena are increasingly frequent, with moreover the loss of human lives. This is a real alarm signal for all the humanitarian community including for donors.

Any type of pressure on you in the daily performance of your duties and your mandates demands a reaction from us. Behind all this there is the development, at political level, of a certain type of debate and a certain type of preoccupation for which we are all responsible. Our societies, the European Union, which with the Member States is one of the main humanitarian aid donors, are societies based at the outset on solidarity. But we are in the process of allowing other preoccupations to take over.

We are becoming preoccupied by the security of our societies. When the main objective in our own societies is to ensure at all costs the physical security of our citizens, anything is permitted. There is a risk of failing to put the objectives which we are trying to achieve in perspective. If the physical security of our own citizens, whether they are in our own country or abroad, becomes the first and priority objective of our rulers, abuses are inevitable. I think that we are witnessing these abuses and we shall see to what extent they can develop rapidly and have extremely serious consequences for other populations which, having no authority, or in context of weakness, are totally exposed to them.

There are then two kinds of security which are in opposition: the security of the Western world in the broad sense, which wants by all possible means to protect itself against any attacks on its society, and the security of civil populations which find themselves caught up in the crisis and whose protection it is increasingly difficult to guarantee because the mandates of the humanitarian organisations are no longer facilitated and respected. Therefore, the fundamental aim of all humanitarian activity which is to protect and ensure the survival of populations, can no longer be fulfilled.

We are in a debate where security is constantly evoked, but depending on the place where one is,

security is a priority or security is no longer a priority and can no longer be guaranteed. How to address and meet this challenge with which we are all confronted? As Mr. Imbeni mentioned, a very serious development in recent years, has been the way in which the role of multilateralism and in particular the role of the United Nations has been increasingly called into question, has been increasingly weakened. Today, we are starting to see the serious consequences of this.

“THE ESSENTIAL DEFENCE
OF HUMANITARIAN AID CAN
ONLY LIE IN THE QUALITY
OF THE WAY IN WHICH
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TO THE BENEFICIARIES”

What conclusions do I draw today? Has humanitarian aid become less of a priority or does it no longer arouse any interest? That is not my opinion. On the contrary, I would say that we are victims of our own success, and over the last ten years, during which humanitarian activity

has considerably changed and our societies have demonstrated their great commitment to the humanitarian cause, we have aroused a lot of envy. There are other forces which are attracted by the compassionate side of humanitarian action, which gets a good press, the noble role. Ultimately, some see humanitarian action as a way of playing two roles at the same time: the slightly “dirty” side of intervention is redeemed by the “good” humanitarian side. For them, humanitarian action equates with a clear conscience and is a way of rapidly restoring their image; despite the “dirty” side, they are seen as bringing freedom, democracy, food, medicines and so on, and everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Because we have been so successful, some people would like to take our place. What is worrying is the way in which these people try to justify themselves. They talk about the need for a consistent political approach towards a country, towards a nation. The problem of migratory flows is also advanced as a justification; the latest “pet theme”, the new “thing”, envisages, as a preventive measure, carrying out humanitarian actions for populations locally, to prevent them from migrating to our countries.

Recently, we have seen several documents in which the creation of local “ghettos” is envisaged. There is also the argument of using the army for civil purposes, because soldiers are true

professionals, they have structures, they are disciplined, they are organised, they have the necessary material. Thus, humanitarian aid is still as much in fashion as it was ten or fifteen years ago. What is lacking in all these justifications, this type of reasoning, is the fundamental question: where are the victims and what are their needs? This question is never discussed. It is completely forgotten, it is a minor factor in the debates and the justifications. That, however, is where the whole of the humanitarian world must react vigorously. Where are the victims? What are their needs, how can they be determined, how can the aid that they want to receive be identified? How to assess their needs, and not our needs? The humanitarian world's strength lies in demonstrating again that for us the only concern is the victim. The victims are at the centre of our concerns; the victims are our *stakeholders*, to whom we are *accountable*, for what we do and what we provide to them by way of aid.

In recent years, and I think for valid reasons, there have been numerous internal debates in the humanitarian world about the sometimes different operating methods and approaches between NGOs, the United Nations agencies and the Red Cross movement. Each has its own specific operating methods, linked to its origins, its mandate, weaknesses and strengths on each side. I think that we have reached the point where we must go beyond these debates within the humanitarian world. That is not to say that it was not necessary and useful to call into question certain mechanisms which were inefficient, but we must now manage these debates in a positive way. Why? Because it is the whole of the humanitarian world and its way of operating which is today under attack. This criticism comes from other actors that have a different vision and want a different use of humanitarian aid. Let me explain.

Over the last few years, ECHO has opened an increasingly structured and strategic dialogue with all its partners, irrespective of whether they are NGOs, the Red Cross movement or the United Nations. One of the elements which we have tried to reinforce and promote, is the dialogue between the different groups, support for the appropriate mechanisms for exchanges of information and co-ordination. I believe that the humanitarian actors

must give very serious thought to this. An internal debate, although necessary among you, must be managed today with certain discretion. It must be kept within the family, the members of the humanitarian world, and not debated in public, with the different parties trying to win approval for their point of view. These differences of opinion are today exploited by those who want to undermine what I would call the traditional humanitarian role, of which you are important elements, in favour of other visions, other actors. I am not saying that we should stop asking questions or questioning certain practices which do not seem to be efficient or relevant, but I think that the humanitarian world must improve its communication with the outside world, acting as a group which shares a certain vision and certain preoccupations. I have no clear-cut position on the subject, but I have asked myself the question in the light of recent developments.

There is one last element to which I would like to revert. The essential defence of humanitarian aid can only lie in the quality of the way in which this aid is provided to the beneficiaries. I think that when faced with criticism calling into question the professionalism, the capacity to respond or the analytical capacity of the humanitarian world, the only valid response is to demonstrate the quality of what we all do together. As you are aware, that is an element to which ECHO attaches considerable importance. We have already been working for several years with you on this concept of partnership which is based on the quality of the aid which is given to the beneficiaries. I think that that is a fundamental element to preserve a certain vision, a certain way of providing humanitarian aid. Otherwise, we will be brushed aside by the forces facing us, which are far more powerful forces; they are majority forces. There are far more powerful interests than the interests of the group that we defend, which is that of the victims, which by definition are powerless and are in a position of weakness. Therefore, if we truly want to play the role of defender of these interests, the only weapon that we can offer is the quality and professionalism of our approach; the steadfast respect of a certain number of principles — neutrality, impartiality, humanism —; a certain independence of thought and action.

THE RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW IN TODAY'S CONFLICTS

> Yves Daccord

// Communications Director

• International Committee of the Red Cross

CV A former journalist, he joined the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1992 and worked in Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories, Sudan, Yemen, the northern Caucasus and Georgia. He returned to ICRC headquarters in 1997 to take up the post of Deputy Head of the Division for the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law. In 1998, he was appointed head of the Communication Division. Mr. Daccord holds a B.A. in political science.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to address this conference on a matter of the utmost importance to all those living with the realities of armed conflict.

There is a great deal of debate these days on the continuing relevance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in a volatile world where the nature of armed violence is continuously shifting, and where conventional thinking is challenged by developments like asymmetric warfare and the consequent “war on terrorism”.

Faced with such challenges, it is tempting to conclude that existing laws designed to impose limits to war, like the Geneva Conventions, which were after all conceived in a different world, no longer serve the purpose for which they were intended. Today, I hope to be able to demonstrate that the laws of war are as important in today's conflicts as they were when devised in response to the terrible human cost of World War II.

Let us remind ourselves of the main objective of International Humanitarian Law — to limit human suffering and uphold rights in times of war. It offers protection to civilians, to the wounded in action, and to prisoners of war. It clearly prohibits certain means and methods of warfare. Inextricable from this important legal protection, is the framework that IHL provides for humanitarian action in war. It facilitates access to protected persons with an explicit mandate for the ICRC to visit Prisoners of War (PoWs) and civilian internees. It provides protection for vital medical and relief work. And it grants a space for independent and impartial humanitarian organisations to work. Simply stated, it seeks to draw a line in the sand between humanity and inhumanity.

It is this combination of limiting the effects of war, and drawing the framework for humanitarian action which is, perhaps, the most visionary aspect of IHL, and which lends the Geneva Conventions the vitality necessary to meet the challenges posed by modern forms of warfare.

If anyone remains unsure of its continuing value, it

is worth pausing to note the human cost of when respect for rights during war is non-existent: genocide and ethnic cleansing; destroying lives by destroying homes, hospitals, and infrastructure essential to sustaining human life; removing the ability even to subsist by riddling farm land with land mines; uprooting people from their homelands in enforced displacement, perhaps never to return.

These and many other examples are a stark indication that it is not the law that is wanting, but the political will to respect it and ensure respect for it. If this will is strong, such human tragedies can be prevented.

This is a theme that I will return to later on.

But what of the post 9/11 environment, since this seems to have been the catalyst for those who seek to cast doubt on the relevance of IHL? It seems to me that we are now confronted with overlapping typologies of conflict: the so-called global war against terrorism, which has taken on different forms in different contexts, from full-fledged international armed conflicts as in Afghanistan, to special forces or police operations; a layer of pre-existing conflicts, that emerged either during the cold-war (Colombia, Angola) or in the 90's, with religion and ethnicity as base (Caucasus, Great Lakes, etc); a layer of more recent conflicts, apparently not related, as in Nepal or Ivory Coast.

Consequently, we have seen, for example, an increase in the number of prisoners detained worldwide — in 2002 alone, the ICRC visited over 400,000 detainees in 75 countries. We have seen the emergence of a range of new so-called “non-state actors”, or private armed groups, often part of networks with a global reach, and with command structures and modes of operation that are clandestine in nature.

How does the law stand up to these developments? The ICRC is convinced that IHL continues to provide the crucial protection to those who are most vulnerable during modern day conflict. Its provisions continue to mark a clear,

“THE ICRC IS CONVINCED THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW CONTINUES TO PROVIDE THE CRUCIAL PROTECTION TO THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE DURING MODERN DAY CONFLICTS”

though delicate balance, between military imperatives and outright inhumanity. But the ICRC's convictions on this issue should not be mistaken for a naive or blind faith that humanitarian law is perfect — no body of law can claim perfection. The ICRC is a willing participant in the debate on the adequacy of IHL, and open to a review of its provisions, since the development of the law is an essential part of strengthening its ability to protect. But any attempt to weaken the protection that IHL provides, or to blur the lines between humanity and inhumanity, will be met with

the strongest resistance from the ICRC, and I feel sure that we will not be alone in our firm opposition to any such moves.

We believe that IHL is continuously proving its ability to adapt to changing realities. For example, recent years have witnessed the establishment of international tribunals to try those suspected of war crimes. The International Criminal Court is perhaps the most celebrated development in this direction, and we wish the court and its people well in the continuing fight to end impunity.

Legal provisions prohibiting the use of certain weapons have been developed. Continuing vigilance on the development of new weapons remains crucial. The ICRC is alarmed by the potential for advances in biotechnology to be put to hostile uses. This potential is exacerbated by the diplomatic impasse to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. The ICRC has responded with its Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity initiative. It is an appeal to states, to industry and scientists, and to civil society to work together to ensure that bioscience advances that make it easier to spread disease or to poison are subject to tough and effective controls.

This is encouraging but there is still plenty of work to be done. One obvious area where development of the law would be welcome is that of non-international armed conflicts. They form the majority of today's conflicts, and are currently only regulated by a minimal number of treaty rules. Means and mechanisms must be identified to

ensure that organised armed groups apply international humanitarian law, and to sharpen their sense of accountability. Returning to the theme I mentioned earlier, whilst moves to strengthen existing rules are welcome, the real challenge is to improve respect for international humanitarian law. Without greater respect, the credibility and protective value of existing and new rules is very limited.

So how is respect to be improved? First, and quite simply, by spreading knowledge of the rules, and crucially of why they are important, to authorities, to combatants, including, of course, organised armed groups, but also to civil society. IHL reflects what we believe are commonly held values of humanity, and we must do our utmost to ensure that what we have to say on the law resonates with the personal values of the wider general public.

We have also a collective responsibility to the public in countries that are not technically at war. They are brought ever closer to the realities of conflict by growing fears of terrorist attack. Embedded journalists, like those with front line troops in Iraq, beam real-time images of war into living rooms, bars and cafes around the world.

The public must understand and support the concept that wars have limits. It is vital that they are able to scrutinise what is going on in the world based on a sound knowledge of clear and internationally agreed standards, and an understanding of why they are important. Traditionally, a knowledge and understanding of

those standards was regarded as important only for parties to conflict — states, the military, and organised armed groups. Perhaps recent developments make us all parties to conflict, in which case, the task of spreading that knowledge and understanding takes on new proportions.

Secondly, clear steps can be taken to adopt preventative measures in times of peace, such as the implementation of relevant treaties into national laws, military manuals and other instruments.

Thirdly, in the heat of conflict, by the mobilisation of all those who can contribute to the better respect of the law, and generate support and understanding within their own spheres of influence. The ICRC stands ready to engage in the debate on how to improve this body of law and how to clarify certain key concepts of

international humanitarian law. But I say again that we should not engage in a development of the law if this is an excuse to reduce existing protection. Any such exercise must have as its aim to strengthen existing law and the protection it provides.

The real test of the International Community's recognition of the strength of international humanitarian law in dealing with today's conflicts, and of its commitment to the existing rules, is and will be their full respect in concrete conflict situations now and in the months and years ahead. In the interest of humanity, the ICRC hopes the test is passed, since the consequences of failing do not bear thinking about.

“THE PUBLIC MUST UNDERSTAND
AND SUPPORT THE CONCEPT
THAT WARS HAVE LIMITS”

FROM THE FIELD: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLITICISATION OF AID

> **Amelia Bookstein**

// Policy Advisor

• **Oxfam International**

CV Ms. Amelia Bookstein is a Policy Advisor with Oxfam GB's Conflict and Natural Disasters Team. She has been with Oxfam since 2000, covering global humanitarian protection and assistance concerns, with particular work on Angola, DRC, Iraq and Afghanistan. Before Oxfam, Ms. Bookstein worked with Refugees International, a refugee advocacy organisation based in Washington DC, from 1997 to 1999. She has a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Women's Studies from Cornell University (New York, USA) and a Master's of Science in International Relations from the London School of Economics (UK).

My name is Amelia Bookstein. I am a policy advisor for conflict in Oxfam GB's advocacy department. My team analyses conflict with a global perspective. My job, working with our country teams, regional teams, media and campaigning, is to make the links between our programme work, the specific, and advocacy on the trends happening in the global sphere. My job is to make that connection, using Oxfam's programme expertise to inform our lobbying, campaigning, and networking.

I've titled this talk "a view from the field", because I thought it was important to bring the stories from the ground into a forum like this one. Most of you know very well situations similar to what I'm about to describe; however, in all our talk about funding, donor behaviour, and accountability, sometimes the numbers, graphs, and political analysis can get very abstract and academic. It is important to remember that this debate matters because international engagement can mean the difference between life and death for millions of people across the globe. There are forgotten emergencies, forgotten wars, and forgotten civilians.

My talk today will cover the following issues in a rough overview:

- > *An example of a forgotten war, the situation on the ground in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);*
- > *The latest information about trends in donor funding, and what that reflects in terms of prioritization and politicization;*
- > *The broader responsibilities of donors and governments;*
- > *New and exciting possibilities and challenges, especially for the EU.*

This is a spontaneously-settled camp in Mudzipela, Ituri, DRC. At the time this photograph was taken, (2000) the war in the DRC was still heaving with armies from six countries, and the ethnic fighting in the northeast had spurred on massacres and reciprocal violence between the Hema and Lendu populations. At that time, Oxfam was calling for international engagement with the country, labeling



Camp in Mudzipela, Ituri, DRC (2000).

it a forgotten war as 2.5 million people had lost their lives, mostly due to disease and displacement; even with this death toll, the country was ignored by all the major donors until ECHO changed its approach that year.

This camp did not have any humanitarian relief or protection. More than 300 families were living in and around an abandoned schoolhouse in terrible conditions. Oxfam carried out an assessment mission to this site, and later installed a system for water supply in January 2001. These people may be the lucky ones, however.

Driving on towards Fataki, another town in Ituri, our team encountered a small group of very scared people, living literally in the bush. They reluctantly came out to speak to us, once our local staff explained that we were from a humanitarian organization and assessing the needs in the area. They were a frightened bunch, legs as thin as matchsticks, clothing torn to rags. They had fled for their lives, after their homes and their entire village were destroyed by arson. They had never seen any humanitarian workers before, and had never received support of any kind. I don't know how many of these people would have survived; I suspect not very many. Unfortunately, this is probably the case for millions of people caught in DRC's war.

Now, the International Rescue Committee estimates more than 3.3 million people have died in what they call the "deadliest documented conflict in African history". The fighting between the Hema and the Lendu took a turn for the worst after May 6, when the withdrawal of Ugandan troops led to a power vacuum in the North East of the country. Oxfam water engineers have remained in Bunia town, despite the upsurge in violence, at the request of the UN. Our teams estimate that some 5000 people are seeking refuge at the compound of the UN's MONUC — the peacekeeping force of 700 troops in Bunia that is unable to keep the peace.

MONUC has been able to secure the compound, and the airport, but not the hospital. There is no accurate count of casualties, but it is an extremely urgent situation. Most of the town's 350,000 residents have fled the insecurity. Some 12,000 refugees have walked to Uganda in recent days.

Oxfam is calling for members of the UNSC to commit troops and resources now for a multinational force to be deployed in Ituri as a matter of urgency. This is being debated as we speak. Any discussion about the choices made in the international sphere — whether or not to engage military resources, whether or not to donate humanitarian aid, whether or not to

engage diplomatically — any discussion risks generalizations and accusations. In my twenty minutes, however, I cannot cover the whole of the history of humanitarian intervention and the evolution of the idea of “human security, from Boutros-Ghali up through Brahimi to George Bush. However, there are important lessons to be learned from looking at trends over the past decade, and the most recent information available about donor funding and decision-making.

One way of measuring international engagement is to look at funding patterns. Documenting the path of money flows provides some answers to questions of where governments priorities lie. Most of my data comes from studies by Development Initiatives, the ODI, and the Tufts University Humanitarianism and War Project.

Many of these studies use the OECD DAC data as the reference for funding patterns, although this information is about 12-18 months behind. Also, this data does not take into account some of the non-OECD countries who are emerging as strong donors, such as India, China, Turkey and Korea. It is often useful to compare the long-term OECD data with the UN’s data for the Consolidated Appeal Process — the CAP.

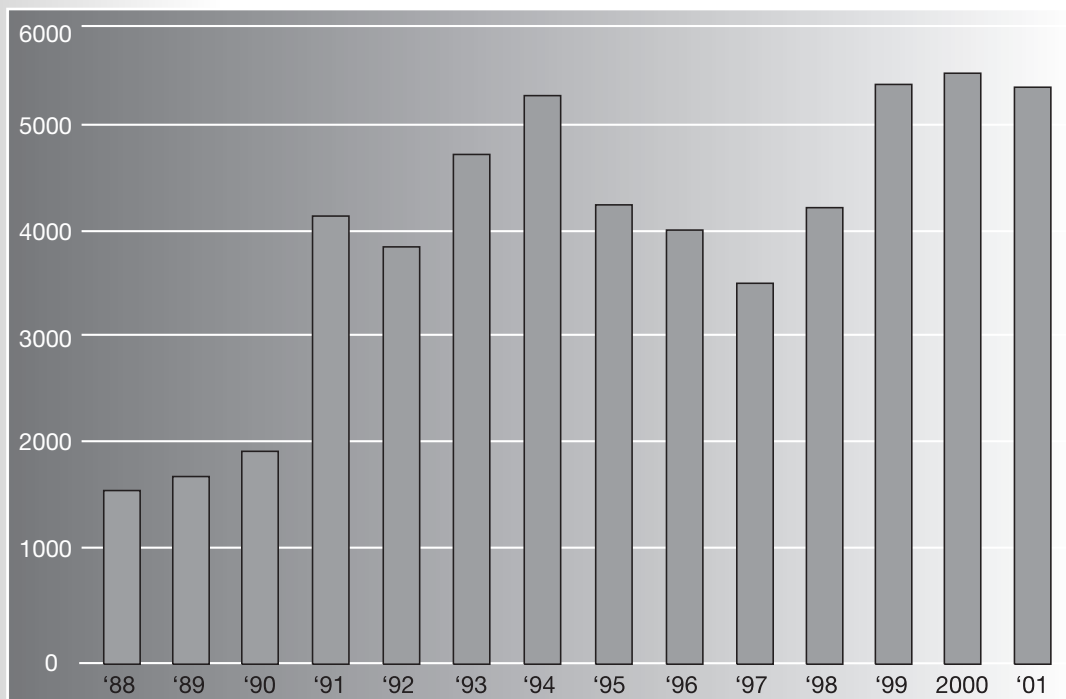
The WFP’s Global Food Aid Information System,

INTERFAIS, is a good measure of food aid flows as well.

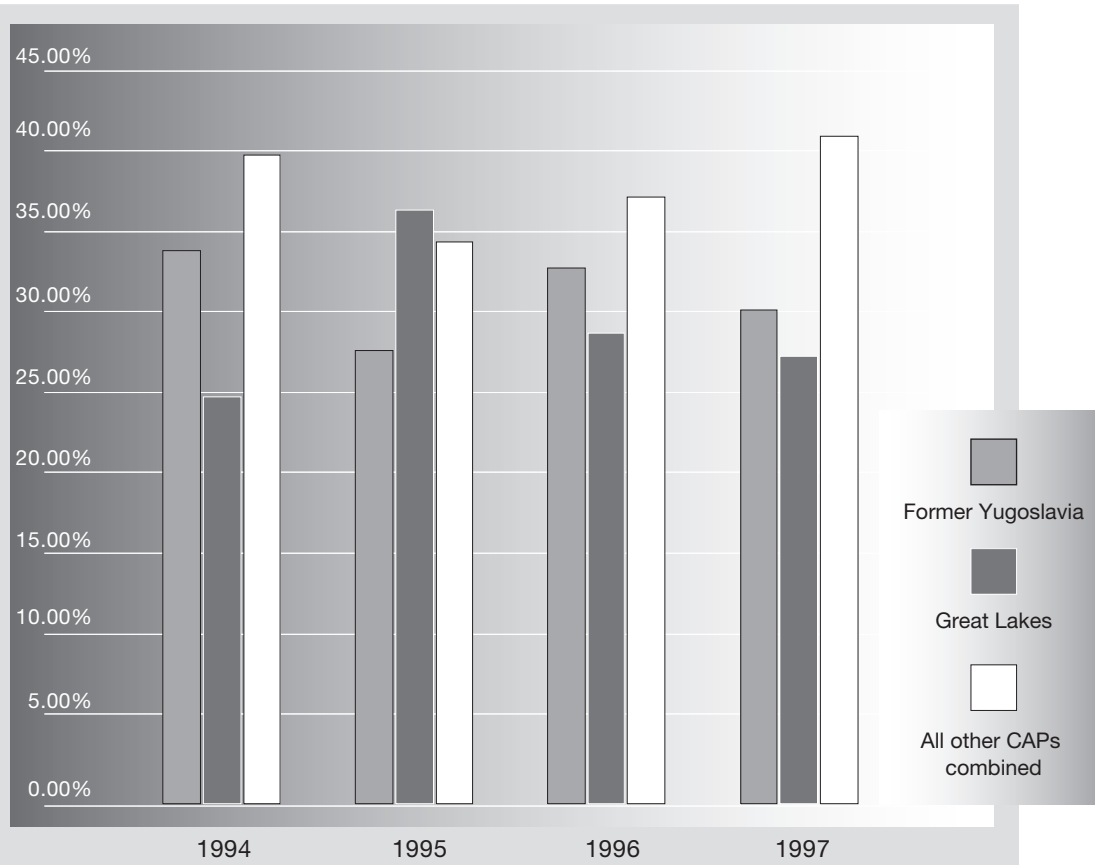
As most of you know, Humanitarian aid rose rapidly in the 1990’s, falling back a bit after 1999 but still much higher than ever before. These figures from Development Initiatives point out that humanitarian aid reached nearly six billion dollars US at the end of the 1990s. However, even with detailed research, there are a lot of problems in the exact accounting for this money, as donors provide the information in different ways, have different methods for accounting, and there is no common definition of humanitarian aid, adding to the confusion. Still, looking over the last decade, we can draw some conclusions.

In Oxfam’s own experience from Indonesia to West Africa, Colombia to Central Asia, there are millions of people deserving humanitarian relief and protection, yet they are denied assistance because of shortfalls of funding or lack of access. For those outside of the spotlight, the human costs of those shortfalls are very real.

The issue of forgotten or ignored emergencies is not new. Oxfam first reported its concern about the imbalance of global resources in November 2000. A vastly unequal response to the crises in Europe and the crises in Africa illustrated how the international community was shirking its



Total Humanitarian Assistance in \$US Millions, constant (2000) prices



In this graph — just covering part of the data set, you can see how the Great Lakes crisis and former Yugoslavia each year took up the bulk of the funding. The remaining CAPS — there were 12 in 1994, 11 in 1995, usually some 11-18 countries have CAPS — had to share less than 40% of the total.

responsibilities to address need universally.

In Kosovo in 1999, donor governments gave \$207 for every person in need, as described by the UN appeal for the Former Yugoslavia. By contrast, they gave only \$16 for every person in need in Sierra Leone; for the Democratic Republic of Congo, this figure was only \$8. Even adjustments for the cost of living and the delivery of services in Europe could not account for such disparities.

In 2000, 21 per cent of all bilateral humanitarian assistance went to South-Eastern Europe — exactly the same percentage that was channeled to all the 24 other countries which had consolidated appeals that year combined.

While Kosovo was unusual, the trends of donations was not an abrupt, one-off example. The history of the CAP over the last ten years is of an overwhelming concentration on the two high-profile crises each year. In all but two examples, over an eight-year period the two largest CAPs exceeded all the other appeals that year combined.

While I am not advocating a reduction in funding to any major emergency where there is need, the challenge is not to let down the millions of people affected by other emergencies. Donor co-ordination, underpinned by commitments to the entitlement of humanitarian assistance based on need, is sorely lacking. Even those donors who have committed themselves to distributing humanitarian aid based on need, such as ECHO, have an additional role to play in pressing their peers to uphold similar commitments.

And the most recent years have followed the same pattern. Based on information provided by the UN's Financial Tracking system, it is clear that the overwhelming bulk of resources went to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan of course has intense needs. The country's child and maternal mortality rates are among the worst in the world. An estimated four million Afghans in rural communities will not have enough to eat during the next 12 months. Some

humanitarian aid has reached those most in need, but the disbursement of funds for reconstruction has been notoriously slow. Lack of security remains a critical challenge, and threatens long-term stability. So far, little has been achieved on this front.

However, despite its immense challenges, Afghanistan is still in a better position than many other places around the world. The CAP appeal for Liberia for 2002, for example, was just \$15.2m, but donors provided only one-third that amount. It is difficult to fathom why the \$10 million shortfall could not somehow be found. Similarly, Guinea — one of the poorest countries in the world, hosting one of the largest proportion of refugees — received only 50 per cent of its appeal; the Republic of Congo received only half of its required needs as well; Burundi, where fighting has flared up recently despite a ceasefire, received only 38 per cent. While there are important differences in the numbers of people affected, it is still striking that ignored crises, such as Liberia, Guinea, Burundi, and the Republic of Congo, request far less funding and receive still less again.

While the latest information is not yet available for Iraq, the engagement seems to follow the same pattern. Humanitarian agencies were in a very difficult position during the war, and the very independence of humanitarian aid was questioned or brushed aside by some political actors. Now, while the war is over, humanitarian aid and reconstruction have barely begun, hampered by insecurity and looting that coalition forces have not been able to control. Still, Donors have already earmarked a good deal of funding for Iraq. The latest UN figures for Iraq indicate that the appeal requesting more than \$2 billion, has already received some \$721 million in contributions. While there are, and will continue to be, important needs in Iraq, the fact that donors cannot find \$10 million for Liberia seems even more unjustified.

Another trend in humanitarian relief is increased scrutiny from donors of agencies. After the

disasters in Rwanda, NGOs pulled together some systems of accountability to stakeholders and to donors. Donors, particularly ECHO, but also DFID and others, have pressed for much more transparency and accountability. The SPHERE and HAP projects were initiated, as well as better systems of auditing. While there is still progress to be made, this is undoubtably good pressure, and these are good initiatives.

However, recently the critical lens has turned on the donor community. Ian Smilie and Larry Minear, in their work with the Humanitarianism in War project out of Tufts University in the US, examine donor behaviour and found, to be frank, that the whole of the donor community achieves less than the sum of its parts. Foreign political interests, domestic policies, domestic constituencies, diaspora influence, historical ties and geographical proximity all combine differently in each country to drive donor behavior. The humanitarian imperative can come close to last in triggering international engagement.

The pieces of the puzzle don't fit together to make a coherent response to humanitarian needs across the globe. The common goal — as the donors themselves have stated — of saving lives, alleviating suffering and restoring human dignity — appears to be pursued in a rather haphazard fashion.

Ian and Larry's work also highlights that the scrutiny has been on the NGOs and the UN for a decade now; it is time to demand more accountability from the donors. I don't just mean towards the taxpayers, although this accountability is important. As citizens, we have a right to demand where our tax dollars are going, and if our governments are living up to their obligations under international humanitarian law and the conventions they have signed up to. However, in addition, I we can demand a different and new kind of accountability from the donors — towards the civilians on the ground, across the world.

Next month in Stockholm, Donors will come together with observers to discuss principles of

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“Good donorship” They will be discussing the findings of the “Humanitarian financing initiative” studies The principles have been circulated in draft form as a kind of rough code of conduct for donors.

This code of conduct could prove to be a very important step. It is time for Donors to hold themselves to account, as a group, for the goals they proclaim. Donors need to sign up to a promise to deliver aid based on need alone, not determined by the most politically important.

And we have to go beyond promises. In the next twelve months us NGOs, working with allies such as the Overseas Development Institute and others, will be pressing governments to get the mechanisms in place for ensuring they deliver on these pledges. These mechanisms demand a universal definition of humanitarian aid, and universal ways of reporting expenditure, as well as — importantly — a system of peer review to ensure that the information available to the public is accurate. This is probably best done through the OECD DAC process, but with new reporting and improved analysis. Also, there needs to be a process for accounting for non-DAC donors contributions as well, to have an accurate full picture. Only once these mechanisms are in place, and the information freely available, will the real truth be known, and politicization exposed, and, hopefully, discouraged.

But, of course, effectively addressing the protection needs of civilians in conflict means more than money. The draft code of conduct also proposes guidelines for humanitarian action, Donor coordination, supporting the UN, and respecting the civilian character of humanitarian agencies in any military situation. However, I would argue that this doesn’t go nearly far enough. What we need is International engagement.

Humanitarian aid is important, but it is not the whole picture. In the next few months, NGOs will be pressing donors/governments to make strong commitments to the protection of civilians, in all

the wars across the globe. We need international engagement on all conflicts where the lives of civilians are being torn apart. There are different ways and means of committing to protection. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. In some situations, diplomatic muscle will be needed to press warring parties for a ceasefire or humanitarian access.

In other cases, such as in Bunia this past week, there is an urgent need for a Rapid Reaction Force to stop the slaughter in the political vacuum. This is not the job of humanitarian agencies, to protect civilians from the worst ravages of war. We are small players in the scheme of things.

It is governments who have the power, the resources, and the obligation to follow through. Governments are the signatories to the Geneva Conventions and the additional protocols, the members of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. It is they who have the obligations to press any warring party on the treatment of civilians, on adhering to the laws of war, and living up to the Refugee Convention, on preventing genocide, just to name a few of the important commitments.

“NOW, PERHAPS MORE THAN EVER,
THERE IS A NEW AWAKENING
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UNDER HUMANITARIAN LAW”

And now, perhaps more than ever, there is a new awakening about the responsibilities to fulfill obligations under humanitarian law. Oxfam and our allies were lobbying hard against the

war in Iraq for humanitarian reasons, and we lost that battle; however, I am encouraged that, during the war, public commentators across the world were quoting the Geneva conventions on all the major news networks, militaries were under pressure to take the utmost of care in targeting, and the public has a higher level of literacy about the laws of war and the obligations of warring parties, higher than ever before. While we were not able to stop the war, I think we can say that we were part of a very important momentum of ordinary citizens demanding accountability from their governments regarding the protection of civilians.

And so — the challenge for the EU, the governments of the member states, and the citizens. There are



Little Boy in Fataki, DRC (2000).

big challenges ahead for humanitarian aid. But this is also a very exciting time, and an important one. The EU, and ECHO in particular, have made bold moves declaring the importance of independence of humanitarian aid, and confronting the “forgotten emergency” problem. However, the EU must now take strong steps to demonstrate — to other governments, to the taxpayers, and to the global community — that it is committed to the basis of humanitarian aid — with the objectives of saving lives, alleviating suffering, and restoring human dignity.

In the current geo-political climate, there is no time to hesitate — the EU, and the member states — must become strong leaders to make the system effective, accountable, and measurably adding to the quality of life and protection for the millions of civilians caught in conflict. The whole

must be worth more than the sum of the parts, and certainly no less.

I’ll end with this photograph, also from Congo, of a boy in Fataki. I always think this little boy wears a very adult expression; I’m sure he’s seen more than we would ever want a child to see. However, he was safe; in a camp with services provided by UNICEF, COOPI and Oxfam working together, this boy at least had safety, food, shelter, and clean water; the mothers were even starting a school, so their children wouldn’t miss out on any more education. This is, I would argue, the bare minimum that every civilian deserves; It will take much more concerted, coordinated, and robust international engagement to ensure that this is the case for the millions of “forgotten civilians” caught in conflict across the globe.

AN NGO PERSPECTIVE

Jean-Cristophe Rufin

President

• **Action Contre la Faim, France**

CV Dr. Jean-Christophe Rufin was appointed President of *Action contre la Faim* in January 2003. He is a medical Doctor and holds a degree from the Political Studies Institute, Paris. Dr. Rufin has a long experience on humanitarian action. He has carried out several missions in the Horn of Africa, Latin America and Far East. He was Vice-president of MSF and administrator of the French Red Cross. He has been attached to the French Secretary of State for Human Rights and advisor to the French Defense Minister. Dr. Rufin is author of several award-winning publications and books. He has recently been named Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

I have been asked to speak to you about the future, which obviously is always difficult. Fortunately, however, I have been given a specific focus for my speech, namely the future of NGOs from the point of view of NGOs. The subject is, therefore, slightly more limited.

I would add that I am speaking here, in fact, as the President of a network of French, English, American and Spanish NGOs, since Action Contre la Faim has branches in those countries. But, it is above all from my past experiences over a fairly long period with different non-governmental organisations that I have drawn the ideas for my speech on their future. I did not participate in the creation of Médecins sans Frontières, but I was involved in its first operations in the 1970s and subsequently became its Vice-President. Therefore, in France, my country, I am considered something of a dinosaur, and it is as a dinosaur that I would like, first of all, to take a little look at the past, if you will bear with me, before turning to the future.

Contrary to what some people who are very close to them might believe, humanitarian NGOs not spring up in a humanitarian desert, as the only actors on the humanitarian scene. Their development in their current form of emergency humanitarian organisations, must be seen in a historical context stretching back over a long period, against a very complex backdrop with numerous actors co-existing with different mandates. I do not intend to go into the details of this long history, but I would simply like to say that humanitarian NGOs are called upon to co-exist with at least two other international bodies, with which their relations are sometimes difficult, but which in any event have a direct influence on their future. Moreover, its other partners are also the partners of ECHO, namely the Red Cross and the United Nations and the humanitarian organisations set up by it.

As regards the Red Cross, I would remind you of just one thing concerning its mandate. The Red Cross is characterised by the fact that since 1864, it has been the embodiment of a fundamental

concept, namely Law, the idea of Law, the idea of a Law of War, the idea of a Law of Victims, the idea of an International Humanitarian Law which, in the mind of Henri Dunant, should have been THE special instrument to help victims and ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Therefore, if we must associate something with the Red Cross, it is this fundamental notion of Law.

As regards the United Nations, their specific characteristic is more complex. The United Nations are not a humanitarian organisation by vocation. The United Nations were created in 1945, precisely because of the failure of the Red Cross approach. Indeed it was in contrast with this tradition of the old continent, which consists in fighting ceaselessly and having at the same time a body of volunteers that the Americans, or more precisely the American democrats of the period, in the person of Roosevelt, proposed in 1945 the creation of the United Nations, which were originally intended to be a body to ensure the world's collective security, that is to say an organisation intended to prevent conflicts and wars and prohibit the use of force. However, because of the failure of its central body, the Security Council, to function correctly owing to the Cold War, the United Nations, in a way by default, developed specialised organisations, such as the High Commission for Refugees, the World Health Organisation and numerous others.

Then, the NGOs, our NGOs if I may say so, emerged over the years, at different periods. As regards the emergency NGOs, they emerged mainly in the 1970s as a result of the failure of the Red Cross and the United Nations. They were the result, in particular, of the idea of Law being very seriously called into question. Without going into all the details concerning the creation of Médecins sans Frontières during the Biafran war, I would simply like to remind you that the Biafran war, which took place in Nigeria and which was a civil war, resulted in a Red Cross mission and that it was from the island of Fernando Poo, where the Red Cross planes and the means of providing aid were based, by seeing the coast of Biafra, which was so close but where no one could go, that the idea was born, in the minds of the creators of the NGOs of that period, that Law, instead of being a mean of reaching the victims, had become on the

contrary a means of preventing aid from getting to them. This idea of the wall of Law, encouraged the founders of Médecins sans Frontières to react by creating this precise idea of interference, this idea of direct responsibility to act outside the Law instead of relying on the Law for the means to help the victims.

The second failure which governed the creation of these NGOs was also the failure of the model of the State, as embodied in the United Nations. Since the Biafran war was a civil war and the United Nations considered that in a certain way it was an internal affair, it was once again necessary to overcome the barrier represented by this concept of the State's role.

In non-governmental organisations, to summarise the thinking behind their creation, since it is that basic underlying principle which needs to be taken into consideration when talking of the future, the basis of their approach was first of all the idea of an action by citizens, an action by individuals without the State, even against States. This idea of mobilising citizens, irrespective of whether or not they are professional people (doctors, agronomists, etc.), is the basic idea which essentially distinguishes non-governmental organisations from earlier forms of humanitarian aid.

Another important idea and one which supplements the first, is the idea that the Law is not essential and that Justice — the old contrast between Justice and Law — is more important. Consequently, it is necessary to rely on different forces, which are not only States or courts, but also public opinion. The links between NGOs and the media are not simply a question of circumstances, they are fundamental and translate the idea that by calling on public opinion, one can obtain the force to do what is not authorised in the name of Law.

Those procedures had considerable success, in particular throughout the final years of the Cold War. The interminable final years of the Cold War period, especially during the 1980s, saw the development of so-called *low intensity* conflicts in numerous countries of the South, where in fact there were few direct military battles but where, on the other hand, there were huge civilian casualties and in particular a flood of refugees fleeing the

areas of conflict. That was when the NGO movement was in its prime. That was, so to speak, the period of their triumph, in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Thailand, at the Cambodian border and elsewhere that they developed. It must be added that they also developed thanks to the support of Europe and in particular thanks to the partnership with ECHO which boosted their impact.

Today these NGOs are facing a very serious twofold crisis. On the one hand, an external crisis, in the context of the actions of NGOs, and on the other hand, an internal crisis, in the donor countries where these NGOs are established. I will address

first of all the external crisis, the crisis of the context of their actions. Over the last dozen years or so, since the famous end of the Cold War, we have seen States and international organisations returning to the humanitarian scene. Mrs. Adinolfi said this morning that humanitarian actions arouse envy and that is true. Humanitarian aid, in the shape of NGOs, has aroused a great deal of envy in the countries where these NGOs have developed and in particular in France, where their actions have acquired considerable prestige, with MSF and others. Numerous politicians were also itching to participate in this humanitarian action and they were able to satisfy this desire at the end of the Cold War.

Accordingly, over the last ten years or so, since the early 1990s, we have seen a proliferation of peace-keeping operations, representing the first shock wave for NGOs which were obliged to adapt to this new concept. During the Cold War period, NGOs often found themselves alone in different theatres of operations around the world; people were not falling over themselves to volunteer to go to Afghanistan at that time. From the beginning of the 1990s, on the contrary, UN Peace keeping forces, armies, politicians, international organisations, everyone became involved in humanitarian aid, creating a certain confusion. This confusion was aggravated by the fact that a certain number of leaders of NGOs turned to politics, especially in France, but also in Belgium and other countries, and became themselves political actors. This confusion was very strong, with the creation of a certain number

of slogans such as that of the duty to interfere, which created a considerable amount of confusion in people's minds at the time.

It can be said that the NGOs succeeded in meeting the challenges of this first crisis during the 1990-95 period and gradually learnt to work with these new partners. In particular, they learnt to dialogue with the armed forces and work in the framework of the UNO. Basically, a new form of collaboration between the UNO and

NGOs developed. The problem is that since 1995 we have seen a change in the conflicts themselves in the sense that the UNO

“ACTIVE HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS
ARE NO LONGER HEROES”

has become increasingly marginalised. The special partner with which we had worked in close support, as it were, in the new circumstances, found itself increasingly marginalised. That was the case in Bosnia, from 1995 onwards, with the appearance of the IFOR and the SFOR and the changeover to the NATO phase, the changeover from the UNPROFOR to NATO. That was the case in Kosovo where, moreover, the situation was reversed. NATO was the first to intervene, followed by the United Nations. And throughout the Kosovo crisis, in the NATO briefing in Tirana, for example, we were confronted with two American officials dressed identically, because one belonged to the fighting branch of NATO while the other belonged to the humanitarian branch of NATO. But they were the same. Therefore, a fairly serious disruptive factor. The third conflict which clouded the issues slightly more, was the war in Afghanistan, during which we saw the intervention of a coalition with international support, backed up fairly rapidly by the United Nations. And then finally, of course, very recently, the latest crisis, the Iraqi war where the UNO was not only marginalised but totally absent; in the Iraqi crisis NGOs suffered very badly from the fact that their “special” partner, the UNO, was sidelined. At the same time, while these major crises were attracting an increasingly less neutral form of international intervention, in many parts of the world situations of crises, notably in Africa, were increasingly “forgotten”.

To summarise this situation, because I believe that it reflects how our environment will develop in the

coming years. Our environment is clearly twofold: on the one hand, we have to help victims in crisis situations where the international community has a strong presence, in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, which today and therefore undoubtedly tomorrow as well, unfortunately, are practically inaccessible to us. Iraq was a considerable step backwards. Never since the start of the 20th century, has a war been as inaccessible to humanitarian aid workers; apart from the rare volunteers who were able to stay in Baghdad throughout the war, no others have been able to enter the country and the possibilities of carrying out aid work have been very limited since the beginning of the war. Indeed, the situation remains the same even now.

Moreover, something even more serious was observed during the Iraqi war; namely the determination of the belligerents to control the strategic scene as a whole, by controlling not only communication — embedded journalism — but also humanitarian aid which, in a certain way, has also been appropriated since it was proposed to us quite simply to go in behind the Coalition's tanks.

Therefore, on the one hand, we have crises which are few in number and in which the major powers have interests and which are basically, neither more nor less, wars in which humanitarian aid has a small place, or even no place at all. And then, on the other hand, there is the second, more frequent scenario, namely crises, in particular in Africa, where we stand alone, where there is no one, deserted, where as it were the major powers have relinquished their role, where the humanitarian scene has become depopulated, where no one stops us from acting, that is clear, but where the working conditions are on the contrary extremely difficult, not because of the strong military presence but because of the withdrawal, the fragmentation, the complete dispersion of the theatre of operation with armed, criminal bands and an extremely difficult and hostile environment for outside actors.

That is the external aspect of the crisis, that is to say the crisis in the places where we carry out our actions. The internal crisis, rapidly, is the crisis which affects NGOs in our countries. NGOs are no longer, at least in our country, in fashion, and it would be interesting in this respect to learn the

point of view of those who work and come from other countries. Obviously fashions come and go. There was a romantic period embodied by certain leaders of our NGOs, whereas today we are in a more technical, more technological, less exciting phase. It is clear that we are no longer the focal point of media attention. There is less interest in what we do. Active humanitarian aid workers are no longer heroes. Legionnaires are held in higher esteem in the media. Our actions are no longer the stuff of dreams, if I may say so, and it is far more difficult to obtain media coverage for our presence, our actions, our commitment.

A second problem in this internal crisis, is the increase in certain accusations, sometimes even scandals, in a more anecdotal way, with this fundamental idea and which for us is extremely paradoxical, that many people think that humanitarian action should not cost anything. In other words, we are called into question because our operating expenses are too high. It is true that there have been some excesses; not too long ago, one NGO President had a Ferrari among many other things which had been paid for by the combat against cancer. But we must recognise that on the whole that is rare, there is no embezzlement, we are very strictly supervised. The problem is far bigger than that. People think that if they give ten euros, then all ten euros should go to the victims. But, at the same time, we have inescapable operating costs linked to accounting, the accounts that we must provide and the quality which we must improve.

And the last point I will mention is the fact that today it can transpire that our opinion is different from that of our financial donors. During the Cold War, there was a kind of harmony. When you go to help Afghan refugees, in the end you also help in a certain way the mujahidins, who resisted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. You help the enemies of our enemies. In a nutshell, there was a kind of harmony between humanitarian aid and the strategic aims of the major financial donors. When today you say that you do not agree with the way in which the armed intervention has taken place in Iraq, it is very clear that this can lead to a head-on clash with an important financial donor, possibly even the key donor, whose opinion you contest, and there once again there is a risk of making yourself more vulnerable.

In conclusion, I will say that, in this new context, and in the future as it seems to be emerging, faced with these crises, it is very important to re-assert what was said this morning by Mr. Imbeni and which has been referred to on several occasions, namely that humanitarian aid is a stakeholder in democracy. That is our base, of course, but it must be said a contrario. We must invite people who call into question humanitarian aid to take their logic to its extreme. What does humanitarian aid mean? Does that mean that in the case of a war the victims should be left to their own devices? That the law of the strongest should be applied right to the end? And at that point they will say, no, not at all.

I think that we need to make an effort to educate people to try and show that criticism is, of course, possible, but that it is not a valid option to push it to its extreme to the point of destroying humanitarian aid, because that would mean purely and simply abandoning the world to barbarism. I believe that in order to ensure the survival of humanitarian aid and the NGOs, we must maintain a kind of multiplicity. That is to say humanitarian aid cannot be seen only as a question of NGOs, in the same way that it can no longer be reduced simply to the Red Cross and the United Nations. I think that it is necessary, and moreover important for a financial donor such as ECHO, to realise to what extent these different forms of action, these three types of actors — the United Nations, the Red Cross, and the NGOs — are complementary. They do not say and do not do the same thing, they are important. Obviously, the Red Cross is absolutely essential to maintain this ideal of law which has today been reinforced by the International Criminal Court and which, accordingly, is one of the pillars of humanitarian aid. The United Nations are the only source of international legitimacy. It is important to defend their presence in conflicts, the opposite is the case in Iraq. But the NGOs do things which only they can do. First of all, because they are supported by public opinion. If the NGOs have a future, it is on

“THE MAJOR IDEA OF NGOS IS TO ALLOW EVERYONE, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR POSSIBLE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT, TO ACT DIRECTLY AND NOT TO RELY ON STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO DO SO”

that basis, as the link with civil society. We act as a go-between for the actions of citizens. We give, and we must continue to give, citizens the possibility to act. Not only through their donations, of course, but also directly. The major idea of NGOs is to allow everyone, irrespective of their possible level of commitment, to act directly and not to rely on States and international organisations to do so.

The second fundamental challenge is clearly to succeed in enhancing the quality of our actions, improving our accounts, our professionalism etc., while maintaining our flexibility, our reactivity, the added value which

we contribute and which distinguishes us from international organisations, with their burdensome procedures. This enables us to be the first on the scene and to sound warnings in a far more flexible way.

And the last point which constitutes our strength and makes NGOs irreplaceable is our independence. We spoke this morning of independence, impartiality, neutrality, but there is another very simple, but apposite word, and that word is freedom. They are free organisations which must attempt by all possible means to preserve their freedom and notably their freedom of speech. Personally I am in agreement with co-ordinating actions with the military, with international organisations, with governments. We never refuse to open a dialogue with these institutions, but we must also know when to say no. It must also be possible to disagree with them and even to air forcibly in public such disagreements. NGOs must also be capable of drawing attention to forgotten crises which are not the priority of governments.

Every time that humanitarian aid is reduced in the end to an extension of foreign policy it caricatures itself. In recent times, we have heard a lot about the Crusades and I would like to remind you that, all the same, humanitarian orders were actually created during the Crusades. The Templars were a military and humanitarian order. They were humanitarian when protecting pilgrims who left for

the Holy Land, but their actions were more military when dealing with those who did not share their beliefs. Do we want to become like them? Do we want to become the new Templars of some power of tomorrow? I think that we must focus rather on maintaining vigorously the humanitarian beliefs that underlie our movement. Obviously, as a French person, I am very attached to the Enlightenment Philosophers and Voltaire and the idea that we should act for mankind as a whole and not only for those who share our views or for those whose interests coincide with our own. Consequently, I believe that NGOs will have a future as long as they are loyal to their origins.

A MEMBER STATE PERSPECTIVE

> Pieter Maurice Kraan

// Deputy Head of Humanitarian Affairs Division

- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Buitenlandse Zaken

CV For the last eight years, Mr. Kraan has been developing his career at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he is currently Deputy Head of the Humanitarian Affairs Department. He is also a member of the UN Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination Team (UNDAC). Mr. Kraan's previous experience also includes the coordination of several projects and initiatives for *Médecins sans Frontières* and the *International Dialogue Centre for Conflict Prevention*, as well as Field Diplomacy in countries such as Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Angola and Mexico.

I feel particularly honoured to have been invited by the director of Voice, Kathrin Schick, to speak to you today about a member states perspective on the role of humanitarian NGO's in the future. In the invitation letter was mentioned that the strong commitment of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in keeping the debate on humanitarian issues as open as possible, lead VOICE to this invitation. You will understand that I accepted right away. Because the debate is what matters.

So now I'm standing here, and you will probably want to know who I am and why I think I have something to say to you. Well, allow me to paint my humanitarian background to you first, so that the things I will say later on are blending more easily into perspective. Because I only entered the MFA in 1996, and not by coincidence. Let me explain.

I joined MSF in 1991 as a volunteer, leaving a job and a home behind and was quickly dispatched to Turkey and Iraq because of the 1st Gulf war. Later in 1991, I went to Liberia behind rebel lines and on to Bangladesh for a seven months aid programme for the Rohingya refugees from Birma. In 1992 I was called back to Monrovia, Liberia, for what turned out to become the largest water and sanitation programme so far in the history of MSF.

MSF-Belgium offered me in 1993 a position in the *pool d'urgences*; the emergency team. I saw this as a challenge and accepted it, although realising that the stress and dangers involved could turn out to be very big indeed. The *pool d'urgences* brought me in 12 months time from Nagorno Karabakh via Mexico to Angola and finally to Rwanda during the 1994 genocide.

GENOCIDE. Not at all a medical problem. Still I was leading a multisection MSF-effort and had a medical mandate only. So there I was: The NGO coordinator, responsible for five hospitals, over forty international staff, hundreds of local staff and thousands of patients. Everywhere grave and systematic human rights violations. Abuse of peoples' basic rights and very little I could do to change their fate in the long run. Just an

NGO-representative. Just a medical mandate. Just short term and limited solutions. Nothing I could do more for mankind.

Twelve years later 2003: Gulf War number II. One thousand cruise missiles are launched on Baghdad in what I consider from a diplomatic point of view an unconventional war-effort. I feel like looking back. A sentimental retrospective with lots of non-fiction in the background, brought live to us by CNN. A review of personal humanitarian engagement followed by 7 years of devoted service in the Dutch MFA on humanitarian affairs.

Much has been achieved by humanitarians over the past twelve years. But now things have changed. The world is after the 11th of September attacks on the World Trade Centre Towers a very different place. A place where wars are waged on movements instead of on nations. Bombs are being dropped on phenomena. Shock and awe. Today's war is on terror. The strife is against the so called axis of evil.

Shivers run down my spine. The crazy world of Charles Taylor's rebels in Liberia was difficult enough to understand. Genocide too hard to comprehend. But what is happening today, turns an upside down world inside out too. I'm spinning. Where do we go? If the role of the UN, the EU and NATO is so easily diminished, where does the NGO stand today.

Rwanda 1994. While RPF forces surrounded the joined MSF/ ICRC hospital to shift the national staff and take the so called undesirables out, I was on the road to Kampala to pick up the newly appointed General Director of MSF-Belgium. I felt responsible. I was a prime eye witness. I had to act. But how? Human Rights were not in my mandate. The time for advocacy limited. I had called for the arrival of the director out of misery. Caught in a total catch 22 I felt sandwiched and powerless. But I had to act.

Upon arrival in Uganda I ran into the Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Jan Pronk. I told him of the random killing by Tutsi forces. I shared with him the thoughts I had developed during the many sleepless nights that armed soldiers were roaming the hospitals to

inform those selected, that they would be next as soon as MSF discharged them. I asked him to allow me to present the political problems I faced to a politician: Him. He listened. He listened and asked questions for three hours. Finally he asked me to write all I had said down in a comprehensive report. I agreed to do so. But not before I would have ended my assignment with MSF, to prevent the medical neutrality and my colleagues in the field from being compromised. I wrote the report later in Amsterdam and dropped it at his desk in the Hague. The document revealed much of the suffering of the so called liberated people. It documented human rights violations. The exploitation of the innocent and the introduction of yet another round of greedy rule with plans

for expansion to the West. I suspected the regaining of the territory of the 13th century Mwami Kingdom of the Tutsi's. I suspected that part of the former Zaire were on Kigali's menu. We all have seen in the

Eastern Congo how right I was.

Back to 2003. A different world. I'm as a result of the contact with Jan Pronk now a civil servant. I work in the ivory towers of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs. From within the bureaucracy I'm dealing with problems like I faced as a NGO-rep back in 1994.

In our ministry we have the departments for Humanitarian Affairs and for Human Rights combined in one Division. This seems logical to us, because people have a very broad range of needs, not only humanitarian. Besides the bare necessities for survival, we need our human rights secured. The right to live, to work and to learn. Therefore we need to tackle problems of impunity, lawlessness and the absence of the judiciary. We need to act. But in our upside down, inside out world according to George W. Bush, things are not what they were before. And, ladies and gentlemen, speaking on personal account, I don't think that we will be back to normality easily. Because normality comes with norms. And the norms are different nowadays. The Geneva conventions, and their additional Protocols. The Hague conventions on occupation. Who cares? It's no longer automatically considered to be paramount. Independent, unimpeded, neutral

“NGO'S WILL HAVE TO BE
EVEN MORE CRITICAL
AND OUTSPOKEN”

humanitarian aid? No more? Or maybe only with great difficulty. In today's wars, humanitarian affairs are a part of the game. For some to boost the war economy, for others to win hearts and minds for the regime change efforts. So where does this leave you? What about the NGO's? Do they have a role to play today and in the future? Oh, yes, you do!

NGO's will have to be even more critical and outspoken. They should be cross checking the governmental and multilateral bodies and advocate the rights of the vulnerable. Check on me, for instance. The Dutch care taker government supported the war against Irak politically.

Where were you lately? Did anybody make a fist for the Geneva Conventions? Who spoke out in public against the law of the barrel in the war of terrorism? Was the prevention of the looting of hospital not a plight under the Hague Treaty? Who spoke about that? Who denied Dutch funding because of our support to the war effort? Who played the typical non-governmental role?

NGO's are supposed to be the vulnerable's advocates. But when I ask around in Holland, or during a field visit to Angola, for instance, few are aware of the international mechanisms that can bring about the so desired change. Seldom I receive letters from the advocates of humanity to make us bring problems to the attention of the UN. Or to speak on your behalf in the European Union. And why is this? Mistrust? May be. Not all are as good or as bad as they seem. There are also little choices in picking the messengers. Being the NGO-rep in 1994 I knew very well I didn't have the clout to make impact on the Security Council. So I picked a minister. And he listened.

I want you to think your role over. There are moral obligations to the choice for humanitarianism. Once you've made the decision to join, you better

try hard is my opinion. Because the ones that you defend, are not in a position to come to Brussels, the Hague or New York to demonstrate for a better life and defend themselves. You will have to act.

Coming to conclusion, I want to call on you to use the instruments available to control, advocate, steer and mobilise. ICVA represents many of you in the Interagency Standing Committee. The committee that is for instance responsible for the appointment of competent humanitarian coordinators to countries in need. The committee that has the right to bring up matters of principle, such as the respect for — or the lack of respect for — the code of conduct of the Red Cross or the Geneva Conventions and lead your worries on to the politicians and to the Secretary General of the United Nations. So how come I hardly ever hear a Dutch NGO speak about these bodies? Why is the NGO world so divided that even in a world that trembles in it's bearings, we still do not unite to fight for the last resorts and the respect for bottom lines of what is considered acceptable? Will you develop the self-scrutinising mechanisms to protect your ranks from the profiteers?

The future for humanitarian NGO's is difficult, I think. More will be demanded from you than ever before. You will need to interact more with bodies you most likely tend to avoid. Politicians, parliaments, the UN. Mobilise the public awareness. But you will also have to improve your knowledge of how the world turns. Of the buttons to press. Of the do's and don'ts. The times of innocence are over. Because the waves we rode the last decade have become treacherous.

I wish you lot's of wisdom. I wish you good luck.

I hope to hear your voice. Loud and clear.

But act, do act!

AN EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE

> **Hugo Slim**

// Reader on International Humanitarianism

• **Oxford Brookes University**

CV Dr. Hugo Slim is a Reader on International Humanitarianism at Oxford Brookes University. He holds a MA in Theology, followed by 12 years experience with NGOs, ODA and the UN. He managed relief programmes during humanitarian emergencies in Ethiopia, Sudan, Iraqi Kurdistan and Bangladesh, and child-centred development projects in Morocco and the Occupied Territories. Mr. Slim has served as a consultant to Oxfam, Save the Children, Action Aid, Comic Relief, Norwegian Church Aid and World Vision. Currently, he serves as International Advisor to the British Red Cross and is an Associate of Oxfam. Mr. Slim is the author of several papers on international humanitarianism and different books and publications.

I have been asked to give an “external perspective” on this question, so perhaps I should start by explaining the view from which I am speaking.

The conference description of my role makes me sound a bit like an orbiting alien gazing in at the curious world of Euro-humanitarianism. But — apart from the fact that I am British — I am not really an outsider to Europe! My perspective is intrinsically European and my understanding of humanitarianism comes from the mainstream of western liberal European thought.

So what external perspective shall I bring? I thought it might be useful to stand here with four particular perspectives that I can add to these discussions of humanitarian NGOs.

- > *A perspective as a **European tax payer***
- > *A perspective as a **parent** of small children*
- > *A perspective as a **personal supporter** of 4 British NGOs (two with a very small amount of money and two with a still smaller amount of time)*
- > *A perspective as a **citizen of Europe's most belligerent nation** which has been at war more than most in recent years.*

From these perspectives, I cannot pretend to be able to answer the question of this session. In truth, I do not know what the role of humanitarian NGOs will be in the future. I cannot predict such things.

But these personal perspectives do enable me to say what I would like the role of NGOs to be. I can, perhaps, contribute a wish list rather than a crystal ball.

My four perspectives — as tax payer, parent, NGO supporter and belligerent — help me to look to the future and ask:

- > *How do I want my government to spend its humanitarian budget?*
- > *What do I need to protect my children in the event of war or mass terrorism?*
- > *What can best help to protect other civilian families around the world — including my enemy's.*
- > *How do I want my nation's armed forces to behave in the wars they fight?*

And, if I can ask these questions as a civilian in Europe, then these four questions might well be asked by civilians like me in many other countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas today.

So, first, I will start with my wish list and then I will imagine the challenges it poses for humanitarian NGOs. All these challenges, I will suggest, are essentially challenges around relationships.

MY WISH LIST

It is important to note that, through my own private donations and through my tax that ECHO spends on my behalf, I support two main types of humanitarian NGO: *single-mandate NGOs* who are only humanitarian and work solely in war or disaster; and *multi-mandate NGOs* who work as emergency humanitarians but also have much wider goals around global poverty and social justice.

I want slightly different things from both these types of NGO:

> *Single-mandate Humanitarians NGOs*

I want these agencies to stand up for humanitarian ideals in war, to urge this ideal upon others and to work with many different groups to make the protection of civilians a reality wherever they can, with whomever they can.

I want these agencies to be serious in arguing and encouraging the principles of humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law with states and armed groups. And I want them to do this impartially and independently but in close relationships with any government or civil and religious group that can also bring humanitarian influence to bear.

In the event of a war of my own, I also need to know that humanitarian NGOs will be doing all this for my enemies too because I would probably find this very difficult to do — practically and emotionally.

So, I want these NGOs to try to work at the heart of war and at the heart of the debate about war in a way that makes a real difference for civilians.

But I do not want them to claim this territory as their own particular kingdom in which they reign alone over human suffering and pass judgement on the atrocities of perpetrators. And I do not want them to “go in” and then “stay on” like colonial humanitarian invaders. I do not want them to have delusions of grandeur.

Instead, I want them to be part of a plural humanitarian democracy in which all people and many different organisations are challenged to play a humanitarian role: governments; armed groups; private citizens; religious movements; secular organisations; adults and children.

The restraint of war is a great and probably endless political project in which everyone must be involved. It is also a tragically difficult project that usually only ends with very limited success. So, I expect these NGOs to be honest with me about what they can do and what they cannot do. I do not want them to have delusions of success.

I also expect humanitarian agencies to reveal the inevitable bias in government funding of humanitarian programmes that emerges when my government tries to weigh the respective priorities of national interest (such as the personal and economic security of my own society) with the humanitarian interest of those suffering war around the world.

“HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES ARE OFTEN PRESENTED AS ONES OF EXPERTISE, LOGISTICS RESOURCES, PERSONNEL, TIMING AND SECURITY”

Humanitarian impartiality needs to be global as well as local. The politicians and civil servants who represent me need to be constantly challenged by the implications of their foreign and security policy that prioritises civilian protection

in their wars (like Iraq) over the protection of civilians in others’ wars (like DRC). NGOs that I support have an important role in reminding governments of their bias.

> *Multi-mandate NGOs*

I expect all this as well from multi-mandate NGOs when they are also operating in a humanitarian mode in war.

But I also expect different things from these organisations. I expect them to use my money and

my support to make deep, structural links between war, disaster and social justice. I expect them to examine the world economy, the arms trade, and to scrutinise the causes and patterns of poverty.

In this way, I hope they will track and uncover the very real political geography of suffering and the sources of calculated and despairing violence. And I hope they might use this knowledge to be actively concerned for peace and a process of peace in any war.

I expect them to do this with an expertise which is precise and politically impartial so as not to compromise their humanitarian mandate.

I also expect these agencies to be deeply concerned with the practical longer term aspects of people's lives in war — their livelihoods, their health systems, their education and their systems of government. As a parent, I know these things are vital to my children so I want my money to pursue these wider social goals as well — in war as well as in peace.

I don't want people sealed off from their wider human rights just because their society is at war. In jargon terms, this means I want my money to fund development and relief objectives whenever it can.

THE CHALLENGE OF RELATIONSHIPS

This is my basic wish list from humanitarian NGOs. It involves a range of many different roles that I would like NGOs to play. Some of them overlap and some of them may seem to clash. I want and need NGOs to do something quite complex. I can't pretend that their role is a tidy one which fits neatly into a humanitarian box.

But how wishful is my wish list? Is it practical? What challenges does it involve for NGOs and ECHO?

Humanitarian challenges are often presented as ones of expertise, logistics resources, personnel, timing and security. These are real challenges for NGOs and ECHO. But if one listens in to the humanitarian debate as I have from Oxford for the last 10 years, it is obvious that the most fundamental challenges of humanitarian action are relational.

The 1990s did much to re-establish the idea of humanitarian principles, civilian rights and

humanitarian obligations. NGOs have written important codes of conduct, charters, operational guidelines and humanitarian standards. But between the lines of all these texts is always the challenge of different and complicated relationships:

- > *relationships with the **civilians** they seek to help*
- > *relationships with **belligerent armed forces** waging war or perpetrating civilian atrocity*
- > *relationships with **armed groups** prioritising terror and atrocity as political strategy*
- > *relationships with **extremist groups** they cannot meet*
- > *relationships with **governments at war** — fighting for their political survival*
- > *relationships with **their own governments at war***
- > *relationships with an increasingly **imperialist US state***
- > *relationships with **donor governments** who want to be humanitarian but also want to pursue hard political and economic strategies to end wars or avoid them*
- > *relationships with **internationally mandated military forces** pursuing a mix of peaceful and forceful objectives*
- > *relationships with those **who want to kill and deter humanitarians'** relationships with **other NGOs** — in other words with each other*
- > *relationships with **the media** — national and international*
- > *relationships with **local NGOs and social movements***
- > *relationships within **their own organisations** and organisational family*

Key questions of power and interest differ in all these relationships.

In some relationships, interests will coincide. In some they will differ but also overlap. Many of these relationships will always be intrinsically ambiguous. The line between co-operation and co-option will remain as fine as it has always been. In other relationships, interests will clash outright. These relationships are likely to be conflictual and often fail.

In some relationships power will be equal or at least even. Sometimes, NGOs will have more power. Sometimes they will have very little.

The question of culture is also important. Different groups will have different ways of understanding these relationships and different ways of managing their ambiguity and their conflict. For example, some NGOs get very pragmatic in the face of ambiguity while others get very indignant. Some get so indignant sometimes that it is hard to see how pragmatic they are also being at the same time!

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

If NGOs are going to meet the challenge of my wish list in the future, they will have to manage and negotiate all these relationships — their ambiguity, their conflict and their overlap. This means entering into all these relationships wherever they can and not pretending that they can pass through the world without getting involved.

Humanitarianism does not give them an invisibility cloak. They are visible and need to know what they look like to others. With this knowledge, they then need to work very hard at these relationships.

If NGOs were to look for inspiration in seasoned and successful humanitarians, they will notice that such people are constantly relating to others.

So the message is a simple one for humanitarian NGOs: don't stand and complain about the difficulty of these relationships, make them and

shape them instead. Because they will not go away.

And the golden rule here is simple too: always negotiate and manage these relationships with the best interests of civilians in mind.

And, finally, be careful with your organisations. They are very important as a precious part of the humanitarian movement to restrain and limit war. Don't break them and don't let others discredit and destroy them.

CONCLUSION

So, if I have a conclusion it is that the main future challenge for humanitarian NGOs will be one of relationships. And relationships are the main challenge precisely because they are the most difficult challenge.

“NGOS CAN SHAPE THE HUMANITARIAN SPACE IN WHICH THEY AND OTHERS CAN MEET THEIR MORAL OBLIGATIONS IN WAR IN THE YEARS AHEAD”

We can tend to overlook them as challenges because they are the most familiar. We can be tempted to try and write codes and guidelines about these relationships because that avoids us actually making them.

But, in reality, relational challenges require us to know ourselves as humanitarians and to know those we need to relate to as well as we can. It will be out of these relationships that NGOs can shape the humanitarian space in which they and others can meet their moral obligations in war in the years ahead.

SPECIAL INVITED GUEST STATEMENT

> Poul Nielson

// Commissioner for Development
and Humanitarian Assistance

• European Commission

CV Mr. Poul Nielson is European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid since 1999. He has a Master of Political Science from the University of Århus, Denmark. Poul Nielson has a long political career. He has been elected Member of the Danish Parliament several times with the Social Democratic Party. He served as Head of Section in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Nielson was appointed Minister of Energy from 1979 to 1982 and Minister for Development Co-operation from 1994 to 1999. In between these tasks, Poul Nielson has worked as Assistant Professor at the Danish School of Public Administration (1985-86) and as Director of LD Energy Inc. (1988-1994).

First of all, I would thank VOICE for inviting me. The theme “**EU HUMANITARIAN AID — CHALLENGES AHEAD**” is very topical at this moment, the future of Europe and also the future of our humanitarian assistance being discussed in the forum of the Convention. So, it makes a lot of sense to speak today on the challenges and constraints that humanitarians are confronted with nowadays and also on my vision of European humanitarian aid.

I think the humanitarian community finds itself at a crossroad for different reasons. The conflicts are more complex than ever before and we also have very different conflicts at the same time. The latest one looked more like a classical war than the types of conflicts that have been statistically dominating for some time: guerrilla types of fighting without clear military identity of the whole action. The conquest of Iraq has been something much more classical in this aspect.

Most of the conflicts are internal conflicts with different groups fighting for power and conflicts about getting control or access to key natural resources. In a way, looking at the financing of the ongoing fighting in the DRC, this is pretty much like going back to how armies financed themselves in the 30 years war in Europe, simply living of what they had control over as they moved around. But the ethnic, tribal and religious tensions and elements in these conflicts also make it practically impossible to describe one model that is really relevant for all conflicts. But one element, not in the case of Iraq, but otherwise an element that we see unfortunately dominating, is that civilians are not only indirect victims but often directly targeted themselves. This is clear when we look at the Middle East conflict. In general, terrorism is also a kind of conflict where directly aiming at civilians is a normal practice.

In many post cold-war conflicts there is widespread disregard for International Humanitarian Law. Irregular armed groups, militias, foreign mercenaries have absolutely no knowledge or respect for the core principles of IHL making the

distinction between combatants and non-combatants. In other situations, disregard of International Humanitarian Law is not due to lack of knowledge by these irregular actors. Guantánamo, Chechnya, the Palestinian Territories are examples where states, signatories of the Geneva conventions and the international community as such are not fulfilling all their duties under IHL or they are interpreting it in a very selective way. The effective enforcement of IHL is a major challenge to the international community that we really have to address.

There is another worrying trend I would like to mention. Humanitarian organizations are increasingly denied access to the victims, humanitarian operations are often obstructed. Denial of access is very often not linked to the circumstances and related operational constraints surrounding an armed conflict. Instead, it is the result of a deliberate policy which goes against the very basic principles of humanity. The framework of respect for humanitarian assistance is often broken down as increasingly humanitarian organisations come under attack. More and more aid workers are taken hostage and even killed. I would like here again to express my deepest sympathy to the humanitarian organisations and the relatives of those who lost their lives when trying to save other's lives. It is more dangerous to be a humanitarian worker than to be a peacekeeping soldier.

We are at the same time witnessing a growing tendency by States to integrate humanitarian aid into their foreign policy and security agendas and subordinate or mix relief with the pursuit of national interests of different kinds. One of the most immediate consequences of this evolution is the emergence of non-humanitarian actors like civil defence experts and military assets in the delivery of humanitarian aid. You cannot see it, but in my speech I have put the term humanitarian aid in inverted commas to emphasize that this is not the truly traditional delivery of humanitarian aid as we know it. But we do not have a brand name protection of the terminology in our business. We saw it in the Afghanistan crisis where armed US military personnel dressed in civilian clothes delivered so called humanitarian aid at the same

“EU HUMANITARIAN AID IS NOT AND SHOULD NOT BECOME PART OF CRISES MANAGEMENT”

time as they were gathering intelligence. More recently in Iraq, we again witnessed coalition military forces delivering so called humanitarian aid or carrying out different tasks of that kind.

In my view, there is nowadays widespread misuse or even abuse of the word humanitarian amongst politicians, military and certainly also the media. In the present discussion about Iraq, almost everybody mixes freely the words humanitarian aid and reconstruction as if all this is one and the same thing. Of course, it becomes a little more problematic also to handle because the real activity we carry out delivering humanitarian aid right now in the case of Iraq looks like rehabilitation or reconstruction or infrastructure to a large extent. Not all of it, but enough of it to explain why so many journalists mix it up. That is a complication in maintaining the strict principle in all this. Of course military forces may have saved lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, but I don't think that the action as such can be called humanitarian. But we have seen quite outrageous language in different situations calling it humanitarian conflict and things like that. I dislike this contamination of the terminology of our work.

Humanitarian aid is by definition provided impartially and solely on the basis of the needs of the victims by civil organizations that are independent of the warring parties. The different military life saving or relief operations are bound to be driven first and foremost by military or political considerations as part of so called winning hearts and minds strategies. I think that the term “humanitarian” should be used only for the truly independent provision of aid provided by mandated international organizations or by NGOs with a genuine humanitarian vocation. The primary objectives of humanitarian assistance are to preserve life, reduce or prevent suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of victims of natural and man made disasters. The provision of humanitarian assistance has to be determined solely by the needs of the victims. The principles of humanity, neutrality, non-discrimination, impartiality and independence have to govern the provision of European humanitarian aid, and the conformity with International Humanitarian Law has to be ensured.

This is why EU Humanitarian Aid is not and should not become part of crises management. Nor should it become a tool at the service of EU foreign policy objectives. I would like to recall that the genuine aim of humanitarian aid is not to resolve conflicts but just to provide help for people affected by them without engaging or taking side on the causes of the crises and without conferring military or political advantages to any group. To make humanitarian assistance a tool of crisis management goes against the specific nature of humanitarian assistance and against the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. It could lead to subordinating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the strategic, political, economic interests of the Union in each crisis and thus to discrimination between afflicted populations. Subject to the interest at stake, the Union may decide to intervene in certain crises but to ignore other crises, questioning the objectives of humanitarian assistance and the principles according to which it works.

I am also of the view that the delivery of humanitarian assistance must be resorted to international organisations and professional NGOs with a genuine humanitarian vocation and experience. The use of military and civil defence assets for the delivery of humanitarian aid only leads to a dangerous blurring of roles which is detrimental to both the afflicted populations and to the security of humanitarian workers. If the military engages in an armed conflict and gets involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the opponents can regard it as an act of war. If humanitarian aid is seen as partisan, the aid itself and aid workers will become a war target and access to the victims will be denied. This does not exclude however that in specific and well defined situations the military and the humanitarian side have to work side by side but each doing their task. This can be the case where humanitarian actors cannot overcome logistical or security related obstacles to the delivery of aid. The use of military and civil defence assets should

“THE DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE MUST BE RESORTED TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL NGOS WITH A GENUINE HUMANITARIAN VOCATION AND EXPERIENCE”

be at the request and in support of humanitarian organisations and would have to respect the international rules, guidelines and principles governing humanitarian assistance.

I therefore welcome the recently adopted guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets to support UN humanitarian activities in complex emergencies which are designed to ensure that impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian activities are preserved. I would like to cease this opportunity to announce that there will be a joint EC-UN event to launch these guidelines in Brussels on 26 June with Kenzo Oshima, the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Discussions about the future of European humanitarian aid have been going on for a while already in the Convention and the issues that I have just mentioned were addressed during the preparatory phase that preceded the preparation of the draft constitutional treaty. Of course, the EU is one of the major players in the field of humanitarian aid. European humanitarian aid is the expression of the solidarity of the people of Europe with the victims of humanitarian disasters in developing countries. And yet in reality European humanitarian assistance has not up to now been reflected in the European Treaties. I welcome the fact that for the first time in the history of the EU, a proposal has been made to include in Europe's Constitutional Treaty a specific provision on Humanitarian Aid as a shared competence between the Member States and the Union, as it is now. The so-called community method will continue to apply. This will be the first expressed recognition of Humanitarian Aid in a European Treaty. This having been said, I'm not going to hide to you that I have some reservations on the current drafting of the proposed article.

First, I think that one of the basic principles, which governs the provision of humanitarian assistance, namely the principle of neutrality, should have been specifically mentioned in the draft article.

Second, I am not in favour of the idea proposed by the Presidium of the Convention to set up a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps in order to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian actions of the Union. Providing humanitarian assistance means nowadays operating in complex and often dangerous environments. We therefore need professional, experienced and trained partners able to deliver quality humanitarian aid and to minimize the risks for their own security of operating in dangerous environments. Humanitarian organisations and donors are well aware of this reality and are putting a lot of efforts into the development of humanitarian professionalism. This is what I have been extremely happy about seeing emerging year after year, while I have had the privilege of having this job, that we are better than before doing these things and this also has to be recognized. Much of the credit for the success and the quality of what we are funding in humanitarian interventions goes to the organisations that you represent, being a big element in the totality of all our professional implementing partners. I think such kind of young volunteers corps would counter efforts to bring professionalism into an activity which has become more technical and more dangerous. You may sense that I am not pretending to support this proposal. I would add a remark that it is also quite strange that a proposal like this could pop up like

that, out of the difficult to access internal discussions in a procedure which is working in a manner that does not reflect the ideals of transparency. It is very strange to see it coming up like that.

Thirdly, the opportunity provided by the drafting of the constitutional treaty should have been actually used to clarify the so-called Petersberg tasks. There are things we need to have clarified and we should focus on that. The treaty should in my view clearly spell out that military and civil defence assets should only be used in crises situations in support and at the request of humanitarian organisations when these are unable to overcome obstacles such as logistics or security related obstacles that prevent the delivery of humanitarian aid. I hope the members of the convention will give adequate attention to the matters I just referred to in order to ensure that the specific nature of European humanitarian aid is preserved in the future architecture of the European Union. European humanitarian assistance is a system that works, so I would say that if it is not broken, do not fix it. We only need to have a few screws fastened here and there to have it embedded — if you want — and positioned in the new treaty context. I have been disappointed with the lack of response on these specific points in the Presidium and among the members of the Presidium. We are not at the end of it yet.

SHOULD EU HUMANITARIAN AID BECOME A TOOL OF THE CFSP?

- > **Joanna Macrae**
- // Humanitarian Policy Group Coordinator
- **Overseas Development Institute**

CV Dr. Joanna Macrae works as Coordinator of the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute, an independent research centre in London. Her particular interests lie in the interface between humanitarian and political responses to complex political emergencies, and in aid responses in conflict-affected countries. She has conducted fieldwork in Sudan, West Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Cambodia and the Balkans for a wide range of research and evaluative studies. She is co-editor of many publications and author of “Aiding Recovery? The Crisis of Aid in Chronic Political Emergencies”.

What I would like to do today is to place current discussions with regard to the position of humanitarian aid in the context of the European Convention, in the broader context of global trends towards adopting more integrated, coherent approaches to conflict management.

Specifically, I will look at three issues:

- > *Defining the content and significance of the coherence agenda*
- > *The way in which coherence has worked in practice*
- > *A brief review of the implications*

The Rwanda evaluation is often credited with defining the coherence agenda. In fact the idea has a much longer history. It is intimately linked with the concept of human security, which provided a framework for the definition of approaches to conflict management and to the provision of aid in crisis at least since the early 1990s.

The concept of human security assumes that conflict is an aberration and can be addressed by the parties embracing a set of liberal values including enhanced governance reforms, liberalisation of trade and measures to address inequality and poverty. International actors can assist in part by providing financial compensations as countries make the difficult and often contested transition towards development.

Initially, humanitarian assistance was largely absent from these debates with discussion often failing to distinguish between development and humanitarian assistance. This changed for two reasons:

- 1 *First, quite simply, development actors were largely absent from these environments and as an instrument development aid was not easy to deliver in many of the most difficult environments. Humanitarian aid provided the most flexible means of engagement in these environments*
- 2 *Importantly too was a significant reinterpretation of the Rwanda crisis and of the evaluation. In particular, its primary conclusion that there had been a*

catastrophic failure of political and security intervention, was reworked and presented as a catastrophic failure of relief aid, which was accused of feeding the killers. In other words, the emphasis was on how aid might do better politics, not on how politics might be used to protect humanity.

In this context, it was quick and easy for debates regarding the closer integration of aid and politics to become quickly entangled with debates regarding the need to link relief and development, particularly in chronic political emergencies. Aid agencies (both relief and development agencies) have claimed increasing responsibility for delivering security at the margins, and to increase their claims about their role in the management of conflict. This is evident in the debates with regard to do no harm, and more broadly in the adoption of more developmental approaches to relief.

The implications of moves to integrate humanitarian action into a wider project of development and security are obvious, but perhaps worth rehearsing. First, it implies a shift in the objectives of humanitarian action. Specifically, it implies moving away from the idea of humanitarian action as a palliative to conflict, to the idea that it can and should have a play in resolving conflict.

This shift in turn provided for increased experimentation in the use of political conditionality on humanitarian action during the mid/late 1990s. It has also spawned new approaches to developmental relief, and to using aid (often from emergency aid budgets) to finance conflict reduction interventions. There is little evidence regarding the positive impact of these shifts in terms of people's access to life-saving support, nor in terms of the impact on conflict dynamics.

Potentially, it also signals a change in the terms under which aid actors are engaging with the donor governments and UN and with belligerents. Specifically, rather than not taking a position in relation to the justness or otherwise of a particular conflict, an integrated approach to humanitarian action implies that all actors will actively seek to resolve a conflict, and, importantly, conform to a common framework to achieve that end. In doing so, potentially both the neutrality and independence of humanitarian action are undermined.

Again, we see this playing out in a number of ways, including the emergence bilateralisation of the humanitarian agenda, integrated missions of the UN, and of course in the current context of discussions of the positioning of the European Union's humanitarian response in relation to the CFSP. This is both with regard to ECHO, but also in terms of other sections of the Union and the Commission claiming a role as humanitarian actors.

What has given this agenda a new salience is the fact that it is being played out in a rapidly changing and highly contested geopolitical arena. In particular, the peculiar and limited domain of humanitarian action has become integrated into first "humanitarian" wars a la Kosovo, and more recently into the GWOT. This new security environment has made explicit a debate that remained hidden for nearly a decade, is humanitarian action an instrument of foreign policy? Or is it something different.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- > *Shift from a palliative to a solution*
- > *Shift from neutrality and independence to political engagement and coordination*
- > *Association with increasing military interventionism*

It is difficult to capture the current state of the coherence agenda. At one level, there are signs of its abandonment, at another, there is a sense that it has increased in its significance.

On the one hand we see a number of donors renouncing the idea of applying conditionality on humanitarian assistance and a new willingness to re-embrace impartiality (if not neutrality) as guiding principles for their humanitarian programming.

However, alongside these shifts within some aid bureaucracies there are wider trends that potentially counter this, particularly in high profile crises. The rumoured restructuring of ECHO and European Common Foreign and Security Policy more broadly, is one example. More broadly, what one sees is that responsibility for humanitarian action is not seen as being the preserve of specialised aid agencies, new military and paramilitary actors are claiming a role.

What is also clear is that the way in which any single government interprets the coherence

agenda differs according to context. The point to emphasise, however, is that what is at issue the selection of different models of interaction between humanitarian, military, foreign policy and developmental instruments is being driven largely by expediency rather than principle.

In this vein, the apparent shift away from applying political conditionality on humanitarian assistance is probably a hollow victory. Governments may be moving away from this approach less because of principle than because of its limited success in practice.

In its place we see both increasing selectivity in the disbursement of humanitarian assistance (a trend echoed in the development sphere). At the same time, in countries such as Afghanistan and probably Iraq, rather than promising to exert leverage over warring parties, aid is now seen to be most useful in legitimising intervention to domestic and international publics.

One of the most pervasive and persistent elements of the coherence agenda is that associated with developmental relief. While taking place in the quieter, apparently less controversial conflict-related crises around the world, my own feeling is that perhaps this requires as much, if not more analysis than the politico-military versions because it is applied most frequently.

Developmental approaches to relief necessarily require a rethinking of the politics of humanitarian action, because it implies making decisions regarding the relative legitimacy of different forces. In a context in which development cooperation is being linked more and more explicitly to a security agenda, this must be worrying.

It is significant, therefore that at least some of the comments in response to the draft elements of the Convention in relation to external relations are likely to sharpen the distinction between relief and development, not overcome them. This may be counter-intuitive, but it is highly rational if the objectives are to protect humanitarian

independence and principles.

COHERENCE IN PRACTICE

- > *Evolving and differentiate*
- > *Move away from political conditionality to legitimisation*
- > *Developmental relief — coherence through a small back door?*

So, what to conclude from this brief gallop? First that the concept of coherence is probably unhelpful. It shifts discussion away from an analysis of the purpose of any intervention, rather focuses attention on issues and management and purpose. In other words, it assumes that because

a policy is coherent it will be right. This is clearly problematical. Coherence itself is value neutral, it is neither necessarily good nor necessarily bad. The UK's policy in relation to Sierra Leone in 1997, or the efforts by the EC to use aid selectively in Serbia in 1999 may well have been

coherent. Whether they were good, or more specifically humanitarian in terms of their motivation and outcome, is a quite different question. In other words, what needs to be examined is less the quality of the coordination between political, humanitarian and military actors, than the impact of their interventions and the extent to which they conform to humanitarian principles and law.

The conclusions of the Rwanda evaluation were that there was a need for a more robust political framework for responding to situations in which there were major abuses of human rights and genocide. The framework they sought was that of a new international humanitarian order. Events since the publication of that report in 1996 suggest a decidedly mixed picture in terms of the definition and realisation of such an order. While some would see the interventions in Kosovo as the expression of such a vision, others remain more sceptical. The GWOT has, of course, further muddied the picture, with the case for intervention again drawing on a

“THE IMPLICATIONS OF MOVES TO INTEGRATE HUMANITARIAN ACTION INTO A WIDER PROJECT OF DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY ARE OBVIOUS, BUT PERHAPS WORTH REHEARSING”

humanitarian rationale continuing to be made alongside hard security agendas.

What will be important, therefore is to distinguish between innovations in the political and military spheres which are guided by humanitarian values, and contribute to enhanced protection of individuals, and efforts to integrate humanitarian action into a largely Western security agenda. This distinction is invariably very hard to make, and thus it is vital that the legal right of initiative and independence of humanitarian organisations is preserved.

Integrating humanitarian action into foreign policy threatens humanitarian principles, which arguably matter more now than at any time in our recent

past. The principle of humanity is about respecting all people by virtue of the fact that they are people, not because they are black, white, Christian, Muslim, left wing, right wing. The principles of impartiality and neutrality are expressions of that belief, and reflect a highly pragmatic deal between humanitarian actors and belligerents on which secure access to populations rest. The more that humanitarian actors become associated with a particular "side" in a global conflict, the less that they will be able to reach affected populations. In the era of the Global War on terrorism which is taking on increasingly religious and cultural dimensions, losing our claim to universal values and principles is, of course, deeply worrying.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions and answers following the sections of the conference gave participants the opportunity to intervene in the debate and discuss further with the speakers. The following is a summary of the main ideas which were debated.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN CONFLICTS

> **Lack of a common foreign EU policy** in relation to the latest international conflicts has resulted in humanitarian assistance becoming a substitute for other political actions.

> Different reasons motivated the latest international armed operations, but the humanitarian situation was used as a **main argument for military intervention**.

> **Political and humanitarian actions must be coordinated**. There is a need to strengthen liaisons at European level between specialised NGOs and the European Parliament in order to formulate political positions.

> Some situations might need fast military action, but the majority of **forgotten crises** and conflicts need to be analysed case by case in order to decide whether military intervention is necessary or not.

> The core task of **addressing immediate needs** in complex emergencies and natural disasters has further positive impact. The delivery of humanitarian aid gives a signal to populations in need that the world has recognized their situation and that it is trying to do something about it.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

> There is a need to **engage the general public** for the humanitarian cause. A new kind of public has supported NGOs lately. During the 1950s and the 1960s, private donors and the general public were extremely engaged and committed. They had strong ideological or religious convictions. From that period on, and partly through the influence of the media, a more emotional and superficial public emerged. Nowadays, there is a need to educate a stable, committed and also emotional public, able to react to humanitarian crises and stand up for the victims.

> There is an engaged civil society connected through the world wide web. Marches all around the world against the war in Iraq represent a strong example of **citizen coordination**.

> **Humanitarian agencies have a very unique contribution to make.** Their proximity to victims in conflict and their ability to link civil societies, bringing the voices of the victims to the attention of the people, need to be taken into account.

> Independent, responsible, engaged and committed implementing agencies make EU humanitarian aid less vulnerable. **The diversity of partner organizations** should be considered a source of strength.

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

> There is a **risk of undermining humanitarian principles**. Used in the wrong manner, humanitarian assistance can also lose its positive impact.

> There is a need to put International Humanitarian Law at the core of humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian assistance is broader than humanitarian aid; it also implies a protecting dimension not to be neglected.

GOOD DONORSHIP

> There is a need to **improve donors' performance**. International studies of governmental funding allocations show that humanitarian assistance does not always take a needs-based approach. Geopolitical concerns and media attention may also be determinant factors.

> The upcoming Stockholm Conference will try to promote good donorship in the field of humanitarian assistance. It will set up principles and plans for humanitarian action. It will consider how humanitarian action is understood among governments, which need to realise their **commitments under International Humanitarian Law**. Connecting formal governmental mechanisms with civil society is essential, so that NGOs are able to scrutinize official humanitarian policies.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION

> Concerning the article on humanitarian aid proposed by the Presidium of the European Convention (Article III – 218), most of the important principles of humanitarian aid are reflected in the draft Constitution. However, the **principle of neutrality** has been unable to find its way into the text. There is confusion about what neutrality means in this context. Discussions are still going on, and continued lobbying is needed.

> **Humanitarian aid cannot be improvised.** The proposal from the European Convention to create a Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps would certainly affect the quality and professionalism of the delivery of humanitarian aid. Aid workers need training to cope with many difficulties on the ground.

CAPACITY BUILDING

> It is a challenge for the EU to strengthen the **capacity of humanitarian aid NGOs in the South**. In development cooperation the EC is asking European NGOs to establish partnerships with Southern NGOs. However, in the field of humanitarian aid, ECHO has a more defined action line. The EC chooses professional partners that have a proven ability to carry out humanitarian activities and projects. Collaborating with local partners should not represent a legal problem and it could certainly be taken into consideration for humanitarian assistance.

ROUND TABLE:

HUMANITARIAN AID IN CONFLICT, PREPAREDNESS AND LESSONS LEARNED

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Ms. Shada Islam, Brussels based journalist specialised on development issues, moderated the round table, which developed in a very dynamic manner. Questions on different issues related to the main topics were put forward to the panel. The following is a summary of the discussions.

PANEL:

> **Francisca Sauquillo Perez del Arco**

// Member of the European Parliament

• **President of MPDL**

CV Francisca Sauquillo is a Spanish MEP and President of *Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad* (MPDL). She is the Socialist Group Coordinator on the Committee on Development and Cooperation in the EP and member to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the ACP-EU Agreement. She holds a degree in Law. Previously, Ms. Sauquillo was a member of the Executive of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), a member of the Madrid Regional Assembly and Spanish Senator. She has won the European Women's Prize and the Arab Journalists' Prize. Ms. Sauquillo is author of books on divorce law and on the Great Lakes region.

> **Niall Burgess**

// Head of Early Warning,
Conflict Prevention and Terrorism Task Force

• **Council of the European Union**

CV Niall Burgess has been Head of the Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Terrorism Task Force inside the EU Policy Unit at the European Council since 1999. Previously, he worked as Head of Unit (Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Unit) in the Irish Mission to the United Nations in Geneva (1997-1999). From 1993 to 1997, he was Private Secretary to the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs. Before this he worked as Deputy Consul General at the Consulate General of Ireland in Chicago (1987-1991) and in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin (1984-1987).



> **David Throp**

// Deputy Director of the Emergencies Section

- **Save the Children UK**

CV David Throp is currently the Deputy Director of the Emergencies Section at Save the Children UK headquarters in London. Previously, he worked in the field for many years with both local and international NGOs, principally in Latin America and Africa. His roles have included the management of programmes in rapid onset and chronic humanitarian emergencies. He has also undertaken periods of advisory work in the Middle East and the Balkans. Mr. Throp's current responsibilities focus on supporting the development of Save the Children's global capacity for timely, effective and accountable work in emergencies, including preparedness, prevention and response.

> **Kirsi Madi**

// Chief of Inter Agency Standing Committee Secretariat

- **UN OCHA**

CV Kirsi Madi is currently the Chief of the Inter Agency Standing Committee Secretariat located in the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Previously, she has worked for twelve years with UNICEF. Her responsibilities included preparedness, contingency planning and the management of emergency response to both natural disasters and complex emergencies. Before, Ms. Madi worked on more developmentally-oriented initiatives and also on questions related to human settlements in developing countries. Ms. Madi's current responsibilities focus on enhancing and supporting transparent and consultative collaboration among the key humanitarian agencies.

> **Will De Wolf**

// Responsible for International Cooperation

- **Caritas Europa**

CV Will De Wolf is currently responsible for the coordination of international cooperation within the Caritas Europa. He is coordinating 22 national European Caritas donors for emergency interventions and development strategies. Previously, Mr. De Wolf was manager of the emergency department in Cordaid and director of the international cooperation department of Caritas Netherlands. He has a long experience in the field mainly in Africa, where he has been confronted with the Ebola epidemic in Democratic Republic of Congo (1976), the drought in the Sahel (1984) and the Uganda war (1986). Mr. De Wolf has also been lecturer at the Dutch military academy.

THE HUMANITARIAN MESSAGE AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF CONFLICTS:

Q *In view of the propaganda machine controlled by the USA during the war in Iraq, which virtually dictated public perception of humanitarian stories, what lessons have we learned to ensure that the humanitarian message gets heard in the future?*

> NGOs play an important role in facilitating information and shaping the public opinion. There is a need to ensure public awareness of humanitarian issues in order to get the humanitarian message heard. In the case of Iraq, there was enough media attention for humanitarian agencies and organised civil society, who expressed their will through collective actions and public demonstrations. However, all this clearly had no effect in terms of influencing the war scenario. The need to clarify humanitarian vocabulary and emergency language in order to make it understandable for the general public is essential.

> The EU has normally difficulties to get its messages out. There exists very little information resources for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which makes it difficult to get messages through. Mr. Solana, for instance, has just a small press office of two people at his disposal.

> All humanitarian agencies have to take into account their responsibility. They need to exercise self-reflection and ask themselves whether they represent and correspond to the needs of affected populations.

> Many journalists present in Iraq counted on humanitarian agencies to predict which dimensions the war would have. NGOs should be careful with these predictions since they have a huge impact on populations. Miscalculations in the humanitarian dimension of a conflict can make it more difficult to mobilise resources in the future.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS:

Q *How would it be possible for international organizations to cope with the challenge of wanting to prepare for a humanitarian crisis and at the same time not wanting to appear as legitimising a war? How to react to or prepare for predictable crises?*

> The EU was politically unable to prepare for a war in Iraq, because that would have given the impression that war would happen. The Iraq crisis exposed very deep tensions between Member States at a crucial time. Without a European position capable of influence, the EU effectively dropped out of the debate as an actor.

> The EU needs more developed foreign and security policies in the field. Many humanitarian crises are in areas where the EU has humanitarian policies, but they are not backed up by political dialogue. Without getting into the debate of whether humanitarian aid should be a tool of foreign policy, it is clear that CFSP and humanitarian aid in the EU are not contradictory elements. There should be more interaction between both of them.

> Many institutional donors are not able to fund preparedness activities prior to a crisis. In order to solve this problem, some humanitarian organisations make a link between preparedness and development activities (e.g. training programmes for local staff in the field).

> Adequate preparedness requires proper contingency planning. However, the lack of funding for preparedness activities is a major constraint. Thus, three different needs for the humanitarian community were underlined: the need for contingency planning; the need for enough funding; and the need to involve all actors through an inclusive process.

> There is normally a certain level of expectation from the donor community that NGOs are going to be ready for intervention on the ground. Therefore, contingency planning needs to be backed up by resources for the benefit of the victims in conflict affected areas.

> Flexibility is an important element for humanitarian agencies from an operational point of view. Despite being key actors, they do not know precisely how the crisis will develop and what will happen. In the case of Iraq, for example, many refugee camps were installed by the UN in neighbouring countries prior to the war, but the expected massive influx of refugees never occurred.

INDEPENDENCE OF NGOS:

Q *How far do humanitarian organisations go in accepting conditions or making concessions to the Occupying Powers in a conflict situation? To what extent would the acceptance of these conditions affect NGOs' relations with their constituencies, the general public and the victims?*

> During the recent crisis in Iraq there was a debate on whether or not to accept funding from belligerent parties or governments supportive of war. In the UK, some of the NGOs did not take money from the British government.

> NGOs are first of all non governmental. They must adopt a needs-oriented approach and work in the field exclusively for the victims. However, their presence and activities have sometimes been misused by other parties involved in emergencies.

> Military intervention is not always a good solution; on the contrary, it may be the worst one. When there is a need for intervention, it should be done upon request from the victims. NGOs must raise their voices on behalf of populations in need at all times.

CIVIL — MILITARY RELATIONS:

Q *Is there a line of action for humanitarian agencies using military assets when delivering aid? How do military forces and humanitarian agencies interrelate?*

> The civil-military interface is extremely complex and needs to be addressed very carefully by all parties involved in such a relationship. There is definitely a need for dialogue between the civil and military sectors to clarify the tasks performed by each one. On issues such as access and security there might be a need for cooperation.

> There is no universal opposition by NGOs to military interventions of peacekeeping forces. Everything depends on the circumstances of the conflict. However, the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid by the military cannot be accepted in any case. It is intolerable that the military uses and abuses humanitarian aid in order to improve their performance and gain the hearts and minds of civilians in conflict.

> Belligerents cannot be responsible of delivering humanitarian aid. But they should guarantee access to the victims and maintain security on the ground so that UN and civilian actors can work. The Occupying Powers must fully respect their obligations under International Humanitarian Law. Specific UN guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Complex Emergencies will be launched in Brussels on 26 June 2003. Although these guidelines are non-binding, they represent an important step in clarifying aspects of civil-military relations.



CLOSING REMARKS

> **Ms. Kathrin Schick**

// Director

• **VOICE**

1 There is a need for the humanitarian community to gather around a common agenda. Increasingly we are witnessing that humanitarian aid is used for political purposes instead of primarily focusing on the needs of the people in need. EU humanitarian aid should not become a political tool under the Common Foreign and Security Policy. On the other hand, there is a need to be political; not along the lines of party politics, but acting as civil society in defense of humanitarian values and principles. The role of NGOs and humanitarian agencies in advocacy, lobbying, information exchange and awareness raising will therefore be even more crucial in the future.

2 It is also important to strengthen partnerships and build alliances. Due to their specificities and variety, humanitarian agencies can complement each other. Instead of rushing and competing for funds or leadership in crisis scenarios, there is a need for dialogue and cooperation. Humanitarian agencies should strengthen their collaboration and particularly reinforce the core of humanitarianism: to save lives and relieve the suffering of victims.

3 Impartiality, neutrality, independence, non-discrimination, humanity... today more than ever, the humanitarian community has to defend and promote the humanitarian principles enshrined in International Humanitarian Law.

ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN CONFERENCE

VOICE MEMBERS

ACF- ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM: www.acf-fr.org/

ADRA: www.adra-ev.de/

ARBEITER-SAMARITER-BUND E.V. (ASB):
www.asb-online.de/index_flash.htm

CARE INTERNATIONAL: www.care.org/

CARITAS EUROPA: www.caritas-europa.org/

CARITAS GERMANY: www.caritas.org/

CARITAS SECOURS INTERNATIONAL: www.caritas.org/

CESVI - COOPERAZIONE E SVILUPPO: www.cesvi.org/

CHRISTIAN AID: www.christian-aid.org/

CHURCH OF SWEDEN AID:
www.svenskakyrkan.se/lutherhjalpen/indexeng.htm

CISP: www.cisp-ngo.org/

CONCERN WORLDWIDE: www.concern.ie/home.htm

COOPI: www.coopi.it/it/

CORD: www.cord.org.uk

EU-CORD: www.eu-cord.org

COSV: www.cosv.org/

CRIC: www.cric.it/

DANCHURCHAID: www.noedhjaelp.dk/

DIAKONIE EMERGENCY AID:

www.diakonie-emergency-aid.org/

GERMAN AGRO ACTION: www.dwhh.de/

ICCO: www.icco.nl/

INTERSOS: www.intersos.org/

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE: www.theirc.org/

JOHANNITTER-UNFALL-HILFE E.V.: www.juh.de/

MEDAIR: www.medair.org/

MEDECINS DU MONDE INTERNATIONAL:
www.mdm-international.org/

MEDICO INTERNATIONAL: www.medico.de/

MISSION EAST: www.miseast.org/

MOVIMONDO: www.movimondo.org/

MPDL: www.mpd.org/

OXFAM GB: www.oxfam.org.uk/

OXFAM SOLIDARITE: www.oxfamsol.be/

PMU INTERLIFE – SVERIGE: www.pmu.se/

SAVE THE CHILDREN UK: www.scfuk.org.uk/

SOS KINDERDORF INTERNATIONAL:
www.sos-childrensvillages.org/

TEAR FUND UK: www.tearfund.org/

WORLD VISION: www.wvi.org/

EUROPEAN UNION

ECHO: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/>

EUROPAID: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/>

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: <http://ue.eu.int/>

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: www.europarl.eu.int/

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

IOM: www.iom.int/

ICRC: www.icrc.org/

WFP: www.wfp.org/

WHO: www.who.int/

UNICEF: www.unicef.org/

OCHA: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/

RELIEFWEB: www.reliefweb.int/

UNHCR: www.unhcr.ch/

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

ADRA DENMARK: www.adra.dk/

AGA KHAN FOUNDATION, UK: www.akdn.org/

AMAR INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION:

www.amarappeal.com/

AVSI: www.avsi.org/

BIOFORCE: www.bioforce.asso.fr/

CCF KINDERHILFSWERK:

www.ccf-kinderhilfswerk.org/

COALITION FOR AFRICA DEVELOPMENT

COOPERAZIONE NORD-SUD

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, PRAGUE:

www.iir.cz/uk/uvod.htm

DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE:

www.dec.org.uk/

ECTI - FRENCH SENIOR VOLUNTEERS:

www.ecti-vsff.org/

ECPDM: www.ecpdm.org/

EPLO: www.eplo.org/

EURONAIID: www.euronaid.nl/

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR COMMON GROUND:

www.eccg.be/

EUROSTEP: www.eurostep.org/

FIDA INTERNATIONAL: www.fida.info/

FIDH: www.fidh.org/

FINNCHURCHAID: www.evl.fi/kua/english/

GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM: www.belgium.fgov.be/

GRIP: www.grip.org/

HELLENIC INSTITUTE FOR SOLIDARITY & COOPERATION

HELP - HILFE ZUR SELBSTHILFE E.V.: www.help-ev.de/

HELPPAGE: www.helpage.org/

HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT:

www.hapgeneva.org/

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS REVIEW:

www.humanitarian-review.org/

HUMANITARIAN POLICY GROUP, ODI:

www.odi.org.uk/hpg/

ICVA: www.icva.ch/

IFIAS: www.ifias.net/

INTERNATIONAL ALERT: www.international-alert.org/

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION TERRE DES HOMMES:

www.terredeshommes.org/

INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE: www.ips.org

ISCOS: www.cisl.it/iscos/

ISIS EUROPE: www.isis-europe.org/

JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA: www.andaluciajunta.es/

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS: www.lse.ac.uk/

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES BELGIUM:

www.msf.be/

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FINLAND:

<http://formin.finland.fi/english/>

NETHERLANDS MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

www.minbuza.nl/

NOHA – NETWORK ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE:

<http://www.noha.deusto.es/>

NOVIB – OXFAM NETHERLANDS: www.novib.nl/

OXFAM INTERNATIONAL: www.oxfam.org/

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY: www.brookes.ac.uk/

PHARMACIENS SANS FRONTIERS: www.psfci.org/

PYM – PENTECOSTAL FOREIGN MISSION NORWAY:

www.pym.no/

REACH AFRICA FOUNDATION: www.reachafrica.net/

REACH OUT PROJECT: www.reachout.ch/

REUTERS FOUNDATION ALERNET: www.alertnet.org/

SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA www.orderofmalta.org/

SAFERWORLD: www.saferworld.co.uk/

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

UNIVERSITE D'AIX EN PROVENCE: www.up.univ-mrs.fr/

U.S. EMBASSY - THE HAGUE: www.usemb.nl/

VETERINAIRES SANS FRONTIERES – BELGIUM:

www.vsf-belgium.org/

VOICE MEMBERS 2003

AUSTRIA

CARE Österreich
CARITAS Österreich
Österreichisches Hilfswerk International
SOS Kinderdorf International
World Vision Österreich

BELGIUM

CARITAS Secours International
Belgium
Handicap International Belgium
OXFAM Solidarité - Solidariteit Belgium

DENMARK

ASF Dansk Folkehjælp
Dansk CARITAS
DanChurchAid - Folkekirkens Nødhjælp
Danish Refugee Council - Dansk
Flygtningehjælp
Mission East - Mission Øst

FINLAND

World Vision Finland

FRANCE

ACF - Action contre la Faim
ACTED - Agence d'Aide à la
Coopération
Technique et au Développement
AMI - Aide Médicale Internationale
Atlas Logistique
CARE France
CARITAS France (Secours Catholique)
Handicap International France
MDM - Médecins du Monde
International
Première Urgence
Secours Populaire Français
Triangle "Génération Humanitaire"
TSF - Télécoms sans Frontières

GERMANY

ACTION MEDEOR
ADRA - Adventist Development
and Relief Agency Germany
ASB - Arbeiter Samariter Bund
DeutschlandCARE Germany

CARITAS Germany
DWHH - German AgroAction
Diakonie Emergency Aid
- Diakonisches Werk der EKD
Handicap International France
Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Medico International
World Vision Germany

GREECE

IISA - Institute of International
Social Affairs

IRELAND

CONCERN Worldwide
GOAL
TROCAIRE
World Vision Ireland

ITALY

AFMAL - FBF
ALISEI
CARITAS Italia
CESVI - Cooperazione e Sviluppo
CISP - Comitato Internazionale per
lo Sviluppo dei Popoli
COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale
COSV - Comitato Di Coordinamento
Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario
CRIC - Centro Regionale d'Intervento
per la Cooperazione
GVC - Gruppo Volontariato Civile
INTERSOS
MLAL - Movimento Laici
America Latina
MOVIMONDO

LUXEMBOURG

CARITAS Luxembourg

THE NETHERLANDS

CORDAID
CARE Nederland
ICCO
WORLD VISION Nederland
ZOA Refugee Care

NORWAY

NPA - Norwegian People's Aid

PORTUGAL

AMI - Fundação Assistencia Medica
Internacional

SPAIN

ActionAid Alliance Spain
- Ayuda En Acción
CARITAS Spain
CIR - Comite Internacional De Rescate
Intermón OXFAM
MPDL - Movimiento Por La Paz,
El Desarme Y La Libertad
PTM - Paz Y Tercer Mundo

SWEDEN

CARITAS Sverige
Church of Sweden Aid - Lutherhjälpen
PMU Interlife Sverige
Star of Hope International

SWITZERLAND

ACT - Action by Churches Together
CARITAS Suisse
Lutheran World Federation
MEDAIR

UNITED KINGDOM

ActionAid
CAFOD - Catholic Fund
For Overseas Development
CARE UK
Christian Aid UK
Health Unlimited
MERCY CORPS Scotland
OXFAM UK
SCF - Save The Children Fund UK
TEARFUND
WAR CHILD
WORLD VISION UK

UNITED STATES

International Rescue Committee

On 20 May 2003, VOICE — with the support of ECHO — hold a one-day conference in Brussels entitled “EU Humanitarian Aid — Challenges Ahead”, gathering together EU policy makers and ECHO partners, governments, UN officials, the Red Cross and civil society.

Recent international developments, like the latest war in Iraq, will most likely influence the work of the humanitarian community in the future. Reforms within the EU itself, especially those connected to the shaping of a Common Foreign and Security Policy and the EU crisis management procedures, have shown that support for EU humanitarian aid should be further strengthened. The need to make humanitarian aid more visible and better understood remains, in addition to the need to tackle new challenges emerging in this domain.

Within the wide-ranging theme of **EU Humanitarian Aid — Challenges Ahead**, three areas of particular concern formed the basis of more focused discussion during the Conference:

- > *Politicization of aid: reality or danger?*
- > *What will be the role of humanitarian aid NGOs in the future?*
- > *The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union: an opportunity for humanitarian actors?*

More than 180 participants representing 100 different organisations involved in the humanitarian field took part in the conference: ECHO; members of the European Parliament; representatives from EU member states; a wide range of NGOs, civil society and humanitarian aid practitioners; the Red Cross and UN representatives.

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VOICE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN COOPERATION IN EMERGENCIES



CONFERENCE REPORT

EU HUMANITARIAN AID — CHALLENGES AHEAD



VOICE / ECHO EU HUMANITARIAN AID — CHALLENGES AHEAD MAY 2003

VOICE — VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN COOPERATION IN EMERGENCIES