

VOICE out loud ¹⁵

NEWSLETTER OF VOICE
VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
IN COOPERATION IN EMERGENCIES



20 years

I S S U E 1 5 , M A Y 2 0 1 2

From the VOICE Secretariat

In 2012, VOICE is 20 years old, so this is the start of a celebration year! For this occasion, VOICE has requested a number of prominent EU humanitarian decision makers to contribute to this issue of VOICE Out Loud.

The VOICE Director Kathrin Schick reflects in her article on the evolution of the network and its priorities through-out the years. VOICE was founded in 1992 to follow the work of the then newly established European Commission Office for Humanitarian Aid, ECHO. As DG ECHO remains one of the main counterparts for VOICE, this issue contains an interview with **ECHO Director-General Claus Sørensen**. Amongst other issues, Mr. Sørensen reflects on ECHO's achievements in the past two decades.

The core of this newsletter is about building bridges to sustainably reduce human suffering worldwide. While humanitarian aid aims to save lives and respond to immediate needs, development programmes are more long term, aiming to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. Given these different goals, both sectors have grown to become parallel universes. This gap needs to be overcome through LRRD: **linking relief, rehabilitation and development**, also referred to as 'transition'. LRRD provides a means to an end which both humanitarian and development actors support: improving well-being, reducing vulnerability and risk, and increasing the resilience of communities. Given the differing ways of working and various bureaucratic hurdles, LRRD is not easy. It will require an effort and mentality change of all actors involved in disaster response.

As an introduction to the topic, **Dr. Joanna Macrae** analyses the evolution in the thinking of the humanitarian and development sector with regards to LRRD, the challenges encountered and current opportunities. The perspective from the field is brought in by **VOICE members**, who reflect on LRRD in Haiti, Liberia and Afghanistan, as well as on how to build resilience in humanitarian response. This is complemented by the view of two EU member states on LRRD. We are proud to present an article by **Irish Minister Costello** responsible for Trade and Development, and by **Per Örneus & Hans Magnusson** from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Sida. They put forward their view as a European donor on LRRD, explaining why it is important to them and how they support this link.

This VOICE Out Loud issue clearly demonstrates that there is shared recognition across the sector on the need to build these bridges, and the need to build them now. At EU level, the preparation of the next generation of development instruments and the discussion around the EU budgetary priorities for 2014-2020 are an ideal moment to try to finally make LRRD work in practice.

In the 'View on the EU' section, VOICE members reflect on the importance of the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid** and on the need for EU member states to bridge the gap between humanitarian policy and practice.

Lastly, the field focus is a common statement by NGO networks ICVA, VOICE and the Humanitarian Forum, released in late February, who together call for humanitarian **access to populations in distress in Syria**.

VOICE

VOICE stands for 'Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies'. It is a network representing 83 European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction. As a European network, it represents and promotes the values and specificities of humanitarian NGOs, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors.

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On our 20th anniversary, congratulations and gratitude are due to VOICE members, many of whom have been part of the network since its birth, and who have driven its growth and activity over the years. Many others also deserve thanks for the network's success, including Presidents, Boards and staff who have contributed with their expertise, time and engagement over the years. In true network spirit, the VOICE of today is the result of the work of many.

20 years

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FROM THE VOICE PRESIDENT



20 years of VOICE and 20 years of DG ECHOⁱ – a welcome occasion to look back on this period of partnership based on the common battle for principled humanitarian action. While a lot has been achieved, reality tells us that humanity, the fundamental principle of humanitarian action expressed through addressing human suffering wherever it is found, is still not universally applied, despite Henri Dunant's dreamⁱⁱ. During these 20 years the humanitarian actors had to sail through rough seas.

After 4 years, my term as a president of VOICE comes to an end. This is a good occasion to look back and ask what has been achieved and what remains to be done in the years ahead.

As an academic the last years were a continuous process of learning and understanding much better than before the relevance of humanitarian action and the challenges that humanitarian NGOsⁱⁱⁱ are confronted with. Access and security are the main challenges today. Increasingly military actors operate in humanitarian settings so VOICE members developed a common position on civil-military relations. The UN-led humanitarian reform was another theme around which a position and advocacy activities towards the EU were developed.

A major advance at EU level has been the adoption of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid to which VOICE contributed substantially. This is the core EU policy document, signed by EU institutions and member states, which specifies the philosophy of humanitarian aid and how assistance should be provided. VOICE has relentlessly promoted the Consensus in member states and an increasing number of them are including reference to its principles in their humanitarian strategies.

At the same time, major institutional changes at EU level took place due the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which VOICE closely monitored. Humanitarian aid has now its own Commissioner and civil protection was included into DG ECHO, which, it is hoped, may improve coordination among these two response mechanisms without compromising principled humanitarian action in the field. While supporters of the so-called 'comprehensive approach' might have preferred an integration of DG ECHO into the EEAS^{iv}, the foreign policy and security body of the EU, this did not happen. Humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool. In addition, the European Parliament has gained new prerogatives so the VOICE network has steadily worked to extend its parliamentary support base.

But all this being said I do not believe that we can be confident about the future. The suffering of millions of people in man-made and natural disasters is still a reality with no ending in sight. Notwithstanding guidelines such as the Consensus or the MCDA^v guidelines, there is still a wide gap between theory and practice: the principle that humanitarian aid is about saving lives, not about conflict resolution or winning hearts and minds is still under challenge. Therefore common positioning within the humanitarian sector resulting in common advocacy for principled humanitarian action remains crucial. This is exactly the core function of VOICE, where working groups have ensured a platform for convening European NGOs to seek to influence EU humanitarian-related policies and sharing good practices, e.g. with regards to humanitarian funding, disaster risk reduction and civil-military relations.

Throughout my period as a President my personal encounters with Commissioner Georgieva, the ECHO Directors General and their colleagues, demonstrated that VOICE is perceived as an efficient and effective interlocutor of ECHO, whose comments and suggestions are taken seriously. I have seen the network increasingly gaining visibility and credibility within the Commission but also within the Council of the European Union and the Parliament as well as in some member states. While not all stakeholders may be aware of the daily challenges in the Brussels office, the dedication of the Secretariat staff must be highly praised in trying to achieve the best for the members.

Starting next year VOICE will implement its new strategy for the years to come. VOICE, through the expertise of its members, aims to remain the main NGO interlocutor at the European level on matters concerning humanitarian aid and related policies. The Humanitarian Consensus provides the substance of the specific advocacy activities. For that objective we want to further strengthen the links with the national level, through our members, seeking to ensure that member states have an explicit humanitarian policy and implement it. Given the challenges ahead coordinated advocacy strategies, both at the national and the European level, are more needed than ever.

After 4 years I want to thank particularly the Director of VOICE, Kathrin Schick, and her team for their dedication to the humanitarian cause and their support. These were 4 very exciting years.

ⁱ The humanitarian aid department of the European Commission

ⁱⁱ Renowned humanitarian who inspired the founding of the Red Cross movement. Seeing the horrifying consequences of the Solferino battle (1859), Dunant stressed that all humans were brothers and should thus receive medical care regardless of the sides chosen in the conflict

ⁱⁱⁱ Non-governmental organisations

^{iv} European External Action Service

^v MCDA guidelines on the use of the military and civil defence assets in complex emergencies

VOICE 1992-2012



This year VOICE is 20 years old and so is DG ECHO (perhaps the names are not insignificant?). We have come a long way since then....

1992 - 1997 The early years under Director Xavier Ortegat

The Humanitarian Office of the European Commission was created in 1992 under Gomez Reino. 7 NGO members of CLONGⁱ created VOICE as a relatively autonomous structure working on humanitarian matters inside the platform. NGOs asked ECHO for a special relationship based on partnership. "Partnership" would involve the shaping of policies, capacity building towards professionalization, and would show two parties working with different roles but towards the same purpose.

However, the start was not easy; the Commission had little or no experience with civil society, so there was distrust to be overcome on both sides. The first "Partnership Framework Agreement" (PFA) entered into force in 1993. It was written to standardise and clarify EU humanitarian decision making. In these early years, VOICE and other ECHO partners in the so-called "Dialogue Group" were disappointed that ECHO extended the "PFA" several times without consultation of NGOs - over time, its name changed to FPA (Framework Partnership Agreement). They also complained that the PFA did not reflect humanitarian principles. This was partially remedied by the EU Regulation on Humanitarian Aid of 1996, which included some NGO contributions.

Over a period of 4 years, VOICE membership grew to 74 members from all over Europe. Coordination was already an issue at that time, and during the Rwanda crisis VOICE collected information on over 1300 projects which it presented to the UN donor conference in The Hague. Attracting ECHO funding for members and developing common activities with ECHO became other important priorities; in 1996 a high-level forum jointly organised by VOICE and ECHO in Ireland discussed the ethics of humanitarian aid. Also several high-visibility emergencies (e.g. Somalia), the role of the military and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) received a lot of attention. Discussions around cooperation among development and humanitarian NGOs resulted in VOICE becoming formalised as a department within CLONG.

1998 - 2001 Growing further under Director Gianni Rufini

Building on the previous achievements, this period saw an increase in the external visibility of the network and engagement from members through a number of ECHO financed projects, policy papers and activities related to the humanitarian situation in various countries.

When the second FPA began in January 1999, VOICE created the FPA Watch Group to engage in the FPA renegotiation. This group was a response to the coordination concerns of ECHO partners and ECHO's request to have a single interlocutor. A number of other working groups were established, including one on security which led to the launch of the Humanitarian Security and Protection Network database.

VOICE also set up an NGO focal point in Tirana in 1999 to facilitate NGO response to the influx of Kosovar refugees into Albania, with the objective of collecting and disseminating information regarding humanitarian activities. This was followed by the regular 'Focus' publication, which aimed to inform European decision-makers about the Balkans. Another publication was the leading European Quarterly "Humanitarian Affairs Review" published together with Forum Europe. A successful photo exhibition on the issue of child soldiers toured European capitals.

2001 - today, Director Kathrin Schick

As CLONG underwent a transformation in 2000, VOICE members decided that it was time to establish an independent network of humanitarian NGOs. The transition phase was challenging, but programme activities continued. VOICE continued to work on LRRD, remained engaged with the Sphere Project, followed the theme of child soldiers with an expert conference, facilitated the FPA Watch group and established a solid working relationship with DG ECHO. Over the last years priority has been given to the importance of humanitarian principles for operational humanitarian NGOs, triggered by the humanitarian situations in Afghanistan and Palestine and an emerging EU focus on crisis management. A milestone was the engagement of VOICE members in the process which led to the signing of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid by the European institutions and member states in 2007. To strengthen common positioning further, members established a working group on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2008 and one on civil-military relations in 2009. The expertise of these groups and their policy and advocacy work has been widely recognised.

The network is now well established as a credible interlocutor for EU institutions and EU policy makers alike on matters of humanitarian aid, representing 83 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwideⁱⁱ.

Kathrin Schick
Director of VOICE

ⁱ CLONG stands for 'Comité de liaison des ONG de développement auprès l'Union européenne'. CLONG was the umbrella platform for European Development NGOs. In 2003 CLONG became CONCORD.

ⁱⁱ This article is based upon several documents, including the activity report 1998-2001 and VOICE Briefing paper "Partners in Humanitarian Aid - The FPA consultation as a model of EC partnership with NGOs". More details on achievements and activities over the last decade can be found on www.ngovoice.org

INTERVIEW WITH ECHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL CLAUS SØRENSEN

Claus Sørensen became the Director-General of DG ECHO in July 2011. Mr. Sørensen has been working in the European Commission for 20 years, most recently as the Director-General of DG Communication.

This interview by Inge Brees (VOICE) took place in the Director-General's office on April 2.

★ **DG ECHOⁱ is 20 years old in 2012. What are its most important achievements to date?**

First of all, we have significantly increased the number of people that we are helping over the past 20 years. This is the ultimate objective. Last year, an estimated 117 million people were helped through EU funded humanitarian aid. And secondly, we have managed to successfully explain the importance of EU humanitarian aid to our citizens. In the 2012 Eurobarometerⁱⁱ 9 in 10 EU citizens confirmed that they consider it important for the EU to fund humanitarian aid. And this support has actually increased, in spite of the economic crisis.

On a more technical note, the expansion of our field network has been one of the biggest achievements. It enables us to deliver high quality humanitarian assistance, and permits us to have both more oversight and more cooperation with partners in the field. This field network makes us quite unique in the donor community, and their knowledge benefits all member states through their reporting.

I also want to give credit to my predecessors for managing to speed up the financing decisions which enable ECHO to provide funds quickly and efficiently. In addition, the global needs assessmentⁱⁱⁱ has professionalised immensely over the years.

Many of the above issues are included in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2007). Being able to achieve a wide agreement on what constitutes European humanitarian policy was an enormous step forward. It consolidated the policy framework and gave benchmarks against which to measure our performance. While ECHO and the EU member states still have a lot of work ahead, agreeing on the basic principles is immensely important. It is a very good document which should be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

★ **ECHO partners with NGOs, the Red Cross and the UN to deliver humanitarian aid. How do you see the role and added value of humanitarian NGOs?**

NGOs are our main implementing partners.^{iv} They bring a lot of expert knowledge to the field which one could probably not mobilise with the same speed, dedication and level of enthusiasm any other way. NGOs deserve a lot of respect and gratitude for the good work

they are doing. However, I still believe that we have to reach a higher degree of efficiency in facilitating the work of NGOs and their access to ECHO financing by creating more stability in our financial relations. We could consider procedures for grouping or accrediting partners, for example. We also need to improve reporting on the impact of EU humanitarian aid on the ground, so that we can always explain to the taxpayer how their money is spent in concrete terms. But the reporting has to be proportional to the action. We must find ways to streamline the work and cut down on red tape.

At national levels, NGOs are strong advocates for humanitarian assistance. They have a widespread presence in EU member states and extensive networks, interacting with civil society. This is very valuable.

NGOs thus bring double benefit to ECHO. This does not mean that we should not be critical vis- a-vis each other. I appreciate the robust dialogue that we have with NGOs, on delivery, efficiency, neutrality etc.

★ **In the quest for more efficiency and sustainability of humanitarian aid, Linking Relief with Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) is back on the EU agenda. Where do you think EU institutions can improve to make LRRD work?**

I was very upset when I first started in ECHO, after having been away from the development and humanitarian world for 8 years, to discover that not much had changed concerning LRRD. Sometimes it is like humanitarians and development experts live on two different planets. But today there is a far broader consensus around the world that if we do not get the transition from relief to development right we create the breeding ground for the next disaster.

We have been working increasingly hand in hand with our development colleagues to find ways in which we can link our programmes. One idea is to ensure that humanitarian field experts give advice to their development colleagues on how development initiatives can help in avoiding future crises and strengthen resilience. We have also established a working group on transition together with DG DevCo^v that also functions as a "help desk" on LRRD. One particular issue that I am focusing on is to ensure that when our development colleagues speak to the governments of crises-affected

states, they emphasize prioritising the sectors that are important for resilience. If you take the Sahel region for example, it is very important to have food and agriculture as priority sectors in development programming.

In the new development instruments^{vi}, we plan to have more flexibility, both in terms of funding for LRRD and potential re-programming of development assistance in case of a sudden onset crisis. The two commissioners, Kristalina Georgieva and Andris Piebalgs, are fully committed to LRRD.

★ **Politically there is a strong international consensus on the need for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). What can the EU do to ensure DRR becomes a reality in disaster-vulnerable countries?**

We have to find a way to scale up the experiences we have gained from various DIPECHO projects (ECHO DRR programme, ed.). For example, in Kathmandu we work together with the building companies on a building code because we know that it is only a matter of years before a major earthquake will hit. This is an example of an experience that can be scaled up. The knowledge of these projects has to be brought to the attention of our development colleagues but we have not yet found a way to do that.

★ **At present the EU is discussing the future budget for the period 2014-2020. What are the financial needs for EU humanitarian aid to maintain also in the future the solidarity of EU citizens with disaster affected populations?**

Given the current economic crisis, the Commission has proposed a fairly modest budget increase overall. In ECHO we have looked at the effects of climate change, demographics and conflicts, and unfortunately all of these indicators show that the risks are increasing. We have also looked back on the disbursements of funds over the last years and we have seen that every year we have to rely on the Emergency Aid Reserve. We are now at a cruising speed of 1 billion euro per year, so we need to stabilise the budget at that level and keep some elasticity in the budget through the Reserve.

What do I expect to happen? Frankly speaking, it is very difficult for Finance Ministers to get everything financed. However, there is a strong support by EU citizens for the humanitarian cause. On top of this ECHO get top marks in

international evaluations. I am confident that we can safeguard most of our proposal.

★ **We have seen an increased involvement of new donors in humanitarian crises. How does ECHO link up with these new donors?**

The funding provided by new donors is still modest but if you look ahead and you take into account their GDP, it is clear that Brazil, India, Turkey, Russia and China will become big players. It is important to engage with the new donors; the sooner we get an agreement on the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid, on coordination, reporting and humanitarian assessments, the better. But we need to be open to their suggestions.

In order to get the new donors on board, we might show flexibility, for example if new money is coming with strings attached (e.g. religion or availability of staple food). While we would not co-finance a project in that case, it should not be a reason to cut back on collaboration. We need to keep the door open to dialogue so that we can better advocate for humanitarian principles and good practices. NGOs are doing this as well, for example by reaching out to Islamic donors.

★ **VOICE was founded in the same year as DG ECHO, in 1992, so the network is also 20 years old. What would be your birthday wish for VOICE?**

My birthday wish is that you would maintain and further strengthen your role as an NGO focal point for all humanitarian work done in Europe. Because we need a place where all these interests come together. If on top of that you could expand, like we have expanded over the last 20 years, that would even be better; I am really looking forward to seeing you at your 40 years' anniversary!

Another issue to keep in mind is that in the NGO world it is important to continuously make sure new blood comes in. We have established NGOs that are highly professional and which should stay. But it would be nice if we could also create an enabling environment for new NGOs to join not the least in the newer Member States. The strive for efficiency does have a risk of squeezing some of the smaller ones out. That is why we need a greater effort in keeping the door open, perhaps through offering support activities and advice.

ⁱ DG ECHO is the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission

ⁱⁱ Eurobarometer is a survey measuring the public opinion in the EU

ⁱⁱⁱ The Global Needs Assessment aims to identify the neediest people who ought to be priority beneficiaries of DG ECHO assistance

^{iv} In 2010, 50% of ECHO funding went to NGO partners

^v DG DEVCO is the development department of the European Commission

^{vi} The EU is currently discussing its funding priorities for 2014-2020, which includes new legislation for development instruments.



THE CONTINUUM IS DEAD, LONG LIVE RESILIENCE

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Relief and development were designed to be different in terms of their goals, institutions and timeframes, and these differences became embedded in a polarised aid architecture'

For nearly two decades aid professionals have been looking for the holy grail of how to "link relief and development aid". Books have been written, piles of consultancy reports generated and a handful of policy statements, including that of the European Commission in 1996, have sought to bridge the humanitarian and developmental universes.

Until now, these bridges have seemed fragile. Their conceptual foundations have often been weak, underpinned more by optimism than either robust theory or strong empirical evidence. Even where the bridges have appeared relatively firm, they have often become places of ideologically driven stand-offs between the two different communities who, when they meet half way, often find it difficult to understand each other's language and motivations and so, frustrated, retreat back to their side of the divide.

I think, now, however, there is a serious chance of cracking this particular nut. Doing so will require understanding why the problem has proved so difficult to tackle in the past. It will also require looking at the problem from a different perspective.

★ LEARNING FROM THE PAST: THE PROBLEM WITH BRIDGES

Why did earlier efforts to 'link relief and development' prove so precarious and problematic?

First and foremost, at least until the 1980s humanitarian crises were perceived as outliers, essentially unpredictable and unfortunate acts of God, that interrupted the otherwise progressive process of development. In this model, the task of relief is to provide temporary respite, allowing people to survive until normal service could be resumed. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the fact that for millions of people their vulnerability is far from transitory. Rather, it is normal, embedded in their economic and political position in society. As such, "disasters" are not unfortunate; they are symptomatic of poverty and political crisis.

A second related problem lies in the history of aid itself. In the 1950s and 1960s development assistance was designed to reinforce governments of newly independent states. This was all fine while governments acted in the interests of their people, but what about those that did not? Until the 1970s most emergency aid was channelled through national governments. By the 1980s, however it was recognised that in many cases governments

were a significant part of the problem, particularly in conflict-affected states. If you wanted to reach people affected by war, then you needed to work *around* governments, not with them.

Thus, the aid architecture became increasingly polarised. Development assistance remained the means of engaging with governments when they were perceived as legitimate and effective. Humanitarian aid became the means of doing the precise opposite - *avoiding* engagement with national governments, even in non-war situations.

More broadly, development assistance was designed to build *sustainable* economic, social and political *systems*. In contrast, humanitarian assistance was designed to save the lives of *individuals*, and is not concerned with sustainability.

So it should not be surprising that 'linking relief and development' was inherently difficult. They were *designed* to be different in terms of their goals, institutions and timeframes, and these differences became embedded in a bifurcated aid architecture, each wing of which had its own jargon, procedures and organisational allegiances.

★ FROM BRIDGES TO MAPS

So what's changed?

The past five years have seen the convergence of a number of factors which provide important opportunities to get out of the impasse that has hampered progress for too long.

Climate change, combined with demographic trends, is making it impossible to see physical hazards as improbable diversions from the business of development. For example, between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of the world's GDP exposed to tropical cyclones tripled in absolute terms to more than US\$1.9 trillion¹. Increases in economic loss associated with tropical cyclones were highest in high-income countries where they went up by 262 per cent. While development is reducing the mortality associated with such events, exposure is increasing.

The 2011 World Development Report highlighted the concentration of poverty in fragile and conflict affected states - long the domain of humanitarians. Also emerging is an analysis that points to large numbers of poor people in countries that are defined as middle income. At the same time, cities, and particularly urban slums, are emerging as centres of humanitarian crises. Often urban communities suffer not only from the routine

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'An integrated approach starts with an empirically driven analysis of vulnerability: who are the most vulnerable and why in this particular environment?'

threats of poverty, but from violence and the impacts of physical hazards.

These difficult contexts are the landscape in which multiple vulnerabilities are layered. Maps are needed to understand the contours of what is driving vulnerability - environmental change; political crises and /or economic shocks. In other words, needed is an integrated analysis - which is owned *both* by humanitarians and developmentalists.

All of this is moving us to a position where it is possible to think not of two different universes - a humanitarian and a development one, but one. What defines this universe is the reality of poor people's lives in which their vulnerabilities are not neatly divided, but which all too often combine fatally. This integrated approach starts with an empirically driven analysis of vulnerability: who are the most vulnerable and why in this particular environment? A second order question is what should and could be done? A poor third is what kind of assistance is required - "humanitarian" or "developmental".

Addressing chronic extreme vulnerability will require humanitarian and development interventions. It is encouraging that both 'sides' are increasingly able to draw on more common instruments for programming. Cash transfers are the most obvious example of this new generation of approaches that can truly link relief and development interventions - not in terms of smoothing aid curves, but in terms of providing conceptual and practical unity between humanitarian and poverty alleviation aims.

There are risks associated with proposing more integrated approaches to planning humanitarian and developmental work. The most significant risk is in relation to the political positioning of aid, and specifically the degree to which international actors work with or around national authorities. Again, however, this question is arguably an empirical one, not a theological one.

Governments may provide the best way of reaching people in need, or they may constitute the primary threat to populations. The trick will be then to disaggregate the humanitarian caseload and recognise explicitly that the institutional framework to respond to floods in Mozambique will be very different from that required to reach those injured in the violence in Homs. While the former provides opportunities to link with developmental actors responsible for building

the capacity of national disaster prevention and response institutions, the latter is, by definition, an anti-developmental space with no opportunities to build sustainable institutions.

Thus, an integrated, resilience-led approach to vulnerability does not mean dumping humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. Rather it means protecting them and using them *when doing so is in the interests of the most vulnerable and at risk populations*. In developing these principles, Dunant was seeking to find a way of navigating contested environments and to reassure all sides that the purpose of providing relief was not designed to provide political advantage. This highly pragmatic positioning remains useful not only in the contested battlefields of southern Afghanistan, but perhaps more broadly as a litmus test to consider the degree to which in *any* particular context it is reasonable to expect the responsible national authorities will be able to mount a response to a crisis that is at least not worse than that independent actors might be able to field.

★ CONCLUSIONS

The rapidly changing global context will demand that both the humanitarian and development communities look afresh at what they do and how they work together.

Developmentalists responsible for delivering solutions for poor people are recognising the powerful threats posed by climate and demographic changes, and increasingly concentrating their efforts in the most fragile and conflict affected states.

Humanitarians long familiar with these problems are also recognising the value of learning from their developmental colleagues to find new ways of addressing chronic extreme vulnerability.

The time is ripe for renewed dialogue and debate. The starting point for such a debate is not the organisation of the aid machine. Rather it is an empirically grounded analysis of the risks - social, political and environmental - facing poor people. Only then, can we see how the collective skills of development and humanitarian actors can best be deployed.

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ⁱUnited Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2011) *Global Risk Assessment Report*

ⁱⁱThe views expressed here are personal and do not necessarily reflect those of DFID.

2 YEARS AFTER THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE - LRRD CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Finding the right approach and time to move from relief to development to maximize synergies is often difficult'

 In the last two years, the Haitian population not only faced one of the most destructive natural hazards of the last century in an already very fragile economic, social and political context (January 2010); in the aftermath they also had to cope with successive shocks including cholera epidemics, hurricanes and political instability. Consequently, an LRRD approach is critical to support the long term resilience and sustainable development of Haiti.

The sheltering process is a prime example of the challenges and opportunities that followed the quake. With an already precarious quality of housing and scarcity of urban land, the earthquake forced hundreds of thousands to IDP campsⁱ. Following emergency and transitional shelter interventions, CARE now aims to increase demand for better quality housing, while supporting exit from camps. This is achieved through a combination of technical assistance, awareness-raising, and skills training. CARE's 'retrofit' project for example will support structural house repairs for families who host free of charge for one year a family living in a camp.

But better housing quality is only one of the needs in urban neighbourhoods on fragile hillsides affected by flooding and landslides. They lack water supply and sanitation, receive few services and have little influence on decision-making at the municipal level. Through a joint effort between community members and municipalities, CARE supports the communities to gain legitimacy by improving neighbourhood infrastructure and strengthening links with the local authorities, thus achieving greater inclusion of these previously marginalized communities.

Building the disaster risk reduction/relief/rehabilitation/development continuum in Haiti is as challenging in Haiti as in most humanitarian crises due to similar factors:

a) Identifying appropriate development initiatives that can be applied at the right time:

It is imperative to move towards long-term interventions that address the underlying vulnerabilities as early as possible, but finding the right approach and time to move from relief to development to maximize synergies is often difficult.

One example of a positive transition are CARE's Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA). Following interventions to address gender-based violence in camps and surrounding communities, CARE introduced VSLAs in the same areas to further reduce women's vulnerability to violence and improve their economic resilience. CARE provides technical guidance to associations comprised of up to 30 members, approximately 95% of which are women. Without external financial inputs, members invest in shares to later lend money to each other

at an interest rate determined by the group. When the loans are repaid, all members benefit from the dividends gained. This self-investment approach has proven successful and it has brought a new dimension of true empowerment to the programming in Haiti. It is planned to expand VSLAs to all CARE's operational areas.

b) Accessing adequate funding despite lack of donor coordination:

Given the large differences between donor funding in terms of nature and flexibility, timing and duration, amounts provided, etc., ensuring predictable funding for an on-going programme is extremely challenging. Overall, there has been a serious gap in Haiti in availability and flexibility of funding for LRRD initiatives, thus there is still a strong need for better coordination amongst relief and development donors.

As a contrasting positive example, CARE and other partners have worked closely with the European Union (primarily DG ECHO) in the drafting of LRRD strategies and prioritization of initiatives such as the structural repair of houses. Another effort is underway to improve the response to future cholera outbreaks, where regional government and local volunteers will work together to address the causes and sources of contamination, develop surveillance networks and response preparedness.

c) Building a correct and shared understanding of the underlying dynamics of the crisis' evolution and accordingly mobilizing the right implementation capacities:

Coordination and leadership had been poor across most sectors of the aid system. The lack of common understanding of overall needs, possible solutions and what can be accomplished within specific timeframes, undermines the coordination efforts as there is often little consensus on how to intervene. More accountability is needed from the lead agencies in clustersⁱⁱ to ensure that appropriate resources for coordination are made available in a timely manner.

To conclude, it is recommended firstly that ECHO and DEVCO together prioritise in Haiti programming that supports a transition into development and secondly that the EU and other donors work on addressing the gap in transitional funding to allow interventions to continue without interruption. In the future, these recommendations should be applied by the EU at an early stage in any crisis through securing in advance significant LRRD and Disaster Risk Reduction funding.

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ⁱ Camps with Internally Displaced People (IDPs); people who are displaced within the borders of their country.

ⁱⁱ In follow-up of the evaluation of the Indian Ocean tsunami response, it was decided to set up clusters in crises affected countries to improve coordination between agencies working in the same sector (e.g. health, shelter, etc.)

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Resilience is about people's ability and internal capacity to identify, react to and manage the vulnerabilities which impact negatively on their lives'

★ The concept of resilience is being referenced increasingly in the strategies of humanitarian donors and NGOs. The increasing intensity, frequency and complexity of disasters, coupled with a growing recognition of the inability of the current system to facilitate integrated ways of working, have prompted a reassessment of how humanitarian actors respond to disasters.

Comprehensive resilience can be understood as stemming from an analysis of all factors driving vulnerability and how these can be mitigated and managed. It takes into consideration the political, social, cultural, economic and physical hazards, shocks and threats which face communities, and it seeks to join up the multiple layers - local, national, regional and international - which impact vulnerability. In recognition of the intersections between vulnerabilities, and the fact that they are often deep-rooted, resilience building focuses not only on meeting immediate needs, but also on addressing underlying causes. At its heart, resilience is about people's capacity to identify, react to and manage the vulnerabilities which impact negatively on their lives, and the ability of the humanitarian system to navigate with flexibility a multitude of known and unknown risks.

★ ANALYSING AND ADDRESSING MULTIPLE VULNERABILITIES

The 2011 drought and food crisis in the Horn of Africa left millions on the brink of starvation. 76 year-old Chemket Lotunya, of Tangulbei, Kenya, was one of them. An agro-pastoralist, Chemket lost all of her crops and the majority of her animals to the drought. Participatory assessments in Chemket's community revealed further vulnerabilities beyond the immediate causes of the food crisis, including exposure to conflict (e.g. cattle rustling between tribes), climate change, gender-based violence, and an exclusion of women from decision-making fora.

The drought resulted in stress on food, water, fodder and fuel, but ActionAid's analysis suggested that these impacts were due not only to the failure of rainfall but a host of other reasons, including the inability of communities to negotiate access to and control over natural resources, inadequate allocation of resources by authorities, and the existence of decision making processes which consistently excluded the voices of those affected. Whilst addressing the immediate needs of communities like Chemket's was a priority, a more comprehensive approach was needed to mitigate the impact of wider vulnerabilities, and build the resilience of people and systems to manage and adapt to future shocks and hazards.

★ INTEGRATING RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE

In recognition of the multiple vulnerabilities present in drought-affected communities, ActionAid incorporated resilience building as a core component

of its humanitarian response in Kenya. A long term comprehensive response plan was developed, including traditionally humanitarian elements such as improving access to clean and safe water, but also looking at livelihood diversification, education and Disaster Risk Reduction. At the same time, the plan aimed to ensure women's participation, curb violence against women and in general support communities to advocate for improved delivery of services.

The comprehensive plan effectively reoriented existing programme plans and budgets to the new context as defined by the disaster, and placed the resilience of communities and systems - from the perspective of the drought-affected people themselves - as the key outcome of activities across all sectors. Whilst response activities may change depending on the emergency context, the crucial factor is that the comprehensive resilience framework structure remains the same, addressing multiple vulnerabilities across multiple layers to initiate long term social change processes.

★ WAY FORWARD

Given its relatively new appearance on the humanitarian agenda, there remain a number of key challenges to overcome if humanitarian actors are to successfully integrate resilience into humanitarian response as well as support its recognition and incorporation into development:

- Increase understanding of the concept of resilience within humanitarian and development communities, and how it relates to vulnerabilities beyond those linked to the hazards which cause disasters
- Recognise that resilience can and should be incorporated into both immediate and longer term response, and do away with the split - both perceived and real - between humanitarian and development programming which perpetuates ineffective and 'silo-ed' ways of working.
- Present robust evidence of what works, and what doesn't in terms of mainstreaming resilience in humanitarian programming
- Promote women's leadership and participation in decision-making and policy formulation as a central component of resilience
- Provide flexible funds for building resilience, in contrast to current models which pool funding into prescribed "pots" for either development or humanitarian work
- Recognise that addressing underlying causes of multiple vulnerabilities is by its nature a political project, and one that may not sit comfortably with agencies which subscribe to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

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BUILDING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE NEEDS TO LEARN FROM THE PAST – MISSING LRRD LINKS IN AFGHANISTAN

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Despite a decade of assistance, large parts of the Afghan population remain chronically vulnerable to natural disasters. In 2011, the drought in northern Afghanistan demonstrated improvements in coordination and planning in drought response, but it also clearly laid bare the extent to which humanitarian actors have failed to effectively link relief and development responses despite long experience with cyclically recurring natural disasters.

★ ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

Northern Afghanistan, particularly the foothills and mountains of the Hindu Kush range where People in Need (PIN) operates, experiences recurrent emergencies. The limited availability of natural resources means the majority of the population is forced to make a living on the margins of sustainable existence where the farmers are highly reliant on rain-fed agriculture.

Despite attempts to improve infrastructure, diversify income sources and improve access to markets, the cyclical nature of droughts continue to determine the livelihoods of the population in an age-old pattern. In these areas the question is when, not if, the next severe drought will occur.

★ POLITICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LRRD

Despite the rhetoric around LRRD, the building of coherent and complementary emergency and development responses has been implemented more in word than in action. Fighting a battle for credibility in the face of continued large-scale humanitarian needs, many actors have tried to sharpen their focus on “purely” acute humanitarian needs. This attempt to increase their relevance and to have a single message to promote ignores the reality of chronic poverty and vulnerability of the majority of the Afghan population and diverts attention from the need to build resilience.

The rhetoric of reducing the chronic vulnerability of the Afghan population seems to be overtaken by the need to cut losses in the run-up to the international military withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014. While focusing on humanitarian needs might lead to more concrete figures of the number of people assisted, or even “saved”, it ignores the needs of the same target group to “survive” beyond 2014. Like the promises of greater female empowerment that underpinned the justification for an international war on Afghan soil, the reality has been that ‘walking the walk’ is much harder, and costs more, than ‘talking the talk’.

Some donors have tried to bridge this gap by establishing links between their priority sectors in emergency and development, which is the basic pre-condition for ensuring the transition. The EU’s assistance to Afghanistan can be taken

as an example. However, the funds available, in particular for LRRD activities, can only be described as insufficient.

The problem also lies with implementing agencies without a coherent monitoring system, in particular for slow-onset emergencies. In the case of the 2011 drought, even the first calls for increased humanitarian assistance were several months late. Emergency responses on-going more than a year after the drought’s start reflect a sad picture of the level of field presence the international humanitarian community has. Because of the difficult security and hardship environment in Afghanistan, agency staff indeed frequently changes, which is also a factor that works against the long-term perspective needed for LRRD.

While humanitarian needs are often pressing, building the population’s capacity to mitigate shocks must be increased. In order to do this properly, a number of principles need to be more strongly enforced:

- Agencies must continue to build long term presence and community acceptance to be able to understand and address both relief and development needs. This is crucial for a coherent and complementary LRRD response.
- Agencies must better understand the impact of their actions. After 10 years of large-scale, uncoordinated and badly researched emergency interventions, traditional coping strategies and community responses to mitigating disaster risks (such as clearing of flood passages) have been undermined.
- A more detailed understanding of the social dynamics and coping mechanisms at the community level both before and after emergencies is required to design appropriate assistance.

Dry years and droughts in northern Afghanistan will not disappear, and with increased population pressure, their effects will become more devastating. As Afghanistan begins to look to the future beyond heavy international military presence, the humanitarian community should evaluate the last decade of humanitarianism, and reflect on the best ways to link their relief programmes to actions that sustainably build the capacity of local structures and communities to mitigate the effects of the cyclical droughts. These attempts also need to be prioritised by donors that remain interested in reducing chronic poverty and vulnerability as a goal.

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‘Despite the rhetoric around LRRD, the building of coherent and complementary emergency and development responses has been implemented more in word than in action’

FROM CRISIS TO CAPACITY BUILDING IN LIBERIA

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Donors are increasingly aware of the need to support successful projects to transition and the need to dovetail humanitarian and development work, which has clearly been demonstrated by DG ECHO and DG DEVCO in Liberia'

 Liberia has only 50ⁱ doctors practicing medicine, with a population of just below 4 million. This is 1 for 79,882 people.

International Rescue Committee (IRC) Liberia is specialised in ensuring access to quality health services, supporting the government's promise of free access to basic health care. In pursuit of this aim, a strong relationship with key institutional donors, such as DG ECHO and DG DEVCOⁱⁱ, was established. This has enabled the IRC to successfully transition from short term humanitarian interventions to longer term development projects that strengthen Liberia's institutions, build the capacity of health staff and enable the independence and sustainability of hospitals.

MOVING TOWARDS A WELL-FUNCTIONING HEALTH SYSTEM

Following on from the civil war, IRC Liberia started to receive funding from DG ECHO in 2004 for the work carried out in various hospitals in Monrovia and Lofa. The projects aimed to reduce child mortality, improve service delivery and build staff capacity. In conjunction with the Ministry for Health and Social Welfare, care was taken to ensure that hospitals were staffed, stocked with medicines and adhered to Sphereⁱⁱⁱ and WHO^{iv} standards in sanitation and waste. Support was also given to Ministry staff to improve the services provided (establishing treatment protocols, implementing vaccination campaigns etc.) while at the same time developing hospital management capacities.

Close engagement with Ministry staff at the hospitals provided the groundwork to strengthen the health service provision. However, as Liberia stabilised, it was clear that support should shift from direct service and supply delivery towards building up the service provided in the hospitals to an independently sustainable level. While the humanitarian support provided by DG ECHO permitted to some extent to engage in strengthening systems and capacities, this is not their mandate. Therefore alternative sources of funding were necessary for IRC Liberia to start designing an acceptable exit strategy that would take into consideration the unmet needs- which are quite clear given the Liberian government's shortfall within the health sector.

ENSURING DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

A close relationship between IRC and DG ECHO's representative in Liberia ensured that the issue of long term development support was raised and discussed early on. As a result of strong coordination between DG ECHO

and DG DEVCO representatives in Monrovia, the Country Strategy Paper^v included support to the health system, with a special focus on the hospital level. It allowed support for both capacity strengthening and for the provision of direct supplies, given the on-going needs in this respect.

As the EU Delegation in Liberia called for project proposals (under the European Development Fund, EDF), IRC's premise was to build on the already existing projects supported by ECHO. While the EDF funded projects had a similar objective to the ECHO grants-namely ensuring the provision of quality services- they enabled a far more rigorous approach to capacity building and sustainability, concentrating on improving the capacity of the hospital administration to independently manage and support quality health care delivery.

Despite the strong ECHO-DEVCO coordination in planning, there was a challenging gap in funding for two of the hospitals between the end of one of the ECHO grants and the start of DEVCO funds. As it was crucial to continue the support to staff and services during this time, DG ECHO showed their understanding and creativity by identifying a small pool of EDF funding under which they could allocate further funds to help bridge the gap between humanitarian aid funding and development aid funding and enable uninterrupted health provision.

While government funding for health care in Liberia is still some way off, the engagement by the Health Ministry with other health actors has certainly strengthened the infrastructure and systems. The sector is improving in leaps and bounds.

Looking back, it is evident that without the links built with donors, the task of linking relief, rehabilitation and development would have been much more of a struggle. Donors are increasingly aware of the need to support successful projects to transition and the need to dovetail humanitarian and development work, which has clearly been demonstrated by DG ECHO and DG DEVCO in Liberia.

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ⁱ Liberia National Health Policy 2007-2011

ⁱⁱ Respectively the humanitarian aid department and development department of the European Commission

ⁱⁱⁱ Sphere standards are minimum humanitarian technical standards established for a number of sectors (e.g. health, water, nutrition etc.).

^{iv} World Health Organisation

^v A Country Strategy Paper is a development strategy designed by the government and the EU delegation, which links up with DG DEVCO.

JOINING THE DOTS: IRELAND'S APPROACH TO DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & LINKING RELIEF, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'Ireland is ready to play its part in intensifying collective efforts to fulfil our obligations in promoting a more systematic approach to Disaster Risk Reduction in disaster-prone developing countries'

 The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters is a major threat to long-term development and to the economic progress of the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing countries. Large scale emergencies have occurred every year over the past decade, from the Darfur conflict which started in 2003 to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and the Horn of Africa food crisis in 2011. This year we face a looming food security crisis in the Sahel region of Africa, where acute food shortages threaten some 12 million people.

At the same time, many of the advances made through development assistance have been eroded or lost due to the increasing frequency and recurring nature of crises. Indeed, it is predicted that the nature and intensity of natural hazards will continue to increase as climate change generates more severe weather-related events. The world also faces new threats such as soaring food and fuel prices; the threat of pandemics; and increasingly complex conflicts. In the year 2011 alone, 302 disasters claimed 29,782 lives; affected 206 million people and inflicted damages worth a minimum of estimated US\$380 billionⁱ.

Against this backdrop, it is the poor and marginalised who die in greater numbers and endure higher economic losses as a result of disasters. Their food and nutrition security is much more at risk because they typically seek out their livelihoods in the most challenging of environments: in situations of conflict; in drought prone areas; in swamps and flood-prone riverbanks or in congested urban settlements.

As the number of predictable crises increases, the need to plan for these as part of development assistance therefore becomes more and more critical. Ireland, through the Irish Aid programme, has long recognised that reducing the risk of disasters and creating greater links between our humanitarian and development activities is more vital than ever before. Like other donors, we are also increasingly aware that it is much more cost effective to prevent and prepare for a crisis than to wait for it to happen. It is estimated that every US\$7 spent on responding to a natural disaster could be offset by US\$1 spent on preparedness and early warning. Likewise every US\$1 spent on conflict resolution saves US\$4 in humanitarian responseⁱⁱ.

Ireland is ready to play its part in intensifying collective efforts to fulfil our obligations in

promoting a more systematic approach to Disaster Risk Reduction in disaster-prone developing countries. In this effort, the importance of supporting national partner governments' institutional capacity and processes rather than creating new and parallel structures is our preferred approach.

The multi-donor support to the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Nets Programme, supported by Ireland since its inception, is a good example of addressing risk and vulnerability in a planned way, together with national partners. Using government systems, it provides timely and predictable transfers of income or food in exchange for labour on public works. The programme bridges the food gap of over 7 million people and enables them to protect household assets. In addition, it facilitates the building of community assets such as soil and water interventions and local infrastructure through labour-intensive public works thus reducing the risk of humanitarian crisis. This was critical to Ethiopia's resilience to drought in 2011.

In short, it is increasingly accepted that humanitarian and development assistance must be delivered simultaneously in order to manage risks and build the resilience of affected communities. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) is based on the understanding that better development and risk reduction can reduce the need for emergency relief and that better relief can contribute to sustainable development. Investing in resilience today through humanitarian and development assistance is ultimately much more cost effective than responding to a crisis tomorrow.

At EU level, Ireland will use its forthcoming Presidency during the first half of 2013 to champion greater links between humanitarian relief and development aid and disaster risk reduction. We will also press for predictable and flexible financial support for LRRD activities in order to help ensure that aid continues to rebuild lives long after the TV camera crews have gone home.

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ⁱ United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2012): "Discussion Paper: Disaster Risk Reduction & Aid Effectiveness"

ⁱⁱ UN figures regularly quoted by donor and implementing agencies. (See for example Save the Children, "Reducing risks, saving lives")

SWEDEN'S FLEXIBLE APPROACH TOWARDS LINKING RELIEF, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

THE ISSUE- LINKING RELIEF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

'The recovery perspective aims at supporting partner organisations' operational flexibility and enabling a longer term approach in planning and implementation, as well as strengthening national and local capacities'



Humanitarian efforts focus on saving lives and alleviating suffering of affected populations. During and immediately after humanitarian crises, both in man-made and natural disasters, there is a need to lay the ground for recovery and development. Recovery efforts should mainly be undertaken through development cooperation but can be facilitated through well-targeted humanitarian assistance.

Sweden is working to find innovative ways to better link humanitarian assistance with development efforts. In contrast to most donors', Sweden is able to provide flexible funding (both humanitarian as well as development funding) to support recovery activities in post-conflict and disaster contexts.

Efforts towards building capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Recovery constitute fundamental parts of Sweden's policy for humanitarian assistance. The recovery perspective aims at supporting partner organisations' operational flexibility and enabling a longer term approach in planning and implementation, as well as strengthening national and local capacities. This perspective also emphasizes the need for a closer link between humanitarian coordination mechanisms and similar development cooperation mechanisms.

In settings where Sweden does not engage in development cooperation, we try to ensure that humanitarian assistance has an impact on recovery through our choice of sectors, partners and type of relief interventions. Cash or voucher-based supportⁱⁱ and livelihoods activities are examples of support that help to better link relief and development. In 2011 a large contribution was made to WFP's "Cash for Change" initiative, based on the assessment that cash and vouchers do not only offer dignity and choice for the beneficiaries but are also more cost-efficient in stimulating local markets.

Moreover, Sweden is able to provide multi-year funding to professional humanitarian partner organisations. Such funding is particularly important in chronic crises, where humanitarian assistance clearly is not a short-term activity. Multi-annual agreements allow for a number of benefits, such as reducing operating costs, promoting longer-term approaches that are more appropriate in chronic crises, establishing more stable relationships with local partners and investing in strengthening local capacities.

In crises and post-conflict situations where Sweden engages also in development cooperation, the flexibility of its development and humanitarian funding can be used in order to respond to a range of needs of crises affected communities. This includes:

- supporting the same partner for development and for humanitarian assistance in order to create a continuum of interventions in changing environments. In the DRC, MSF Switzerland was able to start a handover of its hospital programme in Bunia to local authorities.

- contributing to Common Humanitarian Funds through the development budget in order to finance the recovery objective in a humanitarian action plan or Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAP)
- providing support across the spectrum of displacement with the same partners through humanitarian and development budgets
- contributing to the phasing out of humanitarian efforts, depending on the focus of the country's development strategy
- focusing development assistance on social sectors in conflict and post-conflict settings without which humanitarian action would become a substitute for social services delivery. In Somalia, Sweden supports the development of a comprehensive health system.
- developing flexible programmes that are supported from both the development and humanitarian budgets, for example Oxfam Novib for livelihood and WASH-activities in Somalia, and Merlin for primary health in Somaliland.
- Supporting pilot projects for durable solutions for refugees through the humanitarian budget.

Finally both Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have made in-house efforts to better ensure the link between relief, recovery and development. The humanitarian section at the MFA has been integrated in the Department for Multilateral Development Cooperation. Sida humanitarian staff has been made an integral part of the country units, managing overall development cooperation with conflict and post-conflict countries. This approach has resulted in building a common ground for sustainable and effective development cooperation as well as innovative approaches to mixed financing and joint planning. Both MFA and Sida have also established institution-wide working groups, including both humanitarian and development expertise, to enhance Sweden's contribution at policy and field level towards resilience in vulnerable countries. These achievements complement Sweden's strong involvement in the OECD Development Assistance Committee's International Network on Conflict and Fragility which has led to the development of transition compacts.ⁱⁱⁱ

The challenge to link relief, recovery and development is well-known. However, donors, humanitarian actors, development practitioners and policy-makers must continue to test ways to transform the words into action. This article has tried to set out some of the Swedish efforts to this effect.

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ⁱ 2010 External evaluation of Sida's humanitarian assistance by Development Initiatives.

ⁱⁱ Cash transfers provide money to people who can use it to meet their basic needs for food and non-food items or services. A voucher is a paper, token or electronic card that can be exchanged for certain goods or that has a certain cash value.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mutual accountability arrangements that are used to agree on priorities, results and measures between a government and its international partners (INCAF Policy Statement on transition financing, Monrovia, June 2011).

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY & PRACTICE: THE EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

VIEW ON THE EU

'The European Consensus is an important instrument for promoting principled humanitarian assistance, for safeguarding humanitarian space and for facilitating the delivery of aid to those most in need.'

ⁱ Published in October 2011 by a number of Caritas Europa member organisations led by CAFOD and Trócaire; www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/BridgingtheGap_ENdefinite.pdf

ⁱⁱ Including International Humanitarian Law, human rights law and refugee law

ⁱⁱⁱ The MCDA guidelines on the use of the military and civil defence assets in complex emergencies were developed by an international committee which included several EU member states.

^{iv} UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

^v Article 15: "EU humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool".

★ For a number of years NGOs have been concerned over the growing trend towards an increased politicisation of humanitarian aid, and the implications for respect of humanitarian principles and principled humanitarian response. The report "*Bridging the Gap between Policy & Practice*"ⁱ, examines some of the practical consequences of this trend within the framework of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. The report identifies discrepancies between policy and practice in the delivery of principled humanitarian aid, and makes recommendations for bridging that gap.

★ EMERGENCE OF A STRONG POLICY FRAMEWORK IN THE EU: THE EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN AID

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (hereinafter referred to as the Humanitarian Consensus) was adopted in 2007 by EU institutions and Member States. It is a non-binding policy framework complemented by an Action Plan, which sets a common vision for delivery of humanitarian aid in line with humanitarian principles and international lawⁱⁱ. It clearly distinguishes civil from military action in humanitarian crises, elaborating the conditions under which humanitarian aid can draw on military assets, and confirms that humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool. As such, it is an important instrument for promoting principled humanitarian assistance, for safeguarding humanitarian space and for facilitating the delivery of aid to those most in need.

Article 15 of the Humanitarian Consensus^v implies that the mandate of ECHO remains distinct from other Commission services and outside the remit of the recently created European External Action Service (EEAS). However, the terms of the Lisbon Treaty require that humanitarian aid be conducted within the framework of external action of the EU. One implication is that there is now greater potential for politicisation of humanitarian donorship and erosion of humanitarian principles, particularly in situations of conflict and fragile states. While coordination between the Commission and the EEAS is required, care has to be taken that humanitarian aid does not become a crisis management tool, blurring the lines between highly political and military operations and humanitarian aid.

★ IT'S TIME TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

Several Member States have made progress towards making the Humanitarian Consensus a relevant and living policy framework, but for others (including emerging donors) such frameworks are still missing. Practical steps that Member States should take include:

- National humanitarian strategies and policies should reference the Humanitarian Consensus and agreements made therein. States without humanitarian strategies and policies should develop them in 2012.
- Raise awareness of the Humanitarian Consensus across government departments (Foreign Affairs, Development, Defense, and Interior), and ensure it is consistently put into practice so that donor practice is guided by it.
- Establish mechanisms for independent annual review of States' commitments made under the Humanitarian Consensus, including assessment of adherence across relevant government departments, and make the findings public.
- Work with the European Commission to conduct an independent end-of-phase evaluation in 2012 of the impact of the Humanitarian Consensus and its Action Plan, and ensure strong continued commitment to humanitarian principles post-2012 in the new Action Plan.

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Case study: Libya and EUFOR

In April 2011, preparations were made by the EU to send a European-led military mission (EUFOR) to Libya to support humanitarian assistance. In its Conclusions, the EU Council reinforced adherence to existing commitments made under the Lisbon Treaty and the Humanitarian Consensus. EU Member States agreed that a military operation would operate in accordance with the Humanitarian Principles and the MCDA Guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ, which require that any military assets used must remain under civilian coordination and must respect the needs-based and neutral nature of humanitarian aid. Furthermore, it was decided that EUFOR could only be deployed at the request of UNOCHA^{iv}, thereby ensuring that a humanitarian body would decide whether EU military troops would have an added value in support of humanitarian activities.

This decision maintained the integrity the Humanitarian Consensus and is a credit to Member States' commitment to it. However, as it was a matter of large debate whether UNOCHA would receive this decisive role, there is no guarantee that the same kind of conditions will be agreed upon in a future situation. As the "*Bridging the Gap*" report highlights, there is sometimes a gap between policies and their implementation in practice, which can result in negative consequences for humanitarian actors and ultimately for crisis-affected communities.

ICVA, VOICE, AND THE HUMANITARIAN FORUM CALL FOR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO POPULATIONS IN DISTRESS IN SYRIA

FIELD FOCUS

27 February 2012

As the respective global and European NGO networks for humanitarian response, our NGO members, collectively, have a significant capacity to respond to the humanitarian needs in Syria. Today, too few are working inside the country.

The further escalating armed conflict in Syria is putting the civilian population at immediate risk and creating untenable living conditions. The UN estimates that between 100,000 and 200,000 people have been forced to leave their homes, while another 500,000 are trapped by the immediate fighting. Providing these populations with essential life-saving assistance has become near to impossible, with food and medical assistance as the most pressing needs.

We urge all parties to **comply with international humanitarian law** and to ensure full and **unhindered access of impartial humanitarian agencies** to the victims of the current crisis. We join others in calling on the Syrian authorities and all others involved in the conflict to implement a daily cessation of fighting in all areas affected, to allow the prompt delivery of impartial humanitarian assistance.

We also urge all relevant international actors to **recognise and honour the independence of humanitarian action**. The risk of humanitarian agencies being perceived as aligned with political or other agendas could have serious consequences for our ability to act. We call on all international actors, therefore, to **avoid any confusion between humanitarian action and other agendas**. Our motivation is strictly humanitarian and based on the imperative to provide relief to those who need it most.

We call on the relevant Syrian authorities to **answer the requests from humanitarian NGOs** that have the capacity to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs in the country. The authorities should **engage with them** in order to agree on appropriate humanitarian programmes and projects. In particular, we urge Syrian authorities to register those NGOs, which follow internationally-recognised principles and standards aimed at preserving the independent and impartial character of humanitarian response, as well as the quality and accountability in delivery.

VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing 83 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. Seeking to involve its members in advocacy, lobbying and information exchange, VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the EU on emergency aid, relief and disaster risk reduction and promotes the values of humanitarian NGOs.

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The Humanitarian Forum is a global network of key humanitarian and development organizations from Muslim donor and recipient countries, the West and the multilateral system. We improve the effectiveness and efficiency of aid by addressing identified gaps between humanitarian communities through training, dialogue and cooperation.

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The International Council of Voluntary Agencies is a global network of non-governmental organisations whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working independently and collectively to influence policy and practice.

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VOICE AT WORK

- ★ **Advocating for principled and relevant humanitarian aid in crisis-affected countries** VOICE members have a wealth of operational expertise relevant to EU humanitarian policy and practice. Members of Parliament from the Budgetary Control Committee were briefed before their visit to Haiti. VOICE members highlighted concerns with regards to access to education and health care, child protection, sexual and gender-based violence as well as land ownership. Also the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was stressed, given the high vulnerability of Haiti to natural disasters. The Danish EU presidency hosted a high-level meeting amongst international donors to discuss how to best react to the looming hunger crisis in the Sahel. VOICE member Oxfam underlined the importance of managing the risk of a high probability-high impact crisis rather than managing the crisis when it has already hit, and the need for preparedness and DRR.
- ★ **A continuous engagement to improve partnership with ECHO** - A new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) - governing the contractual relations between ECHO and its NGO partners- will enter into force in 2014. Since 2011, the FPA Watch Group representing all ECHO NGO partners in the monitoring, review and consultation of the FPA, has been in active dialogue with ECHO on the shape of the new agreement. For the partnership between ECHO and NGOs to be effective and to present the best framework for effective aid delivery, the new FPA has to bring about some real simplification to lessen the administrative burden on NGOs and ECHO alike. The group has called for improvements in focusing on results of aid interventions (as opposed to only looking at means used), and highlighted the need for mechanisms which can support context-specific aid via a diversity of partners.
- ★ **VOICE brings European funding for humanitarian NGOs into the spotlight** - In 2011 the EU started negotiating its long-term budget for 2014-2020; this includes the EU's humanitarian funding for the remainder of this decade. Throughout the last months an extensive advocacy effort by VOICE members has taken place all over Europe. NGOs have written to and met with relevant governmental representatives stressing the importance of maintaining the current level of humanitarian funding in light of increasing humanitarian needs and the added value of EU humanitarian aid.
- In Brussels, the network showcased the operational funding reality of NGOs to its stakeholders and took stock of the current state of funding for European humanitarian NGOs. The VOICE event "*Money Matters: Humanitarian funding in spotlight*" organised in October 2011 brought together over hundred participants from EU institutions, NGOs and the wider humanitarian community.
 - MEP Ehrenhauser drafted a report on budgetary control of EU humanitarian aid managed by ECHO, which was approved by the Parliament in January 2012. Many VOICE members engaged actively in giving input to the report. Key NGO messages, including a reference to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the need to reduce the administrative burden on FPA partners and the importance of a diversity of professional humanitarian partners were included in the final report.
- ★ **VOICE members stress the importance of humanitarian principles to member states** - VOICE member CAFOD presented Caritas Europa's report "*Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice*" to the member states in COHAFA (Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid). The report uses the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid as a policy framework for measuring adherence to humanitarian principles, and recommends amongst other issues that member states should establish mechanisms for independent annual review of their commitments under the Consensus. In another COHAFA meeting, VOICE member Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) introduced the main findings of their report "*A partnership at risk? - The UN-NGO Relationship in light of UN integration.*" NRC highlighted that if the UN is aligned to one side of the conflict, there should be no integration of humanitarian aid with the political and/or military mission.
- ★ **Working with development NGOs to bridge the gap from humanitarian aid to development** - Aiming to better influence EU policy and practice on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), VOICE is working together with CONCORD, the European network of development NGOs, building a common NGO position. In a feedback to the Council of the EU, current barriers to implementing the LRRD approach at EU level were stressed, such as the lack of flexibility in EU development funding. In a forthcoming joint position paper, the networks reflect on the rationale for LRRD and give recommendations on how LRRD programming and funding may be improved. Over the last ten years NGOs and the VOICE network have been stressing the importance of LRRD and the current momentum among donors and decision makers has to be seen as another opportunity to move the matter further.



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VOICE out loud

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