



VOICE (*Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies*) is a network representing 84 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide, which are based in 19 European countries. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid and disaster risk reduction and it promotes the values of humanitarian NGOs.

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***“Too important to fail: addressing the humanitarian financing gap”:
VOICE reaction to the HLP report***

Launched on 17 January 2016, the report from the High Level Panel on humanitarian financing aptly responds to the mandate given to the Panel and effectively raises essential recommendations to ameliorate the current humanitarian system while developing innovative new funding mechanisms.

VOICE would like to stress that the report does reflect many of the inputs that NGOs provided to the panel and appreciates the openness from panel members to having such conversations with humanitarian actors. Since many of the proposals from the report are not complemented with concrete measures for implementation both in terms of means and timeline, **VOICE encourages Member States to pursue further the HLP’s proposal and to maintain constructive consultations with humanitarian aid actors in this process.**

Among the different recommendations, VOICE underlines the HLP’s statement of the humanitarian principles¹ and strongly supports the stress on *“leaving no one behind”*. NGOs particularly appreciate that the HLP emphasizes the importance of political and diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts and the need for the UN to increase its role in this regard.

In the context of humanitarian aid growing needs, innovative mechanisms and recommendations on new sources of funding are welcomed. Specific measures to fund protracted and conflict crises as well as so-called forgotten crises are indeed needed since they suffer the most from critical lack of funding. However, **increased cooperation or partnership between NGOs, the private sector and the media should be thought through carefully with regard to respect of the humanitarian principles.**

The HLP report provides also interesting recommendations linked to Disaster Risk Reduction and for the development sector to expand its funding criteria. We support the recommendation on bridging the humanitarian-development divide in order to increase communities’ resilience and risk management capacities, as well as the attempt to link with climate change adaptation discussions. **There is now a need to provide concrete options on how to implement the recommendations since they seem very ambitious to humanitarian practitioners.**

The Grand Bargain as presented in the report suggests several positive actions which are in line with many NGO perspectives and aims at addressing weaknesses within the humanitarian system. **We believe there was here an opportunity to call for the UN to complete its Transformative Agenda.** But it also raises another important concern for NGOs since the Grand Bargain could be interpreted as suggesting a further centralisation of funding to the UN. **NGOs, being the main implementing actors of humanitarian aid, call**

¹ In line with the [Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Principles](#), signed up by many VOICE members.

unequivocally to be included in the Grand Bargain and for the benefits of the Grand Bargain to be passed onto implementers.

The Grand Bargain also suggests improving joint assessments which NGOs are ready to contribute to. Collecting disaggregated data is necessary to be able to take into account the needs of most vulnerable groups such as children, women, elderly or people with disabilities.

VOICE welcomes the HLP touching upon the issue of administrative burden through the proposal to harmonise reporting. **There is a need to go further and embrace the issue of simplification of rules and requirements in a more comprehensive manner** - reporting being one visible part of the iceberg

The HLP recommendation on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) limits is welcomed and Member States should support this recommendation further on the international scale in order to protect the proper delivery of humanitarian aid. Thus **the World Humanitarian Summit should be the place to first acknowledge the limiting impact Counter Terrorism legislation can have on humanitarian operations and commit to work further on the issue.**

Finally, the HLP is proposing an ambitious and “political” response to the call for localisation of aid².VOICE welcomes this pledge for strengthened local ownership and civil societies’ capacities. NGOs are willing to support donors to adopt a “localisation lens” when shaping the Grand Bargain.

We recognize that the task for the HLP must have been very challenging in producing the report in the given timeframe. Therefore, we believe that **the next step will have to be for the humanitarian sector to take ownership of the report and to define which of the innovative recommendations to prioritise and how to pilot them. VOICE stands ready to engage with donors and decision makers in this process.**

References:

Report to the UN Secretary-General from the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing- *Too important to fail: addressing the humanitarian financing gap*, (17 January 2016) New York.

VOICE input to the HLP on Humanitarian financing (06 June 2015), Brussels.

VOICE letter to Vice President Georgieva, in the frame of the ongoing HLP on Humanitarian financing (30 September 2015), Brussels.

² Including a reference to the [Charter4Change](#), endorsed by several VOICE members.