

Complementing the webinar for this topic on the [Donor perspectives on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus](#), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) took the opportunity to get perspectives from donors such as Sweden.

Read below for Sweden's response to various questions.

EXPERT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What is included in the nexus, from your perspective? We're discussing in this series the "triple nexus" framed by the UN Secretary-General. This includes humanitarian, development and peace action. How does your government frame the nexus? Is it more limited, or does it include other types of actions (e.g. migration, stabilization, human rights, etc.)?

Sweden:

"Today's complex crises demand cooperation across mandates. In a world in which humanitarian needs are growing, it is essential to work preventively on the underlying causes of humanitarian crises. By putting more effort into conflict resolution, disaster risk reduction, resilience, sustainable use of natural resources, environmental and climate work and long-term development, we can seek to ensure that crises do not arise, and are not protracted or recurrent. This demands improved synergies, coordination and cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors for sustained collective outcomes.

Humanitarian assistance, with its distinct mandate, cannot of course solve root causes. Political solutions are needed to end conflict and the humanitarian system has to be part of joint efforts towards long-term sustainable solutions, while maintaining the unique nature and mandate of the humanitarian work.

Synergies in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus are crucial. On the one hand, we need development and humanitarian action that are country and context-specific and in full respect of humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. At the same time, there is an obvious need to take new steps to address the current dynamics of humanitarian crises and develop new approaches. The Global agendas of the New Ways of Working and the Grand Bargain commitments, the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda and the increased attention on co-designed, joint-up programming for collective outcomes are important avenues for us to pursue jointly.

Some progress can already be noted. Within the UN and the EU there are ongoing initiatives to consider possibilities of strengthening humanitarian–development–peace synergies. They include collaborative working methods, such as joint analysis and joined-up planning and programming towards collective outcomes. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, has together with OECD-DAC developed pilot resilience analysis systems for 7 different countries. In the EU nexus process Sweden is focusing on pilots in Uganda and Sudan."

How does your government allocate funding towards the nexus? Do you have separate departments distributing funds separately or do they collaborate in decision making? Do you ask your partners to distinguish between activities in their proposals (e.g. humanitarian distinct from development)? Do you provide multi-year funding for humanitarian activities? Do you try to safeguard humanitarian principles in the decision-making process?

Sweden:

“Nationally, Sweden has through its 2014 Aid Policy Framework decided to have an integrated conflict perspective throughout our development assistance, including our humanitarian assistance. Our Government adopted strategy for humanitarian assistance 2014–2020, explicitly states that conflict sensitivity must be systematically mainstreamed in humanitarian aid.

Conflict sensitivity analyses at country level are in fact key to minimizing the risk that humanitarian assistance will contribute to unintended negative consequences, or, in other words, that it will respect the principle of do-no-harm which must be an integrated and central part of humanitarian assistance.

Over the years, Sweden has, and continue to be, one of the foremost proponents of international humanitarian law and principle-based humanitarian assistance. Sweden actively work to promote humanitarian principles, access and protection as a condition for effective humanitarian assistance, and will continue to safeguard these principles also in the “triple nexus” discussion.

Sweden development cooperation has worked actively during the last years to strengthen synergies in order to make crises-affected and vulnerable people more resilient and less dependent on humanitarian assistance. In 16 places, Sweden is at the same time active with large ongoing development cooperation and with humanitarian support. Their mandates and roles differ. This of course presents opportunities to find synergies and a better complementarity. The objective is to meet people’s immediate humanitarian needs, but over time also to reduce risk, vulnerability, and dependence on humanitarian assistance. Sweden’s development strategies are therefore increasingly geared towards strengthening resilience of vulnerable people and communities addressing root causes of crises, and seeking synergies with humanitarian assistance, e.g. the regional Syria-crisis strategy, the strategies for Iraq and Sudan.

As a committed friend of multilateralism and multilateral cooperation, Sweden remains a strong supporter of UN reform and of humanitarian reform processes. The change that the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul set in motion, in particular the Grand Bargain commitments, shows some clear areas of progress on financing for the nexus. And financing is key.

Sweden firmly believes that humanitarian financing must be flexible and predictable in order to be efficient and effective. Multi-year flexible funding allows for a need-based approach both in forgotten, protracted crisis and in sudden onset crises. Flexible funding and early disbursement means that funding can be available when a crisis occur. It allows humanitarian organisations to start saving lives and alleviate suffering, immediately. It in fact also makes it easier to incorporate synergies and to take a longer-term perspective.

Donors must do more to use and scale up tools and modalities based on flexible funding and early disbursement. Incentives to reduce earmarked funding should be strengthened. Sweden has taken a leadership role on flexible funding in the Grand Bargain process.”

LEARN MORE: Visit www.icvanetwork.org for the webinar, video, further information and references.

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Does your government plan to change its own behaviours vis a vis the nexus? Is it asking its partners to do anything differently? What would those changes look like, specifically?

Sweden:

“In 2017 the Swedish government adopted a strategy for Sweden’s humanitarian aid for the period 2017–2020, which states that humanitarian activities also can help to prevent and combat conflicts and promote peace while maintaining respect for the humanitarian principles of independence and neutrality. Sweden will work for stronger interplay between humanitarian actors and development actors so as to strengthen the capacity of individuals and societies to deal with conflicts, disasters and health threats, such as epidemics, and to support sustainable solutions to protracted crises, without compromising on the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality. To do this, the strategy task Sida to promote a dialogue with development actors and humanitarian actors on the use of flexible, innovative solutions and financing forms that interact with humanitarian measures. Closer operational cooperation should also take place at country level through joint analyses, planning and long-term objective formulation. Sida is to develop working methods for humanitarian aid based on the various context-specific conditions attached to the objective of creating synergies with development actors.

In 2017 the Swedish government also adopted in 2017 a strategy, Sustainable Peace, which includes addressing root causes of humanitarian crises. The strategy will contribute to increased collaboration between actors in the humanitarian system and long-term development cooperation with a focus on joined-up analysis, planning and goal formulation.

Sida, has identified a 3 pillar-approach to systematize the work on risk, resilience and strengthened synergies between humanitarian and development assistance:

1. conduct joined-up analysis, planning and programming based on context specific risks and vulnerabilities,
2. increase flexible, innovative and complementary development funding for the most vulnerable people,
3. promote increased dialogue and coordination on risk, resilience and synergies between humanitarian and development.”