

# Global Humanitarian Platform- Discussion Paper

## Local Capacity and Partnership: A New Humanitarian Business Model

### Introduction

When the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) was created in July 2006, there was agreement that the GHP should “provide a forum for focused discussion of particular strategic issues, such as accountability, capacity-building, security, or transitions.” During the first meeting of the GHP in July 2007, it was agreed to focus discussions at the 2008 meeting on “particular themes, such as humanitarian financing, capacity-building, or on cross-cutting issues such as access and security.” In 2010 the GHP will focus on the preservation and expansion of Humanitarian Space, Humanitarian-Military Relationships and **a new business model focusing on building local capacity and regional and international readiness to address cross border humanitarian issues.**

Although the GHP has often referred to capacity building, the concept addressed in this paper is better described as building disaster response on local capabilities and capacities, support to local and national capacity, partnership between international and local and national actors, and sharing capacities between local/national organisations and international organisations.

This document provides some background to the GHP discussion by briefly presenting some of the challenges facing the humanitarian community; stresses the importance of further ‘*reform*’ within a strategic framework; identifies a number of issues to building local capacity and partnership; and outlines some of the challenges in working across borders. Finally the document poses some questions for the GHP meeting to consider in determining the next steps in developing a new humanitarian business model.

Information in this document has been drawn from a number of papers and individuals that are identified in a series of footnotes and in the references at the end. This document does not necessarily reflect the views of those papers or individuals or organisations. The responsibilities for any views expressed within the paper and for any factual errors belong to the writer.

### The Challenge of Ensuring Humanitarian Response

A number of inter-connected global trends are exacerbating people’s vulnerability: climate change, the global financial crisis, rapid demographic changes and human displacement, increasing demand for natural resources, and political instability or conflict. These trends have a dramatic consequence for poor people and are expected to increase humanitarian needs in the future. Humanitarian action is also being impacted by other trends such as the growing threat to humanitarian space, and the increased utilisation of military assets in response and recovery.

Some commentators also expect that the traditional distinction between natural and man-made disasters will become more blurred and people will face “compound crises”, characterised by multiple and inter-connected aspects of vulnerability reinforcing each other<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore difficult to draw a comprehensive picture of the future by examining each trend individually as they are likely to have even more of an impact on humanitarian needs collectively. These

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<sup>1</sup> This notion was explored at the 22<sup>nd</sup> ALNAP meeting focusing on West Africa

problems will intensify political instability and risk and bear most heavily on weak and fragile states.

The challenge of maintaining sufficient humanitarian space and an operational presence in a number of countries in order to access populations in need is already great and will most likely become greater. It requires considerable efforts and sometimes a complete rethink of the modus operandi, with greater emphasis on working with or through local partners and a renewed commitment to principled humanitarian action. In this the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence are fundamental.

In recent years the military forces of a number of countries have been involved in humanitarian operations during and immediately after combat and after major disasters. The motivations for such missions have often been twofold: to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians affected by warfare and/or disaster, and to demonstrate the benevolence of the providing government to local populations and to the international community as a distinct element of foreign policy. Many have questioned the legitimacy of providing neutral humanitarian assistance with armed forces that are ultimately dedicated to supporting a partisan foreign policy. This dilemma has profound implications for the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance, for civilian humanitarian agencies, for military forces engaged in humanitarian operations and for the political leadership that authorizes such actions.

For humanitarian organizations to respond equally to all on the basis of need requires maximum access to all populations which, in turn, demands that the organizations are perceived as being neutral, with no political agenda. However Humanitarian organisations are increasingly becoming involved with military forces in the delivery of assistance. This results in an inevitable tension between military and humanitarians. The more closely associated a humanitarian agency is with an unpopular international military force, the less room for manoeuvre the agency has and the more problematic the civil-military relations become.<sup>2</sup>

**Lessons from the Tsunami:** The evaluation of the December 2004 tsunami response found that in the immediate aftermath of the disaster most lives were saved by affected and neighbouring communities. When the international community bypassed or appropriated local and national response, the impact was inefficient in terms of cost, effort and time. The evaluation showed that when the aid system is under pressure in crisis situations, the imperative to deliver services is dominant. This resulted in a lack of engagement with community-based and local non-governmental organisations (CBOs and NGOs). Many of these had played a major role during the search-and-rescue phase but were marginalised during the relief process. By the time agencies sought their cooperation in the recovery phase. CBOs and NGOs became contracted organisations, corruption spread and inappropriate forms of leadership were able to flourish.

The tsunami evaluation highlighted the need for international humanitarian agencies to:

- engage with local and national capacities and have clear partnership strategies and develop local partnerships from the start;
- work to enable marginalised groups to improve their position in relation to communities, and communities in relation to district and national authorities;

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<sup>2</sup> T. Weiss, Military Civilian Humanitarianism: The Age of Innocence is Over, *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1995.

- develop protocols to prevent ‘poaching’ of staff and to ensure local capacity is not undermined;
- critically examine reporting requirements; and
- ensure women are represented in all decision-making bodies affecting them.

**Limitations of humanitarian reform:** Weaknesses and gaps in major humanitarian operations such as the December 2004 tsunami and the Darfur crisis led to a decision by OCHA to review the response system and identify measures for improvement resulting in the humanitarian reform process. However the **Humanitarian Response Review (2005)** and the resulting humanitarian reform process were limited in their focus to international humanitarian response.

The findings of a further review commissioned under ALNAP’s Humanitarian Performance Project<sup>3</sup> and of a recent Ditchley Conference<sup>4</sup> confirm what a number of individuals and agencies had already been suspecting. There has been a positive trend in the internal workings of the humanitarian system, such as coordination mechanisms, funding vehicles, and needs assessment tools, but at the same time there were some fundamental issues such as leadership and the system’s engagement with and accountability to the affected population remain weak. The findings thus depict a system steadily and incrementally improving its own internal mechanics and technical performance, while remaining deficient in some big-picture requirements for effectiveness.

The report of the NGO and Humanitarian Reform Project<sup>5</sup> states that “the original focus of the reform on the international community was to the detriment of national and local actors.” By and large, national and local NGOs have been excluded from most humanitarian reform fora and consequently, reform measures adopted thus far have not been aimed at meeting the capacity needs and operating requirements of local actors. Some commentators have suggested that international agencies are inadvertently choking the potential of the very organisations that are best placed to meet the needs of persons trapped by disaster and conflict. International organisations frequently have a greater potential to attract funds, they are able to poach staff, they dominate meetings, etc. The same issues often apply to the involvement of governments. This represents an additional set of challenges for international humanitarian actors, particularly in conflict situations, who seek to respond to need wherever it occurs on an impartial basis.

The NGO and Humanitarian Reform Project also concludes that HCs and cluster leads have a role to play in supporting local and national NGOs, but their participation must also be facilitated by their international NGO partners. Donors should also play a pivotal role in finding ways to better support the role of local and national NGOs in the reform processes, whether in clusters or in terms of accessing pooled funds.

Despite the recommendations coming out of the *Tsunami Evaluation Coalition* in 2006, there has been little focus in looking at how we can arrive at “a fundamental reorientation from supplying

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<sup>3</sup> Harvey, Paul, Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, Glyn Taylor, Victoria DiDomenico and Lauren Brander: **The State of the Humanitarian System: Steps toward developing a general assessment of progress.** 17 November 2009.

<sup>4</sup> International Rescue Committee UK: **Humanitarian reform: Strengthening Partnership for Effective Humanitarian Response.** International rescue Committee and Ditchley Foundation. 2009.

<sup>5</sup> NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project: **Review of the Engagement of NGOs with the Humanitarian reform Process.** October 2009

aid to supporting and facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities.”<sup>6</sup> Neither the IASC nor the GHP have been able to effectively take the evaluation conclusions and recommendations forward.

**Further challenges to the response system:** A number of recent studies indicate that humanitarian funding levels have gone up both in overall levels and in all sectors, and that coverage is more equitable across sectors and emergencies. Perhaps as a consequence of this the global aid worker population has also increased. But the needs of affected populations have also gone up and they are still not properly matched by resources. The result is a nearly universal perception of insufficiency, despite quantitative evidence of progress<sup>7</sup>. How will the humanitarian community deal with this and any further scaling up of needs in the future?

It has also been recognised that there is a shrinking of humanitarian space and as a result decreased access or no access to persons in need of life-saving assistance. This results from the changing nature of conflict, including an increasing confusion between civilian and military activities. In today's conflict there is often little respect for humanitarian principles or the safety of humanitarian staff. Conflict zones often contain a mix of national and foreign armies, militias acting along ethnic or religious lines, insurgent groups and criminal gangs. Conventional armies often co-opt or directly assume "humanitarian" work in order to win hearts and minds. The confusion between respective roles that results can be easily exploited by the parties to a conflict<sup>8</sup>.

**Need for a new humanitarian business model:** The importance of local communities and national organisations has long been recognised, and so also has the need to build local, national and regional capacity. It is now necessary to identify the means to make partnership more predictable, coherent and better supported by on-going reform measures. It is also important to recognise and strengthen a very different type of partnership with local, national and regional organisations. Placing civil society, national NGOs and community organisations at the centre of humanitarian action and reform efforts will require a fundamental shift in approach and a new business model. It will be necessary to first establish a framework for such a business model.

### **Strategic Framework for the New Humanitarian Business Model<sup>9</sup>**

To achieve and support a new humanitarian business model ideally might first require the development of a comprehensive strategic framework encompassing the management and reduction of crisis risk whether from natural, technological or human induced hazards. Such a comprehensive framework would be utilised for the better documentation of current problems, the forecasting of future threats, informing decisions for intervening in and mitigating crisis, and facilitating recovery in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters.

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<sup>6</sup> Telford, John and John Cosgrove. **Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report**, TEC, 2006, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> Harvey, Paul, Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, Glyn Taylor, Victoria DiDomenico and Lauren Brander: **The State of the Humanitarian System: Steps toward developing a general assessment of progress**. 17 November 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Lim, Janet: **The Weak Link: Strengthening Partnership for Better Humanitarian Response**. UNHCR Statement to the Ditchley Conference on Strengthening Partnership for Effective Humanitarian Response. Ditchley 13 October 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Humanitarian Issues. **A New Business Model for Humanitarian Assistance? A Challenge Paper**. Geneva June 2009.

Such a new humanitarian business model needs to be less event focused and to be more comprehensive and extensive in its approach to humanitarian issues. This means keeping in focus not only the response but also the cause and aftermath of humanitarian crisis. The new humanitarian business model would retain the traditional ethical and legal principles of humanitarian action, and link them to the broader context of poverty and vulnerability. The model would place local and national capacities as a starting point, aim for long-term sustainable risk reduction and bring in other players to provide support. “Only when vulnerable people take control of their environment will they escape from vulnerability. Otherwise they will simply be dependent on fickle Western public responses and the reliability or otherwise of international aid.”<sup>10</sup>

The elements of a comprehensive framework underpinning a new humanitarian business model would include mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery risk assessment and risk management. The framework would develop the strategies for responding to these identified and quantified risks. It would include sustainability as a fundamental feature of humanitarian actions. It would be driven by local and national partners. It marks a shift in terms of approach and approximates a development long-term approach.

The strategic framework for a new humanitarian business model would include:

- a comprehensive risk analysis;
- a reworked balance of spending between response and prevention-recovery;
- a significant investment in local, national and regional capacity for mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery;
- driven by local and national partners with a fuller engagement of both government and the private sector;
- a readiness to adapt to situations with awareness that one situation / system does not fit all;
- link the humanitarian to broader social and economic development issues;
- regional and international readiness to address cross-border humanitarian issues.

The new humanitarian model would need to build capacity that accesses the most local level and would be focused on geographically specific and most at risk countries. It would need to have a very flexible approach to tackle organisations, communities and individuals and would work at both the policy and the practical level.

### **Building Local Capacity and Partnership**

Partnership in a humanitarian setting refers to the relationship between humanitarian organisations involved in similar activities. It is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility. In the context of humanitarian reform effective partnership requires the adherence to the GHP Principles of Partnership.

Local and national partners are a wider group than formally constituted NGOs and national societies of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and have a variety of motivations. These organisations can range from the national army and militias to both formal and informal non-governmental community, social and religious groups. Each of these groups may come with

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<sup>10</sup> Parakrama, Arjuna: **Impact of the tsunami response on local and national capacities**. Refugee Studies Centre: Forced Migration Review, Issue 28. Oxford, July 2007.

their own comparative advantage, or baggage, for a given situation depending on their status and dynamics within their communities.

It is therefore important to have a good understanding of the landscape surrounding local actors and the different types of relationships that may need to be forged with various local organisations. GHP agency partnerships should be with those organisations that most closely share the basic humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence and secondly the principles of partnership established by the GHP.

**Can a first fiddle learn to play second fiddle?** There would appear to be a general consensus, certainly amongst NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement that more needs to be done with local and national partners. Whilst progress has been made in building and using those partnerships when crunch time comes the principles of partnerships are often ignored. The challenge for the GHP is therefore more than building partnerships and developing new business models. Two key areas will need to be addressed if these concepts are to move forward:

- First determining how much control each agency is prepared to hand over to local and national organisations. If the intention is to put the local and national organisation in the driving seat then as international partners, GHP agencies will have to take a back seat role. Having played first fiddle, is it possible to play second fiddle?
- Second, the new business model would appear to require agencies to shift from being predominantly operational response agencies to undertaking much more of a developmental approach to the overall management of crisis risk – mitigation, preparedness and recovery. Agencies, and the staff within those agencies, frequently assume that local and national actors do not have skills or resources but can the response cowboys employed by many GHP agencies acquire the skills need for developmental approaches?

GHP agencies must place national partners at the forefront of reform efforts and to go beyond the practice of seeing them as the implementers of *our* programmes to one in which we help them implement *their* programmes to assist their own communities. In environments where humanitarian space is shrinking and access for internationals become more and more constrained, we need to accept that local partners may be better placed to design, develop and implement the assistance that is critical for the survival of populations in distress.

**Capacity and Partnership building:** There are and have been a number of initiatives attempting to build humanitarian skills and capacity around the world. But it is unclear what impact these initiatives have had. They have been undertaken by NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, UN agencies and donor government. AusAid, for example, is funding Australian contactors to improve disaster response capacity in East Timor and the Philippines and to support local government and non government partners. Are there lessons to be learnt from these programmes?

The recent ALNAP study<sup>11</sup> found a scarcity of investment in local and national capacities. It found top-down tendencies with the humanitarian system and a risk of undermining local capacities. However, there were signs of improvement in the way international agencies work

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<sup>11</sup> Harvey, Paul, Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, Glyn Taylor, Victoria DiDomenico and Lauren Brander: **The State of the Humanitarian System: Steps toward developing a general assessment of progress.** 17 November 2009.

with local humanitarian actors, and the survey found that a solid majority of respondents felt that efforts at capacity building had increased in the last two to three years. There was also a clear momentum around the need for greater downward accountability and participation, and there are a growing number of examples of investment in feedback and complaint mechanisms and greater transparency which benefit programmes.

Strengthening capacities is not simply about supporting institutional structures. It is a complex political process that involves the empowerment of poorer and more excluded people so that when disaster strikes they have a valid claim on their community, local officials and national government. Furthermore a partnering process with government agencies must not ignore partnership opportunities with national organisations. A strong civil society provides an important check on government power. In cases where humanitarian agencies do not match efforts to improve government functioning with efforts to build up local civil society, they neglect the notion of government responsibility to its citizenry.

**Humanitarian Reform and Leadership:** Humanitarian reform has placed emphasis on international leadership through the Humanitarian Coordinator. However, no comparable system exists to develop local leadership on humanitarian issues, yet this element may be a more important key to improving the management of the humanitarian system. Local leadership also implies that local organisations set the agenda when it comes to defining the assistance that they need. That is, they would be in a position to assess global needs in a given community and the international response would be aimed at meeting some of the needs that the locals identify. The international NGO community and the IFRC can play a particularly important role in helping organisations to develop local leadership and coordination structures.

Building national and local partnerships is a strategic activity that must be based on a long-term assessment of where critical operational requirements will lie in the future. This kind of long-term assessment and investment may be something that donors find difficult to support. Yet, it is clear that without a long-term commitment to develop this capacity the international community will not be able to establish coherence and effectiveness in operating with local partners. Capacity development is an essential ingredient in preparedness for an effective emergency response. If the international players are serious about developing effective partnership with local and national partners, they need to be prepared to include those local and national partners in the various aspects of humanitarian reform, be it in the way humanitarian funding is designed, the cluster approach developed or the leadership issue addressed.

**Preparedness with local and national partners:** identifying and forging local partnerships is a task best carried out in times of relative peace. It will be very difficult to identify and develop partnerships in the heat of an operation, where security concerns are high, access is difficult and the immediate imperative of assistance delivery drowns out all other considerations. Capacity-enhancement is needed before a crisis hits so that different national and local actors can respond. This requires certain predictability and security of funding that is unrelated to any emergency. Regardless of civil society and local NGO's capacity for emergency response, it is important to get them involved early for trust-building, networking, information sharing and feedback, often acting as interlocutors for local communities. As Antonio Donini puts it: "Trying to predict the crises of tomorrow is not a very useful exercise but investing in preparedness is – making

organisations more adaptable to shocks, strengthening partnerships at all levels and thinking outside of our humanitarian box.”<sup>12</sup>

**Risks and accountability:** Where security considerations compel the withdrawal of international aid workers, humanitarian agencies rely increasingly on national staff. Agencies tend to assume that locals are at less risk but this is not necessarily the case. International agencies have largely failed to consider the ethics of transferring security risks from expatriate to national staff. It is an issue that must be considered if local and national capacity is to be developed.

At present quality and accountability to communities is not yet a stated part of the Humanitarian Reform agenda. Downward accountability to beneficiaries is clearly an area that requires greater attention. Not only is it necessary to balance accountability against a range of risks, but also against complex bureaucratic systems being established for its measurement.

**Procedures and finance:** The NGO’s Synthesis Report on Humanitarian Reform<sup>13</sup> noted that reform initiatives remain particularly demanding in terms of process and this constrains rather than builds the capacity of smaller organisations. Efforts therefore should be aimed at minimising procedural requirements that are barriers to small, local organisations.

Some African humanitarian leaders have argued that the most significant challenge facing them is their inability to generate funds to support their core personnel and infrastructure costs while still being expected to implement large front-line programmes effectively.<sup>14</sup> Predictability and security of funding for broader risk management, particularly local, national and regional preparedness is essential. Donors, perhaps through the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative, will need to be persuaded to commit to such activities in addition to their generous contributions to response.

Development budgets will need to be made available and the humanitarian community will need to have sound arguments that stress the cost efficiency of a new approach. It will also be a challenge to ensure that donors commit to increasing their financial contributions to response in line with the anticipated growth in humanitarian needs. Whilst the next decade may see a significant increase in the need for funding resources required as agencies adopt a new humanitarian model, those demands should stabilise once local and national organisations take more control.

### **Addressing Cross Border Issues**

Some Humanitarian disasters, whether natural or human made, raise complex cross border issues because their cause and/or consequences go beyond national frontiers. Examples include: refugees from Darfur in Chad who have become the unwitting triggers of local conflict in the country that hosts them and vectors transmitting conflict across the border from Sudan; the conflict against al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the combination of conflict and drought in

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<sup>12</sup> Donini, Antonio: **Hard questions for the future of the humanitarian enterprise**. Refugee Studies Centre: Forced Migration Review, Issue 29. Oxford, December 2007.

<sup>13</sup> NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project: **Review of the Engagement of NGOs with the Humanitarian reform Process**. October 2009

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, Anisya and Desiree Bliss: **Capacity development from the inside out**. Refugee Studies Centre: Forced Migration Review, Issue 28. Oxford, July 2007.



the Horn of Africa; etc. In each of these cases humanitarian need increases, humanitarian space diminishes, access becomes more restricted, roles become confused and how to respond becomes more complex.

But even in weak, fragile and failing states, chaos and anarchy are not necessarily the rule. Contested forms of rudimentary political order, based on local social practices and traditional structures of communal self-organisation, often re-emerge as central structures fade. In this case various non-state entities will claim or indeed possess a local monopoly on the use of force and delivery of social services, and control access to natural resources, remaining infrastructure and international humanitarian aid. In these and other situations the capacity of local and national actors becomes essential.

In a number of such situations insecurity for aid workers has increased markedly. Furthermore there is a growing concern regarding the lack of respect for IHL and core humanitarian principles both on the part of warring parties and on the part of donor governments and their militaries as a result of comprehensive approaches that integrate humanitarian action with broader foreign policy goals on the part of Western governments.

In such complex situations, as with natural disasters extending beyond national borders, regional approaches and cooperation provide a further avenue for humanitarian action. Furthermore, regional cooperation on cross border issues needs to address all forms of disaster. In the major transnational river basins, such as the Niger in West Africa, the Nile, or the Ganges-Brahmaputra river system in South Asia, risk management is in essence a matter of regional cooperation. Drought in the Horn of Africa must be addressed from a regional as well as national perspective. It makes sense then for more emphasis to be placed on the regional organisations – OSCE, AU, SADC, ASEAN, OAS and others – and on making it possible for them to play a role in addressing cross-border issues. Such an emphasis must include ensuring a regional preparedness.

It has become fashionable these days to talk about “remote management” of operations in high-risk environments where national partners deliver while internationals manage from afar. Not only does this smack of arrogance but it raises controversy about the morality of transferring security risks to local partners. All options should be considered such as communications equipment and networks, training, transport, physical safety and evacuation measures, insurance liability issues, etc., to mitigate against security risks for national partners. There may be situations in which local partners and beneficiaries may need more immediate support from an international presence, especially in situations where protection may be an issue. What may be necessary is a well calibrated, combined or complementary presence of national and international staff in the field. In any case, it is clear that this trend requires a lighter footprint of international staff and greater reliance on national staff and partners.

Remote management is currently practiced in a way that is ad hoc and unplanned. Few organisations have a specific policy on what security-related equipment would be handed over to national staff or local partners when security deteriorates and international staff have to leave. The practical challenges of remote management – less efficient service delivery, difficulties in ensuring strategic focus and accountability, and risks of corruption – have not been fully thought through. The approach is still seen as an option of last resort, to be used in rare situations of high insecurity, but unfortunately such situations are occurring with increasing frequency.

Part of the reason that local staff security and remote management are difficult to talk about is that practical responses can seem to reflect a hierarchy of values placed on different lives: those of international staff, national/local staff and the affected population. While these issues are undoubtedly difficult and ethically fraught issues, not addressing them only delays the formation of clearly communicated, transparent policies and practical, field-based operational plans. National and local staff deserve better. Humanitarian agencies have an equal duty of care to all employees, regardless of nationality.<sup>15</sup>

Finally in weak, fragile or failing states, there might be a government in place in the Capital, but no government control outside the capital. Humanitarian assistance may never reach the periphery – where it is often needed the most – if the channels of aid distribution are limited to state structures. The role of civil society and NGOs, particularly those that are local, becomes crucial. Because local NGOs are not likely to face as many bureaucratic obstacles to bringing staff into areas of the country affected by crisis, and agency policy often allows national staff to work and travel in areas where international staff cannot, implementing partnerships have become essential for the timely delivery of aid in large-scale humanitarian crises.

### **The Way Forward**

It is vital for discussion to both commence and continue on tackling some of the formidable practical issues required for the development of a new humanitarian business model. In the agenda of the GHP Meeting it is proposed that discussion be focused on partnership: building local capacity and regional and international readiness to address cross border issues. The outcomes of this discussion were expected to:

- generate a debate on how humanitarian organisations need to broaden engagement and/or support to better address humanitarian needs;
- identify where the focus of investment and effort needs to be made to support local capacity; and
- Identify ways the humanitarian community can strengthen operational approach in order to ensure the most appropriate and timely response to humanitarian needs.

More specific issues and questions that the GHP meeting may wish to focus on include the following:

#### **On the new humanitarian business model:**

- How can the GHP make the proposed fundamental shift in approach and develop a new business model that places national NGOs and community organisations at the centre of humanitarian action?
- If the intention is to put the local and national organisation in the driving seat then as international partners, GHP agencies will have to “step out of the spotlight” and take a “backseat” or supporting role to local organisations. Are international organisations prepared to hand over control to local and national organisations and take a different, more challenging, and potentially crucial role where they support and facilitate other organisations? How are they to maintain their relevance?

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<sup>15</sup> Haver, Katherine: **Duty of care? Local staff and aid worker security**. Refugee Studies Centre: Forced Migration Review, Issue 28. Oxford, July 2007.

- Should agencies shift from being predominantly operational response agencies to undertaking more of a developmental approach to the overall management of crisis risk – mitigation, preparedness and recovery? If so, how do they go about it?

#### **On capacity building and partnership:**

- How can the international humanitarian actors respond to need wherever it occurs on an impartial basis and utilise the full potential of the local and national organisations that are frequently best placed to meet the needs of persons affected by disaster and conflict?
- How do the GHP and its members better develop local leadership on humanitarian issues?
- How do the GHP and its members better include local and national partners in preparedness activities and include capacity development in those preparedness activities?
- How can stronger partnerships be formed between local and international organisations, both during time of emergency preparedness and in times of crisis and how can those relationships be promoted with donors?
- Should humanitarian organisations be building capacity or should development organisations be playing a greater role?
- How can international organisations identify partners with whom a trusted relationship can be developed? What are lessons that can be learned from organisations that work with local partners before crises?

#### **On cross-border issues:**

- Should the GHP or IASC establish a mechanism to develop a clear policy and guidance on cross border remote management for use by humanitarian agencies?
- The GHP should examine how to extend protection to intended beneficiaries as well as national and international staff and consider the ethics of transferring security risks from expatriate staff to national staff or local NGOs?
- GHP agencies should -consider the human resource implications of dependence on remote management and in particular how to ensure that national staff have the leadership skills and acquire the necessary training and self-reliance to make difficult decisions in response to the rapidly changing operational realities in insecure environments?

#### **On Funding:**

- How can the humanitarian community convince donors to support civil society and local and national NGOs in the reform processes and response activities?
- In almost every discussion on working with local capacity, the issue of funding is raised. Are there ways to address this issue of funding by, for example, ensuring that a percentage of funds spent on emergency response go towards local organisations?

**Next steps:** It is also essential that the GHP determine ways in which the discussion can continue beyond the 2010 meeting. How do we establish a realistic process that moves a new humanitarian business model forward and involves all the relevant actors i.e. governments, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN Agencies, donors, civil society etc. At the Ditchley Conference, Janet Lim of UNHCR proposed that this issue be made the over-

arching theme for the work of the Inter Agency Standing Committee in 2010. She recommended that all of the sub-groups working on the various aspects of humanitarian reform, such as leadership, clusters and financing, re-orient their work-plans to make effective local partner engagement a priority issue in 2010.

The GHP should also consider other ways of moving this item forward. It may need to ask whether the IASC is the right body to reflect the views of wider ranging GHP agencies. It should consider how such agencies and the local and national humanitarian partners can be part of a process to develop a new humanitarian business model. “Failure to address and reverse present trends will result in the demise of an international assistance and protection regime based on time-tested humanitarian principles. If the disconnect between the perceived needs of intended beneficiaries and the assistance and protection actually provided continues to grow, humanitarianism as a compassionate endeavour to bring succour to people in extremis may become increasingly alien and suspect to those it purports to help.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Donini, Antonio: **Hard questions for the future of the humanitarian enterprise**. Refugee Studies Centre: Forced Migration Review, Issue 29. Oxford, December 2007.

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