



Buitenlandse
Zaken

GOOD HUMANITARIAN DONORSHIP

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

Chairs' Summary Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative Meeting 22 June 2009, EC delegation Geneva

Co-Chairs: EC and NL
Present GHD members: AUT, BEL, CAN, CHE, CZE, DEU, DNK, EST, FIN, FRA, GBR, IRL, ITA, JPN, NOR, NZD, SWE, USA
Observer donor: Republic of Korea
Standing Invitee: OCHA
Guest speakers (morning): S. Fouquet (DFID-Kinshasa), F. Froehlich (SDC, seconded to UNRWA), U. Kollies (OCHA), R. Otto (Channel Research)

The GHD meeting took place in two sessions. The first was a specific session dedicated to the issue of donor coordination in the field. This was followed by a session on on-going GHD business. The Republic of Korea was officially welcomed by the co-chairs as an observer to the meeting.

A) GHD - lessons on donor coordination and mapping study

The thematic session addressed lessons learned on donor coordination in the field as one of the three main strands of work identified by the GHD group in its current (2008-2009) work plan. The purpose of the session was first, to take stock of current coordination practices in the field; and second, to come up with concrete recommendations on how to improve donor coordination.

A 'Study on the Mapping of Donor Coordination (Humanitarian Aid) at the Field Level', undertaken by Channel Research and commissioned by the European Commission (DG ECHO) on behalf of GHD was circulated in advance of the meeting. This report was warmly welcomed by the group as a useful reference for discussions on enhancing donor coordination.

The theme was introduced by a presentation of the donor coordination mapping study by Ralf Otto, Channel Research (one of the co-authors of the study). The study highlights the fact that donors do in many cases coordinate their activities in the field, with coordination taking very varied forms (often informal) depending on local circumstances and the degree to which donors are present in the field. Donor coordination can add value to humanitarian response both by providing a "checks and balances" function, and by looking into broader systemic issues at a country level. The study found that while donors' field representatives were in most cases aware of GHD in general terms, there was little awareness of the relevance of specific

GHD principles to the field, and there appeared to be little guidance to field representatives from donors' headquarters on the application of GHD principles. It was noted that GHD is (alongside the EU humanitarian aid Consensus) the only overarching framework establishing principles for good donor behaviour, and this made it highly pertinent as a tool for the field. One of the main recommendations of the study therefore concerned the identification of the GHD principles most directly relevant to a given situation, and their communication to the field.

The GHD group heard presentations on lessons learned from three concrete examples of donor coordination in the field. The donor coordination process initiated by donors in the occupied Palestinian territories was presented by Fritz Froehlich (SDC, currently on secondment to UNRWA). In the oPt donor coordination on humanitarian issues (which became known as 'the 'Friday' group) had been instituted at the initiative of one donor when faced with specific conflict-related access issues in the early 2000s; it had proved the usefulness of donors speaking with one voice on access issues, and had also in a number of instances been useful in supporting specific action by UN and other operational actors. The GHD group in the Democratic Republic of Congo was presented by Sebastian Fouquet (DFID), current chair of the group. The DRC group tended to focus on higher-level strategic issues, given that the DRC pooled fund mechanism had to a large extent obviated the need for project-level operational coordination. It had evolved into a useful focal point for donor discussions with operational partners, and in a number of instances had developed positions presented to UN or host government partners. Finally, the Geneva-based donor contact group on Chad was presented by Ute Kollies (OCHA). The group was established by the UK in 2007, and has focussed both on funding issues and on advocacy with regard to implementation of humanitarian reform and coordination in Chad. The work of the group had led to, or contributed to, a number of concrete steps on the ground to improve coordination and response. A joint donor mission organized by the group had made an important contribution in this regard.

➤ *Copies of presentations and photos are annexed to this report.*

In the discussion, donors agreed that donor coordination in the field should be context-specific. More formalized arrangements were perceived as functioning well in contexts such as DRC and Sudan. In response to the study's recommendations, some of which were presented at the meeting, some donors commented positively on the recommendation to identify those GHD principles that are most relevant to a given context and to provide more specific 'guidance' for field representatives on the application of GHD (as part of a two-way communication field-capital, not as a 'top-down' exercise).

A small-group discussion with read-out to the whole group concluded the session and the following preliminary conclusions and follow-up action were put on the table to be taken forward in the next period of the GHD work plan:

Conclusions

- Donor-coordination in the field seen as strategically important for advocacy, raising the 'humanitarian voice' with other actors and support to the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator/OCHA and wider humanitarian community in effective delivery of aid.
- Agreement that field-based donor coordination should be context specific and with flexible format (voluntary participation, careful attention to be paid to who is 'plugged-in' remotely e.g. via email/info circulation (where not able to be present)
- Challenges to donor coordination highlighted include: variable capacity and rotation of people; different 'cultures' of donor representatives and actors present (humanitarian/development/political); how best to link informal contacts with formal structures; political constraints and divergence on definition of humanitarian aid (in relation to transition); different funding planning-cycles.
- Positive lessons from the cases studied include: agreement on value-added strategic approach to donor coordination (need for clarity of purpose); informality of process and voluntary participation important - even where groups are formally convened; multi-donor missions considered particularly useful and systematic info share encouraged from findings of individual donor missions.

Proposed follow-up Action

Specific actions (short-term):

- Geneva-based Chad donor coordination group - will be reconvened by UK before the summer
- Proposal that donors share Terms of Reference for their humanitarian field representatives (where applicable)
- Review circulation of summary minutes from DRC and Sudan donor coordination groups (and others where applicable).

For the next year:

- Strengthen GHD global-field link: two-way communication field donor groups- 'Capitals' GHD group to be enhanced; input from the field on problems/priorities to be considered under GHD umbrella (both collectively and within each donor organisation);
- 'Capitals' GHD group - to clarify expectations on donor coordination in the field.
- Capitals GHD group to look at (a number of) GHD principles and good practice and how these are field-relevant and elements of implementation and review 'guidance' (Danish GHD field-guidance note), with focus on a few key messages on GHD and its operational relevancy.
- DRC GHD group will review principles at a forthcoming meeting with a few to offering some advice/input on 'implementability' and field-relevance.
- In field - increase number of 'joint' missions where feasible and ensure info share from individual donor missions.

Longer-term issues to be explored further:

- What 'incentives' are there for GHD donors field-based representatives to provide 'information and analysis' service function to donors without field presence?
- Possibility of building-up a network of GHD 'focal points' in the field
- Definitional issues: humanitarian aid and transition.

B) On-going GHD Business

1. July meeting preparations - proposed agenda and format

The annual High Level meeting of GHD will be organized on Thursday 23 July, directly following the Humanitarian Segment of ECOSOC. The meeting will have a short donors-only session in the morning and will be open for members of the Inter Agency Standing Committee for the rest of the day. On the agenda for the morning session is the nomination of the new GHD chair, a review of the work plan and annual report, reflection on areas for implementation under the forthcoming chair(s), and a review of donor implementation of commitments under GHD. During this last agenda item Development Initiatives will give a short presentation of the new 2009 Global Humanitarian Assistance report. Concerning the agenda for the afternoon session the main theme will be the Principles of Partnership. A more detailed agenda will be issued after consultation with OCHA as liaison for the Inter Agency Standing Committee-GHD contact group, ICVA and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Reform. A final agenda for the July meeting can be expected in the week of 6 July.

2. Update by Ireland on examples of donor financing mechanism approaches for NGO and Red Cross Movement partners.

The case-study paper under preparation by Ireland with contribution of a number of donors on financing approaches to non-UN organisations according to good practice in humanitarian donorship is not yet finalized. In relation to Abby Stoddards' recommendation to maintain diversity in funding mechanisms the paper will seek to illustrate some examples of financing mechanisms from donors for non-UN partners which reflect some or all of the GHD principles no. 11 to 14 (e.g. dynamic, flexible, predictable, un-earmarked, etc.). GHD members are invited to present a case study for this paper following the format that was previously distributed by Ireland. Contributions should be submitted within the coming three weeks (with thanks to those who have already contributed) so that the paper can be finalised for early autumn.

3. Monitoring collective progress in implementing GHD commitments

DARA

On 28 May 2009 the Netherlands had a short bilateral meeting with DARA and was present at an NGO meeting at which DARA gave a presentation on its Humanitarian Response Index. DARA has been working on its methodology but still adheres to the system of ranking individual donors. In 2007 the GHD group already expressed its doubts about the ranking system. GHD is not a 'beauty contest' but a collective effort to improve the effectiveness and quality of humanitarian assistance. A background paper from DARA with more information on the changes in methodology could not be ready in time for the GHD meeting but will be distributed to GHD members at a later stage. The next humanitarian response index will be presented in November 2009 in Washington. OCHA informed the group that John Holmes had not yet confirmed that he would write the foreword for this HRI as DARA have requested.

Development Initiatives

During the annual GHD meeting in July Development Initiatives will give a short presentation on the new Global Humanitarian Assistance report. This report will be based on figures of

2007 for DAC members and 2008 for non-DAC members. A copy of the report will be circulated shortly before the meeting.

OECD-DAC

At the May GHD meeting the co-chairs indicated that the revised DAC humanitarian peer review assessment framework was near finalisation. Meanwhile the assessment framework has been finalised and circulated on OLIS (the OECD's information network). This version is now being used in forthcoming peer reviews. The overall peer review assessment framework will be open for further revision in mid-2010. The co-chairs noted that it would be useful to stay involved in the discussion around the revised assessment framework either through the GHD group or via delegations to the DAC in Paris.

Domestic Implementation

The United States informed the group that they have recently re-instituted an inter-agency steering committee on humanitarian aid (including both USAID and PRM and other relevant parts of government).

Canada is supportive of learning and accountability initiatives that can improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action (GHD principle no. 21) and to this end is hoping to support an initiative with a Canadian Humanitarian Coalition comprised of Care Canada, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Québec, Save the Children Canada to pilot their monitoring and evaluation framework during a humanitarian emergency. On needs assessment tools (linked to GHD principle no. 6), Canada is looking ahead to supporting the Humanitarian Needs Analysis Support Project (HUNASP) in order to strengthen multi-sectoral needs assessment, and the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) project.

4. Any Other Business

Future chairing of GHD

Ireland indicated that it was putting forward its candidacy to take over chairmanship of GHD for the period 2009-2010. The preliminary announcement was met with a very positive response. Ireland is still in consultation with an interested co-chair and a formal endorsement on chairing will be taken at the July 'annual' meeting.

GHD Future discussion

The co-chairs have been working on a brief outline for taking forward this discussion. Themes that will be addressed are amongst others the scope and focus of GHD; the operational relevancy of GHD at the field level; the link of GHD with other fora and partners; and management of the process (e.g. workload, rotating chairs, rolling work plan). Some preliminary work on this will be taken forward on the basis of an issues paper to be looked at initially by the group of former and future co-chairs for further discussion.

Letter to GHD co-chairs from the Norwegian Refugee Council

The Norwegian Refugee Council have written to propose a field visit by the GHD group to Afghanistan to assess the operational challenges faced by humanitarian agencies working in this context. Both co-chairs acknowledge the challenging humanitarian environment in Afghanistan but consider it not to be logistically feasible to visit Afghanistan with a group of 35 donors. It would put too high a strain on the security infrastructure of the donor-missions in Kabul, without judging the general point about whether joint donor field visits under the GHD umbrella should be considered. The GHD group did not reach a final conclusion on this

matter. There was discussion on different formats for such a field visit and an interest in consulting further on proposed scope and purpose. Consultation with missions in Kabul was also considered appropriate. The co-chairs concluded that the proposal would be reflected upon further before replying.

Needs Based Decision Making – training organized by Sweden

Sweden informed the group about the training workshop on needs based decision making that was held from 10 to 12 June in Härnösand, Sweden. The handbook for this training will be further developed as a base for future training and will be shared with all donors through the GHD website. Several delegations gave very positive feedback on the training and informed Sweden that they would welcome further training sessions.

Estonia – Seminar

Estonia informed the group about the ODSG outreach event that was hosted by Estonia in Tallinn in June. The outreach event focussed on emerging European donors and was also attended by Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, Japan and Croatia. The participation of ERC John Holmes was much appreciated. Participants found the event very useful.

Update by EC on Needs Assessment-letter

The European Commission gave an update on the proposed donor letter on needs assessments to John Holmes. In follow up to the discussions during Montreux in March and the GHD meeting in January the EC had circulated a draft letter on the subject of needs assessments open for signature by the GHD group. The deadline for signing was Friday 19 June. So far 15 donors have confirmed their intention to sign the letter.

Sweden – CAP meeting

Sweden informed the group about the ad hoc meeting on the funding status of humanitarian appeals that was held at the Swedish mission on 8 June. A report of the meeting has been circulated. The meeting received a positive response by the participants. A follow up meeting is planned for October 2009.

Norway – Transaction costs study

Norway gave an update with regard to the Transaction Costs Study on Humanitarian Pooled Funds – an initiative of UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, FAO and WHO. Norway is a member of the steering committee of this study together with Denmark and Ireland. A second draft of the study has been circulated. Preliminary results indicate that the study will identify specific challenges for CHF's in the context of wider humanitarian reform but will not provide many new recommendations. A challenge is posed by the lack of baseline data with regard to transactions costs. The study is running behind schedule with finalization expected for autumn 2009.

5. Conclusions (on-going business session)

- The annual GHD meeting will be held on 23 July 2009. The session that is open to IASC members will focus on the Principles of Partnership. A final agenda will follow in the week of 6 July. Co-chairs are finalising consultation on the agenda.
- The Irish discussion paper on financing non-UN organizations according to good practice in humanitarian donorship is under preparation. GHD members are invited to present case studies at the latest by 20 July. Contact person: Anne Holmes, Irish Aid.

- Development Initiatives will present the new GHA report during the annual GHD meeting on 23 July. A copy of the report will be circulated beforehand.
- A background paper by DARA on revisions to their methodology is expected and will be circulated in due course. Further follow up is handed to the next co-chairs.
- Updates on domestic implementation were given by USA and Canada.
- The revised humanitarian assessment framework of OECD-DAC has been finalised and will be used in forthcoming peer reviews. Possibility for review will be provided in 2010.
- Ireland stepped forward as candidate for (co-)chairmanship of the GHD group for the period 2009-2010.
- The discussion on the use and scope of GHD will be taken forward in the coming months on the basis of an issues paper that the co-chairs will initially share with a group of former and future GHD co-chairs.
- On the request from NRC for a field visit to Afghanistan the co-chairs concluded that this was not considered feasible in the short-term but in light of discussion the matter would be subject to further reflection.
- Information updates were provided by Estonia (on the ODSG outreach event in Tallinn); Sweden (on the needs based training and draft handbook, and on the ad hoc donor meeting on the CAP with follow-up planned for October 2009); the EC (on the draft donor needs assessment letter); and Norway (on the study on transaction costs of humanitarian pooled funds - expected for autumn 2009).
