

Feedback to the GHP on the Principles of Partnership

1. What practical suggestions do field colleagues have to improve humanitarian response and access to humanitarian relief in your country of operation;

1.1 Maintain/enhance the cluster system

Given its success in fostering coordination and relationship building between key stakeholders in the aftermath of the Yogyakarta earthquake, we should maintain the cluster system for significantly scaled emergency responses.

We should build on the successes of the cluster system in the following ways ...

- Develop strong links and working relationships *now* between agencies that will be working together in specific clusters, and explore the possibility for joint cluster leadership between the UN and non-UN actors.
- Place greater emphasis on coordination planning at local and national level and mapping of partner resources and logistics for effectiveness and predictability in responding to disasters.
- It is essential that the cluster system is as inclusive as possible for local/national NGOs - this should include consideration of issues such as translation services/location/timing of meetings etc.
- This forum could have substantial value in the collation/dissemination of sectoral "best practice" and ensuring that work is being done in line with international standards.
- Given its position in catalyzing transitional programme thinking, we should ensure that key players (e.g. the Govt or World Bank) are brought into these discussions from the start.
- Ensure that the scale of the clusters matches needs – do not start every cluster when in reality only three or four are needed.

...and learn the following.

- Government relationships – the "easy win" is a one-dimensional focus around co-chairing meetings. Our aspiration should be for a real strategic engagement with Government such as that which was achieved in the Education cluster in Yogya.
- Some clusters tried to achieve too much too soon without sufficient tools/guidance
- Lack of participation from national NGOs/ local communities
- Too UN-centric
- Lack of clear guidance as well as different perspectives of agencies in deciding when to dissolve a cluster

1.2 Fostering interagency inclusivity and coordination

The substantial number of agencies (both national and international) who are now engaging in Emergency or Humanitarian response work underscores the necessity for effective and inclusive coordination across the sector.

- We must achieve a more effective engagement with, and understanding of, the large number of faith-based organizations who are providing very effective assistance in the emergency context. Often this is done from a position that lies outside the international co-ordination systems.
- The INGO sector must initiate more sustained co-ordination meetings to build robust relationships that will facilitate coordination and programming synergies. This forum should also provide a simple means for outside agencies (incl the UN) to consult with INGOs.
- We must recognize our responsibility to share and promote internationally recognized Humanitarian principles (eg Sphere) across the sector.
- Recognize the immense value of the work of local NGOs in situations such as Yogya. All agencies (but esp. INGOs) should ensure that they facilitate the inclusion of local humanitarian actors and affected communities in planning processes.

- The Inter Agency Technical Working Group for Disaster Risk Reduction could act as an interface between various stakeholders (Govt., INGOs, NGOs) within the framework of the IASC Country Team's functions to coordinate efforts in assessment, mapping response capacities and in developing a comprehensive response matrix based on assessment findings. This would facilitate efficiency in the CERF, CAP and other joint funding processes.
- There are an increasing number of non-traditional/private sector actors operating within the Humanitarian sector, including CSR work by multinational organizations, local companies distributing foodstuffs and NFI's, and international organizations providing donor funded solutions (e.g. Shelter). Consideration should be given to how we can (a) ensure that these are in line with internationally recognized standards and (b) bring them inside existing coordination systems.
- It is generally accepted that there is a very valid role for the UN to co-ordinate in an emergency situation (though in the later case impartiality and neutrality caveats for the work of some agencies need to be clearly understood and recognized by all actors).
- To ensure that assistance is based on priorities determined on the ground, the Government, UN and NGOs must work closely together to ensure greater understanding of the needs and requirements created by a disaster and plan a comprehensive response.

1.3 Ensuring a smarter and more effective approach to financial resourcing of Humanitarian responses

Clearly significant flows of financial resources are essential, but there are recommendations to be made around the way that these are managed if they are to build or support more effective Humanitarian responses.

- Change is needed in the ways that donors approach and engage with emergencies. Currently a significant amount of donor assistance is provided bilaterally or outside of the cluster or UN flash appeal system. This creates a dynamic where INGOs are competing with each other and with the UN and local actors for funds. A more systematic or "merit" based system, where resources are allocated according to recognised needs and capacities to deliver, would lead to more effective delivery of assistance, particularly if funds could be disbursed in a timely way through the cluster system. To prevent this becoming a bottleneck, this will need effective and agile cluster management.
- Consideration of the GHP "Principles of Partnership" by larger donor institutions. In both Yogya and Aceh we see donors and institutions such as the World Bank managing huge resource flows, particularly in the post emergency or reconstruction/rehabilitation sectors. If the "Principles" are to lead to a genuine improvement in the Humanitarian sector, these agencies should be in compliance with them.
- Build a broader understanding across the INGO/NGO community about internal UN resourcing systems such as the global CERF, or the locally applied ERF or CAP mechanisms and ensure that these function in a transparent and timely way. In line with this, consideration should be given to having a degree of non-UN oversight or engagement with the ERF.

1.4 Preparedness/Capacity Building

Whilst the above has focused on experiences gained in large-scale disaster settings, it is clear that we should also look at the longer term situation – In the long term how do we ensure the existence of sufficient national capacity to deal with Humanitarian Emergencies, and until we get there, how can we build and maintain the robust relationships required to ensure adequate operational space that exists for International actors?

- We need to co-ordinate more on DRR/CBDRM work, with oversight of this being provided by the UN. The UN agencies and NGOs are providing substantial capacity building to local actors (NGO and Government) on issues such as disaster policy and practice, good governance, CBDRM, fund raising, volunteer management, advocacy, networking and gender issues. Coordination is needed here to identify gaps and prevent overlaps.

- The Humanitarian Coordinator's leadership role in bridging into the Indonesian Government is recognized as crucial, particularly in ensuring mutual understanding and transparency in humanitarian operations.
- Take the opportunity presented by the new legislation concerning disaster management and response as a platform to ensure engagement of NGOs/UN with local level planning processes, lobbying on these down to a local level in key "at risk" geographic areas.
- Government Capacity building (esp. local Government) is seen as crucial. Recent experience has been that Government can be slow in collating or sharing information in the early stages of a Humanitarian response. The UN should help enhance Government capacity in consolidation, analysis and dissemination of information, and we must all work together in building Government awareness of the differing roles, mandates and expertise of the Humanitarian agencies that are operating in country.

2. What do you think about these 5 principles of partnership? If applied in your country context will it make humanitarian access better? Can you see any practical improvements? Or would you see something else as being more worthwhile?

The 5 principles are seen as being very valid, both in general terms and in the specific ways that they are worded. They are a necessary part of achieving improved working across the sector, but we must recognise that they are part of a larger process of change. If they underpin and inform some of the more tangible activities outlined in the first section it is likely that we will achieve the improvements sought.

Re the principles themselves – two comments apply;

The overall aspiration is that we are aiming for better partnership *in order to* provide better quality humanitarian assistance. Therefore, we suggest amending the first sentence in the "Result Oriented Approach" principle to read that "*Effective humanitarian action must be reality based and action oriented, and must provide a clear and measurable benefit to victims of conflict, violence and disasters*".

In order to better reflect an ambition to provide sustainable solutions the second sentence in the "Responsibility" principle should state that "*They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills and capacity to deliver on their commitments, and care must be taken to pass responsibility and ownership of any interventions to the relevant authorities at its closure.*"

3. What would be the top three most urgent priorities that would improve the way we work in Humanitarian action so that victims of conflict, violence and disaster achieve their rights?

- Develop clear ways of working together and understanding expectations around these (which draw on these principles) so that agencies understand fully and act according to expectations in Humanitarian Emergencies.
- Establish/re-launch a mechanism for genuine dialogue between UN, Government, INGOs, LNGOs, Red Cross movement, and other key stakeholders in Disaster response and management so that we have a space where we can highlight and deal with priority Humanitarian Issues. The IASC Country Team allows broader participation at policy and planning level on emergency response. Similar possibilities need to be explored to ensure policy level discussions between UN and non-UN actors on preparedness and disaster risk reduction.
- Use recent large-scale examples from Aceh/Yogyakarta to draw out the factors that promote high quality assistance.

4. What else would you like to say to the SCHR CEO's and to OCHA about this process?

- To encourage them to continue with this initiative, and make sure that the relevant local staff are encouraged to support and comply with this initiative.
- On the INGO side, CEO's must ensure that there is alignment and complementarity between this initiative and other improved humanitarian approaches that are being piloted in Indonesia (e.g. ECB3, Humanitarian Forum etc).
- Some consideration should be given to ensuring that other key actors (eg donors) recognize and act in line with the principles.

- The INGO community should recognize that the SCHR grouping is a small subset of all the INGOs active in the country and that to be effective the principles should cover the approaches of a broader base of agencies.

5. What type of mechanism/forum/action do you see as necessary in order to eventually put principles of partnership into action?

- Reaching a commonly held and robust understanding of what constitutes an effective Humanitarian response, reaching common understanding on the mandates of the various stakeholders involved, and, most importantly, agreeing how we act and measure the impact of our actions.
- The newly enacted Disaster Management Law number 24/2007 calls for the creation of a new Government agency to manage such responses, together with the development of new systems and ways of working. This provides an excellent opportunity to embed the “principles” and we must effectively engage with this process.
- IASC meetings
- Humanitarian INGO meetings and increased coordination
- NGO consortium meetings
- UN NGO Donor coordination meetings
- UN TWG at the technical level for the provision of capacity building

Also when implementing the cluster approach in the next emergency, this should build upon the strengths that were acknowledged in the Yogyakarta response:

- Clusters with strong Cluster leads and programming
- Strategic planning and TOR development e.g. Emergency Shelters & standards
- Proved to be flexible, innovative approach
- Participation from international and national NGO's
- Recognize the value that the strategic engagement of the Government within the Education cluster had.

6. What kind of “indicators of success” do you see eventually being put into place to monitor how the principles are being used?

Impact on vulnerable population's

- Improved speed and quality of assistance to those in need.
- Strong processes of accountability to beneficiaries are put in place in Humanitarian responses.
- New legislation is implemented in a way that produces a tangible improvement in the quality of assistance provided to vulnerable populations.

Coordination amongst agencies

- Level of participation in regular UN NGO Donor coordination meetings and on other related meetings.
- Greater interaction between UN and non-UN actors at all levels, including participation in coordination fora at national and regional levels.
- Following the introduction of new legislation being introduced to cover the Humanitarian sector retrain/support Government in taking on leadership of the Humanitarian sector.
- In case of emergencies, involvement of NGOs in drafting of strategy and contingency planning.