The State of Art of Humanitarian Action

A Quick Guide on the current situation of Humanitarian Relief, its Origins, Stakeholders and Future
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<td>Action Contre le Faim</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALNAP</td>
<td>Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action</td>
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<td>ART</td>
<td>Antiretroviral Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of South-East Asian Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRICS</td>
<td>Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Co-operative for American Remittances Everywhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Community Humanitarian Office</td>
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<td>EUPRHA</td>
<td>European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERC</td>
<td>Emergency Relief Coordinator</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HC</td>
<td>Humanitarian Coordinator</td>
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<td>HRL</td>
<td>Human Rights Law</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>IHL</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>LAS</td>
<td>League of Arab States</td>
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<td>LRRD</td>
<td>Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development</td>
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<td>MSF</td>
<td>Médecins Sans Frontières</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>NOHA</td>
<td>Network of Humanitarian Action</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>OECD-DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee of the OECD</td>
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<td>OIC</td>
<td>Organization of Islamic Cooperation</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>Resident Coordinator</td>
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<td>RCRC</td>
<td>Red Cross Red Crescent</td>
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<td>SINGO</td>
<td>Southern International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDHA</td>
<td>United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>Under Secretary General</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>United Nations World Food Program</td>
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The State of Art of Humanitarian Action was written by Roger Gutierrez Salgado, a NOHA Master’s in International Humanitarian Action graduate and independent consultant, and draws upon many reports and different documents that have been published during the last years. All the sources are acknowledged. Input and review were provided by María López and María Nagore from the EUPRHA management team. Overall oversight and leadership was provided by Cristina Churruca, EUPRHA Project Coordinator of the Universidad de Deusto.

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Introduction

This paper aims at providing a picture of the field of humanitarian action. Therefore the report has been structured in the following way:

The first four sections briefly define humanitarian action and the humanitarian system and outline its main features. It provides a definition of humanitarian action, its goals, scope and main characteristics, its norms (the Humanitarian Principles and its Core Standards), the origins and evolution of the current humanitarian system and the main humanitarian stakeholders and their key features.

Once the humanitarian system is defined, the fifth section describes the major mechanisms of governance, leadership and coordination of the humanitarian system so the reader can have a basic idea on how does this system actually interact and work when an international emergency struck a community, country or group of countries.

Finally, the sixth section explores the current trends and challenges that the world in general, and humanitarians in particular face and will provide some insights on how the humanitarian system should evolve in order be aware and adapt itself to such trends and how o respond to the challenges that it is facing.

It is hoped that this document will help the reader to get a brief but very complete idea on the concepts tackled, although the complexity of the sector goes far beyond the succinctness of this report. For this reason, a wealth of interesting references and links have been also added to the key concepts that the reader can click on for further exploration and learning. Some boxes with key concepts, current debates and useful additions have been added too for the same purpose.

The work is accompanied by three annexes: (i) a first annex provides a list of sources of law and international frameworks under which the humanitarian system is built; (ii) a second annex that provides a list of reading for further consultation listed by sector: and (iii) a glossary of the most important terms used both in this report and in the humanitarian sector in general.
What is humanitarian action?

The notions of ‘humanitarian action’ and ‘humanitarian system’ have almost as many definitions as authors, organizations and institutions have defined them. Indeed, as Borton says, “a striking feature of the humanitarian system is the continuing lack of clarity as to what the ‘humanitarian system’ actually consists of and where its boundaries lie”.

Indeed the humanitarian sector is extremely difficult to define due to its constant evolution, changes and the many different –sometimes even opposite- points of view and definitions expressed by both scholars and practitioners. As Walker and Maxwell expressed, “Its complexity of origins, multitude of players and ever-varying environment make humanitarianism a challenging system to describe and understand and an even more challenging system to predict”.

Humanitarian action has grown into a multibillion dollar industry with capacity to cope with complex emergencies affecting millions of human beings worldwide. Just to have an idea of its size, as many sources such as ALNAP or Development Initiatives describe, the collective international government response to humanitarian crises reached an historic peak in 2010, growing by 10% to reach US $13 billion. Although financial flows have slowed down during the last two years due to the global financial crisis, it is estimated that there are some 4,400 NGOs worldwide undertaking humanitarian action on an ongoing basis and an estimated total of 274,000 humanitarian workers worldwide. To this figures there should be added those of governments, corporations, military, etc that would result on a final still undetermined number of hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Thus, according to many, this sector has become a massive community of stakeholders and actors, who interact, collaborate, coordinate and sometimes even compete to succeed on their main objective: protecting lives and dignity of vulnerable populations and communities affected by natural disasters and conflicts all over the globe.

The aim of humanitarian action

Humanitarian aid generally considered a fundamental expression of the universal value of solidarity between people and a moral imperative. It has many different definitions depending on authors, and reflecting the diversity of organizations and institutions. Nonetheless, the main part of the academia and the humanitarian community has a shared understanding on the aim of humanitarian action.

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid which provides a common vision that guides the action of the EU, both at its Member States and Community levels, in humanitarian aid in third countries and is supported by the main European humanitarian NGOs, defines the aim of humanitarian aid:

In the same line according to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC)— which brings together the main international aid donors—“humanitarian aid is assistance designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies”.

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2 Ibid., p. 5.
5 For more information, numbers and figures on humanitarian aid please visit ALNAP and Global Humanitarian Assistance.
Today humanitarian action is framed in an overall international approach that brings together the United Nations, the Red Cross/Crescent movement, humanitarian NGOs and others, in support of local responses to humanitarian crises. This approach can be found in key internationally agreed documents and standards such as the already mentioned Consensus (2008), the UN Resolutions 46/182 (1991) and 58/114 (2003), the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (1994) or the Sphere Standards and the Humanitarian Charter (2000).

Scope

With regards to its scope, humanitarian assistance is provided in response to man-made crises and to natural disasters as needed. Humanitarian action encompasses operations aimed at:

a) Providing Assistance, relief and protection: Operations to save and preserve life in humanitarian crises or their immediate aftermath.

b) Securing Access: Actions aimed at facilitating or obtaining access to people in need and the free flow of assistance as reaching vulnerable people is essential to provide adequate protection and assistance in the context of a natural disaster and a complex emergency as well as in the improving of local capacity to support humanitarian needs.

c) Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction: Operations aimed at developing capacities for local actors to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies.

Considering this scope, one can classify humanitarian action in three categories, ranging from a narrow to a broad definition of humanitarianism.

Firstly, a narrowly defined ‘humanitarian action’ focuses on ‘assistance’ or the provision of basic needs - this category tends to be short-term in nature and operates in the immediate aftermath of a humanitarian crisis (relief).

Secondly, in a broader scope, the concept of humanitarian aid comprises not only the immediate emergency response but also activities aimed to rehabilitate disaster struck populations and areas, to make the situation habitable again, to start preparing for a return to normality.

Thirdly, in its broadest sense – ‘humanitarian action’ encompasses all activities falling within the scope of linking relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction/development. This concept of humanitarian action fulfills all the criteria of relief and rehabilitation but also gives input into the process of reconstructing disaster struck societies aiming for sustainable development in the longer term.

Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian Action is characterized not just by its goal and scope. It is also informed by a set of principles that distinguish it from other forms of aid. It should be motivated by the sole aim of helping other humans affected by disasters (humanity), exclusively based on people’s needs and without any further discrimination (impartiality), without favoring any side in a conflict or other dispute where aid is deployed (neutrality), and free from any economic, political, or military interests at stake (independence).

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9 Ibid.


12 Instituto Hegoa de Estudios sobre Desarrollo y Cooperación Internacional, Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación Internaiconal. Editor’s translation from Spanish.
Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles and Core Standards

A group of humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement initiated in 1997 the Sphere project (or SPHERE).\(^{16}\) It is a voluntary initiative that brings a wide range of humanitarian agencies together around a common aim - to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and the accountability of humanitarian actors to their constituents, donors and affected populations.

The Sphere Handbook, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, is one of the most widely known and internationally recognized sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response (water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion; food security and nutrition; shelter, settlement and non-food items; and health action). It is the result of a broad inter-agency collaboration. Because it is not owned by any one organization, the Sphere Handbook enjoys broad acceptance by the humanitarian sector as a whole.

Sphere’s philosophy is based on two core beliefs: first, that those affected by disaster or conflict have a right to life with dignity and, therefore, a right to assistance; and second, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict.

The Humanitarian Charter and minimum standards reflect the determination of agencies to improve both the effectiveness of their assistance and their accountability to their stakeholders, contributing to a practical framework for accountability.

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14 For more information on the ICRC’s public statements with regards to the adherence to humanitarian principles, please see: http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/statement/humanitarian-principles-statement-121007.htm

15 For more information and critical views to the realistic application of humanitarian principles, please see the work of Hugo Slim on pieces such as this one, available online: http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/165Idealismandrealisminhumanitarianaction.pdf

16 The Sphere Project is not a membership organization. Governed by a Board composed of representatives of global networks of humanitarian agencies: http://www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/about/governance/board-member-organizations/
Humanitarian Charter

The Humanitarian Charter provides the ethical and legal backdrop to the Protection Principles, as well as to the Core Standards and minimum standards, thereby setting the stage for their correct interpretation and implementation. It is a statement of established legal rights and obligations and shared beliefs and commitments of humanitarian agencies, all collected in a set of common principles, rights and duties.

Founded on the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative, these include the right to life with dignity, the right to receive humanitarian assistance and the right to protection and security. The Humanitarian Charter explains why both assistance and protection are critical pillars of humanitarian action.

Protection Principles

Protection is a core part of humanitarian action and the Protection Principles point to the responsibility of all humanitarian agencies to ensure that their activities are concerned with the more severe threats that affected people commonly face in times of conflict or disaster. They translate several of the legal principles and rights outlined in the Charter into strategies and actions that should inform humanitarian practice from a protection perspective.

All humanitarian agencies should ensure that:

- Their actions do not bring further harm to affected people (Protection Principle 1),
- Their activities benefit in particular those who are most affected and vulnerable (Protection Principle 2),
- They contribute to protecting affected people from violence and other Human Rights abuses (Protection Principle 3) and
- They help affected people recover from abuses (Protection Principle 4).

The roles and responsibilities of humanitarian agencies in protection are, generally, secondary to the legal responsibility of the state or other relevant authorities. Protection often involves reminding these authorities of their responsibilities.

The Core Standards and minimum standards are an articulation of what these principles and obligations mean in practice. They are the first set of minimum standards and inform all others. They describe how the processes and approaches taken during a humanitarian response are fundamental to an effective response. A focus on the capacity and active participation of those affected by disaster or conflict, a comprehensive analysis and understanding of needs and context, effective coordination among agencies, a commitment to continually improving performance, and appropriately skilled and supported aid workers are all essential in order to attain the technical standards17.

The minimum standards are evidence-based and represent sector-wide consensus on best practice in humanitarian response. They also describe conditions that must be achieved in any humanitarian response in order for disaster-affected populations to survive and recover in stable conditions and with dignity.18 19

Cross-Cutting Themes

The new efforts towards a people-centered approach and action brought into consideration particular areas of concern in disaster response that address individual, group or general vulnerability issues that humanitarian interventions should pay special attention to20. These are commonly referred to as “cross-cutting issues” (XCIs).

The term is employed to designate approaches (such as Disaster Risk Reduction or early recovery), themes (such as environment), conditions (such as HIV/AIDS and various forms of diversity including

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17 The core standards are: People-centered humanitarian response, coordination and collaboration, assessment, Design and response, Performance, transparency and learning, Aid worker performance. See Sphere online at: http://www.sphereproject.org/.
18 The Sphere Project was one of the first of what are now known as the quality and accountability (Q&A) initiatives. See Sphere online at: http://www.sphereproject.org/.
20 Beneficiaries and affected populations must remain at the center of the humanitarian response and be the protagonists of their own development.
disability) and universal determinants (such as gender and age). The problem is that a comprehensive definition of XCIs does not capture the breadth and diversity of the subjects\textsuperscript{21}. It is in fact counterproductive. The Humanitarian Reform, in particular the introduction of the cluster system, and, more recently, the IASC Transformative Agenda, were seen as opportunities to integrate XCIs more effectively into humanitarian planning and response. Unfortunately, this has not happened. All these factors contribute to keep such subjects at the periphery of humanitarian policy and practice, thereby hampering the overall quality, relevance and impartiality of humanitarian action. Nevertheless, the main humanitarian actors recognize in one way or the other the following cross-cutting themes in humanitarian interventions\textsuperscript{22}:

- Children
- Older People
- Gender
- Persons with disabilities
- HIV and AIDS
- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- Environment
- Mental Health/ Psychosocial support

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\textsuperscript{22} http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/accountability-to-affected-people/visuals

For further details, please read the entire section on the Sphere Handbook.

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\textsuperscript{23} The concept of Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) appeared for the first time in 1996\textsuperscript{23} and has changed the way humanitarian action is understood. The theory states that “disasters are costly in both human life and resources, they disrupt economic and social development and lead to separate bureaucratic structures and procedures which do not systematically take into account long term development issues. Development policy, at the same time, is not enough prepared to cope with drought, conflicts and the need to protect vulnerable households by helping them to develop coping strategies”\textsuperscript{24}. It was thus stated, “If relief and development can be appropriately linked, these deficiencies can be reduced. Better development can reduce the need for emergency relief, better relief can contribute to development, and better rehabilitation can ease the transition between the two”\textsuperscript{25}.


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
Origins and evolution of the Humanitarian System

From Solferino to the End of the Cold War

The origins of humanitarism are rooted in most societies since centuries ago. Charity and philanthropy have been embodied in most cultures and religions, and early examples abound of actions by states and religious institutions or orders to alleviate human suffering in situations of man-made or natural disasters. However, the origins, rise and evolution of what could be called “modern humanitarian system” started during the second half of the 19th century, creating a worldwide movement led by Western actors and initiatives that has been always adapting itself to the changing reality, the international landscape and trying to evolve from its own mistakes. Conflicts –both national and international-, for instance, have been the main seed of the many changes that marked the evolution of the humanitarian system.

The origin of the modern humanitarism is almost always placed in 1859, when Jean Henry Dunant witnessed the consequences of the battle of Solferino. Horrified by the terrible conditions suffered by the wounded fighters let on the battlefield, he decided to arrange improvised relief services for them with the help of local villagers. Back to his home in Geneva, he wrote a book (Memory of Solferino, published in 1862) wondering if “would it not be possible, in time of peace and quiet, to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?” These societies, he proposed, should have an “international principle, sanctioned by a Convention inviolate in character” that would support the creation and protection of these societies by all states signatories of such Convention.

Dunant’s initiative led to the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and later of the broader Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The ICRC is closely related to the birth of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and is also at the origin of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. In effect, as Jérémie Labbé explains, “the development of the Red Cross Movement marked the emergence of organized non-governmental humanitarian action.” “International humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) appeared throughout the twentieth century and started out by providing assistance in times of war.” This is how NGOs like Save the Children (1919), Oxfam (1942) or CARE (1945) were born.

The end of the Second World War marked the creation of the United Nations, one of the main players in the humanitarian system. Mirroring to some extent the development of NGOs, three of the five UN agencies having a humanitarian mandate were created out of concerns for people affected by the scourge of conflict or oppression: the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 1946) was originally created to respond to the needs of Europe’s war-affected children, while the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA, 1950) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1951) were established for refugees fleeing conflict and persecution.

Another war, in this case, the Biafra war, triggered another evolution in the humanitarian system: the emergence of a new humanitarism with an independent political edge. The contentious issues faced by humanitarian workers in Biafra led to the birth of several new humanitarian agencies most notable MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières) and Concern. They distanced themselves from the
neutral and advocating for those caught in them. Successive Cold War conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s “triggered the creation of a new generation of NGOs such as ACF (Action Contre la Faim) in France, Merlin in the United Kingdom, and GOAL in Ireland”.

The Post-Cold war decade: the integration of humanitarian action within the Peace and Security agenda

The period between 1989 and 2001 was a time of major changes and growth of the humanitarian enterprise. Three major events in the first half of the 1990s would force upheavals in the humanitarian system: the Balkans wars (specially Bosnia), the civil war and famine in Somalia and the Rwanda genocide and the subsequent refugee crisis particularly in Goma. As Walker and Maxwell argue, “the aftermath of 9/11 required further adaptations to a changed world”.

During the Bosnian war, given the impotence of governments and international organizations to agree on how to stop the conflict, aid was used for a long period of time as a substitute of the lack of political action. It was intended to ‘contain’ the refugee crisis within the Balkans and prevent it to spread over Europe instead of alleviating the suffering of the affected populations. The lack of guidelines on how to act against such kind of crises in terms of leadership and coordinated response and the absence of political engagement to solve the crisis resulted on humanitarian agencies being not able to protect the populations who were suffering ethnic cleansing in front of their eyes. These events caused a profound reassessment of the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Somalia became a syndrome. It taught another lesson to the humanitarian community: aid can sometimes be manipulated and do more harm than good. Somalia symbolized the attempts of well-meaning outsiders to intervene in a humanitarian crisis but then getting caught in it. Noting that the roots of the famine were political, Karin von Hippel points out “not only did the international actors exacerbate the famine and civil war, by sending in food aid, most of which was subsequently stolen [by the warring parties hence fueling the conflict], but they became involved in clan politics… which contributed to further political disintegration”. In addition the role of live, round-the-clock, television coverage of the conflict cannot be ignored. The so-called “CNN effect” was in full force during the Somalia crisis. The impact of dead US Army Rangers in the US and the debacle had many repercussions in the US and UN response to the Bosnia conflict and for the intervention in Rwanda in 1993 and the paralysis after the genocide.

Of all events that have shaped the humanitarian response none is more influential than the Rwandan genocide of 1994. While one of the proximate causes of the genocide was the failure of peacekeeping and a vacuum of political action, humanitarian action was implicated in its aftermath and even in its antecedents. The latter demanded profound changes in the organization and implementation of humanitarian action. Humanitarian action during the genocide was minimal. But after one million refugees crossed to Zaire, donors were quick to respond. Former leaders of the genocide used the camps to re-group and re-arm themselves. The conclusions were that (i) humanitarian assistance had been subverted to support those who had caused the crisis in the first place, and (ii) both the international and the humanitarian community failed in their analysis of a given crisis in the time when critical decisions had to be made. Moreover humanitarian aid “was at least

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35 Ibid.
36 Ibidem, p.62.
38 Ibid.
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partially used by the international community as an alternative to a concerted political action”. 39

The magnitude of the crisis and the size of problems of the response pushed for a multi-agency evaluation of the assistance to Rwanda: the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR). The JEEAR identified main needs directed to the government of Rwanda, the political arms of the UN and the humanitarian community.

The main outcomes of the evaluation in the next decade -which have helped shape the organization of the humanitarian system creating major humanitarian standards and mechanisms of accountability and professionalization- were:

• The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Disaster Response;
• The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP); and
• The idea of a humanitarian ombudsman that eventually resulted into the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP).

It also gave rise to other related initiatives such as the adoption of the 1994 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.

In addition, the 90’s decade saw a “marked preference among donor states to channel their funding through international organizations and NGOs, due in part to a growing distrust in the capacities of receiving states to efficiently handle foreign aid”40. This triggered a “boom of the nongovernmental humanitarian sector”41.

In addition to this boom and the creation of accountability mechanisms, this period also witnessed the institutionalization of humanitarian assistance, with the creation of main stakeholders such as the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (which in 1998 became OCHA) and the Office the Commission’s European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the main humanitarian donor to date.

The post-Cold War era also brought another change of paradigm: conflicts were no longer between states but rather within states themselves, which sometimes resulted on massive displacement movements of civilians and further instability within entire regions. Preoccupation in the West with containing refugee movements, the associated international ‘humanitarian’ interventions and expanded humanitarian presence in countries experiencing large-scale displacement, led also to a growing interest in protecting people within their own countries. In a series of resolutions adopted since 1991, the Security Council started to demand international access to displaced and other populations affected by conflict and massive human rights abuse, sometimes authorizing the use of force to ensure the delivery of relief. As a response to violent conflicts involving gross violations of human rights that threatened to generate wider instability or unacceptable human suffering, the requirements of security had begun to include the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence. This development opened the way to see state sovereignty as a matter of responsibility, not just power, thus underscoring that state sovereignty entails enduring obligations towards one’s own people, as well as certain international privileges.

This brought a “growing consensus, at least among Western states, that the international community had an interest in the internal affairs of states and a responsibility to ensure that civilians were properly protected by their governments”42. The growing pressure from the mass media was now also able to alert the global audience about major humanitarian crises and mobilize the public opinion to push their governments into action. As a result, the UN Security Council, more free to act after the removal of the

41 Ibid.
habitual superpower veto during the Cold War, engaged more vigorously on what to date was the path of humanitarians. UN peacekeeping forces and other military assets - also left with no significant role after the end of the bipolarity- suddenly broke into the scene and accompanied humanitarians on their work. As a direct result, the concepts of impartiality and neutrality “became rather unclear and were often misunderstood” amongst communities and the humanitarian stakeholders themselves. Even though, for instance, these “UN peacekeeping missions were accompanied by strict mandates aimed at guaranteeing the neutrality of the peacekeepers, the fact that they were appointed by the UN means a case can be made that they were not politically neutral”. Indeed, for the last years, action and allocation of funds into some crises or others has not only been decided according to the gravity of disasters or the needs of the affected populations, but also by the geopolitical and economic interests of the big donors and main political powers. The 9/11 events and the following Western-led “war on terror” were a clear proof of this fact. Some governments tried to use humanitarian aid as a strategic tool in their war on terror. As Macrae and Harmer explained, “over the past decade, humanitarian action has become increasingly embedded - conceptually, culturally and operationally - within a framework of international peace and security. The majority of international organizations, including humanitarian organizations, initially welcomed this more integrated approach to international public policy when it was presented in terms of human security. In the wake of 9/11, however, it has become much more difficult to distinguish this agenda, and the mechanisms by which it will be achieved, from the more politicized and contested security agenda of the global war on terror”.

The organization of the system: from the Humanitarian Reform to the Transformative Agenda

As a consequence of the failures of the humanitarian response in the 90s the Humanitarian Reform process was initiated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, together with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2005 to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership.

Humanitarian Response Review

Many of the reform issues find their roots in the recommendations of the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR). The HRR was commissioned by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Jan Egeland, towards the end of 2004. He felt that the slowness and inadequacy of the response in Darfur, Sudan by the humanitarian community signaled weaknesses that needed to be fixed. One of the issues raised at the time of the commissioning of the HRR was its focus on the global level, leaving out national and local capacity in responding to humanitarian crises.

The HRR’s recommendations covered a number of issues, including human resources, common humanitarian services, the Humanitarian Coordination function, and the idea of creating “clusters” in order to provide greater predictability in the humanitarian response and accountability. As a summary, the main recommendations were:

Clusters

This first recommendation taken forward by the ERC was the creation of "clusters". While the original

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48 Ibid.
49 For further information on this matter, please see ECHO’s and IFRC’s new campaign called “Silent Disasters”.
focus of the clusters was on "gap-filling”, the UN agencies decided to put into place nine clusters, including in areas of activity that are not known for being traditional gaps in response. Different agencies leading each cluster were to be accountable, the "port of first call,” and the "provider of last resort". There are three "types" of clusters: service provision, relief and assistance to beneficiaries; and cross-cutting issues. There were questions raised, at that time, by the main NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) movement about the lack of a substantive discussion of the HRR’s conclusions and recommendations and questions about whether or not the clusters were the greatest priority, given that there were (and still are) a number of other areas of concern regarding the humanitarian response.

**Strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System**

One of the major weaknesses in the humanitarian system that is often cited is the lack of coordination that takes place in humanitarian response and the lack of leadership from the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). While the HC position is technically supposed to serve the broader humanitarian community (i.e. beyond the UN), the process of selection and appointment of HCs has been a UN-centered one. Since 2005 some concerns from NGOs were finally outlined after years of being raised. These concerns included the appointment process of HCs, their recruitment and selection process; the possibility of separating the functions of RC and HC; and the accountability of the HC. Some systems were put in place to solve these issues⁵⁰.

**CERF**

The Central Emergency Response Fund is a pool of money that is meant to be disbursed on short notice or to neglected humanitarian crises requiring funds. The CERF grew out of the previously existing Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which largely provided loans to UN agencies when they needed money for a humanitarian response.

**NGO-UN relations**

Another "pillar" to the humanitarian reform process, was the relations between the UN and NGOs. The first focus was on recognition by the UN of the importance of NGOs, particularly the national and local NGOs. It was also stated that the "Western" footprint of humanitarian action had to be "lightened" so as not to override or undermine the capacity of national and local NGOs, which should have a seat on decision-making platforms such as the clusters. It was also discussed their integration in the UN Coordination systems.

As for the biggest international NGOs, the aim was to have them around the table with the heads of the UN and let them be more active in the decision-making processes too at the highest level.

Another focus on this topic was on the "representation" ability of the NGO consortia on the IASC, as this consortia did not expand from the size since the 1990s. It was pointed the need for the consortia to become much larger in order to be able to coordinate the thousands of NGOs that exist like the RCRC Movement or OCHA do.

Since 2005, emergency response capacity has been reinforced at the global level. However, challenges still remain in deploying adequate leadership; putting in place appropriate coordination mechanisms at various levels and ensuring clear mutual accountabilities as evidenced by several major disasters over the past years. Furthermore, the application of the cluster approach has become overly process-driven and, in some situations, perceived to potentially undermine rather than enable delivery.

The Humanitarian Response Review was a big improvement but some major crises shed light on some other weaknesses in the multilateral humanitarian response. So after 2005, and in light of the growing recognition new weaknesses, the IASC decided to review again the current approach to humanitarian response and make adjustments,

⁵⁰For more detailed information on the process, please read the whole article available online here: http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/doc0001833.html
building on the lessons learned in 2010 and 2011. Based on an analysis of current challenges to leadership and coordination, the IASC Principals agreed in December 2011 to a set of actions that collectively represent a substantive improvement to the current humanitarian response model, although there is still a lack of inclusion of non-traditional actors such as National Disaster Management Authorities and southern NGOs. Following the agreement of the Transformative Agenda (TA) in December 2011, the Principals in December 2012 agreed the ‘TA Protocols’, which set the parameters for improved collective action in humanitarian emergencies. The agenda focuses strengthening the areas of leadership, co-ordination, and accountability in the system.

Long Story Short

“In a nutshell, the modern international humanitarian system, characterized by the growing involvement of international organizations and NGOs, is a compilation of largely Western governmental and individual initiatives over more than a century that was created primarily in reaction to conflict. Natural disaster relief took a more central stage in the last two decades as donor governments changed their aid policy and started channeling funding through international and non-governmental relief organizations, rather than through bilateral aid. Newly available funding in turn prompted the proliferation of new NGOs joining what can now be described as a multibillion-dollar humanitarian enterprise, whose financial weight has been multiplied by ten in the last twenty years”.

Jérémie Labbé, 2012
Humanitarian Stakeholders and the Humanitarian System

Humanitarian stakeholders are persons, groups, organizations or institutions that affect and/or are affected by the humanitarian response. There are as many classifications of humanitarian stakeholders as sources and institutions have tried to classify them. Indeed, there is no clear, internationally agreed definition on what are the components of the humanitarian system. Moreover one of the features of the humanitarian system is the “continuing lack of clarity as to what the ‘humanitarian system’ actually consists of and where its boundaries lie.” There are even experts who say that there is no such thing as the humanitarian system, only “various actors with inter-dependent relations, but they are hardly all oriented towards the same goals.”

According to ALNAP the ‘international humanitarian system’ can be defined as the network of national and international provider agencies, donors and host-government authorities that are functionally connected to each other in the humanitarian endeavour and that share common overarching goals, norms and principles. The system also includes actors that do not have humanitarian assistance as their central mission but play important humanitarian roles, such as military and private-sector entities.

The ALNAP mapping of the operational agencies of the humanitarian system revealed more, and more diverse, agencies than expected. There are some 4,400 NGOs worldwide undertaking humanitarian action on an ongoing basis. Yet the system is still dominated, in terms of operational presence and resource share, by the same small group of global giants: the UN humanitarian agencies, the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and five international ‘mega’ NGOs (MSF, Catholic Relief Service, Oxfam International, Save the Children Alliance and World Vision International), whose combined humanitarian expenditure in 2010 exceeded $2.7 billion.

The population of humanitarian workers continued to grow in the past two years, although not as fast as previously. After some shrinkage in NGO humanitarian personnel in 2009, growth was back in 2010. Added to the uninterrupted growth of UN humanitarian staff, this amounted to a combined growth rate of 4% in 2009-2010 (down from 6% for the pilot study years of 2007-2008). In 2010 there was an estimated total of 274,000 humanitarian workers worldwide. Similarly, financial flows for humanitarian assistance slowed down during the peak of the global financial crisis, but still continued to grow. Controlling for the surge in funds for Haiti in 2010 and adjusting for inflation, the long-term upward trend in humanitarian funding still holds, though at just 1% on average for 2009-2010. (see ALNAP).

The ALNAP’s State of Humanitarian System Report shows that in the area of ‘coverage/sufficiency’ – mobilizing resources sufficient to meet needs and cover all affected populations – the system shows no measurable improvement. Although humanitarian funding continues on a 10-year rising trend, the majority of actors surveyed perceived funding in their setting to be ‘insufficient’, especially for the sectors of protection and early recovery.

In the area of relevance/appropriateness – addressing appropriate needs according to host country priorities – the ALNAP study showed that the system has improved on certain measures. Evaluations mostly indicated that community or local government priorities had been met, and most survey respondents from the international system saw moderate improvement in the quality of needs assessments in the past two years.

The pilot study conducted by ALNAP showed similar moderate improvement for effectiveness. Effectiveness was measured by how well humanitarian responses met their objectives, how quickly the system was able to respond to emergencies, how well it monitored and evaluated its

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52 Ibid.
work, the quality of leadership and the competence of coordination efforts. Most interventions were found to be effective or partially effective in terms of achievement against projected goals or international standards, the avoidance of negative outcomes and/or the receipt of positive feedback from aid recipients. Where overall effectiveness has been questioned, the key reasons were time delays and poorly defined goals. Each major emergency during the reporting period (2010-2011) had a mixed review in terms of effectiveness. In particular, the response in the Horn of Africa was found to be abjectly slow at a systemic level, with significant disconnects between early warning systems and response, and between technical assessments and decision-makers.

**Humanitarian stakeholders**

It is worth mentioning at this point that there is a big difference between being a humanitarian stakeholder and being humanitarian—that is respecting the humanitarian principles and act according to humanitarian goals and objectives. To make it clearer, not all humanitarian stakeholders, as it will be seen, are humanitarians. Actors such as governments or military do not follow the humanitarian principles and usually have no humanitarian interests. However, since they interact in what is called the humanitarian system, they have been included.

The following categorization merges the work of ALNAP, OCHA, Global Humanitarian Assistance Platform and ECHO, as well as that of some individual authors on this matter, all of them properly referenced for further reading. The humanitarian stakeholders could be grouped under the following categories:

**Communities and Local Actors**

Communities and local actors (local NGO’s and civil society, local private sector, as well as other organizations) have a central role in the development of relief operations. They do not only represent the affected populations and the aid recipients (also called beneficiaries or right holders) but are also amongst the first to respond to crises and provide valuable information to other stakeholders on what are the needs to be addressed. The participation of the affected communities have gained role within the aid agenda, and will continue to do so, as international actors are sometimes unable to access and intervene to any great extent. Diasporas are worth mentioning under this category too, as sometimes they still maintain strong links with the community and thus respond allocating cash and in-kinds when a disaster or crisis strikes their community.

**National Authorities and Regional Organizations**

The national authorities (government, ministries, regional and local institutions) of the country affected by the crises are the first and foremost actor with the obligation to cope with it and protect the citizens (and foreigners) on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. According to Resolution 46/182, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of an affected country should be fully respected in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, and humanitarian assistance is preferably provided with the consent of the affected country on the basis of an appeal. It is only when the national authorities are not able or not willing to assist victims of disasters in their territory that the international humanitarian response systems enter into action. According to ALNAP, “regional cooperation for humanitarian response has also grown in capacity
and importance. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region have highly effective regional mechanisms for collaborative emergency preparedness, prevention and response, such as the Centre for the Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC) and PAHO (the Pan American Health Organization). Asian governments and civil society have also been making significant advances in regionally based humanitarian action. Asia-Pacific regional intergovernmental bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with its AHA Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have been playing increasingly prominent roles as coordinators and resource mobilisers, as well as centres for knowledge and information exchange. Africa is currently less advanced in terms of regional humanitarian mechanisms, and requires additional capacity within the key regional mechanisms, such as the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

United Nations

The United Nations, by mandate of the Member States, is responsible for the coordination of the international assistance in disaster response. Since its first humanitarian relief operations in Europe following the devastation and massive displacement of people in the World War II, the international community has relied on the United Nations to respond to natural and human-caused disasters and crises that are beyond the capacity of national authorities. Today, the United Nations is a major provider of aid and assistance in the medium and long term. According to ALNAP, the approximate amount of UN Humanitarian Agencies’ staff at the field level (including local and international staff) was 85,681 workers in 2010. The UN has a central and overall coordinating role, particularly the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Other UN agencies that undertake humanitarian relief are WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, UNRWA or FAO. UN agencies are gathered in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), chaired by the head of OCHA in its capacity as emergency relief coordinator.

Donors

This category focuses on “public” donors such as governments and multilateral organizations, as private donors are listed under the category “private entities and initiatives”. These stakeholders provide aid (either in cash or in-kinds) to affected populations via bilateral and multilateral donations and/or technical cooperation. Among the principle donors (also called traditional) of humanitarian aid worldwide are the European Union (through ECHO, the main aid donor worldwide), the United States, or Japan. Together the US and ECHO accounted for 38% of the total humanitarian contributions in 2010, although new countries are emerging as significant contributors too such as India, Brazil or China. The contributions of this “non-traditional” state donner states grew considerably after 2005 and continue to grow. Besides direct donations, they often use indirect channels to deliver their contributions, either through NGOs, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement or United Nations agencies.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement is a recognized international organization, considered distinct from an NGO, composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 186 National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

61 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
The ICRC is an impartial, independent and neutral organization whose mission is to protect life and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide assistance. It does so by promoting and strengthening International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian principles. It directs and coordinates international activities conducted by the Movement in situations of armed conflict and other violence. The IFRC contributes to strengthening the capacity of National Societies to carry out effective disaster preparedness, health and welfare. It directs and coordinates international assistance conducted by the Movement to the victims of disasters too. The Movement acts in direct coordination with the rest of the actors, but is not coordinated by OCHA or any other international platform. This is the only way claimed by its components to maintain pure independence and neutrality, widely acknowledged by the rest of the actors.

**Humanitarian NGOs**

The humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tend to have variable goals but they also share certain characteristics. They are independent from governments and other stakeholders, demonstrate good understanding of local context and are well linked to communities, local organizations and affected populations. They also often work with networks that have established common rules and standards at all levels. In addition, they play an important role in the first phase of response as they often have quick access to financial resources, expertise in relevant areas and more flexible structures.\(^{66}\) Although having these shared characteristics, it is a very heterogeneous and unequal group. According to ALNAP, there are around 4,400 NGOs. Of these, 18% are international NGOs, 64% are national NGOs and the remaining 19% are, for the present, unknown.\(^{67}\) Of these, a very reduced group of International NGOS (INGOs) account for a large percentage of overall humanitarian spending. According to ALNAP, in 2010, five INGO federations / organizations (Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Oxfam International, the International Save the Children alliance, and World Vision International) spent approximately $2.5 billion on humanitarian programming, the 38% of the total humanitarian expenditure by INGOs. In 2009, these five organizations spent approximately $2.5 billion, which was again 38% of the total. Such 5 organizations do share some characteristics too: They are nearly all are based in the US and Western Europe and they were established decades ago, having an average organizational age of 57 years.\(^{68}\)

In ALNAP’s words, “although most of the humanitarian organizations are secular in orientation, a sizeable minority (e.g. 25% of the top 20) have an explicit Christian mission. Roughly 45% of INGOs in the humanitarian system are based in the US, 18% are from Western Europe (excluding the UK and France), 11% are from the UK, 6% are from Asia, 5% are from France and 3% are from Africa, with the remaining regions comprising very small percentages.”\(^{69}\)

Some authors and institutions make differences between the abovementioned Western NGOs and “Southern International NGOs” or SINGOs which According to ALNAP, have increased their strength in Asia-Pacific or in South Asia is evident “with organisations such as BRAC (among the world’s largest development NGOs), Mercy Malaysia and SEEDS Asia, to name just three, whose programming extends beyond national to regional and international presence.”\(^{70}\) A mapping exercise done by the same organization showed that today the approximate number of SINGOs is around 2,800, albeit with some possible duplications.\(^{71}\) These NGOs are active in some 140 countries, with 41% of them based in sub-Saharan Africa, 27% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 20% from Asia and 4%.

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\(^{66}\) VOICE, Quality on EU Humanitarian Aid: The contribution of the VOICE network, VOICE, Brussels, 2011.


\(^{68}\) Ibid. p. 29.

\(^{69}\) Ibidem.


\(^{71}\) Ibid.
from countries in the Middle East72.

**Distinctions between Humanitarian NGOs**

Natsios73 stated the differences between “operational” and “non-operational” NGOs. The former are aid NGOs that deliver specific services to selected groups, whereas the later provide local or national NGOs with money and resources to provide humanitarian aid74. These NGOs are said to be more generalist, while the operational NGOs are more specialized. Specialized NGOs develop a specific way of aid provision and in a particular phase i.e. immediate emergency phase. MSF could be considered an operational or specialized NGO, given its mainly medical-focused activities, although there are many other sector-specialized NGOs, not just on medical care, but on other sectoral activities such as water and sanitation or shelter. On the contrary, Oxfam could be considered a more generalist or non-operational NGO. Generalist NGOs mainly base their activities on a broader multi-sector approach to humanitarian aid or on subsidizing local NGOs and the humanitarian projects they implement. They think that solidarity to people in need should be expressed by providing local organizations the means to prevent and battle humanitarian emergencies75.

**Military**

Governments deploy military assets either in domestic and/or international contexts to respond to humanitarian and other civilian crises as these units have very strong logistical capacities and resources. Furthermore, armies are nowadays included as part of most governments’ national disaster management plans. Their role within these contexts goes from delivering aid to provide security to agencies while they implement their activities. This “new” role of has led the traditional humanitarian actors to have their principles compromised or to be identified by communities or warring parties as partial, or neither neutral nor independent.

**Private Entities and Initiatives**

Private entities and initiatives such as philanthropic organizations, corporate donors and individuals have been gaining momentum within the humanitarian sector during the last years. They represented the 31% of the total humanitarian funding in 201076, although they have decreased a bit due to the overall economic crisis and their engagement has been limited to certain contexts77. Within this funding, individual donations account for approximately 75% of the overall78. Private initiatives include not only funding. The three principal ways in which private-sector entities engage in humanitarian response efforts are as (a) contributors of cash and/or material assistance to relief efforts; (b) contractors of governments or IGOs for delivery of services related to humanitarian response; and/or (c) recipients of grants from other private or public sources for direct implementation or onward sub-granting79.

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72 Ibidem.
75 Ibid.
76 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2012, Development Initiatives, United Kingdom, 2012, p.25
Labbé’s *Humanitarian Galaxy*, 2012.
Governance, Leadership and Coordination

Humanitarian assistance, as seen, has increased in complexity due to the changing political, social and environmental context in which it occurs and the multiplication of actors, making the coordination of humanitarian relief a true challenge. Nonetheless the coordination and effectiveness-seeking initiatives have also grown within the humanitarian community during the last decades and have improved dramatically the way the “system” responds to emergency settings.80

The basis of the current international humanitarian coordination system were set by General Assembly resolution 46/182 which, for instance, created OCHA as the leading UN Agency for Humanitarian Coordination. The 2005 Humanitarian Reform introduced new elements to improve capacity, predictability, accountability, leadership and partnership.81

Although coordination is voluntary in nature, some basic requirements must be met in order for it to be efficient. Among them is a common plan or vision, access to resources, agreed upon leadership of the coordination, pre-established mechanisms and funds for the coordination. The main tools that allow improvement in international coordination for humanitarian response are as follows82:

**Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)**

The Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) is responsible for the oversight of all emergencies requiring United Nations humanitarian assistance. He/she also acts as the central focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. In a country affected by a disaster or conflict, the ERC may appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) to ensure response efforts are well organized. The HC works with government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and affected communities.

**Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC)**

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is “the closest that the humanitarian system comes to having a governance body”83. It is an inter-institutional forum of coordination, formulation of policies and adoption of decisions on behalf of executive representatives of the main organisms of humanitarian assistance (organizations of United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent and consortia of humanitarian NGOs). It makes decisions at an inter-institutional level in response to natural disasters and complex emergency situations, including the evaluation of needs, consolidated appeals for funds, agreements on coordination and the development of humanitarian policies.

**Cluster Approach**

The cluster approach ensures clear leadership, predictability and accountability in international responses to humanitarian emergencies by clarifying the division of labour among organizations and better

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80 Sources include OCHA’s website (www.unocha.org) and OCHA, Guide for Governments 2011 Edition, Panama City: REDLAC Secretariat, 2011.

81 The following is an abstract the international humanitarian mechanisms taken from various documents from OCHA

82 Due to space concerns, only the most important mechanisms will be presented.

defining their roles and responsibilities within the different sectors of the response. It aims to make the international humanitarian community better organized and more accountable and professional, so that it can be a better partner for the affected people, host governments, local authorities, local civil society and resourcing partners.\(^4\)

When an emergency occurs and large-scale international humanitarian assistance is needed by the affected government/s the humanitarian agencies adopt the cluster approach. The cluster approach is the grouping of international humanitarian actors divided around the different humanitarian sectors (such as water and sanitation, health, or shelter). Clusters coordinate the international responses more efficiently and reflect the variety of needs that must be addressed in order to save and preserve the life and dignity of affected populations. They also provide a vision of the many different specialized professional backgrounds that complex emergencies might require.

Each cluster recognizes a leading agency on behalf of the international community that facilitates the coordination of a cluster/sector. The leading agency acts as a point of reference and unique entry for the counterparts of the affected government. At the global level, each humanitarian sector has a leading agency where principal technical instruments are developed for humanitarian action. The cluster approach arranges the division and complementation of work between organizations to better define the functions and responsibilities of the humanitarian organizations within each sector.

The clusters and their respective cluster leads are:

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: UNICEF.
- Shelter: UNHCR (in conflict) / IFRC (in Natural Disasters).
- Protection: UNHCR.
- Nutrition: UNICEF.
- Logistics: WPF.
- Health: WHO.
- Food Security: WFP and FAO.
- Emergency Telecommunications: WFP.
- Education: UNICEF and Save the Children.
- Early Recovery: UNDP.
- Camp Coordination and Camp Management: IOM (In Natural Disaster) / UNHCR (in conflict).

The strength of the cluster approach relies on an understanding that this approach is not the only humanitarian coordination solution. In some cases, the cluster approach may co-exist with other “non-cluster” coordination solutions – whether national or international – or an alternative sectoral approach may be preferable..
How do the Coordination tools and the Humanitarian System interact?

When a disaster occurs, it is the affected state’s responsibility to cope with it and protect the communities of its territory. Its affected population, national institutions, NGO’s, National Red Cross Society, Military Forces and other stakeholders try to cope with the emergency by helping the State in responding to the crisis.

If the state and its stakeholders cannot or are not willing to act, the humanitarian system and its coordination mechanisms enter into action.

Debates on the current humanitarian system

Some critiques from both within and outside the humanitarian system are:
- Too Western: The current system is funded about 70% by 10 countries, all of whom are OECD members and the IASC has failed in attracting significant donorship from non-Western countries. In addition, with regards to its membership, only the IFRC (which is an observer member only) and one of the three NGO consortia include organizations whose headquarters are outside of a Western capital. Only recently few local and national NGOs from the Global South have participated in the “clusters” or in other IASC-driven instruments. In addition, although most agencies have plenty national staff in countries where they work, most international staff (and management positions) of nearly all IASC agencies are disproportionately Europeans and North Americans. This has encouraged some organizations to operate outside the system. Increasingly, Muslim NGOs are operating in Muslim crisis countries, overshadowing those of the IASC.
- Funding for a few: The system favours a few large agencies naming the UN humanitarian agencies and the top international NGOs. Local and national NGOs receive only a small fraction of funding and usually are subcontractors to the UN and international agencies instead.
- Regional Mutual Assistance: It barely addresses the international mutual assistance of neighbouring Member States in middle-income regions, which are developing their own regional systems of mutual support in humanitarian emergencies. It is the case of the Humanitarian Association of the ASEAN, or the Humanitarian Department of the African Union.

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85 An interesting assessment on the current situation of the humanitarian system was provided by Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Catherine Bragg at her statement to the Intensive Programme of the Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA) in 2012. Available online here: https://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/ASG%20Bragg%20statement%20to%20NOHA.pdf
A complex world: Trends, Challenges and Responses

Humanitarian stakeholders are increasingly concerned about the impacts of current or emerging global trends with the potential to change the environments in which humanitarian actors will operate in coming year. A number of inter-connected factors contribute to exacerbate people’s vulnerability around the world. All these factors when combined are presenting the humanitarian system with broad challenges which demand responses from the sector (see Table on Global Trends, Challenges and Responses elaborated by the EUPRHA WP4 in p.31).

Trends

**Climate change:** Climate change will fundamentally transform the way humanity approaches global security and livelihood sustainability. In a warmer, wetter world, millions of people living near sea level, in drought-affected regions and where extreme weather events become the norm, are increasingly vulnerable and at risk of displacement and morbidity disease patterns will change. The numbers and consequences will be very significant, posing humanitarian policy-makers many challenges in developing coherent responses.

**Financial and economic crisis:** The global financial crisis and recession that began in 2008 has spread and deepened and continues to do so. Millions of people in developing countries and worldwide are being pushed into poverty, with dramatic consequences for entire communities, regions and states. The financial and economic crisis is leading to the curtailment of critical safety-nets, thereby threatening an even larger caseload in need of humanitarian assistance. In addition, austerity measures and shrinking foreign aid budgets in the developed world have been reducing the overall humanitarian resources to cope with the increasing needs.

**Food crisis:** The cost of food increased by more than 40% between 2007 and 2011 thus threatening the tenuous position of many vulnerable groups in developing countries. This means that the hundreds of millions of people already poor and vulnerable suffer from increasing restrictions in their access to basic resources and food, leading to famines, acute malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies. This tendency is not expected to change and, accompanied with the rapid growth of population expected for the coming decades, will continue to threaten lives and livelihoods worldwide.

**Extreme poverty and inequality:** With a marked increase in extreme poverty and profound inequalities of income and wealth plaguing most nations (approximately half the world’s population lives on less than 1% of its wealth), extreme poverty and inequality continue to leave whole communities and households in an almost irreversibly devastating state of vulnerability and need.

**Increased resource scarcity:** With the number of people who do not have access to safe water rising just over 1 billion to 2 billion by 2025, water scarcity represents a major political, economic and human rights issue driving vulnerability and conflict. In addition, the energy demanded to cope with the needs of the world’s growing population is expected to increase one and a half times by 2030. This will lead to a rise of prices (oil prices increased by a 36% since 2007). Stoking fears of scarcity might reignite geopolitical rivalries, whilst also providing the impetus to invest in renewable energies.

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86 This section is based in the findings of the different reports listed in the Trends section of the bibliography.
88 Ibid.
93 OCHA, Global Challenges and their impact in international humanitarian action, op.cit., p. 4.
94 Ibidem.
95 Ibid.
Migration, population growth and demographic shift: With the potential for hundreds of millions of people forced to uproot their lives and rebuild them across borders, continents and oceans, migration will be one of the biggest challenges both within and across borders. Population is estimated to grow to over 8 billion by 2025. There will be a massive demographic shift too: Between 2006 and 2050, the number of persons aged 60 and over will triple from 650 million, or 11% of the world’s population, to 2 billion people, or 22%. By then, older persons will begin to outnumber children aged 14 and under. Just over 80% of the world’s older persons will be living in developing countries, compared to 60% today. In developed countries, the proportion of older persons will rise to about one person in three by mid-century. Globally, the “oldest-old” (80 and above) constitute the fastest growing age segment of the older population.97

Urbanization: Urban population is expected to double in Asia and increase by 150% in Africa between now and 2050. Hence urbanization will create massive social inequities and risks as well as tangible health problems, malnutrition rates, unemployment and income deficits, which represent an almost permanent threat to the security of billions.98

Health pandemics and infectious diseases: OCHA alerted that “with projections that any large-scale influenza pandemic could result in from 2 up to 60 million potential deaths, and the discovery that infectious diseases that have been controlled historically are now demonstrating increased virulence, changing incidence, and shifting vectors of transmission, health pandemics and infectious diseases threaten to further degrade the lives of many, potentially increasing feelings of injustice and amplifying the pressures on weak and fragile states.”99

Economic and geopolitical shifts: In the last decade, economic influence has started to move from western countries to emerging powers. The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) have grown to almost a quarter of the world economy and are likely to match G7 countries’ share of GDP by 2040–2050.100 The balance of political power is also shifting. Increasingly, traditional western powers are losing influence and some analysts suggest that soon no single power or group of states will be able to impose its will on the rest of the world.101

Changing nature of violence: Some research shows that the number of recurring conflicts is increasing. According to Labbé, “years, if not decades, of low-intensity but protracted violence place a heavy toll on governance and institutions in states commonly qualified as “failed” or “fragile.” Globalization has also nurtured new forms of violence by international terrorist networks and transnational criminal organizations, which further complicate the situation in some of these “ungoverned” areas. “The remaining forms of conflict and violence do not fit neatly either into ‘war’ or ‘peace’, or into ‘criminal violence’ or ‘political violence’, challenging states and systems of global governance to adapt their approaches to address new forms of fragility and threats.”102

Rapid technological developments: Technologies have developed very rapidly during the last decade and have had both good and bad consequences for the international community in general and the humanitarian community in particular. On one hand, the spread of information and communication technologies has helped interconnect individuals and communities, has led to new ways of assess and respond to emergencies and unprecedented

99 OCHA, Global Challenges and their impact in international humanitarian action, op.cit, p. 4.
communication between the humanitarian stakeholders and their accountability to each other. On the other, new technologies have also brought new kinds of crimes (cybercrimes) and weapons, and the use of technologies for terrorist and warfare ends.

**Challenges**

**An increasing humanitarian caseload:** The abovementioned trends point to an increase of the humanitarian caseload and a dramatic escalation of the number of vulnerable populations and communities. Predictions from most organizations including UN, Oxfam and the IFRC foresee an increased frequency, severity, and scale of both slow- and rapid-onset disasters -due partly to climate change- that is likely to considerably increase the number of vulnerable people in need of humanitarian assistance.

**Changing nature of crises:** The nature of the environment in which crises occur and the nature of crises themselves is changing. As most of the worldwide population is increasingly urban more disaster and thus humanitarian interventions will happen in such contexts. Humanitarians are not yet well prepared for complex emergencies happening in urban contexts and examples such as the earthquake in Port au Prince (2010) or the floods in Bangkok (2011) or the conflict in Syria are just a few examples. The nature of violence is also changing and “non-declared” or “non-official” conflicts between gangs, drug cartels cause more deaths than some civil wars. These non-state actors are already capable to dispute the states’ monopoly on violence and its sovereignty over some parts of their territory. Poverty and inequality, lack of minimum basic rights and resource scarcity might ignite revolutions such as the ones that took place during the Arab Spring that could sadly end in situations of protracted violence. Neither humanitarians nor the rest of the international community have achieved any feasible approach to situations of protracted conflicts and compound crises yet.

**Renewed assertiveness of host states:** The ideals of Human Rights and the humanitarian imperative have entered the mainstream of the international community’s values. The notion that states have responsibilities towards their own population is broadly accepted too. Therefore, for the last years it was mostly accepted that the international community had the responsibility to protect the citizens of a given state if such state was not willing to do it itself, even sometimes against the principle of sovereignty. Such tremendous shift is suddenly bouncing back. The renewed assertiveness of host states is reflected—and reinforced—by recent trends in the development aid sector, and governments in some of the most vulnerable regions of the world are becoming increasingly reluctant to have traditional humanitarian actors behave as they’ve done in the past. Developing countries are determined to ensure greater coordination and control over the aid that flows in and humanitarian and relief departments within national governments and regional intergovernmental organizations such as the League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are mushrooming. On one hand these transformations present opportunities, as improved involvement of emerging powers in the design and functioning of the system will increase its legitimacy and help reduce the perception of western-dominance. On the other, in conflict situations, current global economic and geopolitical changes give more leeway to host governments, who may be implicated in the conflict, to undermine the delivery of principled humanitarian action.

**Finite financial resources:** The increase of the humanitarian caseload is tied to the need of more resources to cope with the growing needs. This is further compounded by the fact that humanitarian assistance is also more expensive now than before, due to the substantial increases in food and oil prices over the last few years. Global humanitarian funding is still dominated by “traditional” humanitarian donors but this might change in favor of new non-
traditional donors who still fall outside the “traditional” humanitarian system and coordination mechanisms. Their support, therefore, does not benefit the formal humanitarian system and creates risks of duplication of efforts and gaps in service. Although emerging powers’ contributions to pooled funding mechanisms and international agencies have increased in recent years, the challenge for the humanitarian system remains to convince them that fully joining the existing coordination and funding mechanisms is in their interest too.

Responses

In order to respond to all these trends and challenges, some responses are suggested:

**Anticipate the risks:** As humanitarians will probably face a tremendous increase in their caseload, the best way to tackle the effects of disasters and crises with finite resources might well be to anticipate them by identifying their causes, to prevent their worst effects. For this they should: (a) further refining early-warning systems and mainstreaming their use will allow the rest of the stakeholders and (b) better understand and identify the “myriad factors” influencing vulnerability and demanding life-saving assistance. This means a better assessment, situational analysis, gathering of evidence and evaluation of the situation in which emergencies occur in order to predict future scenarios and act accordingly.

**Strengthen local capacities and resilience:** Disaster Risk Reduction and better LRRD must become a top priority in all governments’ agenda. In addition, local capacities and resilience of communities must be enhanced. On this point, better communication mechanisms between humanitarians and communities (specially for humanitarians to listen to beneficiaries’ concerns and encourage their participation).

**Develop new partnerships:** Given the changing contexts and new kinds of emergencies that humanitarians will face on one hand, and the limited financial and knowledge resources to cope with them, on the other, humanitarians should work better with experts in different fields, such as meteorologists, economists, or demographers, if they want to adapt successfully to tomorrow’s crises. Links must also be developed with militaries, private military and security companies, corporations, religious institutions, and diaspora communities.

**Enlarge the funding base and use it more effectively:** The funding conundrum—namely, doing more with finite resources—can be resolved by following two parallel and complementary tracks: more efficiently disbursing existing funding and looking for nontraditional sources in addition to traditional ones. Humanitarian actors must fully engage and improve the systems already in place to mobilize resources more efficiently, rapidly and flexibly. In parallel, new non-traditional donors like India must be approached and reached, something that traditional Western organizations are failing to do by now.

**Make innovations and leverage new technologies:** Innovation, in particular related to ICTs will be key for humanitarians in order to cope with the growing
needs and changing contexts. The development of ICTs provide a golden opportunity for relief organizations to communicate better with beneficiaries and between each other together. Technologies will also play a key role in DRR and Early warning systems to be put in place in order to reduce the impact of hazards as much as possible. Traditional donors must not be afraid on investing on research and testing new systems.

**Enhance coordination and leadership.** Efforts to bring more coherence, coordination and complementarity must continue. More competent and experienced leadership within the UN is central to this task, due to the dominant coordinating role of this body. The already functioning systems such as the cluster approach must be less bureaucratic, include national actors and be much more participatory. Quality standards have proved to be very valuable and must continue to be improved and embraced by all humanitarian organizations.

**Enhance efforts to strengthen professionalization and accountability within the sector.** It was understood during the last two decades that as the responsibilities of humanitarians increase so must their accountability and professionalization. With regards to accountability, Walker and Russ mention that “humanitarian assistance is [now] much more centre-stage, politically, than it was two decades ago and the regulatory frameworks of most nations now demand higher accountability from all public service providers, particularly for the spending of taxpayers’ money”\(^\text{103}\). Systems are already in place and are being strengthened and improved. And what is even more important is that the humanitarian system understood that it was not accountable only to its donors. More importantly, it is accountable to the populations it assists. Although this idea has been in place for many years now, the rise of information and communication technologies are enabling affected communities to have –finally- “more of a voice and to start to demand a greater sense of accountability from those who provide vital services to them”\(^\text{104}\). As per professionalization, as Walker and Russ say, “It is clear that many of the elements of professionalization are in place or developing\(^\text{105}\). Nowadays, very interesting initiatives for the professionalization of the humanitarian endeavor are in place such as the development of the first International Development and Humanitarian Trainer Competency Framework or others. Such systems will be essential to strengthen the standards of performance of the humanitarian system for the present and near future.

Accountability and professionalization are much more needed nowadays than ever as humanitarians face new challenges and changing trends that are also pushing them to rethink once again the way they act and interact with others, the way they approach new contexts and new stakeholders (as will be seen below). The current international arena is suffering dramatic changes that will affect the way humanitarism copes with emergencies and disasters. As always, humanitarians will have to adapt and reinvent themselves if they want to continue addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and alleviating the suffering of those in need and distress, as they have been doing for more than 150 years now.


\(^{104}\) Ibid.

\(^{105}\) Ibidem.
### Humanitarian Action: Current Trends, Challenges and Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GLOBAL TRENDS</strong></th>
<th><strong>CHALLENGES</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESPONSES</strong></th>
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| Cumulative effects, intersection of:  
- Climate change  
- Financial and Economic crises  
- Food crisis  
- Extreme poverty and rising inequalities  
- Increased resource scarcity (water scarcity, energy security)  
- Migration and population growth  
- Urbanization  
- Health Risks  
- Changing nature of violence  
- Rapid technological developments  
- Economic and geopolitical shifts | Increase of the frequency and intensity of natural disasters  
Increase in the complexity of conflicts and their effect on communities and countries.  
Changing nature of crises (compound crises)  
An increasing humanitarian caseload:  
- New types of vulnerable people  
- Urban and elderly populations  
- Climate change-induced migration and displacement without legal protection frameworks | - Anticipate the risks  
- Better context analysis (causes of vulnerabilities) and conflict analysis  
- Stronger evidence base  
- *Humanitarian and developmental need to be better defined for integration in the country plans*  
- Strengthen local capacities and resilience. Shifting the power dynamics back to local capacities  
- Develop new partnerships  
-Enlarge the funding base and use it more effectively  
- Enhance coordination, leadership, accountability,  
- Enhance professionalization  
- Make innovations and leverage new technologies. |

### Factors that affect the humanitarian space

- Politicization of aid: integration agenda and coherence approach
- Renewed assertiveness of host states and mistrust of humanitarian action in some countries
- Proliferation of non-traditional actors: the military, for-profit contractors, private philanthropists, regional organizations (African Union, ASEAN etc)
- Deteriorating security situation in some contexts, with deliberate violence against aid workers
- Deterioration of human rights standards in protection of humanitarian personnel and victims

**SOURCE:** Elaborated by the members of WP4 on Trends of the EUPRHA project based on literature review.
Bibliography

- INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, Code of Conduct for the
International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief Prepared, 1994. (6 pp.)
Annexes

i. List of links to Guiding Documents used and/or mentioned in the report and some more IHL and HRL sources by chronologic order

- First Geneva Convention, (1949)
- Second Geneva Convention, (1949)
- Third Geneva Convention, (1949)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Fourth Geneva Convention, (1949)
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and Protocol (1967)
- Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, (1977)
- Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions, (1977)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) (1990)
- UN Resolution 46/182 (1991)
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (1994)
- UN Resolution 58/114 (2003)
- Protocol III additional to the Geneva Conventions, (2005)
- European Consensus On Humanitarian Aid (2008)
- UN Resolution 63/137 (2009)
- UN Resolution 63/139 (2009)
- UN Resolution 63/141 (2009)
ii. Further Readings

Annual or Periodic Reports and Publications:

- INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC), *The International Review of the Red Cross*, available online here: http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/international-review/index.jsp
- THE JOURNAL OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, available online here: http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/
General Readings for Further Consultation:


Humanitarian Principles and Ethics


Trends and challenges

- FERRIS, Elizabeth, PETZ, Daniel and STARK, Chareen, *The year of recurring disasters: A review of


Some Further Readings Listed By Sector

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):


Shelter, Refugees and IDPs:


Protection


Food Security and Nutrition


Logistics


Health

Emergency Telecommunications


Education

iii. Glossary of terms in Humanitarian Action

The following is an extract of the UN OCHA’s Glossary of Terms in Humanitarian Action with a selection of the main concepts mentioned during the report listed with their definition or further information. The complete glossary can be found online.

**Armed Conflict:** A dispute involving the use of armed force between two or more parties. International humanitarian law distinguishes between international or non-international armed conflicts.

- **International armed conflict:** A war involving two or more States, regardless of whether declaration of war has been made or whether the parties recognize that there is a state of war.
- **Non-international armed conflict:** A conflict in which government forces are fighting with armed insurgents, or armed groups are fighting amongst themselves. (OCHA)

**Armed Group:** An armed non-state actor engaged in conflict and distinct from a governmental force, whose structure may range from that of a militia to rebel bandits. (OCHA)

**Assessment:** (and Re-Assessment): Set of activities necessary to understand a given situation, entails the collection, up-dating and analysis of data pertaining to the population of concern (needs, capacities, resources, etc.), as well as the state of infrastructure and general socio-economic conditions in a given location/area. (UNHCR)

**Assistance:** Aid provided to address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This may include food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, seeds and tools, as well as the provision of infrastructure, such as schools and roads.

**Asylum:** The granting, by a State, of protection on its territory to persons from another State who are fleeing persecution or serious danger.

**Asylum-Seeker:** Individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker. (UNHCR)

**Capacity:** A combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organization that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster. It may include physical means, institutional abilities, societal infrastructure as well as human skills or collective attributes such as leadership and management. Capacity also may be described as capability. (ISDR)

**Capacity Building:** A process by which individuals, institutions and societies develop abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve their goals. (UNHCR)

**Child Soldier:** For the purposes of prevention, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, a child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is compulsorily, forcibly, or voluntarily recruited or used in hostilities by any kind of armed forces or groups in any capacity, including but not limited to soldiers, cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, refer exclusively to a child who is carrying or has carried arms. [See ‘Recruitment’ and ‘DDR(R)’] (OCHA)

**Civil Defence:** The system of measures, usually run by a governmental agency, to protect the civilian population in wartime, to respond to disasters, and to prevent and mitigate the consequences of major emergencies in peacetime. The term “civil defence” is now used increasingly. (UN DHA).

**Civil Military Coordination:** The dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation.

**Civil Society:** Refers to structures independent from governments such as non governmental organizations and human rights groups, independent activists and human rights defenders, religious congregations, charities, universities, trade unions, legal associations, families and clans. Domestic civil society represents one of the most critical sources of humanitarian assistance and civilian protection during humanitarian emergencies. (OCHA)

**Civilian Populations:** Groups of unarmed people, including women, children, the sick and elderly,
refugees and internally displaced persons, who are not directly engaged in the armed conflict. (OCHA)

**Climate Change:** The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

**Cluster:** A “cluster” is essentially a “sectoral group” and there should be no differentiation between the two in terms of their objectives and activities; the aim of filling gaps and ensuring adequate preparedness and response should be the same. (IASC)

**Cluster Leads:** An agency/organization that formally commits to take on a leadership role within the international humanitarian community in a particular sector/area of activity, to ensure adequate response and high standards of predictability, accountability & partnership. (IASC)

**CNN Effect:** Alleged emotional influence of massive and direct television coverage and consequent mass public pressure on governmental decision-making in humanitarian emergency situations (“CNN got us into Somalia, and CNN got us out”). Informed observers tend to challenge this view and hold that media follow government policy or “CNN got us out”). Informed observers tend to challenge this view and hold that media follow government policy (Leitenberg, 1997:16). (FEWER)

**Code of Conduct:** A common set of principles or standards that a group of agencies or organizations have agreed to abide by while providing assistance. For example, the Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Response Programmes, and the IASC Core Principles of a Code of Conduct for Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. (OCHA)

**Common Country Assessment (CCA):** The common instrument of the UN to analyze the development situation in a certain country and identify key national development issues in the context of both the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration, international conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments. (UNHCR)

**Community-Based Approach:** Community-based approach motivates women, girls, boys and men in the community to participate in a process which allows them to express their needs and to decide their own future with a view to their empowerment. It requires recognition that they are active participants in decision-making. It also seeks to understand the community’s concerns and priorities, mobilizing community members and engaging them in protection and programming. The focus is on helping refugees organize themselves to solve their own problems.

**Complex Emergency:** A multifaceted humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires a multi-sectoral, international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme. Such emergencies have, in particular, a devastating effect on children and women, and call for a complex range of responses. (OCHA)

**Compound Crises:** A compound crisis is one where “a second or even third crisis occurs – either simultaneously with a first crisis, or before the impact of the first crisis has been completely resolved”. Compound crises arise from vulnerabilities reinforcing each other and are characterized by multiple and inter-connected aspects of vulnerability. A drought which is exacerbated by a disease epidemic would qualify as a compound crisis, as would large scale flooding in a refugee camp. Both of these examples highlight the exacerbated human vulnerability that is generated by compound crises. Each new aspect of vulnerability will diminish people’s ability to cope and to recover (ALNAP).

**Conflict:** A social factual situation in which at least two parties (individuals, groups, states) are involved, and who: i) strive for goals which are incompatible to begin with or strive for the same goal, which can only be reached by one party; and/or ii) want to employ incompatible means to achieve a certain goal.”

**Conflict Prevention:** Measures to avert violent conflict and put in place the means to resolve future disputes non-violently. (OCHA)

**Conflict Resolution:** The resolution of conflict usually by conciliation.

**Contingency Planning:** A management tool used to ensure that adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis. This is achieved primarily through engagement in a planning process leading to a plan of action, together with follow-up actions. (OCHA)

**Conflict Transformation:** Conflict transformation
can take the following forms i) Actor transformation: internal changes in major conflict parties, or the emergence and recognition of new actors; ii) Issue transformation: a change in the political agenda of the conflict, downplaying the importance of original conflict issues and emphasizing shared concern for new issues; iii) Rule transformation: a redefinition of the norms actors are expected to observe when dealing with each other; iv) Structural transformation: profound changes relating to the entire structure of inter-actor relations. (FEWER)

**Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP):** The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) is a tool used by aid organisations to plan, coordinate, fund, implement and monitor their activities, in major sudden onset and/or complex emergencies that require a system wide humanitarian response. As a planning and programming tool, the CAP contributes significantly to developing a more thoughtful approach to humanitarian action. Working together in the world’s crisis regions, they produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and an appeal for funds.

**Contingency Planning:** A management tool used to ensure that adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis. This is achieved primarily through engagement in a planning process leading to a plan of action, together with follow-up actions. (OCHA)

**Conventions:** Formal international agreements among nations (to which states become party), which create binding legal obligations. Such agreements may have different names: treaty, convention, covenant, or pact. Conventions are one of two main types of UN human rights instruments, the other being UN standards. (UNHCR)

**Coping Capacity:** The ability of people, communities or organizations, using available resources and skills, to face and manage adverse conditions that potentially could lead to a disaster. In general, this ability involves awareness, resources and good management both in normal times as well as during crises or adverse conditions. The strengthening of coping capacities is a means to build resilience to the effects of natural and human-induced hazards. (ISDR)

**Customary International Law:** International norms derived from a general and consistent practice of States followed by them out of a sense of legal obligation (opinio juris), rather than from formal expression in a treaty or legal text. Despite not being written, such norms are legally binding on all States with the exception of States who are ‘persistent objectors’. (OCHA)

**DDR(R):** Programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants in a peacekeeping context as part of a peace process, which usually include the following components: (i) Disarmament: The collection, control and disposal of arms and ammunition of combatants and civilian population; (ii) Demobilization: The process by which armed forces either downsize or completely disband, as part of a broader transformation from war to peace.; (iii) Reintegration: Assistance measures provided to former combatants that would increase the potential for their and their families’, economic and social reintegration into civil society; (iv) Resettlement: The settlement of ex-combatants in locations within their country of origin or to a third country; (v) Repatriation: The return of ex-combatants to their country of origin; and (vi) Rehabilitation: The treatment through psychosocial counselling and other programs of ex-combatants, most typically ex-child soldiers, who have been traumatized by war to assist them in resuming a more normal life. (OCHA)

**Disaster:** A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of a natural hazard, the conditions of vulnerability, and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. (ISDR)

**Disaster Legislation or Disaster Law:** The body of laws and regulations that govern and designate responsibility for disaster management concerning the various phases of disaster. (UN DHA)

**Disaster Management:** Comprehensive approach and activities to reduce the adverse impacts of disasters. (UN DHA)

**Disaster Mitigation:** A set of measures to reduce or neutralize the impact of natural hazards by reducing social, functional, or physical vulnerability. (CRID)

**Disaster Preparedness:** The organization, education, and training of the population and all relevant institutions to facilitate effective control, early warning, evacuation, rescue, relief and assistance operations in the event of a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

**Disaster Prevention:** The elimination or reduction of the likelihood that natural events may endanger human beings, their goods, their social assets, or their environment. (CRID)
Disaster Response: A sum of decisions and actions taken during and after disaster, including immediate relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. (UN DHA)

Disaster Risk: The magnitude of potential disaster losses, in lives, livelihoods and assets, which could occur to a particular community or group, arising from their exposure to possible future hazard events and their vulnerability to these hazards.

Disaster Risk Management: The systematic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Action taken to reduce the risk of disasters and the adverse impacts of natural hazards, through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causes of disasters, including through avoidance of hazards, reduced social and economic vulnerability to hazards, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

Displacement: Forcible or voluntary uprooting of persons from their homes by violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights and other traumatic events, or threats thereof. Persons who remain within the borders of their own country are known as internally displaced persons (IDPs). Persons who are forced to flee outside the borders of their state of nationality or residence for reasons based on a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds identified as refugees. (OCHA)

Do No Harm Approach: concept outlined in Mary Anderson’s book of the same name in 1999 that highlights the importance of understanding how international assistance interacts with local conflict dynamics. It is based on a hypothesis that interventions, such as humanitarian aid, can have positive and negative impacts on conflict dynamics. While much of the approach relates to humanitarian aid, many of the principles can be applied to a range of international interventions, including peacekeeping. For example, the influx of foreigners working for international organizations affects prices, wages and profits in the local economy and may be accompanied by inflation in housing and staple goods, sometimes enriching war-related sectors of the economy. Disproportionate distribution of resources may exacerbate conflict where it overlaps with the divisions represented in the conflict.

Early Warning: The provision of timely and effective information, through identified institutions, that allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response. (ISDR)

Early Warning System: The set of capacities needed to provide timely and meaningful information to enable individuals and communities threatened by hazards to act in sufficient time and in an appropriate manner to reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life and livelihoods, damage to property and the environment, and to prepare for effective response.

Emergency: A sudden and usually unforeseen event that calls for immediate measures to minimize its adverse consequences. (UN DHA)

Emergency Management: The organization and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

Emergency Relief: The immediate survival assistance to the victims of crisis and violent conflict. Most relief operations are initiated on short notice and have a short implementation period (project objectives are generally completed within a year or less). The main purpose of emergency relief is to save lives and alleviating human suffering. (UNHCR)

Empowerment: A process/phenomenon that allows people to take greater control over the decisions, assets, policies, processes and institutions that affect their lives. (UNHCR)

Epidemic(s): Affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time. Non-pandemic disease attacking many individuals in a same community during short terms (days, weeks, months maximum), such as cholera, typhoid, bubonic plague, etc.

Ethnic Cleansing: Refers to the practice of an ethnic group in military control of a territory seeking to remove members of other ethnic groups through tactics intended to instill a sense of fear, including random or selective killings, sexual assaults, confiscation or destruction of property in order to create ethnically pure enclaves for members of their group. (OCHA)

Evaluation: A systematic and objective analysis and assessment of the organization’s policies, programmes, practices, partnerships and procedures, focused on planning, design, implementation and impacts. (UNHCR)

First Aid: The immediate but temporary care given
on site to the victims of an accident or sudden illness in order to avert complications, lessen suffering, and sustain life until competent services or a physician can be obtained. (UN DHA)

**Food Security:** A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FIVIMS)

**Funding Commitment:** Creation of a contractual obligation regarding funding between the donor and appealing agency. Almost always takes the form of a signed contract. This is the crucial stage of humanitarian funding: agencies cannot spend money and implement before a funding commitment is made; once it is made, they can begin spending against it, using cash reserves. (FTS Glossary)

**Gap Analysis:** A gap analysis reveals the quantifiable difference between a measured indicator and a standard. For example, if the standard is for each refugee to have 20 litres of water per day and each person only has 12 litres of water per day, then there is a gap of 8 litres of water per day per person. For a comprehensive discussion of gap analysis, please see the Section entitled “How to Use Standards & Indicators.” (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

**Gender-Based Violence:** Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, or other deprivations of liberty. While women, men, boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, because of their subordinate status, women and girls are the primary victims. (OCHA)

**Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols:** The four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 relating to the protection of victims in armed conflict are the principal instruments of international humanitarian law. Together, these instruments seek to limit the effects of armed conflict by protecting persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities, including wounded or sick military and naval personnel, prisoners of war, and civilian populations, and to restrict the means and methods of warfare. The four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I apply during international armed conflicts between two or more States, whereas only Article 3 common to the four Conventions and Protocol II apply during non-international or internal conflicts. As of March 2003, 190 States are party to the Geneva Conventions, 161 States are party to Additional Protocol I and 156 States are party to Additional Protocol II. These instruments are monitored principally by the International Committee of the Red Cross. (OCHA)

**Genocide:** Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (OCHA)

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** An organized collection of tools (computer hardware and software), of information and of professional/technical knowledge which is used to input, store, retrieve, utilize, analyse and output geographically referenced data. A GIS uses geography as its organizing principle. A GIS is particularly useful in situations with a spatial dimension, such as knowing the locations of refugees, where water taps are and how far refugees need to walk to school. (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

**Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD):** The GHD initiative was created by donor governments at a meeting in Stockholm in 2003 with the idea of working towards achieving efficient and principled humanitarian assistance. The initiative provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in funding humanitarian assistance and other shared concerns. By defining principles and standards it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability. (DI)

**Good Practice:** An innovative, interesting and inspiring practice that has the potential to be transferred in whole or in part to other national contexts. (UNHCR)

**Hazard:** Natural processes or phenomena or human activities that can cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

**Host Communities:** Communities that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or integrated into households directly. (OCHA)

**Human Development Index (HDI):** A measure of a country or region’s progress in terms of life expectancy, level of education and adjusted real
institutions on national and local levels, and different population groups. (UNHCR)

**Humanitarian Access:** Where protection is not available from national authorities or controlling non-state actors, vulnerable populations have a right to receive international protection and assistance from an impartial humanitarian relief operation. Such action is subject to the consent of the State or parties concerned and does not prescribe coercive measures in the event of refusal, however unwarranted. (OCHA)

**Humanitarian Action:** Assistance, protection and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards. (ALNAP)

**Humanitarian Assistance:** Aid that seeks, to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality and Independence.

**Humanitarian Worker:** Includes all workers engaged by humanitarian agencies, whether internationally or nationally recruited, or formally or informally retained from the beneficiary community, to conduct the activities of that agency. (OCHA)

**Human Rights:** All human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person. The concept of human rights acknowledges that every single human being is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Human rights are legally guaranteed by human rights law, which is expressed in treaties, customary international law, bodies of principles and other sources of law.

**Human Rights Law:** The body of customary international law, human rights instruments and national law that recognizes and protects human rights. Refugee law and human rights law complement each other. (UNHCR)

**Human Security:** A concept concerned with the security of individuals and promoting the protection of individuals’ physical safety, economic and social well-being, human dignity, and human rights and fundamental freedoms. It reflects the growing recognition worldwide that concepts of security must include people as well as States. (OCHA)

**Integrated Approach:** A planning approach that brings together issues from across sectors, institutions on national and local levels, and different population groups. (UNHCR)

**Intergovernmental Organization (IGO):** An organization made up of State members. Examples include the United Nations Organization (UN), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). (UNHCR)

**Internal Displacement:** Involuntary movement of people inside their own country. This movement may be due to a variety of causes, including natural or human-made disasters, armed conflict, or situations of generalized violence. (UNHCR)

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. (OCHA)

**International Humanitarian Law (IHL):** A body of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare by prohibiting weapons that make no distinction between combatants and civilians or weapons and methods of warfare which cause unnecessary injury, suffering and/or damage. The rules are to be observed not only by governments and their armed forces, but also by armed opposition groups and any other parties to a conflict. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 are the principal instruments of humanitarian law.

**International Law:** A body of laws regulating relations between States. (OCHA)

**International Refugee Law:** The body of customary international law and international instruments that establishes standards for refugee protection. The cornerstone of refugee law is the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. (UNHCR)

**Lesson Learned:** Conclusions that can be generalised beyond the specific case. This could include lessons that are of relevance more broadly within the country situation, or globally, to an organisation or the broader international community (ALNAP).

**Livelihoods:** Livelihoods comprise the capabilities,
assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living linked to survival and future well-being. Livelihood strategies are the practical means or activities through which people access food or income to buy food, while coping strategies are temporary responses to food insecurity. (Sphere)

**Logistics:** The range of operational activities concerned with supply, handling, transportation and distribution of materials. Also applicable to the transportation of people. (UN DHA)

**Malnutrition:** Malnutrition encompasses a range of conditions, including acute malnutrition, chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. Acute malnutrition refers to wasting (thinness) and/or nutritional oedema, while chronic malnutrition refers to stunting (shortness). Stunting and wasting are two forms of growth failure. (Sphere)

**Mandate:** The legal framework that defines the responsibilities of UN Agencies, peacekeeping operations and other international organisations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross.

**Mediation:** A process in which a third-party neutral acts as a facilitator to assist in resolving a dispute between two or more parties in an armed conflict. It is a non-adversarial approach to conflict resolution, where the parties generally communicate directly; the role of the mediator is to facilitate communication between the parties, assist them in focusing on the real issues of the dispute, and generate options for settlement. (OCHA)

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** A summary of development goals set at international conferences and world summits during the 1990s. (UNHCR)

**Military Assistance:** The use of military forces in humanitarian assistance missions during Complex Emergencies. Such assistance may take the form of military protection of humanitarian aid delivery, monitoring demobilization programs, providing logistics, arresting war criminals and protecting civilians.

**Mitigation:** Measures taken in advance of a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment. (UN DHA)

**Monitoring:** System that permits the continuous observation, measurement and a valuation of the progress of a process or phenomenon with a view to taking

**Multilateral Aid/Assistance:** Multilateral humanitarian aid is funding given to UN agencies, international organisations or the European Commission to spend entirely at their own discretion within their mandate. (DI)

**Natural Disaster:** Natural disasters are events brought about by natural hazards that seriously affect the society, economy and/or infrastructure of a region. Depending on population vulnerability and local response capacity, natural disasters will pose challenges and problems of a humanitarian nature.

**Non-Governmental Organization (NGO):** An organized entity that is functionally independent of, and does not represent, a government or State. It is normally applied to organizations devoted to humanitarian and human rights causes, a number of which have official consultative status at the United Nations. (OCHA)

**Participatory Approach:** An approach to development and/or government in which key stakeholders (and especially the proposed beneficiaries) of a policy or intervention are closely involved in the process of identifying problems and priorities and have considerable control over analysis and the planning, implementation and monitoring of solutions. (UNHCR)

**Peacebuilding:** Peacebuilding activities are aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of armed conflict and therefore encompass a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. (OCHA)

**Peace-Enforcement:** Most commonly, multinational military intervention to impose peace or restore cease-fires. It can take place without the agreement and support of one or all the warring parties. It can refer to both an interstate or an intra-state conflict, [serve] the mitigation of a humanitarian emergency or in situations where the organs of state have ceased to function.

**Peacekeeping Forces:** Civilian and military personnel designated by the national governments of the countries participating in the peace operation. These personnel are placed at the disposal of the international organisation under whose mandate the given operation is being conducted. Generally, peacekeeping forces are made up of national contingents under international command.

**Peacekeeping Operation (PKO):** UN field operations that often consist of several components, including a military component, which may or may not be armed, and various civilian components encompassing a broad range of disciplines.
**Peacemaking:** The use of diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute, essentially through means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Pledge:** A non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor. Can be specific as to appealing agency and project, or specify only the crisis. (FTS Glossary)

**Post-Conflict Reconstruction:** A generic term referring to the rebuilding of society in the aftermath of conflict. Physical infrastructures have to be repaired or re-built, governmental institutions have to be reformed, psychic traumas of civilians and combatants have to be treated, the economy has to be restarted, refugees to be repatriated, reconciliation between the belligerents has to be initiated, justice has to be delivered. Such efforts require sustained support from the international community. (FEWER)

**Preparedness:** The capacities and knowledge developed by governments, professional response organizations, communities and individuals to anticipate and respond effectively to the impact of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

**Prevention:** Activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impacts of hazards and means to minimize related environmental, technological and biological disasters.

**Protection:** All activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation. (OCHA)

**Public Awareness Raising:** The processes of developing and communicating factual information for the general population in order to increase their levels of awareness of disaster risks and their understanding of how they can act to reduce their exposure and vulnerability to hazards.

**Reconciliation:** An element of conflict resolution and peacebuilding involving the promotion of confidence building and co-existence. (UNHCR)

**Reconstruction:** A set of activities aimed at achieving the medium- and long-term recovery of the components and structures that have been affected by a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

**Recovery:** A focus on how best to restore the capacity of the government and communities to rebuild and recover from crisis and to prevent relapses into conflict. In so doing, recovery seeks not only to catalyze sustainable development activities, but also to build upon earlier humanitarian programmes to ensure that their inputs become assets for development. (UNHCR)

**Refugee:** A person, who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or for reasons owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge outside his country of origin or nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of his country of origin or nationality. (OCHA)

**Refugee Camp:** A plot of land temporarily made available to host refugees fleeing from an armed conflict in temporary homes. Essential services are provided in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education. (OCHA)

**Refugee Law:** The body of customary international law and various international, regional, and national legal instruments that establish standards for refugee protection. The cornerstone of refugee law is the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Optional Protocol. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated by the UN to provide international protection to refugees and to seek permanent solutions to their problems through its Statute, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1950. (OCHA)

**Rehabilitation:** A set of measures aimed at restoring normal living conditions through the repair and reestablishment of vital services interrupted or degraded by a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

**Reintegration:** A process which enables returnees to regain the physical, social, legal and material security needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and which eventually leads to the disappearance of any observable distinctions vis-à-vis their compatriots. (UNHCR)

**Relief:** Assistance and/or intervention during or after disaster to meet the life preservation and basic subsistence needs. It can be of emergency or
protracted duration. (UN DHA)

**Resettlement**: The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another State that has agreed to admit them. (UNHCR)

**Resilience**: The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to resist, adapt, and recover from hazard events, and to restore an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

**Responsibility to Protect**: A concept that imposes a responsibility on the international community to protect a population that is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it. (OCHA)

**Risk**: Degree of danger associated with a given operation, course of action, or failure to act in crisis situation.

**Risk Management**: A structured approach to manage uncertainty and potential losses through a process of risk assessment and the development of strategies and specific actions to control and reduce risks.

**Safe Areas/ Safety Zones**: Areas, zones, or locations established to protect civilians during a time of conflict. The terms and conditions of establishing safety zones are governed by the law of armed conflict. (UNHCR)

**Sanitation**: The application of measures and techniques aimed at ensuring and improving general hygiene in the community, including the collection, evacuation and disposal of liquid and solid wastes, as well as measures for creating favourable environmental conditions for health and disease prevention. (UN DHA)

**Self-Reliance**: The ability of an individual, household or community to depend (rely) on their own resources (physical, social and natural capital or assets), judgement and capabilities with minimal external assistance in meeting basic needs, and without resorting to activities that irreversibly deplete the household or community resource base. (UNHCR)

**Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**: Acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, that target individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. (UNHCR)

**Sexual Exploitation**: Any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (OCHA)

**Shelter**: Physical protection requirements of disaster victims who no longer have access to normal habitation facilities. Immediate post-disaster needs are met by the use of tents. Alternatives may include polypropylene houses, plastic sheeting, geodesic domes and other similar types of temporary housing. (UN DHA)

**Stakeholder**: All those – from agencies to individuals – who have a direct or indirect interest in the humanitarian intervention, or who affect or are affected by the implementation and outcome of it. (ALNAP)

**State Responsibility**: The principle that States bear primary responsibility for the functions of protecting the physical security and lives of their citizens and promoting their welfare. During Complex Emergencies occurring within their territories, this includes initiating, organizing, coordinating, and implementing humanitarian assistance programs. State responsibility also means that national political authorities are responsible to the citizens internally and to the international community through the UN, and are accountable for their acts of commission and omission. (OCHA)

**State Sovereignty**: A concept that signifies the legal identity of states in international law and provides order, stability and predictability in international relations since sovereign states are regarded as equal, regardless of comparative size or wealth. Sovereignty is not a grant to states of unlimited power to do all that is not expressly forbidden by international law; rather, it entails the totality of international rights and duties recognized by international law. (OCHA)

**Starvation**: The state resulting from extreme privation of food or of drastic reduction in nutrient intake over a period of time leading to severe physiological, functional, behavioural and morphological differences. (UN DHA)

**Sustainability**: Sustainability ‘is concerned with measuring whether an activity or an impact is likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn ...many humanitarian interventions, in contrast to development projects, are not designed to be sustainable. (ALNAP)

**Sustainable Development**: Development that meets the needs of the present without
compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Terrorism:** While there is no agreed upon international definition of “terrorism” yet, it is a concept generally understood to mean a criminal act or acts intended to inflict dramatic and deadly injury on civilians and to create an atmosphere of fear, generally in furtherance of a political or ideological (whether secular or religious) purpose. (OCHA)

**Transitional Justice:** As a political transition unfolds after a period of violence or repression, a society is often confronted with a difficult legacy of human rights abuse. The measures that need to be taken might involve both judicial and non-judicial responses to violations of human rights. These may include: prosecuting individual perpetrators; offering reparations to victims of state sponsored violence; establishing truth-seeking initiatives about past abuses; reforming institutions like the police and the courts; and removing human rights abusers from positions of power. (OCHA)

**UN Country Team (UNCT):** The ensemble of agencies of the UN System in a given country. The objective of inter-agency cooperation is to ensure that a coherent approach is taken by UN bodies in their collective response to humanitarian, developmental, and other strategies relevant to the country in which they are operating. (UNHCR)

**UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF):** The UNDAF is the common strategic framework for the operational activities of the UN system at country level. It aims to provide a collective, coherent and integrated UN system response to national priorities and needs (ODI).

**Violence:** The concept of violence is contested, and definitions generally reflect moral and political motivations. A relatively neutral definition is "psychological or physical force exerted for the purpose of injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property” (US Department of Justice, 1996:D-3). (+) (FEWER)

**Violence, cultural:** New term introduced by J. Galtung,; "[t]hose aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence - exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) - that can be used to justify, legitimise, or direct structural violence" (Galtung, 1996:196). (FEWER)

**Violence, psychological:** Indirect acts of negative influence that aim to affect or arouse fear or break mental resistance of a target audience by indoctrination (brain- washing), misinformation, propaganda, blackmail or terror. (FEWER)

**Violence, structural:** Introduced by J. Galtung this is a broad concept referring to concealed violence in unjust, unequal and unrepresentative social structures, and to situations in which the "actual somatic and mental realisations of human beings are below their potential realisations.” (cit. International Alert, II:5). (FEWER)

**Vulnerability:** The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. For positive factors, which increase the ability of people to cope with hazards, see definition of 'capacity'. (ISDR)

**War Crime:** Grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention, committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.