# Responding to changing needs?

Challenges and opportunities for humanitarian action

Montreux XIII Meeting Paper

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**ALNAP**

The Montreux process was launched in Montreux (Switzerland) in 2000 by a group of Geneva representatives of donor countries keen to discuss, in an informal manner, issues related to humanitarian financing. It has become a yearly forum for the exchange of ideas between donors, international organisations, the Red Cross Movement, and NGOs that contributes to the better understanding and the development of a broad variety of humanitarian issues.

# Table of contents

## Figures and tables

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ALNAP | Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance |
| BRIC | Brazil, Russia, India, China |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DCDC | Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre |
| DEC | Disaster Emergency Committee |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| ERD | Evaluative Reports Database |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FTS | Financial Tracking Service |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GFDDR | Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery |
| GHA | Global Humanitarian Assistance |
| HIC | High-Income Country |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IEA | International Energy Agency |
| INGC | Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades (National Disasters Management Institute) |
| LIC | Low-Income Country |
| LMIC | Lower-Middle-Income Country |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MIC | Middle-Income Country |
| MINT | Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey |
| MSF | Médecins Sans Frontières |
| NECSI | New England Complex Systems Institute |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| OCHA | UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| SOHS | State of the Humanitarian System |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UMIC | Upper-Middle-Income Country |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | UN Development Programme |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |
| US | United States |

## 1.  Introduction

This think-piece was commissioned in preparation for the Montreux XIII Donor Conference in November 2014. It aims to provide a forward-looking overview of the evolving problems the international humanitarian sector is facing and to suggest potential collective responses to them.

The paper first sets humanitarian assistance challenges in a wider context of global trends and issues. Part 2 reviews the broader contexts in which humanitarian action takes place. It presents an overview of the changing global landscape and how this is in different ways challenging, constraining and stretching the humanitarian system.

Part 3 switches from the focus on context and needs to look at recent trends in humanitarian response. As well as examining the financial allocation, scope and distribution of aid, it looks across the wider network of actors now involved in humanitarian efforts and explores what this means for the current humanitarian assistance *modus operandi*. It also reviews key trends and patterns in effectiveness and reform efforts.

Part 4 presents an illustrative overview of the evolving nature of such needs by introducing four differentiated models of the interface between the international community, host governments and affected populations that are apparent when looking across the crises of the past 10 years. It reviews some of the lessons from and challenges arising in the international humanitarian sector response to each model. Using existing data, it illustrates some of the key trends in official donor financing across these different models.

Part 5 concludes the paper by summarising the key challenges for consideration by participants at the Montreux XIII Conference.

The overall purpose of the paper is to inform and support productive and action-oriented dialogue and discussions at the Montreux XIII Conference. It is also hoped that the meeting will be able to contribute to and inform discussions leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

## 2.  Humanitarian contexts: a world in flux

### 2.1   Overview

The wider global context in which humanitarian assistance takes place has changed radically over the past few decades. A comprehensive review of all relevant trends is not possible here; this section focuses on three macro-level contextual factors and their relevance for humanitarian crises and vulnerabilities:

1. Social and economic trends;
2. Climate, environmental and natural resources; and
3. Security, violence and conflict.

### 2.2   Social and economic trends

Key messages:
- The world is becoming more wealthy, but populations are more exposed to crises
- There is a growing tendency for low and middle income states to lead their own disaster responses
- Rising inequality, urbanisation and demographic change are compounding existing vulnerabilities and creating new ones

Over the past 20 years, economic growth in developing and emerging economies has led a number of low-income countries (LICs) to move into, or to have ambitions to soon achieve, middle-income status. Despite the global downturn precipitated by the 2008 financial crisis, many of these countries have sustained remarkable levels of growth. Prominent examples include Brazil, India, China and South Africa (together with Russia collectively known as the BRICS), Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey (the MINTs), Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Mozambique.[1] The growing economic strength of these countries, and the geopolitical clout that comes with it, carry broad implications for foreign aid efforts in general, and humanitarian efforts in particular. For humanitarian agencies, these implications relate both to internal dynamics within the countries in question and to shifting positions in foreign and wider geopolitical relations. The financing capacity of developing and crisis-affected states has grown considerably in the past decade or so (figure 1).

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[1] http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-6040

FIGURE 1: MAJOR RESOURCE FLOWS IN DEVELOPING AND EMERGING ECONOMIES, 2000–2013
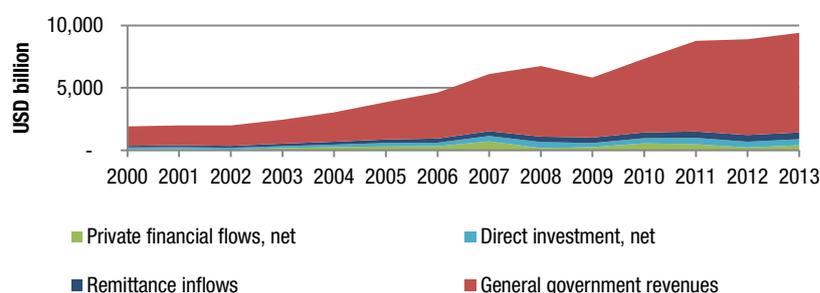


Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook, April 2014; World Bank inward remittances data April 2013 adjusted to OECD list of developing countries.[2]

This has, in combination with a range of other factors, driven a greater assertiveness when dealing with the international aid community.[3] Interestingly, this assertiveness is not limited to those countries enjoying strong economic performance. Many countries are starting to exert a legitimate and very welcome degree of choice about the nature and scope of their aid relations. Previously, the mentality was more one of, 'We have to take it or leave it.'

There are numerous examples of middle-income and upper-low-income countries starting to 'graduate' from traditional models of humanitarian assistance. This has seen some countries seeking a more cooperative and nationally owned approach to disaster response. One of the most widely cited examples is that of Bangladesh. Cyclone Sidr killed some 3,000 people in the country in 2007, whereas similar or weaker storms in previous years had killed up to 100 times that number. The reduction in deaths was largely because of government and community preparedness and response measures, much of it funded by regional and global development banks.[4]

Recent years have also seen important and much-praised work led by the Ethiopian government to move away from unsustainable modes of aid delivery in the face of recurring food crises, towards establishing national safety nets. Similarly, Mozambique has set up a national disaster management agency to oversee flood and cyclone responses. Again, these local capacity development efforts have typically been facilitated and supported not by humanitarian aid but by long-term aid finance from development donors.

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[2] http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/pdf/text.pdf
[3] http://www.alnap.org/ndma
[4] http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/earth-and-environmental-science/climatology-and-climate-change/natural-disasters-and-adaptation-climate-change

Increasingly, a number of these countries are also responding as donors to international emergencies in other countries, typically focusing on those with a regional or cultural connection. Turkey has been prominent in the humanitarian response in Somalia; Brazil has contributed almost £30 million to Haiti, mostly through support to the multilateral system. China has consistently been one of the largest providers of humanitarian aid among the BRICS countries, contributing some $87 million in 2011 alone. Overall, non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donorship has increased considerably, in terms of both numbers and volume of funds provided (Figure 2), in the past few years.[5]

FIGURE 2: NON-OECD DAC DONOR FUNDS, 2004-2013 (US$ BILLIONS)
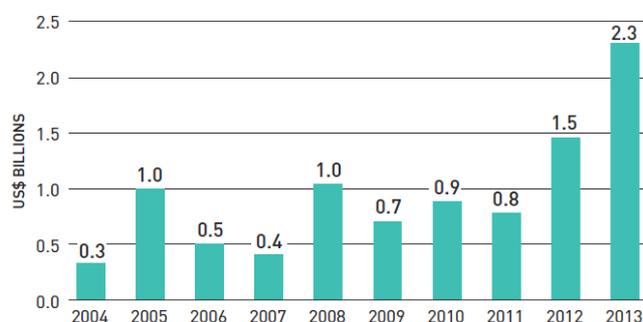


Source: GHA analysis of OCHA FTS data[6]

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in particular now regularly features in the top 20 humanitarian donors annually, typically focusing on crises in the Middle East. For example, in June 2014, the government of KSA gave a $500m grant to people of Iraq, through the United Nations, to provide support and assistance to conflict-affected populations in Iraq irrespective of religion, sect or ethnicity. A number of African countries were among the top 10 donor governments supporting the Haiti Emergency Response Fund, and were in the novel position of being both donors to, and recipients of, the humanitarian aid system.

The economic boom in developing countries has also seen development gains. One of the most important global movements in social development in recent years has been the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The data on progress on the MDGs tells a positive story about the eradication of poverty, which should – on the face of it – be good news for humanitarian actors: less poverty means less vulnerability, which means smaller crisis-affected populations. Figure 3 illustrates the extent of this shift: as recently as 1990, more than half the population of Africa and Asia lived on less than $1.25 per day (the World Bank extreme poverty line). Today, the proportion of extreme poor is much lower in all regions: less than 10% in East Asia and Pacific and less than 35% in Sub-Saharan Africa.[7]

[5] http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/GHA-non-DAC-donors-humanitarian-aid1.pdf
[6] http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2014
[7] http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7537.pdf

FIGURE 3: GLOBAL POVERTY REDUCTION, 1990-2015 (%)



East Asia and Pacific
Europe and Central Asia
Middle East and North Africa
Sub-Saharan Africa
China
Latin America and the Caribbean
India
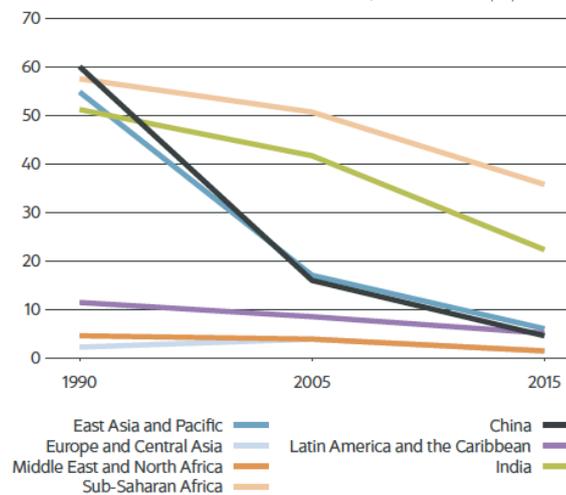
Source: World Bank Global Monitoring Report (2011) [8]

However, the picture is still worrying for the poorest, and most disaster-vulnerable, communities, of which there are still large numbers. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 1.2 billion people still live on less than $1.25 a day, and more than 840 million people are chronically undernourished.[9] One can conclude that, in many countries most affected by disasters, the conditions of the very poorest have not improved significantly. Indeed, things may be getting rather worse. One downside of rapid economic growth is that inequality within LICs and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) is now a major issue. Recent data show there are now more poor people – defined as those living on less than $1.25 dollars a day – in middle-income countries (MICs) than in LICs.[10] Humanitarian crises can increasingly serve to reveal the 'vulnerable' populations within these countries, and the worrying reality behind positive economic data.

As the recent multi-agency Call to Action Campaign[11] showed, LICs still disproportionately bear the mortality impact of disasters, when looked at relative to the numbers of disasters (Table 1). Some 39% of all deaths are in LICs, even though only 3% of disasters happen there. However, a greater overall proportion of disaster deaths – some 42% of all disaster deaths globally – are occurring in LMICs.

Because their development progress is more recent and potentially more tenuous, these LMICs also face greater economic vulnerability. This results in a double blow of high numbers of deaths combined with much greater financial losses. These LMICs have to cope with 25% of global losses compared with 3% for LICs and 8% for upper-middle-income countries (UMICs).

8 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGLOMONREP2011/Resources/7856131-1302708588094/GMR2011-CompleteReport.pdf
9 https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20SLTT%20Web%20Final%20Single.PDF
10 http://www.cgdev.org/blog/new-bottom-billion-andy-sumner
11 http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/UNDP_CPR_CTA_20140901.pdf

TABLE 1: DISASTER IMPACTS BY COUNTRY INCOME LEVEL

|  | LICs | LMICs | UMICs | HICs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disasters (as % of total numbers) | 9 | 24 | 20 | 47 |
| Financial loss (as % of total) | 3 | 25 | 8 | 64 |
| Deaths (as % of total) | 39 | 42 | 12 | 7 |

Source: UNDP, UNICEF, Oxfam and GFDRR[12]

Regardless of national origin and macroeconomic income levels, some groups have been found to be more vulnerable to crises. Widespread discrimination and inequality have undermined the ability of women, girls, children, the chronically sick, the elderly and others to cope with crises. One of the downsides of recent economic growth is that the positive benefits have not always reached these systemically vulnerable groups in most countries.

Inequality is not the only problematic implication of recent economic growth. As in other regions throughout history, recent rapid economic growth in developing countries has been accompanied and mutually reinforced by urbanisation. There has been a massive rise in the number of people living in cities and in the total numbers of cities across the developing world. This has a positive effect in terms of cities being the engines of economic growth, but, as was infamously found in Great Britain in the 1840s, urbanisation can simultaneously lead to greater impoverishment and vulnerability. Despite a groundswell of interest after the Haiti earthquake, this urban reality is imperfectly understood and incorporated in humanitarian policy and programmes. It demands fundamentally different business models, and a more cooperative approach – one that has proved somewhat elusive for mainstream humanitarian actors.[13]

As well as changes in where people live, a number of other demographic factors are having an impact on humanitarian crises. While most developed countries are facing an ageing population, in developing countries the opposite is true. A number of African countries in particular are seeing an emerging youth bulge.
In combination with inequality, this has been found to be a critical driver of conflict and unrest.[14] The youth bulge has been heightened in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries by the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS, which have served to 'hollow out' entire generations through early, untimely deaths.

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[12] http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/drr-call-for-action/
[13] http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/urban
[14] http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries

## 2.3   Climate, environment and natural resources

Key messages:

- Climate change is intensifying the vulnerability of the poorest people, leading to heightened risks of floods, storm, and disruption to food production
- Environmental pressures are eroding the ecological basis of many livelihoods
- There is a growing link between climate change and conflicts

Current projections of the latest trends show global average temperatures will increase by about 3.5 degrees by 2100.[15] This is some way beyond the threshold of 2 degrees that is widely viewed as the trigger-point for globally disastrous, irreversible, climate change.[16] This has clear and widely cited implications for humanitarian efforts. The effects of rapid climate change are already apparent in the rise of disasters globally. Growth in the number of climate-related shocks and stresses around the world has been widely acknowledged. A 50% rise in climate-related events is projected in the 25 years from 1990 to 2015 (Figure 4), and the resulting disasters will affect at least 375 million people globally.[17]

FIGURE 4: PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS, 1990-2015 (MILLIONS)
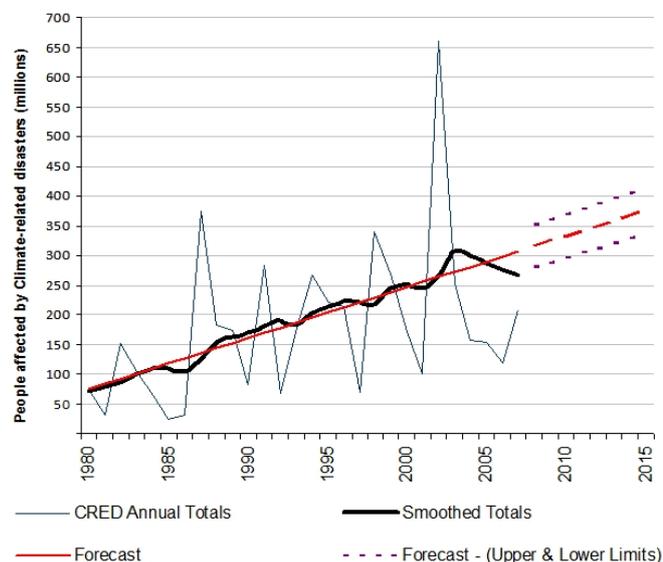


Source: Oxfam (2009) [18]

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[15] Climate Action Tracker (2012); IEA (2011).
[16] UK Met Office (2010).
[17] http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/right-to-survive-report.pdf
[18] http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-right-to-survive-in-a-changing-climate-112468

Figure 5 shows three examples of the growing exposure of populations to a range of climate risks. The growing frequency of extreme weather events, in combination with greater numbers of exposed people, will lead to increases in deaths and financial losses. Of course, as with many other drivers of crisis, it is the poor and powerless who are most vulnerable to the potential negative impacts of climate change.
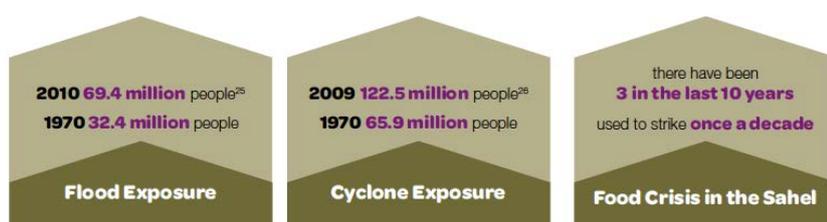
FIGURE 5: INCREASING CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTER RISKS (MILLIONS OF PEOPLE EXPOSED)



**2010 69.4 million** people[25]
**1970 32.4 million** people
**Flood Exposure**

**2009 122.5 million** people[26]
**1970 65.9 million** people
**Cyclone Exposure**

there have been
**3 in the last 10 years**
used to strike **once a decade**
**Food Crisis in the Sahel**

Source: Call to Action (2014) [19]

Climate change is, of course, just the most high profile of the environmental pressures that are likely shape and have an impact on humanitarian crises. Forest and farmland degradation, over-fishing, water and air quality and new disease emergence, in tandem with socioeconomic factors such as population density and urbanisation, are all projected to lead to upward spikes in human vulnerability. In the short term, the impacts are likely to be food and energy insecurity. This has already been seen in the growing frequency of food crises in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and arid parts of Asia.

Over time, as these pressures erode the basis of livelihoods, the effects are likely to become increasingly severe, driving conflict, climate migration and resource competition. As the global food price crises of 2008-2010 showed, these scenarios are not some far-flung fiction; they have happened already. Towards the end of the 2000s, the demand for biofuels, combined with poor global harvests driven by climate variability and market speculation, led to unprecedented volatility in food prices. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Food Price Index a powerful predictor of political stresses and social unrest (Figure 6).

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[19]
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/UNDP_CPR_CTA_2014090
1.pdf

FIGURE 6: FOOD PRICES AND INCIDENCE OF SOCIAL UNREST, 2004-2012
(USING THE FAO FOOD PRICE INDEX)
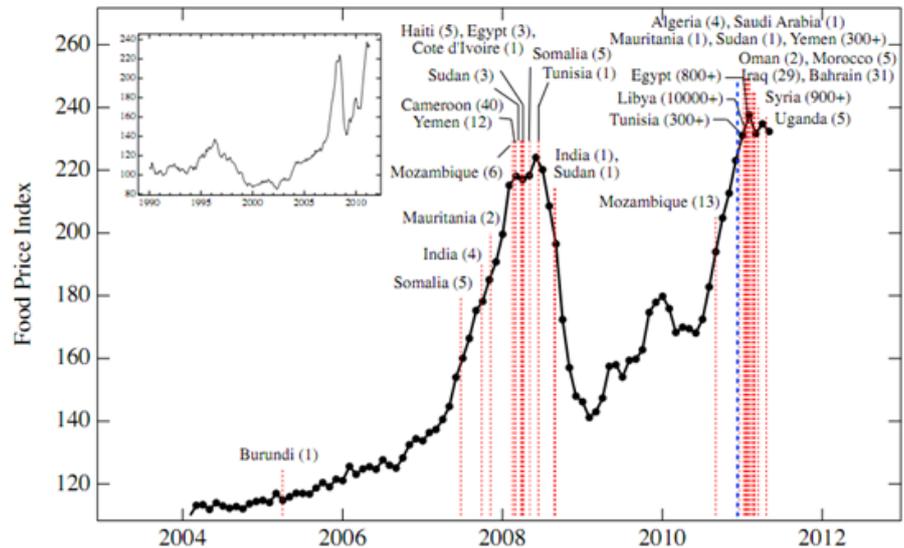


Source: NECSI[20]

Although the connections between climate change and the Syria crisis may seem tenuous, the Arab Spring was driven as much by high food prices as by any other single factor – and the Syrian crisis is the result of the violent repression of that uprising.[21]

## 2.4   Security, violence and conflict

Key messages:

- State fragility is affecting growing numbers of poor people, who are missing out on the development gains seeing in other contexts
- Geopolitical factors have and continue to play a major role in generating and shaping both crises and the space for humanitarian action

Since 1990, the proportion of extremely poor people living in fragile states has gone from 14% to 24%. The lack of development progress in such states is widely recognised: none is projected to achieve any of the MDG targets by 2015. While inter-state conflict has fallen to historically low levels, there is ever-greater intra-national conflict and violence, which are often persistent. The World Bank estimates that 1.5 billion people live in countries trapped in repeated cycles of violent conflict. Even in otherwise stable countries, there are 'pockets of fragility', where conflict can escalate and lead to national crises. Recent examples include the tipping of Mali into full-blown conflict, the constitutional crises in Thailand and ongoing levels of violence in many Latin American cities. [22]

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[20] http://necsi.edu/research/social/foodcrises.html
[21] http://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2013/may/13/1
[22] http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/FSR-2014.pdf

In many of these crises, the typical international community response runs counter to the key recommendation of the Joint Evaluation of the Rwanda Response. Instead of political action to deal with the causes of crises, the tendency is to address symptoms through disbursements of humanitarian aid. This is as true today as it has ever been – for example in the recent outbreak of violence in Northern Iraq driven by the ISIS group, where the rather cautious response of many Western governments has been to bolster aid efforts. It is increasingly apparent that the failure of political settlements, as much as any other factor, drives human vulnerability. A recent and worrying example is how the failure of negotiations between the various parties in Israel and Palestine is leading to spiralling crises for the people of the Gaza Strip.

Of course, it is not just national politics that shape aid efforts, but also geopolitical factors. Shifts in geopolitical interests and approaches have arguably seen greater challenges to the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian aid than at any time since the end of the Cold War. The political language and ideology around aid has shifted dramatically. Prominent examples include the notions of 'humanitarian wars', of 'non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as force multipliers' and of 'aid to win hearts and minds'. Perhaps the most startling example of aid being co-opted in recent years was the use of medical aid in Pakistan as a screen in the counterterrorism effort to capture Osama Bin Laden. These manipulations of aid have had a deeply damaging effect on the reputation, trust and standing of the sector. This goes well beyond the branding and funding concerns: it is arguably as a result of the growing distortion of aid by political interests that the humanitarian profession has become more dangerous today than at any time in its history.

Other geopolitical factors increasingly shape the limits and potential of humanitarian assistance. For example, many view the current era as one characterised by increasingly 'multi-polar' world politics, where there is no longer one single superpower and where the established post-World War II financial order is being eroded. The role of BRICs countries as sources of finance is especially noteworthy here, and has had direct implications for aid agencies' work in developing countries. Developing countries are no longer reliant on traditional sources of finance such as the development banks, but can borrow directly from BRICs countries, especially China, at lower rates without conditions. [23] The growing assertiveness of national governments when dealing with humanitarian aid (described in Part 2.2) can, in part at least, be attributed to the fact that those self-same governments are operating in very different ways in relation to the architecture of development finance.

There are of course other numerous security-related issues the humanitarian implications of which are still unclear but may well be considerable. Increasingly, any full understanding and anticipation of humanitarian challenges needs to take into account a range of these global security and political agendas.

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[23] https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2614/480910PUB0Buil101OFFICIAL0US E0ONLY1.pdf?sequence=1

### 2.5   Summary: Operating in a complex, dynamic world

Closing messages:

- The world is becoming simultaneously more developed and more vulnerable to disasters and crises, driven by social, economic, environmental and political factors
- There is a growing interdependence of crises drivers leading to heightened uncertainty about where crises will strike and with what consequences
- The humanitarian sector as it is current set up and managed is poorly suited to this new reality.

The 21st century world has become simultaneously more developed, more wealthy, more unequal, more urban, more degraded, more resource-constrained, more fragile and more vulnerable. We are seeing both tremendous attention to disasters and resilience but also startling instances where even the best-laid preparations of the wealthiest countries have gone awry. All countries, developed and developing alike, may need assistance at some point. One remarkable instance comes from the past few years: 2011 saw wealthy Japan receive $600 million in official government aid for its response to the devastating tsunami, receiving more that year than Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya or Sudan.

These macro issues are increasingly interdependent. The most obvious, and media-friendly, example is climate change. This is likely to increase the threat of new conflicts, which will lead to more displaced people and a heightened need for more humanitarian aid. One recent report by the International Sustainability Unit estimated that 46 countries would face a 'high risk of violent conflict' when climate change exacerbated traditional security threats.

Leading scientists and policy makers have postulated a number of global doomsday scenarios. These scenarios focus on the dangerous combination of a limited number of the global issues set out here, such as food scarcity, climate change and population growth.[24] Figure 7 shows some of these potential interdependencies on a global scale.

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[24] See, for example, the work of the former UK Government Chief Scientist, John Beddington, on the 2030 Outlook (Beddington, 2011).

FIGURE 7: AREAS FACING MULTIPLE CRISES STRESSES
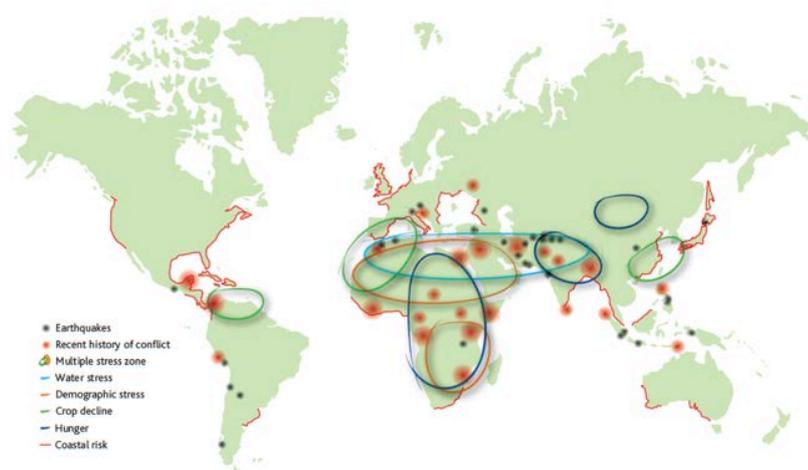


Source: DCDC Strategic Trends Review[25]

For some, the more worrying reality is that it is impossible to predict how these interdependencies might play out, adding ever-greater levels of uncertainty to disaster anticipation and planning.

These contextual factors have created considerable policy and operational turbulence for humanitarian assistance. This has served to push their agendas and efforts – in both policy and practice – in different directions simultaneously. There has been growing attention paid to humanitarian futures in the past decade, with a growing awareness of the need for the sector to better adapt to this 'new normal', and numerous calls for the sector to become more anticipatory and adaptive. On the other hand, there is a deep conservatism within the sector which seems to assume that what **hasn't** worked especially well in the past will somehow meet the challenges of the future. To date, it would seem fair to say that the *status quo* has proved more resilient, and the sector has not proved especially responsive to the contextual challenges it faces.

The internal dynamics and performance of the sector is what we turn to next.

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[25] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-trends-programme

### 3.   Humanitarian responses: growing but insufficient

In this part, we outline how the system operates to meet global humanitarian needs, looking at four specific elements:

1.   The quantity of assistance provided, in terms of allocation, sufficiency and scope;
2.   The quality of assistance, in terms of performance, accountability and innovations;
3.   The network of actors involved in assistance, and how this has changed over time;
4.   The ongoing attempts to reform and improve assistance.

#### 3.1 Allocation, scope and sufficiency

Key messages:
-   Humanitarian assistance is growing to unprecedented levels
-   Although there is no standard objective measure, some argue that the overall volumes are still insufficient in the face of these needs
-   There are also issues of concentration and a lack of proportionality

The past 20 years have seen almost constant growth and diversification in many aspects of the humanitarian system – in terms of numbers and types of actors involved, levels of resources, sectors covered, technologies being deployed and so on. The overall volume of assistance has increased considerably, although there have been some year-on-year fluctuations in the total volumes given. Dips were especially pronounced in the years following mega-disasters, such as 2005, post-tsunami, and 2011-2012, post-Haiti and Pakistan (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8: TOTAL INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE, 2008-2013
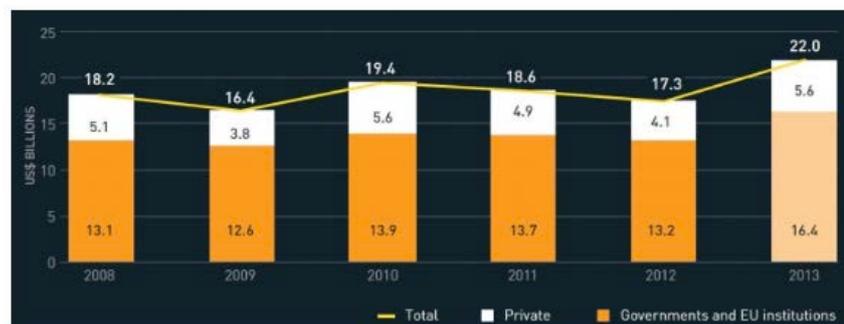


Source: GHA (2014) [26]

As well as of the volume of allocation, there also needs to be consideration of the quality of financial disbursements. One way of judging this is whether funding enables humanitarian agencies to operate with new and differentiated models of response. At the present time, this would seem to be something of a challenge. The many funding requirements and restrictions on response activities – such as earmarking of funds for specific delivery sectors or setting up specific time windows

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[26] http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2014

for the spending of donor money – on the whole tend to reinforce established models of assistance. This is explored in more detail in Part 4.

The growth in resources has been accompanied by a considerable expansion in the breadth of response activities. Humanitarian aid today covers everything from life-saving food assistance and emergency sanitation to education and protection. Different actors have started to focus on specific operational or sectoral niches. In this continually evolving operating environment, fragmentation has become more common. Many different roles and responsibilities inhibit the potential for collective action. There are also questions about whether the expansion of scope has been effective: many of the newer areas, such as protection, have not been allocated equivalent resources to other, more established, sectors.

While the volume and scope of assistance has grown considerably over the past decades, the evidence suggests the growth in volume of disbursements has not matched the growth in needs. Despite growth in aid volumes to record levels in 2013, over a third of estimated humanitarian needs went unmet. UN-coordinated appeals, which targeted 78 million people for assistance in 2013 and asked for $12.8 billion, was covered only to the tune of 65%. Overall, donor contributions have failed to keep pace with growth in demand, as measured by total appeals (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9: REQUIREMENTS, FUNDING AND UNMET NEEDS (2005-2014, $US BILLION)
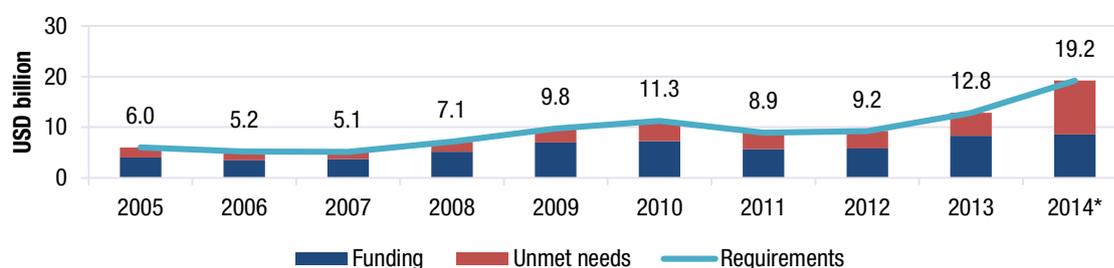


Source: UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS)* Funding as at 18 August 2014[27]

A number of other sources support the overall conclusion that needs are increasing and not being met. For example, the majority of respondents to ALNAP's SOHS survey deemed overall funding insufficient, both globally and for specific under-served sectors of response, notably protection and livelihoods. The response was broadly similar in the most recent survey, covering 2009/10, compared with that in the previous survey, that of 2007/08.

OCHA has mapped this relationship between needs and funding requirements over time and used the data to reach a broadly similar conclusion: resources are not growing as fast, or in proportion with the global population in need.

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[27] http://fts.unocha.org

Of course, using appeals and volumes covered is far from an unproblematic proxy for actual humanitarian needs and how well they are met – but it is one of the few available that enable year-on-year comparisons. What is more certain is that the distribution of resources is problematic in terms of how concentrated it is within specific countries. While the major recipients of humanitarian assistance account for the largest proportion of disasters globally, and also face significantly higher impacts from disasters, there are questions about how well these resources are distributed across these countries.

The bulk of humanitarian funds remain highly skewed towards a small number of crises, with 92% of aid going to the top 40 aid recipients globally, but with the top 20 countries receiving almost 90% of the total and the top 5 countries receiving just over 40%. This degree of concentration has increased over time. In 2000, for example, the top five aid recipients received less than 20% of all aid, whereas in 2009 this had more than doubled to over 40% (see Figure 10 below for a fuller picture).

FIGURE 10: CONCENTRATION OF AID AMONG TOP 5, TOP 20 AND TOP 40 RECIPIENTS, 2000-2009 (%)
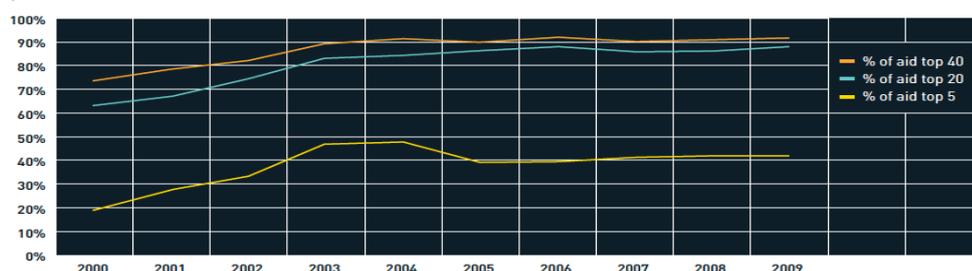


Source: GHA (2012)[28]

### 3.2  New actors

Key messages:
- There has been a growth in the numbers of donors and NGOs
- Many new kinds of actors are now operating in responses, from the national governments to the private sector
- A number of parallel systems for assistance are emerging, some such as remittances are much bigger than aid, others are built on principles of circumnavigating traditional aid agencies

The delivery of humanitarian assistance has been subject to various 'big bangs' over the course of its history. One prominent example was in the 1960s, when many agencies traditionally focused on development started to develop humanitarian departments. The 1990s, and the end of the Cold War, also saw many different actors enter the humanitarian realm. More recently, the rise in mega-disasters, such as the tsunami and the Haitian earthquake, has led to even more diversification of the modern humanitarian landscape.

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[28] http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2012

This can be observed both among the traditional actors in the sector and among new actors starting to take on a more active role in response efforts.

- • Donors: there has been a rapid increase in the number of government donors. The number of non-DAC donors reporting humanitarian aid expenditure to OCHA rose to 127 in 2010. As Figure 2 shows, the volume of resources has increased over time.
- • There are more assertive national and regional disaster management bodies.
- • There has been an increase in the number of operational responders from outside the traditional sector, most notably the private sector and the military.
- • There has been a significant increase in the number of southern and northern NGOs.

Of course, some may say these actors have always been involved in assistance but are only recently starting to be recognised. Allocations of official aid to major emergencies indicate the range of organisations delivering relief aid is changing. Figure 11 shows the post-Haiti earthquake relief allocation. It is interesting to note that, despite the large volume of relief assistance that poured into the country, estimates are that only 1% of all aid went to the government of Haiti.

FIGURE 11: DELIVERY OF RELIEF AID TO HAITI (%)
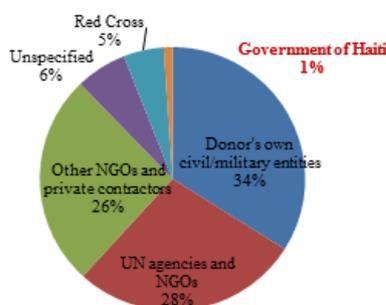


Note: Most NGOs which received support are international. Percentages in this chart are for the $2.43 billion committed or disbursed as of March 2011. By December 2011, donors had disbursed 52.9 percent of the $4.5 billion pledged for programme support. Source: Office of the UN Special Envoy for Haiti, "Has Aid Changed?" Report, 15.

Source: Office of UN Special Envoy for Haiti [29]

There are also different forms of response that run in parallel with the formal humanitarian system, for example remittances, private sector delivery, peer-to-peer aid, etc. From a humanitarian sector perspective, these alternately complement, challenge or simply circumvent its efforts. One could draw a Copernican analogy here: whereas the humanitarian sector traditionally tended to see the world as revolving around aid efforts, the reality is that disaster events are at the centre, and aid and these other systems are part of a constellation of efforts to deliver assistance.

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[29] http://www.lessonsfromhaiti.org

For example, global remittances have been shown to dwarf the foreign aid system by some 600%, and are arguably much more tailored to the needs of recipients and less disruptive of local systems such as markets. While remittances have been found to track effectively the incidence of natural disasters, often spiking in the years after crises (see Figure 12), they are much more likely to be received by urban than rural populations, and by the low-to-middle than the extremely poor classes.

FIGURE 12: INCREASE IN REMITTANCES AFTER LARGE NATURAL DISASTERS (AS % OF GDP)
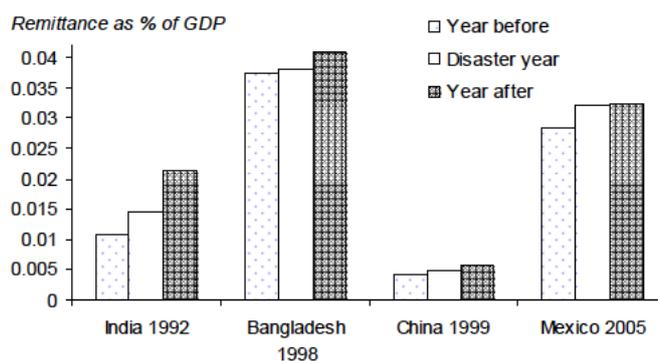


Source: World Bank[30]

As a result of all of this expansion of the humanitarian network, the response side of the system has become ever more crowded – from donors to operational agencies – especially in large-scale and high-profile crises. The same phenomenon has been observed in development aid, described as shifting towards a new 'many-to-many' world:

Humanitarians have never had a monopoly on compassion – but increasingly they also do not have a monopoly on delivery. Whether the new actors are the right ones to meet changing needs, and whether they can legitimately be called 'humanitarian', is the focus of ongoing and energetic debates.

With these multiple and diverse actors come very different principles, values and ways of working. Some of this effort has been directed towards the existing system – for example new donors from the Middle East and South America supporting the multilateral system with large lump sum donations. But other initiatives can prove more problematic for the traditional humanitarian sector – for example the growth of profit-seeking businesses and military actors in mainstream humanitarian delivery efforts. More effort is clearly needed to ensure coordination and collaboration extend beyond the usual suspects to these new, increasingly prominent, but very different actors.

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[30] http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/1813-9450-4972

## 3.3  Quality, effectiveness and reforms

Key messages:
- There are ongoing efforts that have sought to improve the effectiveness of aid
- Progress has been incremental and slow, and uneven
- Few reforms have attempted to change incentives that fundamentally shape organisational behaviours

For the past 20 years, concerns about the quality and accountability of responses have moved centre-stage in humanitarian circles. There are various strands to this work, as identified in the literature:

- There has been a focus on quality and standards, drawing on various efforts in the wider world on quality management. There has been major growth in quality assurance methods that seek to set standards, protocols and thresholds for how aid is delivered. Sphere is perhaps the most widespread of these, with minimum standards for delivery specified for each of the major sectors. Related to these, there have also been efforts related to certification against standards, as well as professionalisation and training to help individuals and organisations better meet standards.
- There have been greater efforts to deliver against results, drawing on public sector management. The most recent focus has been on value for money approaches that seek to show the investment donors make is spent efficiently and with effective results.
- Many donors and operational agencies invest in evaluation research, learning and evaluation to improve operational and ex-post learning about what has worked and why.
- There has been a greater focus on participation and voice, drawing on parallel efforts in international development efforts. Seeking to place affected populations more centrally in assistance has long been a concern of humanitarians, but the impact of such efforts has been very uneven.

These strands underpin much of what the aid system has been doing in the name of accountability, learning and effectiveness. In addition, a number of more recent movements cut across these strands. For example, there has been an increase in the number of needs assessments that seek to systematically assess what affected populations need, in what areas and to what extent. These needs assessments are increasingly carried out by groups of operational agencies working together. As well as providing a systematic means by which to understand what aid is needed, these needs assessments should also provide a baseline against which to judge future performance of aid efforts. As such, needs assessments should support better quality, better results and better participation and accountability.

One of the most significant new areas of development has been the growing focus on innovation management across the humanitarian aid system, at policy, analytical and operational levels. Across almost every sector of aid, there has been a sudden growth of interest in innovative practices, and investment in new technologies, product and processes. It is not yet possible to aggregate specific improvements to quality improvements across the system as a whole.

According to ALNAP's State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) [31] report, the wealth of work on enhancing the quality of global response has led to steady but incremental improvements. This has been attributed to the fact that many of the efforts described above have focused on finding fixes within the existing *modus operandi* of assistance. While some quality issues can be operationally addressed within the *status quo*, others may demand a more complete rethink of how the system works, and moving to wholly new business models.

Following a run of high-profile failures in the 1990s, the various parts of the global humanitarian system busily set about a host of efforts to change the way aid worked. The scale of the effort dwarfed previous attempts at such improvement. Very few parts of the official system were left untouched: from delivery standards and NGO accountability, to donor financing and UN coordination, through to the conduct of the Red Cross movement and beneficiary accountability.

Twenty years on, some of the fruits of these efforts are apparent. There have been some partial, if much debated, successes. Aid is more subject to rules, standards and regulations. It is more controlled, with much greater focus on effectiveness, results and reports. The bureaucracy of aid has increased almost beyond recognition. There have been some significant innovations, and many new technologies deployed to smooth the delivery of assistance.

The ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System report found that reform programmes have brought about improvements in coordination and quick release financing in the midst of crises. Such improvements aside, it seems clear that the impacts of reforms have not been quite as transformative as the architects of change originally envisaged, and hoped.

The vision of a radically improved humanitarian system, which inspired and motivated so many in the wake of its most widely reported failures, is yet to be fully realised. Positive improvements, where they have happened, have been the result of gradual and often painful change processes.

The reasons for this remain rather baffling to many observers. After all, both the need and the desire for change appear so pronounced, and so clearly in line with the goals and interests of the sector. Moreover, so many in the sector so firmly believe the necessary changes not only are possible but also should really have happened already.

Two broad sets of reasons for this lack of change are widely cited. One is that there are many drivers of change for the sector, of which the reform agenda is only one. Reforms, moreover, are seldom, if ever, the most prominent of the internal drivers. Others include organisational interests, professional norms, donor interests and so on. These serve to reinforce the *status quo* of the sector. There are also a number of external factors, described in Part 2, which can often play out in ways that make reforms out-dated before they are even launched.

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[31] http://www.alnap.org/sohs

The second set of reasons relates to the reform efforts themselves. Seldom have change and reform efforts attempted to change the fundamental rules and incentives that underpin humanitarian aid effectiveness. While many of these rules and incentives are increasingly understood, few reforms have tried – or been allowed – to tackle them directly.

Instead, there has been a tendency to focus on technical issues such as standards, methods and processes, while accepting the system as a given. This has left many reforms with the feel of a 'bolt-on' to an existing and imperfect system.

### 3.4  Summary: Where are the game changing reforms?

Closing messages:

- Despite change over the past 20 years, the sector is still subject to the same criticisms made in the era of Rwanda
- There are a number of areas that still need positive change, from financing to partnerships with new actors

It is a curious paradox that, despite the tremendous change seen in humanitarian aid over the past 20 years, the system is still largely vulnerable, and frequently subject to, the same criticisms levelled at it in the years following the response to the Rwandan genocide.[32]

As noted earlier, part of the reason is that very few reforms have mobilised the collective action that seems necessary to make comprehensive, system-wide changes happen. Even the relatively radical and successful reforms have focused on a narrow band of actors, and on specific aspects of their actions and behaviours. These efforts have therefore not brought about systemic improvements in how the sector works. Despite the efforts made to date, there are still a number of areas in need of improvement.

These include:

- New thinking about how to raise funds from non-traditional sources to address growing unmet needs
- Better management of aid distributions to ensure distribution across and within countries is in proportion to needs;
- Improvements to financial disbursements to allow for new models of response to be better implemented;
- More sustained investments to strengthen quality in areas of aid work such as protection and livelihoods;

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[32] The humanitarian system remains neither fair nor especially efficient. It remains very difficult to coordinate, especially in large-scale disasters. It is plagued by duplication, waste and - in many places - irrelevance. It sidesteps or commandeers local actors, and pays too little attention to those people and communities who are the recipients of their efforts. Overall, the humanitarian endeavour does not deliver on its promise.

- Better partnerships and networks with affected populations, private sector, national governments, Southern actors and diaspora groups, enabling them to play key leadership roles where relevant;
- A renewed focus on aid effectiveness, and fresh thinking on how to address longstanding challenges of quality and accountability.

The contextual factors described in Part 2 have combined in various ways to heighten the need for these changes within the sector. This has seen the emergence of a more diverse set of demands for humanitarian aid. The ways in which the sector has responded is the focus of Part 4.

## 4. Four models of humanitarianism: exploring diverse approaches

### 4.1 An emerging framework: The Four 'C's

So far we have reviewed how the wider contexts of humanitarian aid are driving needs, and looked at how the internal dynamics of the sector are shaping the response to these needs.

Many in the sector realise that what works in humanitarian action one setting – in terms of assumptions, processes, mechanisms, structures and relationships – is increasingly unlikely to be suitable elsewhere. As a result of the wider contexts and the internal pressures, it is possible to see the emergence of a number of distinct models of humanitarian response that can be observed in different settings.

The purpose of this framework is to complement existing comparative models of humanitarian crises. Such frameworks tend to use a classification of the severity of the disaster impact (e.g. Type 1, Type 2, Type 3 crisis), which then shape the nature, scale and scope of operational responses.

While useful in many settings, such approaches can neglect considerations of the capacities, interests and attitudes, demands and constraints placed upon humanitarian action by contextual factors and actors in affected countries.

The alternative framework presented here sets out four different models of humanitarian response, based on a range of factors. These include country contexts, the nature of the disaster, state legitimacy, capacities nationally and locally, and the attitude of policymakers and practitioners toward humanitarian assistance.

These models are 1) Comprehensive; 2) Constrained; 3) Collaborative; and 4) Consultative. This section goes through each of these in turn, providing specific examples of each, as well using the framework to see the common challenges faced by the international humanitarian sector in a new light.

## 4.2  The Comprehensive model

Key messages:

- The comprehensive model is the mainstay of the humanitarian sector, and is commonly seen in responses in low-income countries
- It is based on the notion of limited or no national capacity, and a central role for international agencies in managing, coordination and delivering assistance
- There are many issues with this model in terms of its insensitivity to context, the lack of engagement with local and national actors, and a tendency to be supply-driven rather than needs-oriented

The **comprehensive** model of humanitarian response is what typically follows an appeal for international assistance by a disaster-affected state. International actors mobilise funds and capacities to set up aid channels, coordinate assistance and deliver goods and services directly to affected populations. Needs are so great, and local capacities so overwhelmed, that international humanitarian agencies typically take the lead in response management and oversight.

This model is common in LICs, where many in the crisis-affected population are extremely vulnerable, and where the potential for state or domestic assistance is either limited or overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the disaster. The culture and practices of the international humanitarian system are arguably developed with this **comprehensive** model of external assistance in mind: for direct, large-scale delivery in conditions where the state and national bodies have little or no capacity. As such, this model can be said to underpin much of the humanitarian system's operational, policy and analytical work.

A recent example of the **comprehensive** model in action is the Haiti earthquake response of 2010. In January of that year, a earthquake registering 7 on the Richter scale struck the island, its epicentre close to the capital Port au Prince, causing devastation across the country. Around 220,000 people were killed, or 1 in 50 of the population, with a further 300,000 injured and some 2 million left homeless. As with the devastating Pakistan floods of the same year, the crisis was dubbed a 'mega-disaster'. International aid efforts provided the affected population with food assistance, clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, basic medical care, protection services, shelter and non-food relief items. Humanitarian agencies also supported agricultural rehabilitation and other key early recovery activities to combat the threat of ongoing food shortages and to help flood victims recover their livelihoods. The response also involved a whole host of military and private sector actors.[33]

Although, as noted above, this model of response is the *modus operandi* for the sector, it is far from perfect – or even effective – in all settings. ALNAP's State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) found that, when working in large-scale delivery mode, there is a consistent tendency for humanitarian organisations to fail to consult with recipients and not address the most important needs on the ground. Aid agencies often justify such failures on the basis of the urgency of the crisis and the related need to mount responses as quickly as possible. The rationale of speed is often used to justify giving greater prominence to 'supply push' over 'demand pull'.

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[33] http://www.oecd.org/countries/haiti/50313700.pdf

But, as the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition has argued, in the extreme this can lead to searching questions about, 'Whose emergency is it really?' In Haiti, two key lessons from the evaluations were that the intervention needed to take account of context and capacity as well as needs, and that even the most devastated communities and governments retained capacities in terms of relationships, skills, norms and values and decision-making. As one synthesis put it, '[S]low[ing] down to allow meaningful engagement of community and civic […] will add significantly to the quality and timeliness of results.' [34]

What is interesting is that the performance of the system is so uneven in this regard. To take one example mentioned above – the 2010 Pakistan flood response – subsequent evaluations acknowledged agency efforts in undertaking effective consultations of communities and using these to design appropriate programmes. By comparison, in the two other major ongoing crises of that year – the Horn of Africa food crisis and the Haiti earthquake – evaluators raised concerns that the responding agencies did not properly consult with recipients or national/local actors, and as a result overemphasised emergency delivery with insufficient focus on the complex underlying causes of the crisis.

This lack of consistency can be attributed to many internal factors, from the narrow pool of staff capacity and skills to language and cultural challenges. Until these performance issues are smoothed out, this model is likely to remain a necessary but controversial mainstay of the sectors work.

As we will see in 4.6, this model is set to decrease in overall spend in the future as more and more developing states take on responsibility for managing and coordinating responses. The performance of the sector in this model will improve, but in the same incremental ways we have seen to date.

### 4.3  The Constrained model

Key messages:

- The **constrained** model is found where humanitarian space is limited by encroachments onto humanitarian space by political interests
- Constrained contexts represent perhaps the most complex, ambiguous and challenging settings for aid delivery

The **constrained** model describes those situations where encroaching political interests limit humanitarian space in a variety of ways. At a basic level, all humanitarian aid relies on having humanitarian space, which guarantees aid agencies both safety and access to populations in need.

In constrained settings, humanitarian space is limited by the actions of different parties –by violations creating crises, by deliberate limitations of access or, in many cases, by both. For example, as in Syria, states or governing parties may be actively involved in creating humanitarian needs through acts of violence against citizens.

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[34] http://www.oecd.org/countries/haiti/50313700.pdf

Warring parties and the level of insecurity ongoing conflicts generate may limit access to populations, as in Somalia. Violence against aid workers – prominent in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan – is another means of constraining the space for response and possibilities for assistance. In these locations, this latter may be as much to do with perceptions of aid agencies being aligned with foreign powers.

Because of the need for aid agencies to maintain neutrality, constrained contexts represent perhaps the most complex, ambiguous and challenging settings for aid delivery. As was found in the Central African Republic in 2013-14, the fluid, unpredictable, complex nature of such crises repeatedly catch the humanitarian community off-guard.

It was precisely these constraints on aid that led to the creation of *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) by a group of disillusioned International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) doctors in the 1960s. The argument made was that neutrality places limits on being able to fulfil other humanitarian principles.

Clearly, there are challenges here that have not diminished. Moving away from the position of neutrality does not guarantee that aid agencies are able to put pressure on conflicting parties to create and maintain humanitarian space. As a result of these and related debates, the **constrained** model is the subject of much vigorous disagreement in the sector – which plays out in both operational and policy contexts. For example, in the Central African Republic crisis of 2013, MSF reported that it had repeatedly appealed for other NGOs and the UN to expand their presence to no avail, because of security, access and funding constraints. This issue is explored in depth in MSF's 2014 study *'Where Is Everybody?'*[35]

Although there are numerous examples of **constrained** models of assistance today, the Syria crisis is perhaps exemplary. The crisis began with peaceful demonstrations against the Syrian government in March 2011, which led to the promise of legislative reforms. These did not materialise, and government forces started to respond to demonstrations with violence. This led to the rise of armed opposition groups and, in November 2012, the formation of an Opposition Coalition, which many other countries recognised as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. The Coalition established a unit to coordinate humanitarian assistance and worked with donors and NGOs to plan and deliver assistance. In the meantime, the Syrian government has sought to politicise humanitarian principles, citing humanitarian law to manipulate aid delivery to further its own interests. Both sides of the conflict have accused each other of deliberately limiting humanitarian space, and of using humanitarian aid to further their political goals. By contrast, a group of major international NGOs has recently laid the blame at the door of the international political system, as having 'fatally failed' to provide adequate enabling conditions for effective delivery. In the **constrained** model, perhaps more so than in all the other three models looked at here, the tendency for mutual finger-pointing is remarkably high.

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[35] http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf-whereiseveryone_-def-lr_-_july.pdf

Although necessary in all humanitarian assistance, the **constrained** model places a premium on skills and capacities that extend beyond technical capacities. In particular, effective delivery demands political skills and negotiation experience, an in-depth understanding of the conflict context and ideally personal knowledge of the players involved. It is hard, if not impossible, to develop these without good historical grounding and without relationships in a particular setting. This is especially important given the growing reliance on 'remote management' approaches in constrained settings considered too risky for an international presence.

These challenges raise the perennial problem of the short-term nature of much assistance work, and also the challenges of aligning too closely with particular parties to a conflict. Because of the challenge of independence from warring parties, in constrained settings there is a tendency for some parties to work in a direct delivery mode – albeit for different reasons than those cited in in the **comprehensive** model, and with greater practical and operational limitations.

As shown later, overall spend against this model will continue to fluctuate because of the unpredictability of political crises – the spate of crises in the wake of the Arab Spring have led to a renewed focus on such crises after a brief period when natural disasters seem to have dominated disaster responses.

## 4.4  The Collaborative model

Key messages:

- In the **collaborative** model the international response works hand in hand with national and local actors.
- Domestic response capacities for coordination, management and delivery are of central importance in the **collaborative** model
- This model currently leads to numerous tensions with the international system, because of the strong tendencies and preferences to work in the **comprehensive** model.

The **collaborative** model is one of the two more recently emerging models of assistance. It is commonly found in newly middle-income and lower-middle-income countries where there is already some capacity and resource for domestic responses, and where the national and local actors may be unwilling to hand over leadership of responses wholesale to international actors. In some settings, national or subnational actors may seek to play a leadership role on issues such as coordination and oversight.

In the **collaborative** model, the role of international response should be to support, enhance and work alongside these existing domestic response capacities. As such, the international system ideally needs to work hand-in-hand with domestic and national capacities. Recent examples here include the Indonesian earthquake and flood responses, the Philippines typhoon and the various Mozambique cyclone responses.

While this ideal has not been fulfilled, the **collaborative** model has become more prominent in recent years, with many governments unwilling to host 'post-tsunami invasions' of humanitarian agencies. The same governments have also become aware that international aid comes with significant costs in terms of time and resources.[36] However, for numerous reasons explained below, this model does not always work as well as might be hoped.

**Collaborative** models of response can emerge in a number of ways, but are almost always instigated by the affected country governments rather than the humanitarian aid system. In 1999, the Mozambique government set up the Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades (INGC, or National Disasters Management Institute). Prior to this, the main body for disaster management focused entirely on the effective distribution of international aid. The INGC works on coordination, management and oversight of disaster management, and takes responsibility for disaster mitigation, preparedness, coordination and response management in the face of the major natural disasters facing the country, including droughts, floods, cyclones and outbreaks of violence. While the work of the INGC has been widely commended, after recent international appeals numerous tensions have been apparent. These have related to the struggle between the INGC as a domestic leader of the response effort and the coordination and financial management structures incoming international agencies actively promote. [37]

Although the rationale for the **collaborative** model may be clear, and the work of bodies such as Mozambique's INGC widely supported, there are still major tensions among international agencies about relinquishing control of the humanitarian delivery system, and, by extension, the humanitarian imperative. Despite a few stand-out examples, the **collaborative** model is evident in those instances where it should have happened but didn't, because of the resistance of international agencies to moving away from standard operating procedures. For example, in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, despite the strong national disaster management capabilities in the Philippines, local and national NGOs were highly critical of international humanitarian agencies for being unwilling to work as equal partners.

Some countries have taken a more accepting approach to the approaches of the international community but have sought to play a leadership role within them. For example, the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments lead a number of the international cluster structures. In the Philippines, the cluster structures are incorporated into national disaster management legislation.

The need for a more effective and considered approach to the **collaborative** model is therefore pronounced. Indeed, many evaluations of what were ostensibly comprehensive response approaches have suggested, post-response, that what would have been most useful would have been something approaching the **collaborative** model. Certainly, the best-known example of this is the joint evaluation of the international tsunami response, which famously called for a reorientation of international humanitarian aid towards the needs and capacities of local actors. More recently, the urban challenges posed by the Haiti response also led many to

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[36] ALNAP (2012).
[37] http://www.gripweb.org/gripweb/sites/default/files/INGC%20-%20Instituto%20Nacional%20de%20Gestao%20das%20Calamidades.pdf

call for a more cooperative, collaborative and partnership-based approach, limited though this may have been by available capacities on the ground. In general terms, international urban responses should employ the **collaborative** model.

As we will see later, in broad terms there would appear to be growing amounts of resources dedicated to this model of response, and this is likely to increase over time to become the de facto model of the sector.

## 4.5  The Consultative model

Key messages:

- The **consultative** model is to be found in countries where there is considerable domestic capacity to respond to disasters
- The international humanitarian system is called upon to address specific gaps and niches in domestic capacity, and is incorporated into the architecture of domestic response
- Domestic private sector is often central to response and recovery work, making public-private partnerships essential

The final of the four models is the **consultative** model, which is generally called for when crises occur in established MICs and HICs. In these settings, the national government and civil society will usually have enough capacity to respond to large-scale disasters, which limits the need for international humanitarian assistance to specific gaps and niches. These range from the provision of specified skills or knowledge in the form of expert teams or advice to bringing in goods and materials that are in particularly short supply. The **consultative** model sees the most nuanced role for international agencies, where there needs to be a carefully calibrated response to the stated needs, which is close aligned with and embedded in domestic disaster management systems and protocols.

Recent examples here include the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China and the 2011 Japanese earthquake and the resulting tsunami. The latter was the most powerful earthquake ever to hit Japan, and the fifth most powerful ever recorded. It occurred underwater 30km off the Pacific coast of Tohoku, the north-eastern region of Honshu, the largest Japanese island, and triggered tsunami waves up to 40m high, which travelled up to 4km inland from the coast. Almost 16,000 people lost their lives, with 3,000 missing and 6,000 injured. Over a million buildings collapsed fully or partially, and heavy damage resulted to roads and railways. Around 4.4 million households in north-eastern Japan were left without electricity and 1.5 million without water. The tsunami also caused nuclear accidents, and the associated evacuation of thousands of people. The World Bank subsequently estimated the cost at $235 billion, making it the most expensive natural disaster ever.[38]

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[38] http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEAPHALFYEARLYUPDATE/Resources/550192-1300567391916/EAP_Update_March2011_japan.pdf?cid=EXTEAPMonth1

The crisis led to the offer of assistance from 116 counties and 28 international agencies. Japan specifically requested teams from Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, the UK, Canada and the US, asking for capacities in urban search and rescue, victim identification and the management of nuclear accidents. Assistance was also provided in the form of goods, for example fuel and other materials. Financial assistance was typically given directly to Japan as bilateral aid to supplement national disaster management efforts. Most international NGO bodies, such as the UK's Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC), did not mobilise appeals in response to the crisis. However, various national Red Cross bodies set up national appeals to support the Japanese Red Cross, and other networks, such as the Canadian Humanitarian Coalition, worked with Japanese counterparts to share resources, support capacities and mobilise responses.

Lessons for international humanitarian organisations working in Japan are useful for thinking more broadly about the **consultative** model.[39] They include the following:

- Many international humanitarian organisations are simply not set up to become operational in developed country contexts, thus supporting national organisations with targeted assistance is often the most effective.
- Availability of technology and skilled populations means building on community-level capabilities and active facilitation of citizen-led responses can have considerable benefits in the immediate response phase.
- The role of the private sector is often central to immediate response and long-term recovery, so there is a need when working in the **consultative** model to be open to new and forms of public–civil society–private sector partnerships. Done right, these can enhance both efficiency and the sustainability of the recovery process.
- The typical quality standards and protocols used in developing country settings, such as Sphere, prove to be of little or no use in the **consultative** model. Instead, there needs to be close alignment with domestic accountability structures, social norms and cultural expectations.

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[39] http://humanitariancoalition.ca/sites/default/files/publication/japan_en-29jan.pdf

**4.6  Resourcing the four models: what does the data tell us?**

Key messages:

- Based on preliminary analysis, it is possible to understand how official aid allocations have been distributed across these four models
- The **comprehensive** model and **collaborative** models see the most obvious trends over time, with the comprehensive steadily decreasing and the collaborative increasing
- The constrained and **consultative** models are likely to continue to fluctuate over time with the rise and fall of political crises.

Having presented each of these models, one obvious question relates to the resources allocated to each model, and how this distribution has changed over time.

This short review had insufficient time to collect primary data on this, thus the analysis below builds on existing data sources. Using these data and a systematic approach developed for this study,[40] it was possible to calculate overall expenditure by official donors against the four different models, and how this has changed over time.

These data clearly do need to be viewed as illustrative rather than definitive, because of the subjective nature of the allocation of specific annual disbursements to each of the different models. However, even in this preliminary form, and with the clear need for further work on verification and triangulation, it is possible to observe general trends of resource allocation across the different models. Table 2 and Figure 7 show the volume of official aid across the four models in tabular and graphical form. Table 3 and Figure 8 show the proportional distribution across the four models.

Overall, it would appear that an increasing amount of resources is being allocated to models 3 and 4, and relatively fewer resources are going to model 1. Resources for model 2 are fluctuating somewhat with the emergence of new crises – as might be expected given the recent spike in crises such as those in Syria and South Sudan. It can also be seen that specific emergencies can create large fluctuations in allocations across models for particular years. For example, 2010, when Haiti and Pakistan were high-volume responses in model 1, saw an upward spike in the context of a steadily falling proportion.

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[40] Using the Global Humanitarian Assistance Table 1 'Data on Official Aid', data were extracted for the 10-year period 2002-2011. This comprised data on aid to 199 recipient countries given by governments, amounting to some 1990 separate data points in total, each one relating to the volume of aid disbursed to a single country for a single year. Using desk-based research, the aid allocation for each country for each year was classified as fitting into one of the four models. The decision to classify each of the 1990 data points was made on the basis of using OCHA reports, Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) data, country-level studies and other available evaluation reports.

TABLE 2: VOLUME OF OFFICIAL AID ACROSS THE FOUR MODELS, 2002-2011 ($M)

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensive | 3670.9 | 5210.1 | 4703 | 6645.6 | 5431 | 4654.3 | 4678.9 | 4537.7 | 8473.7 | 5483.7 | 53488.9 |
| Constrained | 1223.5 | 1296 | 2127.4 | 2395.2 | 2652.4 | 2641.7 | 3726.7 | 4119 | 2472.3 | 4111.3 | 26765.5 |
| Collaborative | 936.7 | 645.5 | 542.1 | 762.1 | 629.4 | 605.7 | 2401 | 2238.1 | 2039.1 | 2065.6 | 12865.3 |
| Consultative | 612 | 529.2 | 472.2 | 332.9 | 227.7 | 313 | 560.2 | 187.8 | 287.5 | 807.5 | 4330 |

FIGURE 13: VOLUME OF OFFICIAL AID ACROSS THE FOUR MODELS, 2002-2011 ($M)
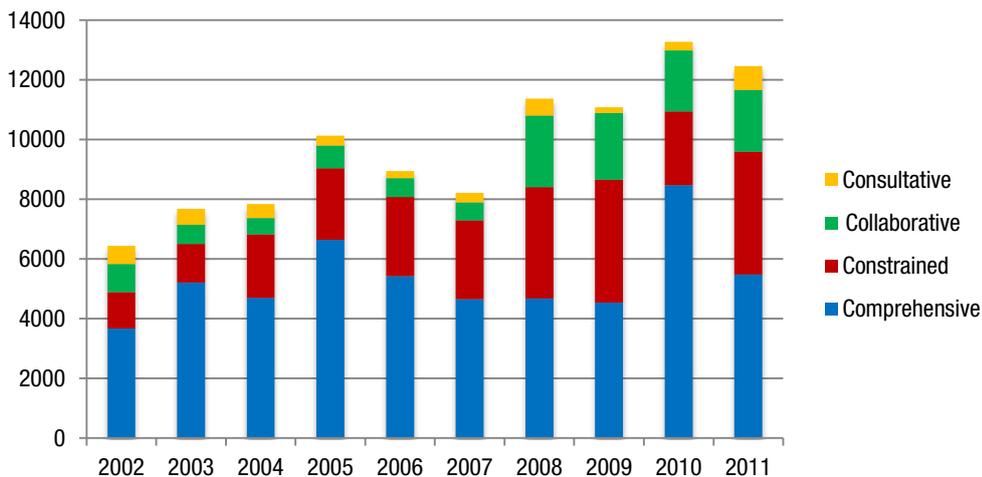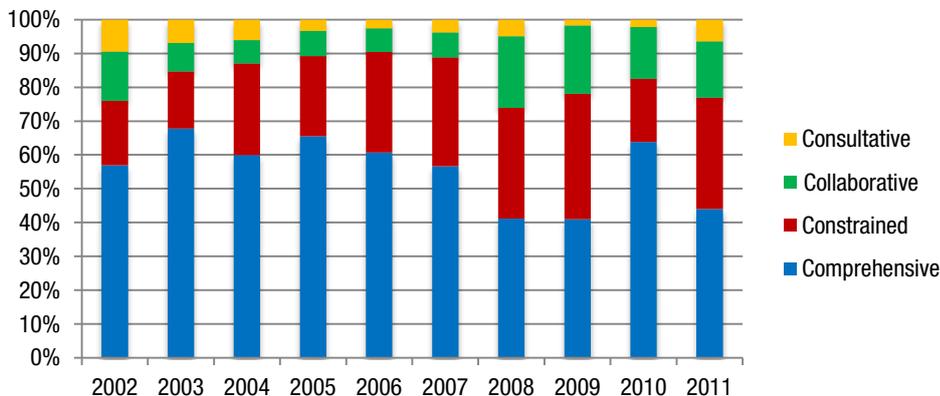


Source: GHA data tables, GHA reports, OCHA report, ALNAP ERD, ALNAP analysis.

TABLE 3: PROPORTION OF OFFICIAL AID ACROSS THE FOUR MODELS, 2002-2011 (%)

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2002-2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensive | 57% | 68% | 60% | 66% | 61% | 57% | 41% | 41% | 64% | 44% | 55% |
| Constrained | 19% | 17% | 27% | 24% | 30% | 32% | 33% | 37% | 19% | 33% | 27% |
| Collaborative | 15% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 21% | 20% | 15% | 17% | 13% |
| Consultative | 9% | 7% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 2% | 2% | 6% | 4% |

FIGURE 14: PROPORTION OF OFFICIAL AID ACROSS THE FOUR MODELS, 2002-2011 (%)



Source: GHA data tables, GHA reports, OCHA report, ALNAP ERD, ALNAP analysis.

Based on this illustrative analysis, it is possible to draw a number of preliminary conclusions projecting into the future:

- There is likely to be a steady increase in volumes allocated to the **collaborative** model.
- There are likely to be ongoing fluctuations in volumes spent on the **constrained** model with the rise and fall of new political crises. Over the medium-to-long term, the likelihood of rises in conflicts over resource constraints may see this area growing.
- The **consultative** model will remain erratic, with big surprises in some years serving as reminders that no country, rich or poor, is fully safe from crises and major humanitarian needs.

## 4.7  Summary: tackling diversity with standardisation?

Closing messages:

-  The humanitarian system already works in a variety of different models, although the performance in each of these models is overall sub-optimal
-  The sector urgently needs to find ways of employing the right model of response for the right context
-  In order to do this, the sector needs to become more open to new actors, ideas and approaches and more adaptive in terms how it is positioned in relation to national actors, its roles, and key functions

The main conclusion from this part, building on the findings of Part 2 and 3, is that changes in the wider world increasingly call for a more differentiated approach to humanitarian assistance. In order to be fully effective, the humanitarian system will need to find ways to deploy resources to each of the models, so as to employ the right model of response for a given context, and to do so as well as possible within each model of response.

To date, the track record of the system appears to be somewhat mixed on both fronts. While the illustrative data in Part 3 suggest resources are being deployed across the models, it is important to note that this is probably not the result of strategic choices. It seems reasonable to say that the humanitarian sector has responded to the emerging diversity of humanitarian needs and contexts with ever-greater reliance on the **comprehensive** model.

While this may have worked for some major emergencies in the past, there is increasing dissatisfaction among even low-capacity state bodies, other national/local actors and aid recipients. There is evidence of rigidity in the humanitarian business model, which limits more sophisticated and collaborative approaches to responses during such 'standard' responses.

The **collaborative** model is perhaps the area where one can observe most clearly the birth pangs of a new kind of humanitarian system. Disaster-affected states that have long been recipients of assistance want to take a more central role in the provision of humanitarian aid to their citizens. It is not clear that the system has yet adjusted to growing demands for this model of assistance. The sentiments expressed by the

Sri Lankan official who, after the tsunami, compared the second 'wave of aid' unfavourably to the first 'wave of water' are becoming all too common. Even in conditions where the national and local actors are well established, and have pre-existing relationships with the international sector, such as in Mozambique, humanitarian agencies have not proved particularly adept at recognising and adapting to their specific needs.

In the **consultative** model, despite the acceptance of bilateral aid by affected states from selected parties, there are signs of antipathy to international aid, even by those states that fund the humanitarian system. In 2011, when under pressure to call for international aid after the devastating Brisbane floods, former Australian foreign secretary Kevin Rudd was quoted as saying that one of the worst things the country could have done was accept 'a whole lot of uncoordinated delivery of stuff from around the globe plonked on [our doorstep]'. This unusually frank summary of humanitarian aid from one of its largest supporters suggests in international humanitarian aid, as in many other contexts, it is the beggars who cannot be choosers.

To engage with this diversity of demand, humanitarians would need to develop and work with a broader and more differentiated menu of response options, and generate the ability to flexibly adapt to different contexts. This would mean having a range of different operational modalities, skills and approaches that could be deployed in different settings to meet the context-specific nature of humanitarian needs. Such an approach may also require rethinking some of the fundamental principles of humanitarian action.

Such shifts away from the best practices and standard business models are often met with considerable resistance from within the sector. Numerous factors reinforce the strong preference for the standard operating model of the **comprehensive** model: funding mechanisms, organisational dynamics and culture, professional norms, the media and wider public expectations. However, the drivers for change include the external factors highlighted earlier, which make the **comprehensive** model simply untenable in all locations around the world. Moreover, there are increasingly apparent costs in the mismatch between demand and supply – with negative impacts on quality and the reputation of the sector.

All of the four models are of course ideal types: in reality, most crises will present a blend of them. Moreover, there is more dynamism across the models within particular crises; some responses may start with a **comprehensive** model but move towards a collaborative one, and so on.

These models may be seen as something of a thought-experiment at this stage, but it is hoped that even this preliminary and provisional framework can serve to highlight the importance of a better understanding of the diversity of needs for humanitarian aid, and the need for a more differentiated response.

As such, the models should be seen as a first step towards conceptual clarity around the diversity of humanitarian challenges faced in different contexts, and how they might best be met.

## 5.  Conclusions: A 'perfect storm' for the humanitarian sector

The humanitarian sector is facing both new and longstanding challenges. Although there is much talk of the demise of humanitarian aid, and criticisms that the system is increasingly obsolete, the evidence in this paper suggests this is somewhat overstated. The humanitarian aid sector is growing and changing, and dealing with many new demanding crises. It is clearly being stretched by the range of crises emerging simultaneously – but the same could equally be said for any element of the international foreign policy system, whether well financed, such as the military, or getting by on a relative pittance, such as foreign aid.

What is clear is that the system is being pulled in different directions by a 'perfect storm' of challenges: **growing and compounding drivers of humanitarian crises** (as we saw in Part 2); and a **set of new and longstanding internal challenges** (as in part 3).

Anticipating and intelligently responding to this perfect storm calls for collective action and change of an unprecedented scale and scope for the humanitarian sector. Of course, the overall ambition for humanitarian responses to become more suited to the dynamic, turbulent world of the 21st century is not a new one. Numerous research studies and programmes have pointed to the need for the humanitarian sector to undergo the following critical changes:

- To move away from dealing with symptoms of crises and toward addressing root causes;
- To take a more systemic, adaptive and responsive approach to diverse contexts and demands;
- To be more comfortable with new processes, technologies and principles, even when they challenge the *modus operandi* and disrupt longstanding beliefs and norms;
- To be more open to new partners, relationships and networks, both within the 'traditional system' and with new actors.

In order to deliver against these challenges, the global humanitarian system will need more than tweaks and incremental changes. Rather, what is needed is a series of coherent and consistent strategies aimed at addressing critical challenges in the current workings of the system. These challenges relate to shortfalls or gaps in knowledge, policy and practice that must be addressed if the system is to become more open and more adaptive in the face of the perfect storm we are already facing.

The sector is already responding to this challenge, albeit in an ad-hoc and unplanned fashion. One of the main ways this is happing is through the emergence of a **more diverse set of models of response** (as we saw in Part 3).

What is required now is productive dialogue on how best to deliver against two related issues:

- How the system can deploy these models strategically, using the right model in the right circumstances, and
- How the system can deliver each model as well as possible.

These two issues will underpin the substantive focus of the discussions at Montreux XIII.