

FOCUS:
Disaster Risk Reduction
and Climate Change
Adaptation

From the VOICE Secretariat

Research is unanimously anticipating that climate change will result in growing number, unpredictability and severity of natural disasters in the coming years and decades. As a result, in hazard prone areas where vulnerability of the communities is high, the population will suffer increased human and economic losses. For years, the humanitarian community has recognised the importance to significantly boost prevention efforts: to limit the impact of hazards and to prevent disasters, risks and vulnerabilities need to be reduced.

VOICE, through the work of its working group on disaster risk reduction is highly engaged and well established in the DRR and climate change adaptation debate at EU level. With the Climate Change Summit of Copenhagen ahead, and as climate change is very high on the agenda of the Swedish presidency, the advocacy efforts of humanitarian NGOs in bringing about the best practices of DRR are more relevant than ever.

In this issue of the VOICE OUT LOUD, VOICE members who are engaged in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) express their views and concerns; and based on their experience share some recommendations. From the devastation caused by violent cyclones to displacement as a drought survival mechanism, climate change together with vulnerability severely impacts on people's survival. Humanitarian actors are the first responders to the growing needs created by natural disasters. These new challenges might bring about a need to change the way they work, engaging more in prevention to mitigate the need for response. From different angles, DRR and CCA both aim at reducing people's vulnerability to hazards. However, there remains a linkage and coordination gap between the two approaches, including at the European Union level. Humanitarian experience, lessons learnt and best practices in DRR offer a professional perspective on how to bridge that gap. One thing is clear: the people at risk of hazards need to be at the heart of policy and programming decision making processes. We therefore complete our NGO overview of DRR and CCA issues by a unique perspective on DRR at community level in the South by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Risk Reduction.

VOICE OUT LOUD is intended to contribute to the understanding of the professional reality of humanitarian NGOs. It is addressed to the European decision makers and other stakeholders of the humanitarian community, while giving an insight into relevant humanitarian issues, relying upon the experience and input of VOICE members.

VOICE

VOICE stands for Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies. It is a network representing 85 European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide. Seeking to involve its members in information, training, advocacy and lobbying, VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness. As a European network, it represents and promotes the values and specificities of humanitarian NGOs, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors. Based in Brussels, VOICE has been active since 1993 and is an independent organisation under Belgian law since 2001.

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EDITORIAL

Who and How?
VOICE President page 3

THE ISSUE

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Linking Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction
Tearfund UK..... page 4

Climate Change: The Humanitarian Challenge for the 21st Century
Oxfam Solidarité..... page 6

Lessons Learnt From Years of Practical Experience
in DRR & Case Studies
Cordaid page 7

Views from the Frontline 2009 – “Clouds but Little Rain”
*Global Network of Civil Society Organisations
for Disaster Reduction*..... page 8

Climate Change and Displacement: the European Response
to a Cross-Cutting Issue
Norwegian Refugee Council..... page 10

The Evolution of DRR and Action Contre la Faim: and Analogy
for Those Supporting Field Actions
Action Contre la Faim page 12

VOICE Policy Recommendations on Disaster Risk Reduction
and Climate Change Adaptation in Humanitarian Aid
VOICE..... page 14

A VIEW ON THE EU

2009-2010 - A New European Landscape for Humanitarian Aid
VOICE Secretariat page 16

FIELD FOCUS

A Ground Perspective on Pakistan’s Displacement Crisis
International Rescue Committee page 18

VOICE AT WORK

Humanitarian Issues at EU level page 19



WHO AND HOW?

EDITORIAL



If the extrapolations of the natural disasters over the past five decades or so are valid, and if even the more benign scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change were to become reality, one can expect with certainty that the number of people in need of life saving activities by the humanitarian organizations will grow considerably in the years if not decades to come. Both vulnerable populations and humanitarian NGOs are faced with a grim future. The problem therefore boils down to the questions of how to deal with this issue and who should be in charge.

The emergency relief organizations are particularly sensitive to the generally agreed upon insight that considerable efforts have to be made with respect to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA). This follows logically from the humanitarian imperative, which is fully in tune with the most fundamental of the human rights: the right to life. This legitimises the strong advocacy role for the humanitarian organizations as an obligation derived from the humanitarian principle of humanity. This is also the justification for the policy recommendations published by VOICE in June 2009.

Yet the problem for the humanitarian community is much more serious. DRR is but one element. A little mental experiment will help to clarify the issue. Millions of people have already to carry the burden: think of droughts, water pollution and scarcity, desertification and flooding; the consequences of which are among others hunger, diseases and migration. The effects of global climate change are themselves caused by the processes of environmental degradation and exploitation at the local, the national, the regional and the international levels.

Looking into the future we know that the world population will have increased by 2.5 to 3 billion by the year 2050. Assuming that the number of natural disasters and armed conflicts will stay at the same level of frequency, the number of people in need of humanitarian relief will increase as well. Extrapolating the number of natural (and technical) disasters from the trend observed over the last 50 years, we have to expect their number to increase further.

The How-question boils down to two core issues. The first one relates directly to DRR and CCA: prevention. One of the lessons to be learned is that roughly one Euro invested in preventive measures may save between five and ten Euro for relief. But this is only one part of the story. The other is how to prepare for satisfying the growing needs necessary to save people's lives? The answer is clear: more humanitarian aid workers and more money, unless the observed trends will change dramatically their course.

This brings us to the Who-question. It is absolutely urgent to remind constantly the governments that it is their responsibility to protect their people from the expected growing threats to their lives and livelihoods. To the extent that the individual governments are unable to do so, the "responsibility to protect" is an obligation of the international community at large. The European Union may have a double role to play in that respect: on the one hand by contributing to finance appropriate measures, and on the other to play a strong advocacy role at the international level, towards the United Nations in particular given the EU's strong commitment laid out in the European Consensus.

What does this imply for the non-governmental organizations at large? What VOICE stresses in its policy recommendations seems to be the appropriate answer: more cooperation and coordination primarily in terms of systematic advocacy activities and particularly within Members States and institutions of the European Union.

What does this imply for the humanitarian organizations? Beyond advocacy activities they are faced with hard choices, namely how to set their priorities in light of the foreseeable future. The last decades have seen their interventions and the number of functions enlarged (women, AIDS, security, etc.). They are therefore running the danger of overstretch. If their engagement in preventive measures is to increase, the hard issue is whether this will lead to a trade-off between their primary function of life saving activities and the equally relevant prevention activities.

What one might fear is that the humanitarian organizations will have to make hard choices derived from the budgetary trade-offs (more resources for prevention, less for emergency relief interventions?) decided at the political level. The latter results from the multiple demands governments today are confronted with. Taking the grim scenario sketched above as the frame of reference for future action, the hope is that these political decisions will not result in increasing the discrepancy between the needs for, and the satisfaction of, emergency relief.

Wolf-Dieter Eberwein
President of VOICE

LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



In its fourth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that rising global temperature would cause increasing drought in mid-latitudes and semi-arid latitudes, increased water stress in many parts of the world, and increased damage from storms and coastal flooding affecting millions more people each year. With 94% of disaster-related deaths occurring in developing countries,¹ the outlook for poor people is bleak.

Both climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) focus on reducing people's vulnerability to hazards. This is done by improving methods to anticipate, resist, cope with and recover from their impact. In doing so, CCA clearly focuses on climate-related hazards, such as floods, droughts and storms. The disaster risk management community has a long history of dealing with such events, and therefore a wealth of experience relevant to adaptation.

There is a need to raise awareness of the similarities and differences between climate change adaptation and DRR, to highlight the benefits of a more integrated approach to these issues, and ultimately to increase the level of strategic co-ordination between climate change and disaster risk management communities. In terms of the similarities, CCA and DRR both focus on risk and seek to reduce vulnerability to hazards, to build community resilience to risk in the context of sustainable development thinking, and they both require to recognize the underlying forces placing people at risk, which often relate to poverty and powerlessness.

In terms of differences, CCA considers the consequences of permanent change in climate and its longer-term consequences while DRR focuses on providing a set of practices to help the community cope with an extreme event. CCA relates to climate-related hazards, whereas DRR responds also to other types of hazards (e.g. addressing the risks associated with geophysical or technical hazards such as earthquakes and volcanoes).

Integrating CCA and DRR would not only reduce climate-related losses, through more widespread implementation of DRR coping mechanisms linked with adaptation, but also make a more efficient use of financial, human and natural resources and increase effectiveness and sustainability of both approaches. Climate change adaptation and

DRR have similar aims and mutual benefits, and there is a very strong rationale for adopting a more integrated approach to these issues. However, there is a lack of co-ordination and communication between the adaptation and disaster risk management communities. In particular the institutional frameworks, political processes, funding mechanisms, information exchange fora and practitioner communities have developed independently and remain largely separate to date; which leads to a lack of a systematic integration of the two approaches in terms of concrete project activities.

REASONS FOR CURRENT LACK OF CO-ORDINATION:

1) Confusion over similarities and differences

Whilst there are many similarities between the two subjects, there are also several differences (see above) which have not always been well understood by the two communities. And there has been general confusion over where synergies start and stop. Confusion and erroneous assumptions about the synergies between adaptation and DRR may have, in part, hindered the climate change community from embracing the DRR agenda, and prevented the disaster risk management community from becoming more engaged in climate change policy and processes at all levels.

Case study of the need to integrate CCA and DRR - Rising Sea-level in Chittagong

Premasia village in Chittagong is situated close to the sea in Bangladesh. The village is often affected by cyclones. In November 2007, the men in the village heard the news of the approaching Cyclone Sidr from a TV in the marketplace. They went straight home to mobilize their family for evacuation to the nearby school which doubles up as a cyclone shelter, as they had been trained in disaster preparedness. They were able to take dry food, drinking water and important documentation with them as well as any other precious assets that they could carry.

The school was crowded as they waited there for days for the increased water levels caused by intense, cyclonic rains to subside. When Tearfund spoke to them after the event, we were told that there was another cyclone shelter that had been built about 15 years ago, 2 kilometers in from the sea but that the cyclone shelter was now useless with the sea lapping at its edges. This shows the sea-level has risen two kilometers inland over 15 years. Building a cyclone shelter is an example of how infrastructure is used to protect the village from flooding but if climate change adaptation had been taken into consideration, the rising sea-level would have been factored into the decision-making for the location and planning for the cyclone shelter from the start.

'Both climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) focus on reducing people's vulnerability to hazards.'

'(...) there is a lack of co-ordination and communication between the adaptation and disaster risk management communities.'

2) Concern over different approaches

The climate change and disaster risk management communities have different origins, approaches to, and methods for addressing adaptation and DRR. These have acted as a barrier to closer collaboration. For example, adaptation has been treated to date as a predominantly top-down process augmented by international policy responses through the UNFCCC.² In contrast, the disaster risk management community has long established the need for a community-based emphasis. The current top-down approach to adaptation can be an issue of concern to DRR policy makers and practitioners.

Another significant difference in approach is related to perspectives on vulnerability. The disaster risk management community is more likely to consider and address social, physical and economic factors contributing to poor people's vulnerability. It has expressed concern that if adaptation and DRR agendas are brought together, focus on comprehensive vulnerability and poverty reduction will be lost. Whether or not such concerns are justified, there is some evidence that they have - in part - hindered DRR policy makers from being more actively involved with the climate change agenda in recent years.

To achieve more synergy between adaptation and DRR, the two communities need to focus on a shared agenda of poverty reduction, increasing funding flows to the poorest people and working together on challenges.

3) Lack of clarity regarding how integration is achieved

Although co-ordination and collaboration on the linked issues of climate change adaptation and DRR seems like an obvious and fruitful step forward, it is important to understand when at what level and to what extent coordination is required, as well as who should take the lead. This has not yet been clearly established. One reason for this is that collaborative work must involve scientists, practitioners and policy makers from communities that are in many ways very distinct and with different cultures, all drawing on different types of information, knowledge and experiences.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations for the CCA community are to:

- Use the guidance of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 agreed by 168 governments in Kobe, Japan to facilitate a comprehensive, system-wide risk-reducing approach to CCA.³
- Ensure there is a strong focus on DRR within the adaptation pillar of the post-2012 climate change framework.

- Scale-up the use of existing DRR tools that have proven to be effective in dealing with the weather-related events that will be exacerbated by climate change. These include vulnerability and risk assessments, early warning systems, land-use planning and building code regulation, and institutional and legal capacities.
- Ensure adequate focus on the socio-economic and political dimensions of managing climate risks, in consultation with the disaster risk management community.
- Ensure that adaptation is informed by successful community-based experiences in vulnerability reduction. A first step may be to examine ongoing projects in the fields of natural resource management, DRR and poverty reduction to identify those with adaptation potential.⁴

Key recommendations for the disaster risk management community are to:

- Demonstrate and promote the role of DRR in CCA policies, strategies and programmes and to make DRR information and tools more accessible for adaptation negotiators and managers.
- Ensure that all DRR policies, measures and tools account for new risks and the aggravation of existing risks posed by climate change. Past and current approaches to DRR should form the basis of new and improved measures aimed at enabling communities and nations to increase their resilience to climate change. This may require developing new partnerships with scientific institutes and bodies working on climate change.
- Actively engage in and seek to influence climate change policy at international, national and local levels. Increase engagement with the national climate change policy team negotiating on the Bali Action Plan as a matter of urgency, to secure a strong role for DRR in the post-2012 framework.

Both communities need to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of adaptation and DRR synergies and differences.
- Develop and widely disseminate simple, shared conceptual frameworks, briefing papers, guidance notes and case studies
- Share experience and knowledge
- Host multi-stakeholder seminars and workshop and engage in staff training
- Encourage systematic dialogue and joint working between climate change and disaster reduction bodies, focal points and experts together with development policy makers and practitioners.⁵

Article adapted from "Linking climate change adaptation and Disaster risk reduction", Tearfund 2008.

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1. Mathur A et al. (2004) *An Adaptation Mosaic: A sample of the emerging World Bank work in climate change adaptation*. World Bank, Washington DC.
2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
3. Recommended by the UNISDR in 'Disaster risk and climate change,' March 2008.
4. Climate change and Environmental Degradation Risk and Adaptation assessment, Tearfund 2009. <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Topics/Environmental+Sustainability/CEDRA.htm>
5. UNISDR (2008) 'ISDR strategy to support the Bali Action Plan process' (Draft 26 February).

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY¹

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

'The world's current humanitarian capacity could be overwhelmed if it doesn't change the way it works.'



MORE DISASTERS TO COME....

250 million people are affected annually by 'natural' disasters. By 2015 the number of people affected by climate-related hazards is projected to rise by 54% to 375 million people². In effect, climate change and environmental mismanagement will continue to create a proliferation of droughts and floods, and more people will be vulnerable to them because of their poverty and location.

Hazards such as storms, cyclones and earthquakes turn into a disaster when they come into contact with a vulnerable community. The higher the vulnerability of the population, the bigger the impact of the disaster will be. Hurricane Katrina is a good example of this situation. When it hit New Orleans, the people who suffered the most were those living in densely populated areas, in rickety houses, without savings or access to health care. These people had no more safety nets to rely upon. In their areas it hence turned into a disaster.

Also, some of these environmental changes will also increase the threat of new conflicts, hence increasing the number of people displaced.



A SHOCK FOR THE HUMANITARIAN WORLD....

New and existing conflicts and the growth of climate-related disasters are likely to create an unprecedented level of need for humanitarian assistance. The world's current humanitarian capacity could be overwhelmed if it doesn't change the way it works.



MORE FUNDING AND MORE DRR MEASURES NEEDED...

It is of vital importance that governments, aid agencies and NGO's act to improve the quality and quantity of humanitarian aid and think of the reforms that must be undertaken within the sector.

Investing in disaster risk reduction (DRR) such as preparedness, mitigation, and prevention is far more effective than focusing on response. While relief operations aim at bringing a person's situation back to normal (meaning as it used to be before the disaster occurred), DRR recognises the highly vulnerable component of the said situation. It enables the humanitarian sector to understand the changing nature of hazards and to tackle vulnerabilities.

In 2004, an average of \$1,241 was spent for each victim of the Asian tsunami, while an average of only \$23 was spent per person affected by the humanitarian crisis in Chad. Elise Ford, head of Oxfam International's EU office asks for an improvement of the humanitarian sector's way of working: "The humanitarian system works as if it's a global card game dealing out aid randomly, not based on people's needs. The response is often fickle - too little, too late and not good enough.

The world barely copes with the current level of disasters. A big increase in the numbers of people affected will overwhelm it unless there is fundamental reform of the system that puts those in need at its centre".

More resources will be required in order to maintain existing levels of preparedness and response (current levels of contributions represent 50-70% of what is actually appealed).

Governments of developing countries must also take greater responsibility for responding to disasters and most importantly reducing people's vulnerability. Where there is political will, roots of vulnerabilities can be efficiently tackled. Countries such as Bangladesh, Cuba and Mozambique have invested in DRR measures implementing early warning systems, evacuation routes and centres and mitigation projects to protect their citizens. Evidences show they suffer much less loss of lives during floods, hurricanes, and droughts than other developing nations.



HOW TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE...

Vulnerability is a human process; it is in our power to prevent it. On the contrary, climate change is a more difficult process to stop. Even if rich governments cut their emissions so that global warming stays below 2°C, more weather extremes will continue as well as the melting of glaciers and rising sea levels. Therefore adaptation remains the most realistic approach to be taken in order to reduce climate change impact. Funds should be made available to developing countries to find adaptation methods such as drought or flood-tolerant crops, to improve infrastructures, raise bridges or to strengthen buildings to cope with hurricanes.

For all these reasons, Oxfam is shifting the way it responds to emergencies in the face of increasing climatic disasters investment, toward helping to reduce poor peoples' vulnerability to disasters while still remaining a front-line agency that responds to humanitarian crises.

"Climate change is already threatening our work to overcome poverty, increasing the pressure on an already-difficult task of bringing relief to millions. It is crucial that we tackle climate change head-on. We need governments to raise their game", says Elise Ford. And to conclude "The world must agree a global deal to avoid catastrophic climate change, stop the fickle way it delivers aid, and radically improve how it responds to disasters."

1. This article partly resumes Oxfam International's report "The Right to Survive, the humanitarian challenge for the 21st century".
2. Oxfam analysed data from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at Louvain University in Belgium.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM YEARS OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN DRR

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

'Recognize and build upon community's voices, knowledge systems.'

 In 2005 the Hyogo Framework for Action was declared, in which 168 governments indicated that they would work on the reduction of disasters in their countries. The second UN ISDR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva in June 2009 was meant to discuss the state of the art. Since 2005, DRR has gained in importance, especially because of the realization of the impacts of climate change. Though many efforts are already undertaken at UN and government levels, and policies are developed, one of the key messages from this second platform highlights the major gap between the policy level and the actual implementation at local level. It can therefore be useful to draw lessons from organisations that have been working especially on the latter: implementation on the ground.

Humanitarian NGOs have been working in DRR since many years. Cordaid and around 100 partners worldwide have been strongly engaged in this sector for more than five years. In June 2009, Cordaid organized a global conference on DRR in Malawi 2009. Lessons learnt were shared and documented among 50 representatives from the ten countries¹ Cordaid is implementing DRR projects in, and were disseminated in Geneva.

1. Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Honduras, El Salvador

Main lessons learnt for successful DRR projects design and implementation:

DRR group of Ngargomulyo village, Indonesia is working together with the government

In Indonesia Cordaid's partner organisation Bina Swadaya feels that integrating DRR into government policies is the only way to sustain DRR efforts. One of the DRR groups that Bina Swadaya supports is from Ngargomulyo village, Magelang, Central Java. This community is living at the foot of the Merapi volcano, living with the every day risk of eruptions.

Cooperation and full support from the Village Head in this community has helped to involve the DRR group into official village development activities. Furthermore, the group developed DRR Perda (District Regulations).

One of the activities initiated by the DRR group was a community tree planting initiative. These trees act as a barrier against the hot clouds from Merapi's crater fumes and protect the health of Ngargomulyo's community members. This initiative, together with other good practices, was shared with the District and Provincial Government and resulted in the support from the District Government to introduce the concept of DRR in all surrounding villages.

- Recognize and build upon community's voices, knowledge and expertise, such as early warning systems. This will accelerate the momentum of local and sustainable disaster risk reduction measures, through systematic documentation, advocacy, and action and good practice;
- Promote, facilitate, develop and implement awareness campaigns, education and training programs on the causes, effects and long term forecasting of climate change and disaster risk, enabling communities to be aware of policies and innovation in climate adaptation and risk reduction measures;
- Link resources to facilitate knowledge management and transfer, research, documentation and capacity building;
- Recognize that action must start immediately, although adequate time and resources enabling communities to lead resilience building are essential; there are no quick fixes;
- Fund appropriate and environmentally sound technologies and support community initiatives in sustainable use of natural resources;

- Recognize that climate change adaptation and resilience strategies require diversified approaches in social protection, livelihoods and income generation, saving and insurance, simple technologies such as rain water harvesting;
- Develop a favourable policy framework for immediate action;
- Network at all levels with the communities. Engage with governments and other stakeholders and work together to develop solutions. There is a critical need for joint efforts. All actors are accountable and must work towards maintaining transparency in reducing disaster risk and climate change, and the devastation it is causing on natural environments.

Supporting local capacities to increase climate change resilience in Kenya

Pastoralists living in Marsabit, a drought-prone district in the North of Kenya, are living with permanent water problems. Their lives and livelihoods are at risk. Deep boreholes and shallow wells are the main water sources. Recurring droughts and climate change negatively impact the water availability of these sources.

In order to enhance access to water, PISP - a partner organization of Cordaid - introduced rainwater harvesting techniques such as underground water tanks, rock catchments, earth pans, sand damming, shallow wells and the rehabilitation of strategic boreholes. These water sources are critical at times of drought.

For example, in Forolle along the Kenya-Ethiopia border, communities fully depended on water trucking during the dry season. Now this dependency has reduced substantially due to the establishment of almost 30 underground tanks.

These developments have also stimulated the cross-border peace dialogue that is now yielding results. In these areas communities have not faced each other for a long time, and have now started discussing ways of utilizing resources in this conflict-prone border region.

The work of PISP is successful and is empowering the local communities. These good practices have resulted in the replication of the technology in and outside the district by individuals, state and non-state actors. It improved the access to water in various locations and reduced the vulnerabilities of many community members.

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VIEWS FROM THE FRONTLINE 2009 - “CLOUDS BUT LITTLE RAIN ...”

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



With a wry but wise smile, Donald Mtetemela, a development worker for over 25 years and head of an East African development organisation, looked to the sky and explained:

“The people I work with every day see many clouds - international initiatives and plans, but very little rain - actual change at the frontline.”

It's an image that sums up the challenge of turning the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 - a global blue print for preventing disasters - into practical, sustainable activity at the frontline where people at-risk live, eat and work.

“Views from the Frontline” (VFL) is the first independent assessment of progress towards implementation of the HFA at the local level. The review serves to connect policy formulation at the international and national levels with the realities of policy execution at the critical interface between local governments and at-risk communities. Forty eight countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas were involved in the action-research project bringing together the views of over 7,000 local government, civil society and community representatives including strong representation from two particularly high risk groups - women and children.

With financial support from the European Commission, USAID and Irish Aid, overall coordination was undertaken by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) working through regional and national focal points who mobilised over 400 civil society organisations to administer the survey. The survey questionnaire incorporated a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions based on indicators derived from the five HFA Priorities for Action (PFA) as well as cross cutting issues. The review was designed to complement the national level HFA monitoring coordinated by UNISDR.¹ Results from the two initiatives should help establish a clear picture of progress, strengthen public accountability, guide policy discussions and identify critical gaps and actions that will accelerate progress at the national and local levels.

FOUR THINGS PEOPLE AT THE FRONTLINE ARE SAYING...

1. Nationally-formulated policies are not generating widespread systemic changes in local practices. The review found a significant gap between national and local level action. Reports of progress fade as activities get closer to vulnerable people - overall progress at the community level is “very limited”. Progress is unevenly distributed

across local actors, with civil society organisations often appearing to emerge as DRR “champions” at the local level. Levels of progress are also different across regions (Asia and Central America score highest; whilst East and West Africa and Middle East score lowest). The greatest levels of progress are often associated with countries that have adopted community-based approaches.

2. Resources are scarce and considered one of the main constraints to progress, although there are existing resources at the local level that remain untapped. The key to unlocking these resources is through participatory approaches that build partnerships between local actors and bring at-risk people into the process of decision-making and action planning. Civil society organisations, particularly grassroot women's groups, can play a critical role in facilitating governments to proactively and systematically deepen their engagement with at-risk communities.

3. The foundation for building resilience is people's awareness and understanding of the risks they face. Therefore a strategic entry point is to undertake participatory risk assessments at the local level. Such assessments would increase awareness and knowledge of risk while informing disaster preparedness for effective response. Risk knowledge can be used to inform local development sector action planning. In addition, increased awareness raises social demand, public accountability and thereby political commitment for DRR. Lastly, such risk assessment opens space for dialogue, participation, trust and relationship building between different actors.

4. Climate change creates a need but also provides an opportunity to address underlying risk factors. Climate change was raised as an issue by vulnerable people although it was cited as only one of many challenges that people struggle with in their daily lives such as poverty, health-care, food security and social protection. Whilst “experts” may differentiate between climate adaptation, poverty alleviation and/or disaster risk reduction, at the household level these “thematic sectors” are dealt with in a holistic way where it comes down to the same thing - the security and wellbeing of lives, livelihoods and assets.

The key to increasing DRR investments lies in a greater integration and alignment of efforts to reduce risk, alleviate poverty and adapt to climate change. This means bringing the decision-making and planning processes closer to people at-risk. When this happens, efforts to address the underlying drivers of disaster risk offers potential for a triple win - for adaptation, disaster risk reduction and poverty reduction.

‘(...) the challenge of turning the Hyogo Framework for Action into practical, sustainable activity at the frontline where people at-risk live, eat and work.’

1. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: www.unisdr.org

'This means bringing the decision-making and planning processes closer to people at-risk.'

TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

The main findings and conclusions of the review were translated into ten practical recommendations designed to accelerate progress at the local level. A summary of these recommendations is as follows:

1. Support strategies to proactively and strategically deepen engagement with at-risk communities
2. Right to participation of at-risk men and women explicitly recognised in government policy and legislation
3. Participatory local risk assessments as strategic entry point to raise awareness and knowledge of risk amongst local stakeholders
4. Use local risk knowledge to inform programming and action planning of key development sectors
5. Decentralise authority, decision-making and associated resources in support of local partnerships for risk reduction, poverty and climate adaptation
6. Develop innovative funding strategies to directly support local multi-stakeholder partnerships
7. Extend Views from the Frontline coverage and consider incorporating climate adaptation indicators to measure disaster and climate resilience
8. Utilise the potential of social networking and "new media" innovations to raise critical awareness and social demand for DRR
9. Invest in networks that promote civil society harmonisation and coordination and foster dialogue and collaboration between state and non-state actors
10. Reforms to humanitarian response system to strengthen local & national capacities to reduce future vulnerabilities.

WHEN THE FRONTLINE FEEDS INTO POLICY

Views from the Frontline 2009 has proven itself as an important first step towards building a global constituency and architecture to measure the effectiveness of DRR policy interventions at the local level. Results obtained in the individual country review provide a credible evidence base to inform and strength DRR policy formulation and over time should strengthen public accountability for policy execution by providing local baselines to measure the effectiveness of future DRR investments.

Perhaps most importantly of all, literally thousands of structured conversations have taken place between government officials, communities and civil society organisations, many of whom had not previously met before. Feedback from participants highlights this facilitated dialogue as one of the main strengths of the VFL participatory review process.

In future years, VFL could be extended geographically within the participating countries and expanded into additional countries ahead of the Global Platform - Disaster Risk Reduction 2011. Consideration will also be given to incorporating climate adaptation indicators to measure climate resilience as well as disaster resilience. In this respect VFL could serve as a useful model to involve civil society in monitoring processes with a view to establishing an independent periodic audit of progress for climate and disaster resilience. This would be a significant development in the way civil society, communities and governments work together towards addressing global issues such as preventing disasters and adapting to climate change.

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www.globalnetwork-dr.org

The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)

"Views from the Frontline" (VFL) 2009 was a landmark project initiated and supported by the GNDR. GNDR was officially launched in Geneva during the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in June 2007. Currently hosted by the British INGO Tearfund, the GNDR is a major international network of civil society organisations with 600 members from 300 organisations in 90 countries around the world. The goal of the network is to harness the potential of civil society to influence and implement disaster risk reduction policies and practice by placing the interests and concerns of vulnerable people at the heart of policy formulation and implementation. We believe the best way to achieve our goal is to amplify the voice and influence of disaster-prone communities and representative organisations at the national, regional and international levels through sharing of learning and experiences, building consensus and supporting collaborative approaches and joint actions.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISPLACEMENT: THE EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



The gravest effects of climate change may be those on human migration.

This was stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change already in their First Assessment Report in 1990. While climate change and disasters are never the single cause of displacement, the existence of a clear link between the phenomena must be acknowledged. Climate change is already increasing the frequency and intensity of natural hazards which together with vulnerability result in disasters. These disasters, in turn, may result in forced displacement. The rich and industrialised countries are most responsible for climate change and must contribute to the prevention of displacement as well as the protection of the displaced persons.

Sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters can be a direct cause of displacement. The study from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)¹ and OCHA "Natural disasters and forced displacement in the context of climate change" estimates that approximately 20 million people were displaced by climate-related sudden-onset disasters, such as floods and storms, alone in 2008. Those that suffer the most are the poorest and vulnerable in risk-prone countries. These people lack the resources to adapt or cope with the rapidly changing climate patterns that they are now exposed to, and which they did very little to bring about. For example, up to 800 000 people were displaced from their homes when Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar just over a year ago. Many of them have still not been able to return. It is likely that many million more are displaced by slow-onset disasters such as drought. With climate change the numbers may increase even further.

Climate change and disasters can also serve as indirect causes of displacement through inappropriate government response measures or conflict. For example, in Colombia biofuel projects and forest conservation activities carried out without due regard to the rights of the local people have resulted in arbitrary displacement. Slow-onset disasters such as drought may trigger distributional conflicts. Conflict may trigger displacement, and displacement may trigger additional conflict. There are several vicious circles. For example, about 300 000 Somalis have come to Dadaab in Kenya due to conflict and natural disasters in their own country. This has resulted in both local level tensions between the displaced population and host population due to inter alia scarce resources,

as well as high-level political tension. In other places, climate change and degradation of land contribute to urbanisation, growing slums and increased competition for resources in cities.

There are several reasons for which states must address displacement in the context of climate change. By addressing and mitigating climate change governments contribute to preventing displacement. All efforts to address the climate change challenge, including biofuel projects and forest conservation activities, must be rights-based and arbitrary displacement must be avoided. Since we are already facing some of the climate change effects, there is also a need for enhanced action on adaptation. Adaptation must include disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response as these are the first line of defences in many risk-prone countries. While reducing the disaster risk can reduce the need to move, some people are displaced now and are likely to be displaced in the near future by climate change and disasters. Adaptation action must therefore include both reducing disaster risk to prevent displacement and protecting those who are displaced.

Persons who are displaced for climate change-related reasons should receive protection in accordance with the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. For those who cross borders and enter other countries, there is a serious normative protection gap, as they are not considered refugees according to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees unless they are also fleeing persecution on specific grounds. Human rights law and the mechanisms of complementary and temporary protection have been used to address the needs of displaced persons not covered by the Convention.

Both the Temporary Protection Directive² and the Qualification Directive³ of the Common European Asylum System were drafted in what can be considered a pre-recognition state regarding climate change. The directives must be applied and interpreted in today's context of climate change, and eventually even amended. The Finnish and Swedish laws could serve as best-practice or even a model for a new sub-paragraph. The Scandinavian countries emphasise that the first alternative in natural disasters is internal flight and international humanitarian assistance, but they also recognise that temporary or complementary protection may be necessary. There are provisions in both countries' Aliens Acts to extend complementary (permanent) or temporary

(...) 20 million people were displaced by climate-related sudden-onset disasters, such as floods and storms, alone in 2008.'

1. Established in 1998 The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide. Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations. www.internal-displacement.org
2. Directive 2001/55/EC, adopted by the European Council on the 22nd of July 2002
3. Council Directive 2004/83/EC
4. See for example the Swedish Aliens Act 2005:716, Chapter 4 Section 2

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Hopefully, Sweden will be successful in its EU presidency. The following are the Norwegian Refugee Council key messages and recommendations for action on climate change and displacement:

- 1) Acknowledge in the climate change agreed outcome the links between climate change and displacement, and also states' obligation to address displacement in the context of climate change.
- 2) Establish alternative forms of protection for persons who do not qualify as refugees.
- 3) Ensure that any adaptation and risk management regime of the climate change agreed outcome covers forced displacement and gives priority to the needs of the most vulnerable people and those most affected by climate change.
- 4) Increase predictable funding to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response, and ensure that some of the climate change adaptation funds will go to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. Already established humanitarian funding mechanisms are currently not sufficient to meet the coming challenges.
- 5) Support and follow up both legal and monitoring research to identify and fill gaps and to improve global understanding of trends in displacement. While IDMC is mandated to monitor.

protection to foreign nationals who cannot return safely to their home country because of an environmental disaster.⁴

Pre-emptive migration is also a phenomenon and possible solution that must be looked into. Carried out correctly, expansion of legal labour migration to European states could assist the most affected countries and offer opportunities for "would be" displaced persons as well as supply Europe with the expected increased need of human resources for at least certain types of work. Developing immigration channels/agreements with third countries that are most likely to be negatively affected by climate change must be done in partnership to avoid brain drain and other negative effects. This could form part of the "comprehensive European Migration Policy."

Since most of the displaced persons now and in the near future are likely to remain within their country of origin or region, complementing external strategies are important in order to address climate change and displacement. Provisions to protect and assist displaced persons could be developed further within the Regional Protection Programmes. The EU can also strengthen its adaptation assistance in other aspects of its external action.

Finally, the European countries and the EU should be proactive in raising and seeking to address humanitarian concerns, including displacement, in the ongoing global climate change negotiations. In Copenhagen

in December 2009 states are expected to arrive at an "agreed outcome" on climate change action. A draft negotiation text now refers to displacement issues in the context of adaptation. In addition to migration- and displacement-specific text, key language on disaster risk reduction and response is also prominent. While these are significant steps in the right direction, it remains to be seen whether and how the agreed outcome actually incorporates displacement and other humanitarian issues. We are now entering the last and crucial months of drafting. As the 200 page draft is whittled down, it is highly important to make sure that text on humanitarian concerns, including displacement issues, is retained.

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'By addressing and mitigating climate change governments contribute to preventing displacement.'

THE EVOLUTION OF DRR AND ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM: AN ANALOGY FOR THOSE SUPPORTING FIELD ACTIONS

THE ISSUE - DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

'A strong coordination is necessary with traditional development actors to maintain program coherence (...)'



A changing understanding of DRR

An evolved understanding of DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) as underlined in the recent Global DRR Platform¹ requires operations acting simultaneously to increase capacity of communities and authorities to prepare and cope with disasters, as well as to build resilience into the fabric of community life by addressing vulnerabilities such as poverty and malnutrition. They require flexibility to adapt to a changing environment, due to factors such as climate change or unsustainable development.

Reaffirming to act before a disaster arrives, rather than to wait for human suffering as the trigger for an intervention: this evolved understanding has prompted a revision by *Action Contre la Faim* (ACF) in terms of roles and responsibilities that may serve as a practical analogy for other agencies working on the ground ('actors') and those supporting these initiatives such as the donor community or governments ('supporters')². One of the key challenges, of 'how to define an exit strategy for DRR', can be expanded to: 'who is best placed to act or to support those acting along the spectrum of overlapping DRR activities, when does their role (or responsibility) end, and what is the best way to sustainably hand this onto the next most relevant actor or supporter assuring the integrity of their own organisation (protecting previous investments)?'

Evolution of roles and responsibilities meeting the evolution of DRR

This evolved role challenges the expectations of what a humanitarian actor should be, and challenges how the donor community and governments define and offer relevant tools or funding mechanisms to support actors. The evolution of DRR implies an expanded mandate for humanitarian actors with an overlap into what had been considered the traditional development domain, supported by an increased flexibility in terms of program modality (local partnerships, capacity building, and international consortium) beyond the traditional direct intervention. It involves a longer vision of programming operating along the spectrum of the pre-disaster phase through to the initial and main phases of emergency response and across the emergency-development transition³ via Early Recovery and LRRD⁴ actions into development programming.

A strong coordination is necessary with traditional development actors to maintain program coherence regarding activity outcomes such as quality and impact across the 'grey zone'.

Those supporting DRR actors require a similar approach to assure that the initial aims of DRR are achieved sustainably, and must be willing to better coordinate the range of mechanisms at their disposal, also taking into account the three major axes of interventions (preparing/coping, building resilience, and adaptation to changing environment). A coordination strategy should anticipate and prepare the handover of responsibility from one mechanism to another defining clear exit strategy at each step. A similar strategic approach is also needed between donors.

The definition of the boundaries between different operational phases is important to all, given that the type and modality of DRR activities changes from one phase to another, as well as who is the most relevant actor and supporter. For example, who supports DRR activities beyond Early Recovery operations? Who supports DRR activities before a disaster strikes? The same donor, the same donor line? Ideally, a single donor entity (for example the EC that has multiple arms with differing mandates) plans for DRR across all operational phases, ensuring a continued support through time, with all mechanisms within its structure coordinated with clear roles and responsibility.

Responsibility to act across the operational spectrum should not diminish in stable contexts where the risks of devastating disasters are great and where transversal vulnerabilities are marked. These contexts cover large parts of the Third World. Furthermore, the exposure to disasters of an increasingly greater number of vulnerable people has increased over the last two decades, concordant with an increase in the number and intensity of hazards⁵. Hence, defining an exit strategy and declining responsibility for acting would be highly challenging for humanitarian and development agencies alike, in terms of their mission statement, vision and mandate.

A coherent and sustained commitment to those in need

A revision of the ACF DRR response across operational boundaries has resulted in key changes including a longer-term commitment, planning and coordination of different stand-alone and mainstreamed DRR activities, coupled with reduction of acute malnutrition as a transversal vulnerability. Concretely, this means the preparation of new activities, particularly in terms of assessment and capacity building of those to take on future roles, and the coordination of both emergency and longer-term technical specialists around the Early Recovery phase.

1. Geneva, June 2009

2. A simplistic vision given the range of 'actors' may include the communities themselves, local government, and so on, depending on the operational phase.

3. Here termed the 'grey zone', referring to operational phases where the role, responsibility and coordination has been historically less coherent between the humanitarian and development communities.

4. *Linking Relief with Rehabilitation and Development*.

5. *Risk and Poverty in a changing climate*, UNISDR, 2009.

6. *Climate Change Adaptation*.

'Timely and continued investment in DRR and CCA initiatives has saved money that can be reinvested (...)'

Further, ACF has been able to train project managers in both shorter and longer-term project methodology, instead of rotating in and out different specialists, reinforcing program coherence. The historical and traditional focus of each of these teams has been widened to promote an integrated approach to DRR, also going beyond the traditional DRR and CCA⁶ functional distinctions with a realisation that short-term and long-term teams needed to be integrated to promote a joint DRR-CCA approach integrated into ACF core mandate to treat and prevent acute malnutrition. One of the great challenges for ACF has been to deal with the specific interests and focus of different technical teams within its structure. The answer has been to redefine the role and responsibilities of these teams to achieve an integrated DRR approach: essentially merging the functioning and interest of emergency experts with long-term program technical experts. The next step for ACF is to further enhance the integration of DRR and CCA, in terms of targeting and programs, and to continue to align these initiatives with acute malnutrition.

There is not always a balanced and constant support for DRR between the shorter-term versus the longer-term operational phases: emergency work receives great media attention, is easier to monitor and demonstrates immediate impact, especially for the donor community and governments to valorise and justify their investment. In contrast, longer-term investments in DRR are more difficult and complicated to monitor, with the impact not always rapid or easy to quantitatively define, and with a longer timeframe of commitment that is eroded by dwindling interest when the last significant emergency becomes a distant memory.

Lastly, when does the role of an actor or donor completely finish, and how can they finally leave? ACF has also engaged in DRR and CCA on a much longer term than in the past for more pragmatic reasons beyond an obvious mandate to assist those in need, namely, to help protect the significant investment of time and money already invested in past operations and to provide an increased chance that future activities will succeed. Timely and continued investment in DRR and CCA initiatives has saved money that can be reinvested to increase impact and coverage. The most efficient operations have resulted from integrating DRR (focusing on communities) with Emergency Contingency Planning (focusing on ACF's preparation for emergency operations) and with new improved emergency operation methodology (e.g. better

overlapping initiatives with Early Recovery). The same approach to protect investment and maximise impact per unit of investment is a compelling argument for the donor community to engage in DRR and to invest over the long-term using all mechanisms possible.

Lessons learned on the ground: recommendations

In summary, there are a few concrete lessons in DRR programming that may be applicable to other agencies, particularly the donor community. The increasing impact and exposure to disaster and shocks requires an increased length of commitment translating into an increased engagement across the bulk of funding mechanisms within a single donor, and across the donor community. To maintain coherence and impact across the spectrum of operational phases for DRR requires a clear coordination, centralised around a long-term strategy and investment that redefines and expands its role and responsibility. Exit strategy must be envisaged at two levels, concordant with the central strategy: firstly exit strategy between different mechanisms; secondly, an absolute exit strategy where the donor declines further responsibility for supporting communities for DRR. There are compelling arguments in terms of protection of past and future investments for donors to remain engaged with DRR as long as possible. Finally, given the evolved understanding of the three axes of integrated DRR-CCA necessary to counter the globally degrading context involving a range of long-term phenomena, it may be extremely difficult for many donor agencies, along with actors, to justify a complete disengagement from these issues. We are all responsible for the long haul as the solutions can only be implemented together over the longer term.

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VOICE (*Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies*) is a network representing 85 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. Seeking to involve its members in information, training, advocacy and lobbying, VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the EU on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and rehabilitation and disaster preparedness and promotes the values of humanitarian NGOs.

VOICE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Disaster Risk Reduction

And Climate Change Adaptation in Humanitarian Aid

– June 2009 –

VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing 85 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. VOICE Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)¹ working group involves agencies among the leading DG ECHO partners in the field of DRR from across the European Union. The following recommendations are based on the work of the working group.

Context

It is anticipated that the global cost of disasters could exceed \$300 billion annually by the year 2050². Similarly, estimates from the OECD³ show that up to 50% of development assistance in some countries may be at risk because of climate change⁴ impacts⁵. The VOICE DRR working group members are deeply concerned about the upward global trend in 'natural' disasters and associated human and economic losses. Climate change is increasing the number, unpredictability and severity of extreme events. These trends have made the international community realize how urgent it is to significantly increase efforts to reduce risk and vulnerabilities and prevent further disasters.

In recent years a number of European Union (EU) Member States have taken significant steps to try to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations through integrating DRR into their aid policies and practice. The recent communications of the European Commission, which outline an EU strategy for supporting DRR in developing countries and an EU strategy for minimizing and adapting to climate change, represent further achievements in terms of mainstreaming these issues in European policies. The DRR working group welcomes these developments which ensure an increased contribution from the various services of the European Commission, and improved coordination across EC institutions.

However, the EU's climate package that came into law in early 2009 is still insufficient both to slow the rate of global warming and minimize the impact on lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations throughout the world. There remain weak linkages and inadequate coordination between DRR and Climate Change Adaptation⁶ (CCA) policies and practices at EU and international levels, although it is widely accepted that considerable benefits would be achieved through better integration. Both DRR and CCA strategies aim at reducing vulnerabilities to future disasters and closer cooperation would improve effectiveness and quality of DRR and CCA programmes.

Taking also into account previous publications of the VOICE network on DRR and LRRD⁷ and in particular the VOICE Policy Recommendations on DRR in the EU Humanitarian and Development Aid policy of July 2007, VOICE makes the following recommendations based on the expertise of its members.

¹ Disaster Risk Reduction refers to the conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. (UNISDR Terminology, 2004)

² The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR), Statement, 2002

³ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

⁴ "Climate change": 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 (UNFCCC Convention, 2004)

⁵ Agrawala S (ed) (2005) Bridge over Troubled Waters, Linking Climate Change and Development. OECD, Paris.

⁶ Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities (UNFCCC Glossary, 2005)

⁷ LRRD stands for "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development".

Recommendations

1. DRR must evolve to meet the needs of a changing climate:

- ***Integrate changing risks in strategies and programming:***

In the humanitarian context, DRR has demonstrated its effectiveness to deal with current climate variability – the existing climate related shocks and trends having significant impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the world's people, and particularly the poorest and most vulnerable. To remain effective in the face of human-induced climate change, the DRR community needs to better comprehend the full range of humanitarian impacts of climate variability and integrate the changing risks within its strategies.

- ***Link local knowledge with climate science:***

Effective DRR should remain based on local knowledge, and built upon local level participatory analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities, but scientific climate information should be brought to the service of communities, in an accessible form, to inform their analysis and support the identification of sustainable solutions.

- ***Develop more accurate forecasting and early warning systems:***

More accurate projections of changing hazard scenarios and related impending events at all levels are needed in order to tackle the humanitarian challenge posed by climate change.

2. CCA must learn from and build upon the experience of DRR:

- ***Build on experience from the humanitarian sector***

The CCA community should build on existing tried and tested principles and methods of DRR, and complement existing programming. The understanding of how to build resilience to current challenges should form the basis of building resilience to the future challenges of a changed and changing climate. CCA practitioners should link into activities started during emergency phase.

- ***Adopt people-centered and participatory approaches:***

The experience of DRR programming in crisis affected areas is that effective adaptation needs to be built upon participatory and community-based approaches. Humanitarian NGOs believe that poor people and communities are central to address the humanitarian impact of climate change in developing countries making it essential to support people-led processes to undertake climate risks assessments and identify routes to resilience.

- ***Build on local capacity:***

To be sustainable, adaptation will need to be built upon local capacities and locally appropriate technologies. New technologies should build on local and indigenous knowledge systems, instead of replacing them, and support should be given for local level innovation.

3. Coordinated strategies must be designed and implemented:

To achieve a coordinated, effective response, as espoused in the recommendations set out above, VOICE DRR working group further recommends the following:

- ***Policy makers and practitioners from the DRR and CCA sectors should work together*** in order to ensure that a coherent and comprehensive approach emanates from complementary policies. In furtherance of this, the European Union should promote the following as priorities:

- Support the DRR community to engage in climate change negotiations more effectively;
- Promote closer integration or convergence of DRR and CCA departments and functions within multilateral bodies, EU Member States and institutions, and civil society organizations;
- Support the generation of integrated knowledge, experience and guidance.

- ***The European Union, its institutions and Member States should coordinate*** to enable long-term approaches and funding sustainability. In furtherance of this, the EU should promote the following as priorities:

- Integrate DRR and CCA into EC programs and strategies as well as in the guidance and delivery of respective funding mechanisms;
- Urge and support developing countries and their governments to place priority on DRR and CCA within their political agendas.

2009-2010 - A NEW EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

A VIEW ON THE EU

(...) stress the need for a major overall increase in the humanitarian aid budget (...)

 **2009 has seen many changes in the EU institutional landscape, and more major ones are to be expected into 2010. All of these have implications on the EU humanitarian assistance framework. However difficult these changes are to fully predict at this stage, some key messages should be underlined.**

The European Parliament and the Humanitarian Rapporteur

In June 2009, European citizens across the 27 Member States of the EU elected those who will represent them in the European Parliament from 2009 to 2014. The result of these elections moved the European Parliament even further to the right; a trend which is reflected also in the political composition of the Committee on Development (DEVE), where humanitarian issues are debated.

As this fully reshaped institution has legislative and budgetary power and exercises democratic control over the EU policies, it is important that the new European Parliament recognises the key role of the EU as a global humanitarian donor and policy-maker. The reappointment of a Standing Rapporteur for EU Humanitarian Aid within the DEVE Committee was advocated strongly for by VOICE and is a first important step in that direction.

It is now hoped that (s)he will be dedicated to following up on the EU humanitarian action, and that (s)he will monitor the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid in close collaboration with humanitarian civil society stakeholders, who will have a crucial role to play in sharing their expertise and first hand experience of humanitarian challenges in the field.

The EU humanitarian budget and a need for increase

Another major milestone for the future of EU humanitarian aid will be the decisions on future budgets for DG ECHO, who mainly implements through partners.

The funds to be made available each year until 2013 to humanitarian aid have been agreed in the framework of the 2007-2013 Financial Perspectives and remain roughly constant. It is essential that the promised level of humanitarian aid commitments be maintained in the upcoming mid-term review of the Financial Perspectives.

Furthermore, humanitarian needs are on a continued increase, and several times in recent years DG ECHO has had to use the EU's humanitarian financial buffer - the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) - in addition to its core budget in order to respond timely and efficiently to arising crises. However, each year when the EU draws up its annual budget, the EAR payment appropriations

are threatened. Safeguarding it is therefore a priority for European humanitarian NGOs members of VOICE.

In view of the preparation of the 2014-2020 Financial Perspectives, VOICE is committed to strongly stress the need for a major overall increase in the humanitarian aid budget if the EU wants to continue supporting crises affected populations and remain one of the major donors for humanitarian aid also in the future.

A new Commission and the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid

The mandate of the current European Commission comes to an end on 31 October. A new college of Commissioners is thus due to be appointed to take up a five year term. What is yet unclear, is when and of what shape. The Lisbon Treaty would indeed reshape the Commission's composition.

Some would like to see the current Commission stay on a little longer until the Irish vote indicates which composition the European Commission should take. However there seems to be a strong push, including from the Presidency, to see "Barroso II" instated as early as possible. It is thus not clear if Karel De Gucht, who replaced previous Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel, will be in charge of Development and Humanitarian Aid beyond October or if he will be replaced before the end of 2009.

Whatever the scenario, what is crucial to the humanitarian aid sector, is that one Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid be reappointed to strengthen the current EU aid structure. This is to ensure linkages between European humanitarian aid and development policies as well as independence from any other external policy.

The Lisbon Treaty and the legal base and independence of humanitarian aid

The Lisbon Treaty introduces for the first time a specific legal basis for humanitarian aid, stresses the specificity of the policy and emphasises the principles of international humanitarian law, in particular neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination.

But the Lisbon Treaty also combines the function of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with that of Vice-President in the Commission, and creates a new External Action Service to support this role. The High Representative is expected to have the dual role of representing the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and coordinating the implementation of aspects of the EU external relations handled by the Commission. The purpose of this important change is to strengthen coherence in EU external action. But it is feared that it would undermine the

A VIEW ON THE EU

'(...) it is essential to ensure that the humanitarian action remains independent from all political considerations.'

independence of the EU humanitarian policies. Regardless of the eventual form of the new EU institutional framework, it is essential to continue to ensure that the decisions on the delivery of EU Humanitarian Aid to crises affected populations are based on identified needs, and that the humanitarian action remains independent from all political considerations. It is equally crucial that the new EU institutional set-up for external action adhere to and support the existing EU external policy commitments, such as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

A Council Working Group and the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

The EU Member States, conjunctly with the European Commission and the European Parliament, have committed to the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. A mid-term review of the Action Plan and the implementation of the Consensus is due to take place in 2010. In the Action Plan, the Commission commits to engage its partners in the exercise. This will be the opportunity for humanitarian actors to assess the progress made by the EU and its Member States in improving their humanitarian action and to reaffirm priorities.

Finally at the European Council level, the COHAFA¹, which became effective on 1 January 2009, has established a key forum for regular policy-level exchange among Member States on

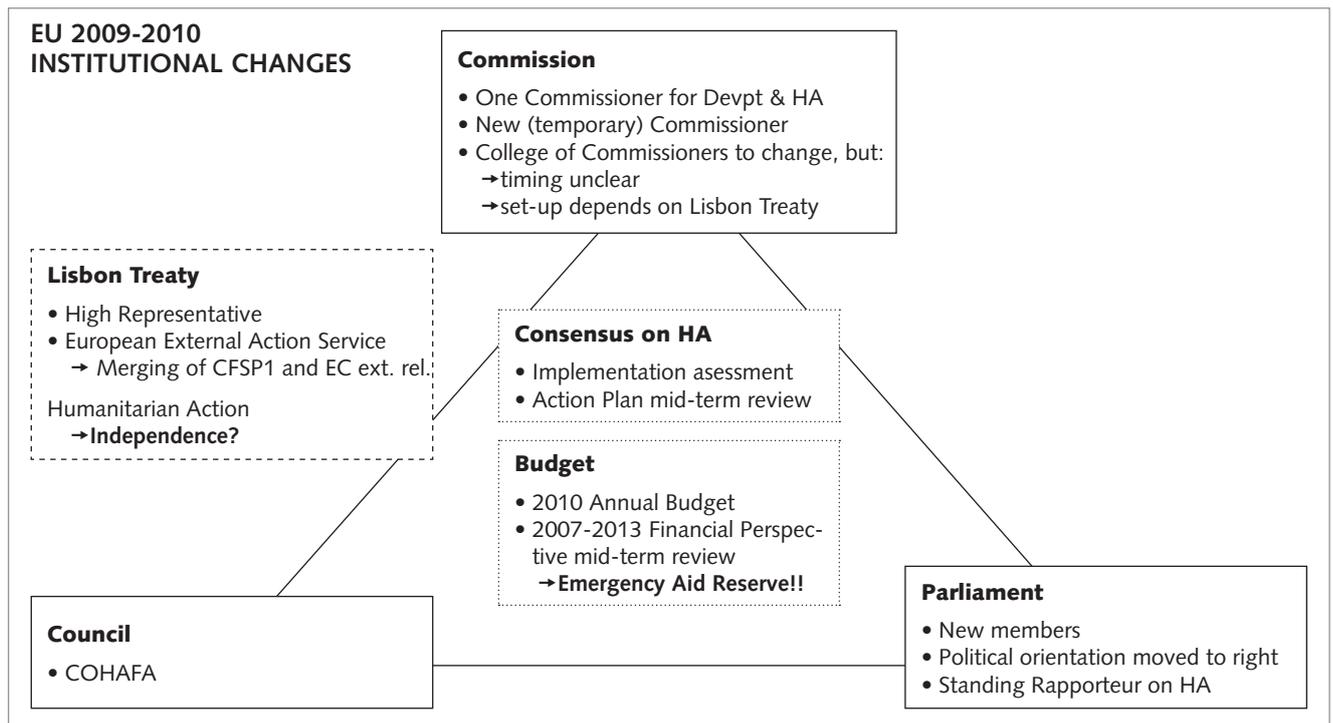
EU humanitarian aid and operational strategies. Nine months after its establishment, it seems that Member States see it as the key forum for discussions on humanitarian issues.

As it liaises with other Council working groups, it is hoped that this will strengthen the position of the humanitarian aid within the EU policy debates. Humanitarian NGOs also hope that a more transparent and regular exchange between the COHAFA and NGOs will be institutionalised.

Conclusion

The EU institutional changes of the past year and the year to come on one hand strengthen European humanitarian aid, but also put some questions. The main challenge will be to ensure that the independence of humanitarian action is preserved, and that the EU gives itself the financial means to be able to respond to crises where it will be anticipated. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the specific objective of saving lives based on needs and principles should remain at the core of EU humanitarian aid policy, and of the overall EU external action.

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A GROUND PERSPECTIVE ON PAKISTAN'S DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

FIELD FOCUS

 Pakistan has witnessed one of the gravest internal displacement crises of the last two decades. At its height, tracking estimates point to well over 2.1 million people seeking refuge in host communities or camps – a movement on the scale of those in Rwanda or Bosnia but outpacing their speed. Return has been equally swift: the latest estimate is that 40% have returned home over the last month.

The Pakistan IDP crisis also threw into sharp light some of the most pressing issues of humanitarian reform: funding; coordination; rights; and 'humanitarian space'. This article offers a personal reflection from inside one agency that has been engaged with the displacement crisis since it began.

Funding - Almost six months after the re-launch of the UN humanitarian appeal, it still remains only 44% funded. What's more, the needs it encapsulates are far below the reality of humanitarian needs on the ground. Pakistan's IDP crisis has not attracted the level of support that needs dictated. Important emergency donors have been slow to ramp up responses and slower to get cash to where it should make a difference: on the ground. Disbursement has also gotten tangled in problematic dynamics within clusters and lead agencies.

Speculation abounds about why this emergency has been under-funded and why some important donors are perceived as under-performing. And, right now, the most pressing concern is for key contributors to recognize that the crisis is far from over: OCHA estimates that over 1.3 million people remain displaced, thousands are fleeing ongoing fighting every week, and return remains fragile.

Coordination - The cluster system's performance in Pakistan has declined as the emergency intensified. Some clusters work adequately; however others are severely dysfunctional. As was recently highlighted¹, the flaws are the same as after the earthquake. They include: the conflict of interest inherent in treating the clusters as funding mechanisms rather than coordination fora; the tensions inherent in 'double hatting' cluster chairs as both operational UN agency representatives and sector facilitators; a lack of group and meeting facilitation skills among cluster lead personnel; and frequent changes in that personnel.

To work effectively, clusters need dedicated human and management resources. Small investments work: there was a palpable improvement in system performance after establishing an OCHA presence and separating out the Humanitarian Coordinator role.

From my perspective, the single most corrosive element has been the use of clusters as project funding channels. This has been administratively

dysfunctional, has subverted clusters from their *raison d'être*, and has exacerbated negative competition among humanitarian agencies.

Humanitarian Space & Rights Protection - This IDP crisis has thrown up many issues around rights protection and the closing of humanitarian space. These are too complex to go into detail here but do require highlighting.

First, the humanitarian response in Pakistan takes place within a highly politicized and militarized context, and the government's response to the displacement has relied heavily on military support. While the civilian administration remains in charge, the army is ubiquitous – both in terms of policy and in terms of presence (e.g. army camp hospitals, relief distributions, and control of humanitarian access). The military has proven logistical strength, but in a context where they are prosecuting the conflict they cannot be part of the response as they were in reaction to the earthquake. The government's implication in both the conflict and the emergency response becomes more and more problematic for humanitarian actors. Neutrality is out of the window, impartiality becomes in question, and the ability of NGOs to rely on community acceptance for security is degraded. The risk is that militant groups will perceive NGOs as just part of the rival combatant's party.

IDP recognition and return illustrate further issues. Questions remain about government criteria for recognizing IDPs – you can flee fighting not two kilometers from your house but not be allowed to register because you are from the 'wrong' village. And without registration, you cannot access government assistance or other humanitarian aid. The return process is equally problematic. There are indications that despite government policy, return did not meet basic rights set out in the Guiding Principles about free, informed choice and assurance of safety and dignity. The vast majority is desperate to go home, but many fear for their safety or for their ability to get promised assistance.

Conclusion

Humanitarian space as we understand it is suppressed in the current Pakistan emergency. But one undeniable fact shines out from this displacement crisis: the response by the Pakistani people. Over 80% of IDPs found shelter not in camps but in private households or other communal spaces. Often complete strangers opened their houses to many. This is a tribute to Pakistani society and a lesson for the humanitarian system.

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International Rescue Committee
www.theirc.org

'Humanitarian space as we understand it is suppressed in the current Pakistan emergency.'

1. Inter-Cluster Diagnostic Mission.

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AT EU LEVEL

VOICE AT WORK

- ★ **Recommendations on civil-military relations** - In May 2009, the VOICE network launched policy recommendations to the EU on civil-military relations in humanitarian action. These recommendations are the result of the efforts of the VOICE Working Group on Civil-Military Relations to define common key messages. They draw the attention to the life-saving, needs-based and independent nature of humanitarian aid; the respect of humanitarian principles as defined in International Humanitarian Law; the respect of roles and mandates of civilian humanitarian actors and the military; and operational recommendations. The recommendations need to be read with reference to the Lexicon of key civil-military relations related terminology, also developed by the VOICE CivMil Working Group. The documents were widely distributed by the VOICE Secretariat and presented to the EU institutions and relevant stakeholders which have highly welcomed them; and VOICE members relay them in their interaction with government officials of their respective Member States.

- ★ **Recommendations on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation** - In June 2009, the VOICE network finalised its recommendations, published in this newsletter, on the need to strengthen the link between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Included into the support documentation of the Second Global Platform for DRR organised by UNISDR in Geneva, where VOICE was also present, they were then disseminated to relevant EU stakeholders. Focusing on how to integrate the DRR expertise into CCA programs and how CCA can bring substantial added value into DRR strategies, they consequently ask for improved cooperation among the two sectors and especially at the EU level. The VOICE DRR Working Group has also been deeply engaged in the developments of DG ECHO policy and the EC Communication on DRR. Key messages delivered by the group were included into those two important papers, reinforcing the notoriety of the group and its level of expertise.

- ★ **One Year after the 2008 Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA)** - The FPA Watch Group, which is composed of some 30 NGOs, worked successfully with ECHO towards the development of the 2008 FPA guidelines. Now that the guidelines and fact sheets are nearly complete, the FPA Watch Group dedicates time to monitor the FPA implementation. To this end, a study 'One year after the FPA' covering the whole range of activities inherent to a project funded by DG ECHO was completed by 53 NGOs. The results show that there is room for improvement, but overall the new FPA remains a positive change and DG ECHO's will to strengthen its partnership with NGOs is highly appreciated. These conclusions were presented to DG ECHO and VOICE will continue to monitor the implementation of the FPA.

- ★ **Dialogue with the Czech Presidency** - In its advocacy work with the EU institutions, VOICE has worked extensively with the Czech Presidency to brief them on NGO priorities and concerns in humanitarian field. VOICE also advocated strongly with the Presidencies and representatives from several member states in order to get access to the EU Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). As a result, VOICE members were invited to brief the members of the COHAFA directly on Sri Lanka and Gaza at the last meeting during the Czech Presidency. VOICE also organised a two-day event in Prague in collaboration with Czech NGOs. A roundtable on the 'Challenges for EU humanitarian NGOs' allowed exchanges between DG ECHO, the Czech EU Presidency Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and numerous NGOs both from old and new EU Members States. A highly appreciated training on the Project Cycle Management and the creation of the logical framework was also widely attended by humanitarian workers from across new Member States.

- ★ **Monitoring the Consensus Action Plan** - Through multiple activities and exchanges with the EU institutions, VOICE followed up closely on the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. VOICE welcomes that under ECHO's leadership many of the action points are underway or completed. Especially the drafting of the sectoral guidelines on Food Aid, Disaster Risk Reduction and Protection took in extensive input from the VOICE network. In light of the upcoming review in 2010, VOICE will also look into the implementation of the Consensus in Member States, and follow up on the issue of civil-military relations in humanitarian action and the Principles of Partnership.



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VOICE out loud

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