

Review

**Review of the GHD Initiative:
Challenges and perspectives of remaining relevant in a changing humanitarian landscape**

January 2013

Final Report

Report for

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN, Geneva
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, Geneva
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Consultants:**RDC**

Resources Development Consultants ApS

Henrik Jespersen	Resources Development Consultants (RDC)
Jakob Simonsen	Strategyconsulting for Development
Randolph Kent	Humanitarian Futures Programme, King's College, London

i. Executive Summary

It has been 10 years since the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (GHDI) was launched as the organizational framework for principled humanitarian action by international donors. As part of the GHDI Annual Work Plan for 2012-13, the co-chairs Denmark and the Czech Republic have commissioned this consultancy-led review to assess the future relevance and potential of the GHDI in promoting principled donor responses to current and future humanitarian challenges and opportunities.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, followed by Chapter 2 which indicates the review’s overall approach and methodology, while Chapter 3 provides a broad brush background to the GHDI.

Chapters 4 and 5 of the report present an analysis of literature reviews, data analysis, and interviews with more than 70 GHDI members and other stakeholders undertaken during the course of this three month initiative.

Based upon a SWOT framework, respondents’ perceptions of “strengths”, “weaknesses”, “opportunities” and “threats” that reflect the present GHDI are summarized below:

<p><i>Strengths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agreement on Humanitarian Principles</i> • <i>A donors’ forum for dialogue</i> • <i>Safeguarding principled action in national Policies and strategies</i> • <i>Widening of GHD Principles signatories</i> • <i>Sharing and learning</i> • <i>An informal and low-cost forum</i> 	<p><i>Weaknesses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Declining centrality of GHDI</i> • <i>Unclear balance between breadth of membership and accountability to principles</i> • <i>Geneva-centric: Limited links to field and other UN Hubs, and insufficient capital-based technical/substantive inputs</i> • <i>Ad-hoc planning and a proliferation of work-streams</i> • <i>Loose Internal Structure: Management and practice</i>
<p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demand for new donor dynamics</i> • <i>A continued need for a donors’ forum</i> • <i>The importance of outreach and pragmatism</i> • <i>Platform for discussion on funding modalities/priorities/gaps</i> 	<p><i>Threats:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of clear and articulated purpose for GHDI in today’s humanitarian landscape</i> • <i>New actors and principles</i> • <i>Changes in international humanitarian agendas</i> • <i>Competing national agendas</i>

These general conclusions may not give full justice to the spectrum of respondents’ views and perceptions; however, there is fundamental agreement amongst respondents about the set of core issues as noted below.

Of fundamental importance is the recognition of the growing importance of humanitarian action for government. Hence, dialogue on humanitarian action has become increasingly important for domestic politics in donor as well as recipient countries. This has led all respondents to emphasize the need for collective action and space for enhancing “Good Humanitarian Donorship”. For most if not all donors this means support to a structure where such dialogue can take place while including as many donors – state and non-state entities – as possible.

Having established a continued need for collective donor action, the report draws the attention to a number of challenges linked with the present format of the GHDI. Overall there is a discontinuity in agenda-setting, which ranges from administrative practices to more substantive issues. The former is reflected in a system with rotating chairmanships that have unclear handover procedures and no overarching themes that reflect organisational

purpose and coherence. This is compounded by the absence of an institutional anchor such as a permanent secretariat.

More substantively, a number of work streams have been established in Geneva, but once again it is difficult to identify an overall, multi-annual strategic line that focuses the GHDI over time. There is little engagement between GHDI members and decision-makers in their respective capitals; similarly, efforts to link the GHD with field-based activities have also proven relatively ineffective. This has led generally speaking to a shift from what was intended to be an informal but vigorous platform for inter-governmental policy dialogue to essentially a Geneva-based information exchange mechanism with a very limited strategic role.

In chapter 6, the report concludes that maintaining the existing structure and format is not an option if the GHDI is to play the role of a genuine humanitarian donors' forum. As such, the report recommends that the GHDI - most probably the GHDI co-chairs eventually in partnership with the upcoming chair/co-chairs - must initiate a process over the coming months, leading to "a refresh" of the GHDI based on a joint understanding of its purpose and objectives. This would involve:

- *prior to any detailed discussions of whether the GHDI is "fit for purpose", explicit agreement amongst members about the "core purpose" of the GHDI, shared by and committed by decision-makers in capitals;*
- *the creation of a GHDI structure that promotes thematic continuity through a "troika mechanism" for dealing with the handover of chairmanships, and a secretariat to ensure continuity, institutional memory and follow-up. This secretariat would also be responsible for maintaining a dynamic and interactive website;*
- *agreement on "what constitutes good Donorship", and the substance of that agreement would directly relate to and be reflected in future work plans;*
- *decisions on a) the balance between new actors and the role of principles, b) the involvement in GHDI of a range of partners that are not part of government, but have comparable humanitarian interests and concerns, and c) guidelines on donor behaviour;*
- *precise guidelines on the role of work streams, and the ways that they individually and collectively relate to the overall objectives of the GHDI, including best practices, accountability and directions for donor behaviour;*
- *a coherent mechanism for addressing policy issues of broad concern to GHDI members such as the "Transformative Agenda" and the forthcoming "humanitarian summit";*
- *related to the outputs of work streams, agreement on measures to promote knowledge management with a specific focus on dissemination of best practices and accountability standards to partner organisations as well as donors;*
- *annual agreement on GHDI activities, including 2-3 plenary meetings and an annual High Level meeting in the margins of ECOSOC. As a refresh will require senior policy engagement, it is suggested to "aim high" in terms of participation;*
- *aim for a lean structure in Geneva. Maintain engagement with other global humanitarian aid fora (e.g. New York and Rome) and field operations, allowing for maximum flexibility while avoiding the burden and expense of formal structures*

ii. Table of Content

i. Executive Summary i

ii. Table of Content iii

iii. List of Abbreviations iv

1. Introduction 1

2. Approach 2

3. A relevant structure 3

4. Capacities and challenges 6

5. Continued GHDI relevance in a changing context 15

6. Options and a potential process 23

Annexes 32

iii. List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
ECHO	The European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GHDI	Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative
HFP	Humanitarian Futures Programme
HRI	Humanitarian Response Index
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid
ODSG	OCHA Donor Support Group
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territories
UN	United Nations
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

In 2003 a group of 17 donors came together at a conference in Stockholm with a view to discussing and finding common ground about what could be a framework for future Principles and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship.

In the decade or so leading up to the conference, international humanitarian aid had grown dramatically both in terms of funding and coverage. The community of humanitarian actors seemed to be constantly expanding and the pace and the modalities underpinning this rapidly growing sector had led to major challenges of coherence and effectiveness. Above all this was felt by the people and communities supposed to benefit from (or work with) the humanitarian community, but donors and international organisations also realised that humanitarian aid had become too unregulated and uncoordinated to provide benefits in ways that were consistent and systematic.

The Stockholm conference successfully concluded with the full complement of 17 donors agreeing on a set of 23 principles that are now widely considered to be the backbone of good humanitarian donor policy and practice. At a meeting in Ottawa the following year the donor group was expanded. Now 22 donors along with representatives from the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian organisations affirmed their new or continued commitment to the principles, which were endorsed by the OECD/DAC High Level Meeting in 2006. Since then more donors have endorsed the principles, and the total number of signatories now stands at 41.¹

At the meeting in Stockholm, it was also agreed to establish an informal donor forum to facilitate collective advancement of the GHD principles: The Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (GHDI – or “the Initiative”)². The GHDI was to serve as a platform for dialogue, and for advancing humanitarian policy and practice in a principled and operationally effective way. It was furthermore agreed that the GHDI would operate on the basis of rotating annual chairmanships (normally co-chaired by two members), and be guided by annual work plans.

GHDI Chair-countries³

2003 – 2005 Sweden and Canada [co-chairs of the informal implementation group]
2005 – 2006 United Kingdom
2006 – 2007 United Kingdom and Denmark.
2007 – 2008 Sweden and the United States
2008 – 2009 European Commission and the Netherlands
2009 – 2010 Estonia and Ireland
2010 – 2011 Switzerland
2011 – 2012 Germany and Poland
2012 – 2013 Czech Republic and Denmark

¹ A list of the 41 countries is attached in annex 4

² The Meeting Conclusions from June 2003 refers to an implementation Plan for the Good Humanitarian Donorship, noting that “...donors agreed to establish an informal Implementation Group for GHD. (This group) will consist of interested donors and other humanitarian partners (...and...) will exist for one year and will be based in Geneva (...) The group will be chaired by Canada, assisted by Sweden as co-chair and one other country (to be decided) in a *troika* arrangement”. This is what now has become the GHDI.

³ Sources: GHD Homepage and “Taking Stock of GHD – 2003 to date - A GHD Non-paper” (2010)

Ten years later the representatives of the Czech Republic and Denmark, co-chairs for 2012-2013, have decided on a stock-taking of the Initiative after the first ten years and have commissioned the present consultancy-led analysis of the GHDI as a first step in that process.

The consultancy team would like to express our gratitude to all the persons participating in the interviews, and providing helpful information. Special thanks to Jitka Brodska from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN in Geneva and Maria Ulff-Møller and Sacha Dyrdorf Kondrup from the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN in Geneva.

The views expressed in this report are those of the consultant team, and does not necessarily represent the policies of Denmark or the Czech Republic.

2. Approach

The Terms of Reference⁴ for this analysis provide for two overall objectives: a) to take stock and to understand the experiences so far with the GHDI, and b) to provide an input into the dialogue and planning of the future format and work of the GHDI. Further consultations on the specifics of ToR with the GHDI partners led to an emphasis of the latter, namely, a more policy-oriented guidance for the future of GHDI.

The principal objective of the consultancy is therefore to assess the future relevance and potential of the GHDI to promote principled donor responses to current and future humanitarian challenges and opportunities.

The consultancy draws on literature reviews⁵, data analysis, and interviews with more than 70 GHDI members and other stakeholders either face-to-face or virtual (by phone)⁶. The report also builds on inputs from the Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP), including a note developed for the review, which is attached as annex to the report⁷. Based on the guiding questions in the ToR, the interviews have focused on questions that concern respondents' perceptions of "strengths", "weaknesses", "opportunities" and "threats", facing the GHDI. This has allowed for relatively open responses rather than applying a model of pre-defined options. At the same time it also means that the study draws on the authors' interpretations of the "perceptions" of the respondents, rather than on quantifiable data in reflecting relevance and effectiveness of the GHDI. This also was done in the analysis of written material such as GHDI annual reports and other documentation on the website as well as independent assessments.

The findings in terms of GHDI "strengths and weaknesses" are presented in chapter 4 on capacities and challenges, while issues referring to "opportunities and threats" largely are included in the discussion of future relevance in chapter 5.

⁴ The ToR are included in annex 1

⁵ A list of key references are included in annex 3

⁶ Respondents to the study include representatives from donors, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, and research institutions. A list of interlocutors is included in annex 2

⁷ See annex 5

Respondent quotes are included in the report to illustrate specific points-of-view expressed on a given issue. Throughout the report quotes and statements are used without attribution to individuals or countries, and the sources are referred to as “stakeholders”, “interlocutors”, “respondents”, and similar expressions. On the whole, this approach has allowed for a more open dialogue, and hopefully also for more comprehensive and nuanced responses.

The report includes references to past performance that have particular relevance for discussion of future perspectives. As such it has been a fixed feature in the stakeholder consultations to assess immediate challenges ahead as well as longer term perspectives. With regards to issues involving future perspectives, the report combines feedback from respondents with inputs from research on future humanitarian threats and opportunities from various think-tank sources⁸.

Interviews have largely been with interlocutors based in Geneva, Rome, New York, and donor capitals. As such the consultancy has not had consultations with national or local counterparts in recipient countries.

During the consultancy it became possible to draw upon two related initiatives. On November 29th 2012 the Overseas Development Institute’s (ODI) Humanitarian Policy Group organised a roundtable on “*What next for the GHD Initiative*”, undertaken together with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss the *raison d’être* of GHD and its future role, and it drew on participation of GHDI member representatives, researchers, and prominent humanitarian practitioners⁹. On December 4th, the European Community’s Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the NRC organised a conference on “*Principles in Practice: Safeguarding Humanitarian Action*”. The consultancy team participated in both of these events, and some findings build on those discussions.

3. A relevant structure

There were many factors contributing to making the Stockholm meeting a reality and a success. Two such factors were the changing geopolitical environment in the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the events around and after 9/11. It was also at a time where there was a feeling of a need for collective action among the international players, particularly with increasing funding coming into this field. The lessons from the Rwanda and Kosovo evaluations were still being digested, while humanitarian funding was rapidly increasing and an overall strengthening of the United Nations humanitarian system was taking place. Similarly various NGO-driven processes such as the SPHERE standards¹⁰ had come about, providing better guidance for the humanitarian action. As such there was a genuine sense of purpose in

⁸ Written and verbal feedback from among others the HFP, GEPI, and ALNAP, has assisted in adding perspective to the feedback from the interlocutors on issues like the role of non-traditional humanitarian actors, e.g. nation-states, regional actors, as well as other actors both from the “globalized” civil society organizations and even the corporate sector (foundations etc).

⁹ Including Randolph Kent from the consultancy team who was an invited speaker in the first panel.

¹⁰ The Sphere Project is an initiative bringing together a wide range of humanitarian agencies on improving the quality of humanitarian assistance raising accountability of humanitarian actors. A particular tool is the Sphere Handbook which outlines sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response.

2003 for donors also to focus on coherence and coordination, and the subsequent agreement on the 23 principles reflected this belief.

Furthermore, many respondents have emphasized the existence of a growing cadre of humanitarian professionals, determined to remedy “*donor action...found...to be dysfunctional, irrational, and sometimes arrogant*” while at the same time asking themselves “*How could we accept to represent a sector which functioned with such anarchy? ... (when) ... aid should be given according to need and where it was required, in sufficient amounts and with appropriate quality ... (and)...include measures to prevent and prepare for emergencies, while also helping people rebuild their lives and livelihoods after a crisis*”¹¹.

In this sense the early years of the 21st century provided a hitherto rare opportunity to discuss and agree on a set of far-reaching principles for “Good Humanitarian Donorship” and a forum for discussing their implementation, namely, the GHDI.

The GHDI is structured around simple and un-bureaucratic principles¹². It functions without a formal secretariat, and the management and agenda-setting is based upon an annual rotating chairmanship, often shared between two members. The chair/co-chairs develop an annual work plan often with a thematic focus – i.e. accountability and adherence; preparedness, resilience and response; shared framework for needs assessment, etc – around Geneva-based meetings with participation of staff from the UN-missions of the members. More recently, the widening of the membership has become an important feature with emphasis on learning and networking. Consequently, GHDI follows a two pronged approach: Advancement of GHD-compliance and attraction of new GHDI members.

“Work streams” have become a staple of the Geneva-based work in which specific issues – indicators, funding, etc - are discussed and solutions or approaches are reported back to the 2 - 3 Plenary meetings held per year, and at times to the annual High-level meeting for decision-makers and capital-based staff.

The work streams are led by a volunteer chair, who also manages meeting schedules and inputs for discussions GHDI members participate based on the priority they attach to the subject and their respective capacities. At least one work stream that focuses on “Sharing and Learning” has become a continuous feature in the annual work plans with alternating country leads.

Currently, 6 work streams are active, though according to interviewees, the frequency of meetings differ quite significantly., There are, for instance, two fixed meetings per year in the work stream on humanitarian financing, whereas the number of meetings in the other work streams seems to be more ad-hoc¹³.

¹¹ Johan Schaar. Perspectives on Good Humanitarian Donorship (in Humanitarian Response Index 2007)

¹² Following consultations on the workings of the GHDI, agreement was reached in 2010 on a Terms of Reference for the Initiative; reaffirming “*the role of the GHD group as an informal donor-led forum with a clear focus on improving donor behaviour...*”, from “Taking Stock of GHD – 2003 to date. A non-paper prepared by the 2009 – 2010 Co-chairs (2010)

¹³ 1) Shared accountability enhancing the process of monitoring donor adherence to GHD [Chaired by Belgium], 2) More equitable humanitarian financing [Chaired by Sweden], 3) Safety and security [Chaired by the US], 4) Preparedness, Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience and Response (PDR4) [Chaired by Germany and Poland], 5) Needs Assessments [Chaired by ECHO], and 6) Share[Chaired by Croatia]

Recognizing the fact that humanitarian issues are being discussed not only in Geneva but also in Rome and New York, a 3-cluster approach was implemented with (mostly) identical chair/co-chair arrangement and intentions of information flows among the three clusters¹⁴. Similarly, the original intention was to use GHDI also as an organizing principle for donor coordination at some humanitarian hotspots. Such pilots were tested in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), and a short guidance note for colleagues at country level have been produced to assist them in promoting the GHD principles¹⁵.

In 2005 GHDI agreed to initiate a process of “self assessment” drawing on a set of 17 indicators that were intended to be used as a tool for a yearly measure of the collective performance against the 23 principles¹⁶. The self-assessment process has gone through a review in 2011 based on which a second phase of the work with indicators have been initiated, with a view to develop an improved analytical framework, allowing for “...*self-assessment and (which) differentiates areas of individual vs. collective performance*”¹⁷.

In parallel with this self-assessment process DARA developed its Humanitarian Response Index (HRI). Since 2007, DARA has produced the HRI intended to provide assessments and empirical evidence on the performance of individual donor governments’ humanitarian assistance against the principles of the GHD. The report aims at ranking and comparing the donors, with a view to assess the quality of humanitarian assistance and thereby to highlight for governments areas where the effectiveness of relief and recovery efforts can be improved.

As such the HRI could be an important input to the GHDI in assessing its own performance. However, during interviews the immediate feedback from donors was largely critical; that the approach with ranking is seen “as “*not useful*”, and that the methodology was not good enough”¹⁸. So, whereas it was the impression that the HRI reports are read in capitals as they contain solid crisis reports and analysis, they have not been used as a tool by donors to strengthen their performance in adhering to the GHD Principles.

In summary, this chapter has shown that prominent features of the GHDI have been marked by informality, a light organisational structure, non-binding discussions on central humanitarian issues, focus on information-sharing and learning for new members, and an expansion of membership to non-traditional actors in the humanitarian community. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss performance and present status of the GHDI after almost 10 years of existence, providing inputs and parameters for future scenarios that will determine realistic options for the GHDI.

¹⁴ The Rome-based GHDI enables donors to meet for discussions around food security in a humanitarian context, and the GDH-platform in New York is tightly linked to the biennial ECOSOC session since the High-level meeting takes place as a side event to ECOSOC.

¹⁵ GHD: Good Humanitarian Donorship – at country level. A Guiding note (undated)

¹⁶ GHD Indicators – reissued. A report by Development Initiatives (2008)

¹⁷ Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Indicators: Outline of Phase Two. Development Initiatives (2012)

¹⁸ It is noted, however, that respondents only provided very vague references as to which parts of the methodology were weak.

4. Capacities and challenges

Introduction

Drawing on a basic SWOT-approach the focus of the present chapter is on a) strengths and b) weaknesses, and chapter 5 opportunities and threats are presented as part of the discussion of future potential and relevance.

The overall findings on past and present performance as well as future potentials are summarized in the below table.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on Humanitarian Principles A donors' forum for dialogue Safeguarding principled action in national Policies and strategies Widening of GHD Principles signatories Sharing and learning An informal and low-cost forum 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining centrality of GHDI Unclear balance between breadth of membership and accountability to principles Geneva-centric: Limited links to field and other UN Hubs, and insufficient capital-based technical/substantive inputs Ad-hoc planning and a proliferation of work-streams Loose Internal Structure: Management and practice
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for new donor dynamics A continued need for a donors' forum The importance of outreach and pragmatism Platform for discussion on funding modalities/priorities/gaps 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear and articulated purpose for GHDI in today's humanitarian landscape New actors and principles Changes in international humanitarian agendas Competing national agendas

a) Strengths

Agreement on the humanitarian principles

The principal and undisputed achievement from the Stockholm meeting in 2003 was the formulation of an agreement with the 23 principles for “Good Humanitarian Donorship” by 17 countries. These 17 to date still provide more than 90 per cent of international humanitarian funding and most of the key donor voices in framing humanitarian action.

The concept of GHD has since been seen as an antidote to a chaotic humanitarian environment which continues to lack a common framework for action. *“It provided an appropriate code of conduct for donors”*. This fact has been repeated in all interviews with initial founding members and those who joined subsequently as well as independent partners and researchers. It was in effect singled out as the most important reason for keeping the “Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative” alive.¹⁹

The accomplishment is even more impressive as most respondents expressed their doubts that it would be possible to repeat an agreement around the 23 principles in today's world. The

¹⁹ “...references to the GHD Principles are helpful when “the system” needs to lobby its “political masters”. For instance when arguing for early releases of committed support, pushing for more predictable funding, or trying to focus on forgotten emergencies. (...) This is probably the same for all the traditional and strong donors, and the main importance today may be for the smaller and emerging donors”.

majority of respondents indicated that a continued presence of GHDI is crucial for maintaining the centrality of the 23 principles in the humanitarian community.

A donors' forum for dialogue

After the Stockholm meeting GHDI was constituted and became the first donors-only forum “for donors and by donors” for informal discussions of principled humanitarian action. After 10 years, it still remains the only donors’ forum for humanitarian issues. Since 2003 donors do not seem to have found it necessary to create additional mechanisms for discussing and coordinating their policies and positions outside of GHDI. While a wide array of bodies had been established throughout this period to deal with various aspects of humanitarian concerns, they have all been limited to either specific agencies, themes, or governance issues (ICRC, OCHA, humanitarian UN agencies etc.) or focusing exclusively on funding discussions (ODSC, Pooled Funding, CAPs etc.). As such there was none until the GHDI that specifically brought the major donors together – as donors.

Reading through the Annual Reports of the GHDI, it is obvious that the Initiative’s first years were extremely active and constructive in addressing issues related to individual and collective donor performance. Cases in point include the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid which was a bi-product of the GHD; the development of a common definition of humanitarian assistance for statistical purposes; improved tools for needs-based assessments of humanitarian situations; predictable and flexible mechanisms for humanitarian funding; and, steps towards a framework for assessing donor performance through the OECD/DAC Peer Review mechanism²⁰.

Many respondents also suggest that GHD was at least partially responsible for the increase in global humanitarian funding during the first decade of the century. GHD’s success in this regard was due simply by raising the issue of humanitarian principles and by turning itself into an important platform for funding discussions, including through an increased engagement in the Montreux meetings even if initially only a limited number of the most active GHD members participated²¹.

Furthermore, GHDI is also seen to have the potential of becoming an important donor partner to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). At the same time, these positive reflections are counterbalanced by the concerns of some that the sheer size of GHDI (41 member states) together with the heterogeneous composition – longstanding and heavy donors vs. new members with marginal roles – makes it difficult for the GHDI to reflect a coherent donor voice.

Safeguarding principled action in national policies and strategies

Almost all representatives from GHDI member states emphasize the crucial importance that the humanitarian principles have played in shaping their national policy and strategic processes.

²⁰ GHDI co-chairs 2009-10, Non-paper (2010)

²¹ The Montreux focus on the Consolidated Appeals Process is explicitly targeting OCHA and coordination, and as such not a GHDI issue *per se*. However during the period 2007 – 2010 the GHDI co-chairs also became part of the Montreux group, and a link was established almost by default. Now there are increasing attempts to make a link between the two, and in GHD meetings an update is provided from the Montreux meetings.

Some insist that the GHDI has imbedded the humanitarian principles into the humanitarian communities – both at governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental levels. This has meant that the GHDI became the default framework when national humanitarian policies were reviewed or when the first comprehensive set of policies were formulated.

In that respect one is led to conclude that the GHD-principles have contributed a high degree of consistency at least in the discourse around humanitarian policies and action even if there are still abundant examples of political expediency prevailing even among the most “principled” humanitarian donors.

Widening of GHD Principles signatories

Over the 10 years of GHDI the membership has experienced a spectacular increase from the 17 founding members (becoming 22 in 2004) to the current 41. This has clearly been a result of very active and successful outreach, and heavy emphasis on learning and knowledge transmission from founding members to new donors²². Some consider this the best indication of the success of the GHDI when stating that “*perhaps the single most telling indicator of the value of GHD has been the increasing numbers of donors willing to adhere to the framework*”²³.

Sharing and learning

When interviewing a number of the more recent members, it becomes apparent that they perceive a number of benefits from GHDI of which the learning aspect is regarded to be of particular value. This is particularly the case when it comes to formulating national humanitarian policies - often their first effort to develop such policies. It is also clear that for some new members it is important to be seen working together with the major humanitarian actors since this can lend prestige from a foreign policy perspective and often serve as a lever for increased budget allocations, as the humanitarian sector is considered to be a positive international platform from a national branding and partnership point of view. In the view of one respondent, whose opinion echoed several others: “*The Humanitarian Department has used the GHD Principles, and the experiences generated in the partnership (meetings etc.) in training / educating diplomats, young MFA staff. The principles in the GHD reflect the long history and experience that exist among the traditional donors, and the cooperation is a way to transfer this to the “newer” and smaller donors*”.

The SHARE work stream is dedicated specifically to outreach and dialogue with governments that are not GHDI members. It functions as a platform for networking with non-traditional state actors and could eventually serve to test common interests and informal partnering arrangements which might not work in a more formal setting. Within the Geneva community, SHARE is perceived positively, and some new members are calling for an even deeper and more substantive dialogue around best practices and lessons learned from the large humanitarian actors. This is regarded as essential for feeding knowledge back into their capital-based institutions for their learning.

An informal and low-cost forum

²² It should be noted, that a good part of the recent members joined in connection with their EU membership

²³ 2009-10 GHDI co-chairs, non-paper.

Several GHDI members and observers believe that it was the non-binding nature of GHDI, including its emphasis on information-sharing and lack of penalties for members' non-compliance which turned GHDI into a successful platform during its first years.

As such the voluntary nature and no-cost structure are seen as major advantages of the GHDI, and for many new members these are important criteria for continued participation. *"It is important that it is informal, and without costs associated"*.

b) Weaknesses

Declining centrality

The principal weakness referred to by most respondents is the declining centrality of GHDI when reviewed over the 10-year period. This is principally heard from the major donors and most explicitly from capital-based respondents. Whereas it is fair to say that during the first years the 23 principles proved their almost paradigmatic relevance in shaping the discussion and operations around GHD, many observers have in the latter half of the decade since Stockholm perceived a shift from an activist approach with emphasis on adherence and implementation towards a focus on inclusion and outreach in order to widen the GHDI's membership. *"It seems that the Work Streams have taken over the importance of the work, i.e. more practical, and less political / strategic"*.

In some cases this has led members to no longer participate in Plenary- and High-Level meetings with staff at decision-making levels and increasingly even without capital representation at all since the issues tabled are deemed not sufficiently central and substantive to justify the time and cost.

Some of the larger / traditional donors point to some of the other fora for policy and funding dialogue within the humanitarian community, as a place to have donor consultations, noting that participating in the agencies' and organisations' board meetings, donor support groups, CERF, Pooled Funds, and COHAFA (for EU humanitarian donors), can replace some of the information exchange which were originally thought to be carried out in the framework of GHDI. The usefulness of these other fora as a donors' forum *per se* is, however, being questioned by many, as their purpose is geared towards the particular constituency of the meeting.

At the same time it is also important to underline that many new members are much more positive in their remarks. Often they do not have resources to participate in the many fora and give priority to the GHDI, which also means that participation in and information from the GHDI feeds into decision-making in their capitals just as capital-based decision-makers are more committed to participate.

This difference is also illustrated in terms of whether GHD and GHDI gain a higher profile when members are part of the co-chairmanship. One donor explained that during the chairmanship, information on GHDI *"went to the Minister and the Director General and they also participated in selected GHDI sessions"*, while a representative of a larger donor noted that *"...the Co-Chairmanship did not change the political interest of humanitarian aid"*.

Donors explain that less participation from capital-based staff also reflects broad-based budget cuts and reduction in staff resources while experiencing a simultaneous increase in number and complexity of humanitarian interventions requiring their attention. However, it is noted by the same donors that the downward shift in participation in GHDI meetings (in terms of frequency as well as of seniority), is an indication of the perceived decline in importance of these meetings.

An indication of this declining centrality of GHDI was seen when 12 major GHDI donors in December 2012 issued a policy-setting letter signed by Ministers or Director Generals in charge of Humanitarian issues on the IASC Transformative Agenda (TA) to the Emergency Relief Coordinator²⁴. This letter was neither discussed nor coordinated in a GHDI framework just as it did not include any references to GHDI or the GHD principles.

A few donors explicitly raised the question whether the GHDI had delivered what it could, and that the existing structure and set-up was no longer useful. The arguments were basically that the historic gains were consolidated and included in existing donor behaviour; that the added value of the forum had become minimal, and that participation in alternative fora now could cover what was left as the core functions of GHDI. There was therefore a risk, that the continuation of the GHDI might actually prevent the development of more timely and relevant initiatives.

All in all, there has been a loss of visible drivers and champions for GHDI at capital-level. The unavoidable staff rotation at most Foreign/International Cooperation Ministries in the member states has also meant that the original generation of proactive individuals responsible for the formulation and adoption of the 23 principles in many cases have assumed other positions in- or outside the respective humanitarian departments.

A balance of depth and breadth

The decision to focus on enlargement of the GHDI membership, expanding the number of donors that recognise the principles is generally perceived as being good, but it is the impression by many that it has taken place at the cost of key aspects of the discussions on the quality of humanitarian Donorship. *“...As such the important discussion of how to improve aid, is not really at the core of GHD discussions at this point (...) the challenge is how to bring back the focus on the application of principled Donorship: Issues, priorities, strategies. It must be recognised that Donors have different priorities and interests, but that calls for an honest dialogue on what is done (...). The way it’s done now makes it very difficult for the donors to hold each other accountable.”*

Others are not quite convinced about the extent to which it is the widening of the group of GHDI-members that has led to less substance work, raising the question whether the deterioration of substance discussions would not have happened in any case - due to lack of capital attention.

²⁴ Letter to All Heads to the Inter Agency Standing Committee from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, ECHO, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, and Australia. (07.12.12)

An example of some degree of causality between increased “breadth” and reduced “depth”, however, was given by one member state, when noting that the degree of their engagement with the GHDI had been directly associated with changes in the balance between GHDI focus on member state adherence and expanding the membership.

Disregarding causality, there is general agreement among the stakeholders, that the GHDI in the course of the past five years has shifted focus from “depth” with an active focus on registering and developing “best practices”, adherence, etc. to “breadth” where expansion of the GHDI group has come to the fore. *“The GHDI was particularly strong in the period from the establishment until 2007/2008, where there were very heavy agendas, a lot of influence, and very high political attention from capitals. Since then focus has shifted, and the added value lies more in the work that is done in the work streams”*.

Accountability and self-assessment

Donors refer to the GHDI principles regularly, but are at times faced with major problems when it comes to living up to them. The extent to which the GHDI has a role to play in this is disputed among member states: *“GHDI should not be a vigorous review of adherence, but rather focus on good practices (...) we should focus on the collective set of activities by GHDI, rather than look at national compliance”*. On the other hand, there is a will to strengthen the application of principled Donorship: *“If we try to enforce compliance, we may lose partners, but if we stay as it is, it runs the risk of becoming irrelevant, and it will be difficult to be recommending others to become members”*.

Several respondents noted that their focus is on their own practice, currently assessed through DAC Peer reviews which often were referred to as the only “best-practice mechanism” in place. At the same time, however, the question was raised whether the OECD / DAC framework for measuring humanitarian issues is adequate. Whereas 90% of today’s aid comes originates from OECD countries, the DAC Peer review model may still prove to be too constrained for the future aid system since not all key players are coming from the OECD membership.

Should the GHDI eventually have a role in addressing humanitarian donor performance will in the first instance require a better system of self assessment. The first phase of the ongoing review of the GHDI indicators found that according to the majority of donors the indicators did not *“...meet their objectives for measuring progress in good humanitarian Donorship and allowing lesson-learning”*²⁵, and that there is a continued need for access to standalone data on GHDI donors’ compliance with the GHD principles, while aiming for a design of indicators that would allow for some synergy with the DAC PEER review. The “monitoring work stream” and the self-assessment process are seen as positive elements towards this end.

The review of the GHDI indicators is ending its second phase at the same time as the present consultancy. The Co-Chairs have worked to have the humanitarian officer from OECD /DAC involved in the analysis in order to draw on OECD/DACs experiences in aid reviews. Historically, there have been some disagreements in the GHDI membership around OECD/DAC involvement, but at the latest Plenary in October 2012 it was accepted that the

²⁵ Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Indicators: Phase One Report. Development Initiatives (2011)

OECD / DAC humanitarian expert will be involved in the review of GHDI indicators. The result of this work will be presented at the February Plenary, and will set the direction of whether a GHDI specific Self-Assessment continues to be useful, or if other modalities such as the OECD/DAC Peer Reviews will become a preferred option.

The GHDI homepage is an accountability issue as well as a managerial challenge. The homepage does have the potential to be a useful information sharing tool, perhaps even a space for dialogue and exchange. However, all respondents note that this is not the case. The homepage, which for the most part is only accessible to GHDI members, is not regularly updated and cleaned out. In its present state, the homepage is not very useful for members, nor does it provide accountability or transparency to the public at large. This seems to be linked to a basic question of time and resources, and it is something that could relatively easily be dealt with, provided dedicated time and a bit of resources would be available.

GHDI in field operations

Four countries are referred to as having hosted GHDI field pilot groups: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Sudan, and the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). It seems that the link initially anticipated between GHDI in Geneva and GHDI platforms in the field has not fully materialized. It is unclear whether the GHDI as a field-based forum has actually provided significant value-addition. The one general exception might be the field-based pilot reports presented on occasion at Plenary meetings. Yet, these meetings have rarely gone beyond providing updates, leading at best to tentative discussions about best (donor) practices and lessons that might be applicable for other humanitarian hotspots.²⁶

On their side, the GHDI pilots in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) have been functioning reasonably well, and have provided the in-country based donors with a platform for information sharing and informal reflection around humanitarian issues and the broader political situation.²⁷

UN and NGO partners note that these sorts of pilots are good examples of effective donor collaboration, and that they would like to see more donors coming together at field level like that to work with the IASC at country level. However, it does not seem important whether this takes place within a formalised GHDI frame or if it takes place in a local or regional setting. This is also the line of thinking in the GHDI guiding note for colleagues at country levels, “*If it is the common assessment amongst the humanitarian donors that GHD at country level is not relevant in the given country context this is fully accepted*”²⁸.

²⁶ The pilot in Burundi has undergone a review in 2005, concluding that it might have had a positive impact on the Consolidated Appeals Process in the country, but that otherwise it had had limited bearing on donor behaviour (Sally Gregory: Lessons Learned from the Good Humanitarian Donorship Pilot in Burundi 2002-2005 (2005)). It’s not totally clear what have been the outcomes from the experiences in Sudan. The groups in DRC and oPt are still active.

²⁷ “*The GHD group in DRC was mainly about donor coordination, not necessarily about the principles. Focus was on practical issues like assessments of partners, approach to CAP process, joint field trips, sharing analysis, challenges arising (...)*It allowed for donors trying some degree of division of labour and thereby avoiding that partners would work on “divide and rule” of donors. In connection with pooled funds arrangements, it was a platform to dialogue with fund management on the Funds”.

²⁸ GHDI: Good Humanitarian Donorship – at country level. A Guiding note (undated)

Unclear role of GHDI in Rome and New York

Representatives from GHDI and partners note that the 3-cluster modality, with a GHDI group in Rome and New York in addition to Geneva, does not seem to be fully operational or well functioning. In Rome and New York, the GHDI only convenes at very irregular intervals. In Rome for instance there have been 1 – 2 meetings a year, depending on the co-chair, whereas in New York the only regular gathering is around the biennial ECOSOC meeting where the GHDI members convene for the annual High-level meeting. There have been very few additional meetings, there are no work-streams, and often meetings have been around a presentation of a member state's humanitarian policy / strategy, which could be understood to be important, but hardly a priority in a busy meeting schedule. Hence, such meetings are often attended only by junior staff or interns. Another indication of the lack of priority has been that it has been difficult to find members willing to chair the meetings in Rome.

Some interviews with agency partners revealed that they had only marginal if any knowledge of the existence of a GHDI network either in Rome or in New York. As expressed by a respondent, “*GHDI is a known entity – but largely from anecdotal information*”. Donor representatives noted that GHDI of course could provide a platform for joint meetings with the heads of multilateral organisations and UN agencies, but that the GHDI is not used as a systematic platform for such dialogue between donors and UN partners. “*In the event that there have to be GHDI meetings here at all – it has to be ensured that there is HQ commitment and that issues are very relevant. Briefings from Geneva are not enough*”.

A Geneva-centric GHDI

Interviews have led to a strong perception of GHDI having turned increasingly Geneva-centric and driven by Geneva-based UN-missions. This is to some extent a logical consequence given the fact that the much of the humanitarian community and dialogue is heavily concentrated on Geneva²⁹. As such GHDI discussions of humanitarian matters which requires inputs from experts either from the field or from capitals are all too often covered by a mixture of Geneva-based humanitarian experts and diplomatic generalists.

Several donors noted that the staff in Geneva always participated in the GHDI work “under instruction” from the capital, and that there is a reporting back after meetings, but it was also the impression that these instructions typically are “*reactive*”, i.e. responding to initiatives made in Geneva, and very rarely “*pro-active*” that reflected more strategic or political engagement. Furthermore, it seems that when staff subsequently report discussions back to capitals, they are very often not picked up. This reflects the difficulty of maintaining links to decision-makers in capitals and to field operations arising from GHDI-generated discussions. In the words of one respondent that seems to have represented the views of many colleagues, “*There is a perception that GHDI has transformed itself from an informal donor platform for policy dialogue, to a forum for reporting on Geneva-based work streams and progress in attracting new members*”.

²⁹ UN-agencies, large-scale NGO-partners and think-tanks

Annual plans and work-streams

Some respondents have commented that the rotating-chair principle opens up the risk that the themes of annual work plans reflect the priorities of the individual chair/co-chairs rather than ensuring opportunity for continuous multi-year work plans and discussions.

This leads to a lack of continuity and coherence, and is an obstacle for issues to be pursued over a longer period of time. The stocktaking note from 2010 illustrates this very well, showing that GHDI has been focussing on a number of important agenda items over the years, but it also reveals that it is difficult to identify a “red thread” throughout the agenda setting³⁰. This may reflect on the much welcomed flexibility in the structure, but it might also have contributed to a lessened strategic and long term perspective, hence also the declining overall political engagement in the GHDI work. In addition it has also been indicated by some, that GHDI is not sufficiently flexible in taking up issues “as they appear” since they cannot be inserted easily into the previously agreed-upon annual work plan.

The intensity and relevance of GHDI activities throughout the year also seems to rely heavily on the capacity and priorities of the chair/co-chairs. This, coupled with informal and thus unclear procedures for handover and work plan consultation and preparation, increases the risk for “stop-go” agendas which makes it even more difficult to attract the attention of capital-based decision-makers let alone make them interested in participating actively in Plenary- and High Level meetings. *“Work plans have at times been too un-ambitious - the setting up of a Work Stream can not in itself be an objective. The goals of the cooperation should be more strategic, for instance stronger ambitions on donor transparency – even just by having a better and open homepage”.*

Work streams are seen as a positive addition by the Geneva-based GHDI members since it allows them to discuss themes of topical relevance which are being discussed simultaneously in the broader humanitarian community. At the same time the issue of the proliferation of work-streams have been raised by a number of members, underlining the existence of high quality work streams, but that their utility depends heavily on the chairs. There seems to be a tendency that last year’s theme becomes next year’s work-stream for the understandable reason that the discussions around that particular theme had not been concluded and thus needed more time and dedication. This points to the need for a more coherent and systematic approach to establishing agendas and work plans, and such an approach would in turn require a regular commitment, participation and input from capitals. *Some donors note that the work stream on humanitarian financing could be good example to follow, as “it is anchored in the capital (Stockholm)”.*

While there are different approaches to strengthening the agenda-setting capacities of GHDI, it seems inevitable that a dedicated “driver”, hosting institutional memory and providing proactive capacity is warranted and perhaps even essential.

Management and practice

During the early years of GHDI there was a structure in place to support the co-chair(s) in managing and undertaking relevant studies, assist in developing agendas, and serving as a repository for best practices and for feeding them into discussions in the various humanitarian

³⁰ Taking Stock of GHD – 2003 to date. A non-paper prepared by the 2009 – 2010 Co-chairs

fora. These tasks now have to be dealt with by the co-chairs just like the management of the website.

A dedicated secretariat function or “a dedicated driver” could assist in these matters³¹, just as it could facilitate the introduction of technological advances³² which would enable dialogue among remote parties, for instance capital or field based staff with the Geneva hub. This, too, could support work streams.

A large number of respondents have raised the absence of such a support function as a particular challenge and even identified the addition of a “dedicated driver” as a precondition for a well-functioning GHDI. This issue has been widely discussed during the course of interviews, but it is fair to say that there is not complete consensus around this. There is, however, a general acknowledgement that the role as chair requires time and efforts that is sometimes hard to find in the busy meeting schedule, and that some kind of a secretariat “*could help without a doubt*”.

5. Continued GHDI relevance in a changing context

Following the discussion on – largely – internal issues of GHDI capacities and challenges, this chapter focuses on discussion of the opportunities and threats circumscribing the relevance and potential future roles of the GHDI.

That geo-political changes and increasing challenges for the humanitarian sector inevitably affect the relevance and utility of the Good Humanitarian Donorship, was raised, acknowledged, and commented on by most interlocutors. A wide number of issues were raised as being both relevant and important for the GHDI to address, some being more internal and focussing on the functioning of the GHDI, and others are at a meta-strategic or broader systemic level. It has, however, become clear that these issues are not one-dimensional (either/or) but rather multifaceted, and that it will not be conducive to present them as either opportunities or threats. The most prominent of these are presented as four themes: a) the need for a refresh, b) actors and principles, c) partnerships and operational priorities, and d) donor behaviour.

a) The need for a refresh

“A continued need for collective action...”

Some of the trends and challenges characterising the humanitarian world over the past ten years have to do with the global context in which humanitarian action takes place. Others have to do with an evident increase in challenges and weaknesses facing the humanitarian sector itself and, finally others concern the changing assumptions that underpin humanitarianism in the emerging 21st century.

³¹ The GHDI ToR identifies a number of such practical assignments presently to be done by the Chairs including: Facilitation of the implementation of the GHDI work plan; providing an overview of the work streams; liaison with ad-hoc sub-groups of donors; prepare the annual GHD group report; organising, hosting, facilitating and recording outcomes of GHD group meetings; managing communication including the circulation of information and managing the website.

³² Virtual meeting rooms, skype conferences etc.

Lessons such as those from the responses to the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, and the crises in the Horn of Africa demonstrated that the original appreciation of the need for coherent, collective and inclusive action among donors “*is as important now as it has ever been*”. The GHDI, with its more than doubled membership, has to find ways to address if not adapt to these changes.³³

...but with a risk that “status quo equals declining relevance”...

As noted above, the role of GHDI in influencing humanitarian policies in the member states has declined or as stated, leaves “*...the impression that GHDI does not hold a lot of traction nor political clout anymore*”. It seems that, in line with the declining participation from capital-based staff in Plenary- and High-Level Meetings, linkages on GHDI issues between Geneva and capital-based staff have become less intense. Furthermore, the expected linkages with field operations have not become an integral part of the policy discussions in Geneva.

Feedback during interviews showed that even if the GHDI provides a forum for donor discussions on strategic matters, it is not fully utilised. Issues such as humanitarian – military interaction, the political development of humanitarian aid, how to negotiate in situations like the present one in Syria, or the importance of donors to support pooled funds are not systematically addressed. Unless more important issues are tabled and that appropriate follow up happens, the outcomes of GHDI discussions and activities run the risk of neither being acknowledged nor - more importantly - being reflected in domestic policy-discussions. As one donor noted, it is a “chicken-or-egg” issue: If the issues are too light, there will be no political interest, and if there is no political interest, then there will not be any heavy issues brought to the table. “*The simple point is, if the GHDI is something that donors want, they have to agree for it to deal with more political issues*”.

...leading to the “need for a refresh”

According to members and partners, the GHDI has significant potential for strengthening the role and impact of donors’ presence in the humanitarian landscape, but it is also apparent that there is “*a risk that it disappears by itself because of lack of defined relevance*”.

The sentiments that were relayed during the bulk of the interviews was that, in order for the GHDI to significantly enhance collective humanitarian action, it will have to be reinvigorated or re-launched, particularly at the decision-making and political level in the donor countries. Such a “refresh” would include the modalities of the cooperation, the types of issues to be put on the agenda, and greater attention to partnerships and outreach, self assessment and mutual support to become better humanitarian donors.³⁴

³³ Ref. e.g. The State of the Humanitarian System. ALNAP 2012

³⁴ This was also the overall outcome of the ODI / NRC organised Roundtable in London, noting that more needs to be done to ensure that GHDI remains a relevant and effective tool in improving assistance to affected populations, and that there is a need for a technically and operationally “refreshed” GHDI.

b) Actors and principles

A new cast of bilateral actors...

The emergence of the BRICs over the past decade is but one indication that the economic and political locus and dynamics of geo-politics are changing. Beyond the BRICs, *per se*, it is evident that more and more countries – from Latin America to South East Asia – are pursuing different forms of political objectives, alignments and processes that are not always consistent with traditional multilateral or intergovernmental systems or methods.

Non-traditional donors like China, Brazil, Turkey, Russia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia all play an increasingly important role in global humanitarian action. Acknowledgement and concerns linked to this changing humanitarian landscape were prominent in many interviews. Several donors noted that the Humanitarian Coordinator has expressed an increasing interest in this issue, and many commented on the very visible developments in donor presence in a number of crises such as Somalia, Haiti, and Syria.

...regional organisations...

A growing number of states around the world are increasingly reluctant to accept the involvement of powers perceived to be “*part of Western hegemonic interests*”. Regional organisations such as ASEAN, ECOWAS and the Arab League will increasingly be seen as both conduits and filters for international assistance, and in that sense, the role of ASEAN as an aid conduit to Myanmar in the aftermath of the 2008 Cyclone Nargis is instructive. Rather than to be seen as rejecting the assistance offered by the international community, Myanmar “used” ASEAN to assist in filtering out unwanted aid and guide proffered aid that was regarded as acceptable³⁵.

Regionalism, as described recently by representatives of ECOWAS, also offer member-states a context and “face” that is seen to be politically and frequently more culturally sensitive to crisis situations than those who come from the outside. ECOWAS member-states have encouraged the ECOWAS Commission to play a humanitarian role in the region that emphasizes the region’s commitment to self-reliance. It is underlined that this is not to suggest that ECOWAS or other regional organizations do not want to be part of a wider international humanitarian architecture, but rather that they wish to do so on a basis of mutual respect and interdependence³⁶.

...and other international humanitarian actors...

In addition to states and regional organisations, a number of other non-traditional aid partners have entered the scene over the past decade. The latter encompass the military, an extensive range of non-governmental and private sector organisations, the Diaspora, and a wealth of other so-called “non-state actors”. In a related vein, it is worth noting that governments of some of the crisis-affected countries are increasingly turning to the private sector for assistance, “*They understand what we want, and are here for the long-haul*”.

³⁵ Yves-Kim Creac’h and Lillianne Fan, “ASEAN’s role in the Cyclone Nargis response: Implications, lessons and opportunities,” *Humanitarian Exchange Network*, Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 41, December 2008

³⁶ See, Humanitarian Futures Programme, King’s College, London, *Adapting to the Changing Global Humanitarian Architecture*, Stakeholders Forum Report – 2012 <http://www.humanitarianfutures.org>

...are putting systems and principles under pressure,...

Respondents noted that the growing prominence of these “emerging”, “new”, or “non-traditional” donors involves both potential risks in terms of operational and normative conflicts as well as potential opportunities when it comes to increased access and resources.

It was often emphasised that most of the new donors are not working through - or with - the existing global donor co-ordination fora, and that they prefer government-to-government contributions to affected countries rather than working through international partners. Respondents echoed the ongoing debates in the humanitarian community of how this will affect humanitarian activities, including those of planning and coordination, and the extent to which it might further complicate mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and pooled funds.

The new group of donors are not perceived to be ready to accept the full set of GHD principles. It was explained that some new donors regard the ‘principles’ as similar to the Paris declaration for aid effectiveness, which they oppose as a Western-driven agenda. This was regarded as a potential source of misunderstanding between traditional humanitarian actors and non-Western donors³⁷.

Such perceptions could raise the issue about the extent to which GHD principles continue to be appropriate and relevant for the humanitarian challenges that lie ahead. However, this is presently not an issue for debate for GHDI members. Rather the school of thought has been along the lines of maintaining the principles, while aiming to join forces, and thereby delivering better humanitarian aid. *“There is a clear self-interest among the GHDI members in reaching out to other partners (non-members) to better understand countries such as Saudi Arabia, China, India...”*

...and underlining the importance of outreach and pragmatism

Overall, the feedback is that the GHDI has an important role to play in the dialogue with countries that have not yet accepted the principles. It is also understood that such a dialogue cannot be based on a one-sided agenda, but that there has to be space to disagree with the notion of “taking good note” of issues where there is no agreement. When it comes to the issue of principles, the importance of ensuring space for continued dialogue and willingness to harmonise views was seen as essential. Initially addressing practical rather than normative issues can help building trust over time. Such issues could include information and knowledge-sharing, advocacy and joint statements regarding demands, for example for humanitarian access. Perhaps over time capacity building and joint partnerships would join the list of collaborative initiatives. Even if in the short term such issues as aligning with the priorities of consolidated appeals and joint assessments cannot be reached, at least it might be possible to find ways and means to share information on humanitarian activities with the broader international system.

³⁷ See also Binder and Meier: Opportunity knocks: why non-Western donors enter humanitarianism and how to make the best of it (2011)

c) Partnerships and operational priorities

Platform for donor dialogue with key partners...

UN representatives and NGOs stressed that it would be useful if the GHDI also served as a forum for partners to contribute to debates on important issues such as funding/pooled funding. NGO partners noted that over the years there have been very few official NGO briefings at GHDI meetings. As stipulated in the Terms of Reference for the GHDI, there is only one representative of IASC participating in GHD meetings, which is typically occupied by OCHA as the chair of the IASC. Anecdotally – and in connection with the issues of openness - it is noted that the GHDI Terms of Reference are not available on the public part of the GHDI homepage³⁸.

It could have been expected that the GHDI, representing the bulk of global humanitarian donors, would have become the default platform for donor dialogue with key partners such as the IASC. As this is not the case, donor dialogue with IASC takes place bilaterally or in smaller groups. Some of the bigger donors noted that this may be inevitable since the group is considered too big to have meaningful, strategic meetings with bodies such as the IASC on matters such as details pertaining to the Transformative Agenda. As noted by one respondent, *“In some meetings there is not really time for niceties and max space for 5-6 participants on either side of the table”*.

Given the informal nature of the GHDI such smaller groups cannot represent all the other donors in meetings, so it has been difficult to develop a relationship between GHDI – IASC beyond information sharing³⁹. However, it is acknowledged that such smaller donor group should have a generic link to GHDI. *“There could be a preparatory process or at least praxis for debriefing to GHD after such meetings, but that does not happen! (...) indeed it’s a question of time and resources... and priority...”*.

Even if the format for discussing the Transformative Agenda with the IASC may not have the same importance to all GHD members, stakeholders note that the issues on the Transformative Agenda are some of the most important for humanitarian donors in the years to come.

If indeed the GHDI as a donors’ forum is to provide added value in the continued reform of the global humanitarian system, it will be important that the full membership has access to be heard, just as it will be important for the donors to draw on all its members’ resources in becoming a strong partner in the system. In a sense, the debate on the Transformative Agenda goes “both ways”: it is a question of donors pushing the UN and other humanitarian partners in improving along the agendas objectives. However, as discussed below, that will require donors to be sufficiently committed to also be reliable partners.

³⁸ The limited visibility of these Terms of Reference was also registered during the interviews. They were very rarely referred to at all during the discussions of the purpose or functions of the GHDI.

³⁹ GHDI members together with other donors are briefed on IASC by the Humanitarian Coordinator (in her capacity as chair of the IASC).

As such it will be important for the GHDI members to find a format to deal with the Transformative Agenda. Donors should be prepared to engage in the dialogue on strengthened humanitarian leadership at country level, improved cluster coordination and enhanced accountability. At the same time, it will be just as important for the GHDI donors to help each other in being able to assess the relevance and suitability of their international and non-governmental partners. Given the priority of these issues, it could become a feature in a revised set of work streams and in future self-assessment exercises.

d) Donor behaviour

“Good Humanitarian Donorship is about consistent national policies...”

A feedback from stakeholders outside the GHDI is that that the GHDI historically has played an important role in pushing partners to provide better aid and on how to approach principles. On the other hand there has been less focus on self-reflection, which may actually constitute a lost opportunity in strengthening the humanitarian system⁴⁰.

Many respondents referred to the challenges of politicisation of aid. In addition to expanding the coverage of humanitarian assistance to also include disaster risk reduction as well as post disaster reconstruction, humanitarian assistance is increasingly poised within a broader policy framework of interventions, where donors under the overall concept of Whole of Government policies, interlink humanitarian objectives with defence, international security, migration and stabilisation of failed or failing states. This trend seems to be inevitable, and allows for comprehensive responses to crisis and for some degree of identifying or sharing new types of capacities. *“Humanitarian frameworks are more effective when they are based on the donor country’s comparative advantage and take into account other policy directives...”*⁴¹

But then again, some respondents noted that this affects the role of needs assessments in setting humanitarian priorities, arguing the importance of resisting politicisation of the humanitarian aid, referring to Afghanistan and Somalia as situations where politicisation of aid has had direct and negative impact on the support⁴².

Obviously, national humanitarian policies are a finely balanced compromise between foreign policy priorities – set by sovereign national governments or unions of governments – and humanitarian principles as stated in the “Good Humanitarian Donorship”. Stakeholders have no illusions of the extent to which stronger coherence among the humanitarian representatives at the GHDI can itself prevent such politicisation of humanitarian priorities. But several comments have focused on the importance for humanitarians to be able to refer politicians and other decision-makers back to a comprehensive set of principles which not only their own country but its peers and partners have collectively subscribed to.

⁴⁰ This argument has been a key feature in the dialogue with non-donor stakeholders, which, when introduced, it has been acknowledged by some GHDI members.

⁴¹ OECD/DAC Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship. 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews. 2012

⁴² See e.g. the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review from 2011 is a review of the UKs Humanitarian response overseas.

...evolving funding modalities...

Respondents regularly referred to the challenges of linking the resources of development and humanitarian assistance together so that their combined effects would promote ways to reduce crisis vulnerabilities and promote sustainable crisis prevention or, “resilience”. This is a divide that has marked the humanitarian sector for almost half a century, but perhaps the increased focus on vulnerability and resilience can be the way forward to address this.

This, however, requires a much closer collaboration not only with other external actors from the development community but also with local planners and decision-makers to address the overall economic, political and social dimensions of the country’s development options. This forces humanitarian actors to be much closer to considering and dealing with issues of core host governmental interest.

At the level of Geneva a new work stream on “*Preparedness, Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience and Response (PDR4)*” has been launched. The work stream is an indication of the issues that are at the agenda of the GHDI, and it will among other issues be dealing with “*the roles and perceptions of the various stakeholders in the field of preparedness, DRR, resilience and response*”⁴³.

...and about good agreements”

The focus in recent years on tangible impact and results from humanitarian action has had a noticeable effect on the management of the humanitarian community, and the regulation of the donor – partner relationships, agreements, and their interpretation.

- Reporting

In spite of continuing discussions and progress on standardized reporting and measures to ease the burden of financial controls, most donors still have their own specific monitoring and reporting tools. It is made clear that these measures/standards have to be there, in order for donors to show impact and results of their country-specific funding or at least to reduce the risk of misappropriations. At the same time it has been restated regularly that such donor-specific types of reporting does constitute major drains on human resources⁴⁴.

- Timeframes

Agreements also have to do with the timeframe allotted for achieving specific objectives. As opposed to the multiyear partnership agreements on development, humanitarian funding is by most donors administered as being “relatively easy to access” but therefore also typically short in duration. The argument makes some sense in terms of sudden onset disasters, but for the protracted and recurring humanitarian disasters, however, annual – or in some cases 6-monthly – funding cycles are counterproductive. In addition to the absence of predictability in planning responses for ongoing medium to long term programmes, short term funding also renders any professional (hence qualified) human resource policy virtually impossible.

⁴³ Co-Chairs’ Summary First Workshop of the PDR 4 Work stream on 20 September, 2012

⁴⁴ One agency noted that they had four full time staff employed to cover for one donors reporting requirements alone.

- *Earmarking*

Earmarking of humanitarian support seems to be on the rise among donors. The support through the multilateral system is increasingly being earmarked, and it is reportedly getting more and more difficult to access core funding to support management, including the management of humanitarian projects.

- *Coherent needs assessments*

Only very few humanitarian donors are present in the countries that are affected by humanitarian crises. As such most GHDI members depend on the capacity of the multilateral system, and they largely follow in-country UN leadership. Multilateral needs assessments though are still considered to be insufficient. Disagreements on needs and priorities, regularly lead the large donors to undertake their own needs assessments, analyses and prioritisation process. They often will arrive at lessons/conclusions that are not in harmony with those of the humanitarian country teams. Hence international priorities are not aligned.

On the one hand the work stream on humanitarian financing is perceived very positively by GHDI members, as they note that it provides a platform to focus on financing of particular emergencies, raising awareness of forgotten and underfunded crises, and that OCHA is also presenting innovative concepts for financing, e.g. multiyear CAPs at those work stream meetings. On the other hand, respondents take note of a “...*fragmentation of the humanitarian financing discussions*”. Perhaps the work stream could offer a space for GHDI to take a look at the fora and mechanisms that exist for humanitarian financing discussions and donor coordination (e.g. Montreux), including to discuss the challenges of making the Common Humanitarian Action Plans the primary instrument for strategic planning⁴⁵.

- *Risk*

Interpretation of agreements influences among other things risk management, the format and scope of acceptance of risks, and approaches on how to apply policies on risk when they occur in a consistent way. A recent example of forced repayments by a UN agency to donors in connection with a fraud case in Pakistan is illustrative on the intra-donor implications of different – and at times changing – standards. As agencies are forced to repay funding lost in fraud, the only revenue source for a voluntarily funded agency has to come from less tied funding – from other donors. As such, refunds of this nature will multiply the damage, since the initial loss now also generates alternative costs as it becomes a loss for other activities as well as for the donors footing the bill.

It is well understood that governments have reporting obligations towards their domestic constituencies (populations, parliaments, auditor general etc.). It is also understood that sometimes certain cases are becoming increasingly difficult to handle, particularly as they become high-level media events, and subject to even stronger constituency pressures. And yet, there is the equally compelling fact that governments have signed up to GHD principles, which commit them at least in theory to provide support to populations and authorities suffering

⁴⁵ As noted by OECD/DAC: “*Focussing on real needs is further complicated by the limited number of timely and objective joint needs assessments – and donors should continue to advocate for co-ordinated needs assessments that reduce inefficiencies and support more objective and rigorous decision-making*”. From *Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship – 12 lessons from PEER Reviews* (2012)

from crises -- despite the inherent, if not inevitable, risks in the endeavour. In that sense, “*Ministers and Governments have to be loyal to their own limitations on financing of administrative costs, and they have to stick to the context analysis in terms of expectations of time and risk involved...*”.

The point made is simple: a strong joint revitalised commitment in a collective entity such as GHDI can assist individual humanitarian donors in withstanding domestic external pressures and in addressing some of these challenges.

6. Options and a potential process

A question of “purpose”...

As mentioned above, the analysis has been structured along lines of “capacities and challenges” focussing on the GHDI as an entity. This has been followed by a discussion of broader issues in the “global humanitarian theatre”, which in chapter 5 has formed the basis of a discussion of the potential relevance of the GHDI.

These discussions have revealed a number of challenges for GHDI that emphasise the context, issues and ultimately the need for open and transparent discussion within the boundaries of this forum. But before outlining options for the issues to be addressed in the GHDI, its members have to come to terms with one overarching question which will influence the entire set of options and analysis of how to make GHDI “fit for purpose”, namely an agreement on the future *purpose* of GHDI! Without such clarity it becomes extremely difficult if not outright impossible to discuss how to prioritize which challenges GHDI might address.

....and of priority and commitment

Discussions with GHDI members and partners almost inevitably end in the following conundrum that a) the GHDI has many weaknesses but it is too important to allow it to wither away, but b) it is extremely difficult to identify members willing to make it their priority to make it work. In other words, GHDI champions are difficult to come about when it comes to commitment beyond verbal appreciation.

Prior to detailed discussions of whether the GHDI is “*fit for purpose*”, as stated above members have to agree on a genuine *purpose*, adjust their expectations to its potential, just as they have to commit to pursuing this. This report considers it a *sine qua non* that this be given a priority at policy level, and that dedicated time and resources be made available. “*If you really want it – then invest in it!*”

A need for a “refresh”...

The need to identify the purpose of the GHDI leads to a fundamental challenge expressed by a few donor-respondents, namely, if the role and responsibilities of the GHDI – its very purpose - is not clear then perhaps the GHDI should be closed down. If it cannot serve as the donors’ “default forum” for principled humanitarian action, the time might be right for new and more appropriate initiatives in the present and foreseeable future contexts.

However, the general sense stemming from interviews do not support such a line of argument. Respondents stress the importance of coherent, inclusive and collective donor action, and argue that inventing a new donors' forum would not be the way forward, but rather insisted on the need for a "refresh" of the GHDI. This will require that the "chicken or egg" challenge mentioned earlier is addressed. Decisions, therefore, should focus on ways to go beyond information sharing and basic outreach on the GHD principles, and that sufficiently "heavy" policy issues are on the agenda, allowing for the dynamics of increased political engagement, enabling the GHDI to cover the needs of a genuine humanitarian donors forum.

This should also be reflected in the structure of regular meetings. The system with 2-3 plenary meetings per year and an annual High-level meeting for decision-makers and capital-based staff, seems appropriate. The question is not about regularity, but rather about substance and issues covered. A refresh will very likely require senior policy engagement, being it at the level of ministers, state secretaries, or director generals. It is suggested to "aim high", and assess the potentials for involving such political level at least every second year at the high-level meeting. It would allow for GHDI to become the humanitarian donors' forum that is aspired, and it would allow for a unique space for ministers / policy makers to meet and to discuss the humanitarian agenda. *"It would make sense - and would be a very efficient way of engaging capitals"*.

Decisions therefore have to focus on how far beyond information sharing and basic outreach on the GHD principles the GHDI want to go. The extent to which this is possible, will depend on the ambitions of the members or as stated by a GHDI member: *"GHDI should maintain an "aspirational" agenda, but be realistic about what it can achieve"*.

...and the beginning of a process

Drawing on the above this report suggests that there is a need for the GHDI - most probably the GHDI co-chairs - to initiate a process over the coming months, where the membership engages in a discussion that will lead to "a refresh" of the GHDI – assuming that the more radical option of closing down the Initiative does not gain ground.

Such a discussion of *purpose* could start with a discussion on the question of what constitutes good practice, i.e. GHDI could compare notes on the understanding(s) of the principles, for instance by using examples of situations in which they consider their funding practices as Good Humanitarian Donorship.

This remainder of this chapter seeks to introduce an outline of options that can assist the GHDI members in carrying out such a process. The chapter also introduces possible issues that could have priority in future GHDI work plans as well as possible changes in future design and management of the GHDI.

Options for future GHDI work plans

It would be foolhardy to assume that the sorts of challenges and opportunities noted in the previous chapters are inevitable. Nevertheless, the three themes outlined in chapter 5 for future GHDI focus - a) addressing actors and principles, b) operational links with partners, and c) donor behaviour - do reflect the feedback received from the relative large group of GHDI

stakeholders that has been interviewed, just as the line of themes echo a body of established scholarship⁴⁶. An additional though perhaps slightly tangential theme is tentatively added as it has been referred to in several interviews, namely d) “the upcoming Humanitarian Summit”.

It is the considered opinion of this consultancy that the GHDI members should further assess whether these issues can and should be addressed in the context of a “refreshed” Initiative, and whether some of the suggested changes in the design and management of the GHDI can accommodate this. It would, however, entail developing a more strategic work plan most likely multi-annual with linkages to an ongoing self-assessment. This is also a finding in the phase one of the review of the indicators, underlining the importance of an indicator system that can “withstand a period for at least three years”⁴⁷.

- New actors and the role of principles

The origins of the GHDI were very much multilateral – it was a question of improving collective action with a view to joining forces and thereby delivering better humanitarian aid. This is still an overarching objective and out of this comes the argument for increasingly trying to also understand and to develop partnerships with the new actors on the humanitarian aid scene, with a view to address challenges linked to questions of acceptance of disciplined action or the principles.

If a common principled approach based on agreement with all the 23 principles, is not possible, perhaps a pragmatic “approchement” on practical matters could be possible. The approach of active outreach to new bilateral humanitarian donors, regional organisations and other actors in the humanitarian field, has repeatedly been described as being very important. At the same time it has been shown that outreach and inclusivity - understood as working towards an increased membership - comes at a cost of substance. Perhaps there is room to expand the strategy for outreach with one of dialogue. This will allow the GHDI to have parallel approaches: On the one hand to continue promoting the principles and on the other to develop approaches to operational coherence and effectiveness that do not overtly depend on those principles. As described by one respondent when discussing humanitarian issues with new partners: “...we use the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct but not in a ‘preaching’ manner. The line is: ‘this is our interpretation of what the Code means; we are interested in hearing your understanding’”.

- Partnerships and operational priorities

While respondents understood the realities and limitations of donor cooperation, some nevertheless noted that through better information sharing and strategic dialogue, the GHDI could become a forum for assisting in developing some kind of “division of labour among donors and between donors and others”. In a situation where donors face declining budgets, and – as one donor noted – in a situation where partners (UN, NGOs) are increasingly setting the agenda, the importance of closer partnerships becomes ever more evident. It was noted that in DRC the local version of the GHDI had allowed for the donors to implement some degree

⁴⁶ The literature list in annex 3 includes number of such references, including the 12 lessons from DAC Peer Reviews: “Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship” (2012)

⁴⁷ Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Indicators: Phase one report (second draft) (2011)

of division of labour through close dialogue and information sharing, which helped donors avoid partners' tendency to try to "divide and rule" the donors.

The feedback has underlined that there is room for elevating the relevance and substance of the strategic and operational debates in the GHDI. Respondents noted that this process would entail a stronger link to operational issues, clearer prioritisation of issues, and then to have straight forward work plans. Without pre-empting the outcome of the process that eventually will disclose which key issues will be prioritized, the feedback during the study has been strongly pointing towards the usefulness of making the framework for the work plan for coming years consistent with the key humanitarian debates, such as the implementation of the Transformative Agenda. As is mentioned below, this does not preclude other issues, but when it comes to partnerships with the main humanitarian partners, the continued implementation of humanitarian reform is deemed to be crucial.

If such support to the consolidation of the United Nations system's role in the coordination of international humanitarian action is to be implemented, it will require an open and honest engagement from all partners in GHDI: large, small, new, and old members. In terms of the operational agencies (UN, RC, NGOs) in meetings with donors, there will have to be a similar level of discipline, i.e. a focus on humanitarian strategy, even if funding is under pressure and fundraising is high on the agenda.

- Donor behaviour

The importance of humanitarian action is growing for governments and states – hence the dialogue on humanitarian action has become increasingly important in and central to domestic politics in donor as well as recipient countries. OECD/DAC has an important point in noting the beneficial aspects of this. If indeed humanitarian assistance is to be delivered in ways that are supportive of recovery, there are needs to create linkages between humanitarian programs and other types on international interventions, just as it will be important to acknowledge the simple fact that Whole of Government policies are indeed a political fact that has to be taken into account. On the other hand it is registered by the bulk of respondents that prioritising humanitarian aid for military, migration, or trade concerns, goes counter to the GHD principles and can have very negative impact on those in need.

Disregarding the "real-politics" aspects of this, many respondents noted that these are challenges that a forum for Good Humanitarian Donorship should try to address by becoming a humanitarian donors' platform to support each other providing input to domestic cross policy debates.

"Bridging the gap", "the grey zone", LRRD, "disaster preparedness" and "resilience" are some of the numerous concepts used to overcome some of the more evident flaws in international humanitarian cooperation. The various concepts have different connotations and emphases, but are all essentially faced with the same challenges of (overly) rigid financial systems, organisational self-interests and imperfect understanding.

It was noted by some that the discussions on linkages between relief and development would have to continue to address issues pertaining to departmental perspectives and interests and

related budget lines, while at the same time identifying innovative approaches for promoting resilience. Other GHDI members were dubious about the added value of engaging in “resilience debates,” e.g. a work stream on resilience, as it was a subject already discussed in a large number of fora.

Under the heading of “agreements,” the report has highlighted a number of issues that continues to challenge donors’ capacities in ensuring the required predictability and flexibility in their funding, as well as the ever-resurfacing debate on more standardised donor reporting.

During the interviews and various discussions with donor representatives, the consultancy was repeatedly reminded that decisions on aid is sovereign to any given donor, that it is a national right to demand specific reporting, and that there are no framework agreements that can change that, “*neither GHDI nor even DAC*”. While this does not bode well for agreement on future standardised or aligned reporting requirements, it continues to be a relevant issue to be addressed, and in that regard it seems logical that a well-equipped GHDI would be an appropriate setting for discussing the balance between efficient and effective resource utilization and the consequences of donor sovereignty.

- *“Humanitarian Summit”*

Lastly, it was mentioned in several discussions, that it seems that the UN Secretary General is considering a call for a “Humanitarian Summit” – a re-launch of humanitarianism and a declaration of humanitarian aid effectiveness - as part of the plan for his second term and foreseen for 2015 or even 2014. This “Summit” would be staged prior to the envisaged intensification of the multilateral aid scene after 2015, when focus will be on the efforts to reinvigorate multilateral assistance in revised MDGs and the Hyogo Framework for Action – both most likely to also include themes of risk prevention and resilience. While respondents still do not have clear indication of what this would entail, they considered it important to support the UNSG in his intent to increase the visibility and priority given to humanitarian assistance..

Whereas this is somewhat premature to discuss in any detail, GHDI could obviously serve as a key vehicle for a coordinated donor preparation for such a “Humanitarian Summit”. Such a process would require an increased focus on some of the issues outlined above, including the engagement of new, emerging and non-GHDI donors as well.

Design and management

Having dealt with possible issues for GHDI work plans to ensure it is “fit for purpose”, it then becomes important also to adjust the design and management of the “Initiative” based on our analysis. Below are a series of issues which are interlinked and mutually supportive in that respect:

- *GHDI design*

Best practice. A reinvigorated GHDI would emphasize a systematic approach for knowledge management, which would allow also for systematically identifying and publicising best practices. This would address a demand from individual GHDI members to feed such best practices into policy development in their respective capitals. Another derived benefit would be

to feed decision makers and politicians in capitals with accounts of results and impact from donor funding in the humanitarian field and thus support arguments around increased or at least predictable humanitarian funding.

Learning, accountability, and compliance. The initial emphasis on self-assessment and accountability around principled humanitarian action has still not led to an agreed indicator framework. Acceleration of such a framework is an important first step towards a transparent compliance reporting which is crucial for a constructive dialogue with non-members showing that GHD-members “are walking the walk” of adherence to the 23 principles. A decision whether such assessment should be embedded in GHDI or be further integrated into the OECD/DAC Peer Review mechanism would depend on the overall decisions on the ultimate *purpose* of the GHDI as well as the findings of the indicator review.

The role of work streams. The perceived proliferation of work streams is a problem for some members. The structure (meetings and work streams) is already complex, and - if anything - it needs to be lighter with fewer meetings and with pre-circulated agendas and plans. In addition to the number and management of meetings, there is an issue of bringing knowledge and relevant voices to work stream meetings in Geneva, including from capitals and other remote locations.

The consultancy believes that a strengthened secretariat support, as discussed below, and innovative use of digital meeting portals among others should allow for participation from remote locations. Another response to these shortcomings could be to prioritize work streams that reflect the overall multi-annual work plans, e.g. drawing on key issues in the Transformative Agenda (e.g. leadership, cluster coordination, accountability), humanitarian funding and perhaps accountability/self-assessment).

3-cluster set-up. The currently non-functional 3 cluster set-up – Geneva, Rome, New York – should either be reconsidered or reinvigorated depending on the outcome of the above referred discussion on the future *purpose* – roles and responsibilities - for GHDI. If the level of ambition for GHDI remains at its current level it seems logical to discontinue the forum in Rome and in New York in order to reduce the impression among members and partners that the GHDI is a loose and uncommitted donor structure without practical use. Should the GHDI members agree on a re-launch of GHDI as the principal donor forum for humanitarian action it would be logical to maintain the option to be able to include the two key UN locations, when issues so warrant, including for the organisation of the biannual High-level meeting in the margins of ECOSOC. This will not require a permanent structure as such, but a commitment and a clarified set of responsibilities among the local GHDI members.

- GHDI management

Consistency. Maintaining the co-chair system appears to be the accepted management principle according to those interviewed. It seems, however, that it could benefit from more standardized handover procedures, which would go a long way towards strengthening a sense of continuity and cohesion. A troika set-up a’la the European Union could ensure better coherence and

continuity would be enhanced with the introduction of a professional secretariat in support of the Chair/co-chairs.

Secretariat. The growing number of new members and partnerships combined with the increasing complexity of the humanitarian agenda for collective action points to the need to consider a dedicated support structure to GHDI in the form of a small but professional Secretariat. To some members a dedicated, institutionalised structure not only covers a vital unmet need but also would indicate a tangible commitment to the centrality of GHDI as the default donor structure for principled humanitarian action. The need for continuity, follow-up and institutional memory becomes ever greater for a GHDI maintaining a pivotal role in donor positioning, coordination and partnership building. This becomes even more essential if the members wish to maintain the current procedure of rotating chair and voluntary leads for work streams given an environment characterized by the regular rotation of diplomatic staff in the respective UN-missions. Valid arguments around cost increases, bureaucratic rigidities and even reduced direct member control over direction and day-to-day management need obviously to be discussed openly among the members to arrive at a balance.

Link with capitals and field operations. A “refreshed” commitment to the centrality of GHDI would require a rebuilding of dynamic links with capitals. A more consolidated and pre-established work plan for work streams and plenary meetings differentiated along the lines outlined above would enable more substantive dialogue involving capital-based expertise and departmental interests. This has to be combined with a more innovative use of remote communication. A differentiation in the themes, setup and membership of work streams would allow for more targeted and substantial discussions. It would seem that focussing the work streams on some of the central themes in the humanitarian discourse – Transformative Agenda, principles for funding etc. should help reinvigorate GHDI.

GHDI structures in the field have been useful in terms of local coordination, but they have only yielded very limited benefits at the overall GHDI level. Though this should not prevent the establishment of local donor coordination fora, one will need to consider whether specific GHDI field structures would provide any added value. In a number of countries, however, some donors are part of the Humanitarian Country Team. In these cases, the application of the GHD principles could perhaps form the basis for an (annual?) discussion, which then through the GHDI members in the country, could feed back to the overall discussions in Geneva.

Agenda-setting and work plans. The current practice of incoming chair/co-chairs setting the agenda for the year and elaborating annual work plans for its implementation needs to be modified at least in the following respects: bringing work plans in line with agreed priorities also reflected in future key “self-assessment-indicators”, and ensuring continuity through multi-year work plans. Multi-year work plans would address the weakness of agenda-setting based on chair/co-chair priorities and consequently reduce a sense of “stop-go”. Addressing rapidly evolving issues becomes an ever increasing necessity in a field which becomes more and more central to overarching foreign policy and general governance issues.

Frequency and modality of meetings. A tighter and more professional meeting management – preferably through a dedicated secretariat – would provide for more orderly and thus hopefully a more conducive environment for senior staff either to participate or at least provide better guidance to staff attending work stream meetings. In this respect, it would be highly recommended to make use of top-end technology – virtual chat rooms, video conferencing etc – to allow for capital-based staff and particularly technical/substantive staff to contribute on a regular basis to discussions in work stream meetings etc.

Dynamic and interactive website. This will offer knowledge management and information sharing allowing capital-based staff to draw on inputs to policy development and best practices. Additionally, this would provide for a more explicit branding of GHDI as the default donors’ forum for principled humanitarian action both externally to partners and the public as well as internally to the members.

Summary and a path forward for GHDI

Throughout the report, emphasis has been on identifying factors supporting or restricting GHDI to continue to play a relevant role in a rapidly changing humanitarian landscape. The SWOT-analysis teased out a number of strengths all having to do with the almost paradigmatic value of the 23 principles which not only provide a common understanding of principled humanitarian action among the overwhelming majority of donors but also offers GHDI two strong features of accountability and the possibility to promote principled humanitarian action among more donors and humanitarian actors. On the other hand, GHDI exhibits serious weaknesses, principally around its declining centrality as the platform for donor dialogue on humanitarian strategy, having increasingly become Geneva-centric. Such limited impact on strategy and decisions made in capitals, are factors undermining the potentials of these exact features.

It is, however, the opinion not only of stakeholders but also of scholars that the current humanitarian landscape demands even more and better coordination, information-sharing, division-of-labour and identification of best practices. This points clearly to a continued role of a “donors only” platform and GHDI is a logical choice because of its history and mandate.

The threats are multiple, though, both in terms of the need for a balanced dialogue with new partners – state and non-state entities – as well as an inclusive and qualitatively different dialogue with authorities in the humanitarian hotspots.

Thus, a number of suggested actions have been identified to support the GHDI in rising to that challenge both in terms of internal dialogue among GHDI members, principles for engagement with partners; emerging issues and themes as well as an updating of the design and management of GHDI to make it “fit for purpose”.

Again, however, it must be emphasised that the options outlined above rest on one fundamental decision to be taken by the GHDI members on “What should be the future *purpose of GHDI*, followed by the initiation of a process involving members. This should be led over the coming months by the co-chairs - eventually in partnership with the upcoming

chair/co-chair – with the clear goal of achieving such clarity. Once a decision is reached by capital-based decision-makers on the ways forward – a re-launch – the work can start on making GHDI “fit for purpose” to assume its role in a rapidly changing and ever more complex humanitarian landscape.

Annexes

- Annex 1 Terms of Reference
- Annex 2 Persons met
- Annex 3 Materials consulted
- Annex 4 List of GHDI member states
- Annex 5 Good Humanitarian Donorship in a *futures* context, by Randolph Kent,
Humanitarian Futures Programme

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Annex A: Terms of Reference

The GHD Initiative –

Remaining relevant in a changing humanitarian landscape

September 2012

The present ToR have been established by the Czech Republic and Denmark, as co-chairs of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD), in consultation with GHD members.

Background and Context

The Good Humanitarian Donorship principles...

The Principles and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship principles (GHD), initially endorsed by a group of 17 donors in 2003, are now widely considered as the backbone of good humanitarian donor policy and practice.

The principles were drawn up to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donor action, by:

- setting out the objectives and definition of humanitarian action;
- establishing general principles; and
- setting out good practices in three areas: funding, promoting standards and enhancing implementation, and learning and accountability.

More donors have endorsed the principles over time, and the total number of signatories now stands at 40.

... and the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative

The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD Initiative), also established in 2003, was set up as an informal donor forum and network to facilitate collective advancement of the GHD principles. It serves as a platform for dialogue, and for advancing humanitarian policy and practice matters. The GHD Initiative is based on the idea that, by working together, donors can more effectively encourage and stimulate principled donor behaviour and, by extension, improved humanitarian action.

The initiative operates on the basis of rotating annual co-chairmanships and annual work plans, and functions without a formal secretariat. Smaller groups of interested donors form working groups to take forward different work streams under each annual work plan, and there is also a SHARE group, which provides mentoring for newer members. Each year a number of working-level GHD Initiative meetings are held during which progress on the work plan is shared. One high-level meeting is also convened per year at the end of which an annual report is compiled on advancements of the GHD Initiative.

Besides meeting in Geneva, members of the Initiative work together in Rome and New York. Groups of donors also work on implementation of the GHD principles and good practices in the field (Local Groups).

GHD Initiative cooperates with UN agencies, OECD and other multilateral institutions.

Remaining relevant in a changing humanitarian landscape

As the GHD Initiative celebrates its 10 year anniversary, members are seeking to reflect on how this forum – one of the few forums where major, smaller and emerging humanitarian donors meet at a regular basis –

should evolve, so that it will remain relevant and continue to add value in a changing humanitarian landscape. Significant changes since 2003 include:

- The 2005 humanitarian reform, and the more recent IASC transformative agenda
- Inclusion of the GHD principles in other international instruments, including the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the re-negotiated Food Aid Convention
- Significant progress on implementing the GHD principles by individual member donors
- Increased focus on humanitarian accountability and standards, including through HAP, ALNAP and the Sphere standards
- Significant enlargement and increased diversity of the membership of the GHD Initiative – growing from 17 to 40 members over the last 10 years

Note that this consultancy will study the relevance of the GHD Initiative as a donor forum. The relevance of the GHD Principles is taken as a given.

Purpose, Use and Users

The purpose of this consultancy is to:

1. Assess the past and potential future effectiveness of the GHD Initiative's work to facilitate the advancement of the GHD principles, with particular reference to efforts to:
 - encourage and stimulate principled donor behaviour in line with each of the GHD principles,
 - hold members accountable (both individually and collectively) for the implementation of the GHD principles, and
 - promote learning and the sharing of good practices across members
 - reach out to non-members to raise awareness of the GHD principles.
2. Analyse the comparative advantage and potential added-value of the GHD Initiative in supporting principled donor responses to a range of current and future humanitarian challenges, including the issues outlined under the 2012 IASC Transformative Agenda. This analysis should take into account the roles and mandates of other complementary groups, for example the EU Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG), and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and look at the extent to which GHD principles have influenced donor approaches towards these other groups.
3. Provide useful insights into whether the GHD Initiative's current internal structures, management arrangements, partnerships, influence strategies and funding arrangements are sufficient and appropriate to ensure that it will remain fit for purpose.

The consultancy will serve as input for the design and prioritization of future GHD Initiative work plans and may, depending on the results obtained, lead to structural changes to the organization and management of the group.

Primary intended users of the consultancy results are the GHD Initiative members. Secondary users include key partners of the GHD Initiative within the wider humanitarian and donor communities, including other donor forums, as well as humanitarian NGOs, multilateral organizations and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

Guiding Questions

What factors are contributing to/or hindering the full implementation of the GHD principles overall?

Issues to consider:

- Evolving humanitarian context and challenges (since 2003)
- Progress to date on the implementation of the GHD principles, both individually and collectively
- Different donor 'models' – no one best way of implementing the GHD principles
- Positioning of GHD with donors/in the donors' system (government vs. implementation level)
- Barriers (common and individual) to implementing the GHD principles in full
- Efforts and actions of relevance to the GHD principles taken by other actors (including military, civil protection, NGOs, multilateral agencies, Red Cross Red Crescent family, etc.)
- Donor presence in the field
- GHD principles that can be implemented individually vs. those that must be implemented collectively
- Applicability of the GHD principles – just for GHD members, or for all providers of funding (including pooled funding mechanisms, multilateral organisations, non-member donors, etc.)

In which areas has the GHD Initiative's work to facilitate the advancement of the GHD principles been effective? Where has it been less effective?

Issues to consider:

- Outputs and impact of the GHD Initiative working groups to date
- Buy-in of key humanitarian decision makers in working groups – those who set policy and make allocation decisions
- Collective vs. individual action to implement the principles
- Learning and sharing of good practice amongst GHD members, including through GHD SHARE
- Accountability of GHD members – both individually and collectively
- Outreach to non GHD members and the wider humanitarian community
- Perceptions of effectiveness by different GHD Initiative members
- Continuity between chairs in respect of thematic priorities

Efficiency: have the outcomes justified the investment thus far? Has this changed over time?

Issues to consider:

- Cost
- Investment in terms of time (participation in meetings, working groups, etc.)
- Engagement of senior humanitarian staff (decision makers) in donor agencies
- Differences in perceptions of efficiency and benefits by members – founding members vs. newer members, perhaps, or larger donors vs. smaller volume donors, etc.
- Use of other tools at the GHD disposal such as webpage

What is the comparative advantage of the GHD Initiative, and where can it most add value going forward?

Issues to consider:

- Current and future humanitarian challenges
- Mandates and comparative advantage of other humanitarian forums – both donor forums and groups within the wider humanitarian community
- Variations (and similarities) in perceptions of comparative advantage by different members
- Coherence and relationships with other actors and partners, including humanitarian donors who are not GHD members, military actors, civil protection agencies, humanitarian NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross Red Crescent movement
- Coherence and relationships with development and stabilisation actors, especially development co-operation donor colleagues and groups
- Links between the GHD Initiative’s comparative advantage and GHD Initiative work plans to date

How can the GHD Initiative be strengthened? What further inputs are required?

Issues to consider:

- Governance of the GHD Initiative, role of the co-chairs
- Organisational structure, including frequency of meetings and approach to work streams
- Partnerships and outreach
- Influence strategies
- Funding arrangements
- Reporting and accountability for GHD Initiative results and impact
- Possible need for a secretariat

Method

The consultancy will include a combination of data collection methods and analytical tools including: (i) background literature and document review; (ii) stakeholder analysis and organizational mapping; and (iii) semi-structured key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Some survey work may be undertaken as appropriate. The consultant should present and further elaborate on the approach and methodology in the tender. The consultant shall take care to establish the reliability and consistency of the information by triangulation – comparing and checking similar information from various sources – wherever possible.

Background literature and document review

The consultant will conduct a brief review of relevant humanitarian and GHD Initiative literature, with a view to identifying current and future challenges within the humanitarian sphere; and to research the history and workings of the GHD Initiative, and progress to date on the implementation of the GHD principles. The review will include:

- GHD Initiative background documents, work plans, meeting reports and annual reports
- Reviews (including peer reviews, OECD/DAC peer reviews) of progress of individual donors on implementation of the GHD principles
- Academic literature and reports by humanitarian agencies, NGOs and practitioners

Stakeholder analysis and organizational mapping

A stakeholder analysis will be undertaken to determine the interests and influence of various actors (members and non-members, donors and wider humanitarian community, individuals and other forums) in relation to the GHD Initiative.

Organizational mapping can be used to provide an overview of the formal and informal operational framework of the GHD Initiative, and of the current decision making structure. It can also provide an overview of partnerships and relationships with external groups and actors, and provide an analysis of levels of influence with different groups.

Key informant interviews and group discussions

The consultant will conduct key informant interviews as needed – and will use survey techniques when this is felt more appropriate. Interviewees will be selected based on their knowledge and experience of the GHD Initiative, and should include:

- Current and past GHD Initiative chairs and co-chairs
- Representatives of GHD members based in Geneva (or who regularly attend the GHD Initiative)
- Representatives of GHD members based in capitals
- Representatives of GHD members based in New York and Rome
- Chairs or co-chairs of other donor forums
- Academics and researchers in the field of humanitarian donorship
- UN agency donor relations personnel
- ICRC donor relations personnel
- Representatives of NGO forums
- GHD groups in the field (local groups)
- Humanitarian donors who are non-members (where this is possible)

Timing, Reporting and Deliverables

The analysis will result in a report of maximum 30 pages (excluding annexes), written in English.

The consultant will be required to present findings – both preliminary and final – to the GHD Initiative members.

The consultant will work against the deadlines set out in these Terms of Reference and the timeliness of the delivery of reports is of importance. Any changes to these deliverables, for instance, in relation to issues arising during the initial phase, must be agreed with the management team.

Timing	Activity/Deliverables
October	Kick off meeting with consultant
October/November	Start work

Mid December	Present interim results to the management team for feedback on conclusions and recommendations
11 January	First full draft available, management team to provide feedback on factual errors and conclusions and recommendations
25 January	Final draft available
February	Publication and dissemination as well as presentation/debriefing with the GHD Initiative at the GHD Initiative High-Level Meeting

The consultant will deliver the report electronically in one consolidated file to the co-chairs of the GHD Initiative. It is the responsibility of the consultant to ensure that the report is professionally edited – checked for grammar, typos, formatting, consistency in presentation of data and references – and is of publishable quality.

Management and Governance

Responsibilities of the consultant

The consultant will:

- Report to the management team
- Provide a presentation of findings and recommendations to the GHD Initiative
- Bear full responsibility for organising all travel, administrative and logistical arrangements; and related costs
- Undertake the consultancy based on the guidance outlined in this Terms of Reference
- Retain editorial responsibility over the final report

Responsibilities of the management team

The management team will comprise staff in the Permanent Missions of Denmark and the Czech Republic in Geneva.

The management team will:

- Manage the implementation of this Terms of Reference (contract management, process management and quality assurance)
- Provide updates to the wider GHD Initiative group on progress
- Provide feedback on the initial findings, draft report, conclusions, recommendations, quality and relevance of the study
- Assist the consultant in their work by providing relevant documents and by assisting the consultant to set up interviews with key individuals, especially within GHD Initiative member agencies
- Invite experts or other organisations/groups to participate in its meetings about this study to obtain additional perspectives
- Decide on approval of the final report and on any next steps

Competency and Expertise Requirements

This consultancy will require the services of a consultant with the following skills and experience:

- Strong understanding of humanitarian issues and challenges, particularly as they relate to humanitarian donorship
- In-depth knowledge of the international humanitarian system and of donor architecture
- Excellent writing and communication skills in English
- Proven experience in facilitating different types of consultative exercises involving participants from a wide range of humanitarian organisations
- A proven record in delivering solid consultancy outputs in the humanitarian field

Annex 2

Persons met

Name	Organization	Position
Andrea Binder	Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI)	Researcher
Anke Reiffenstuel	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Task Force Humanitarian Aid, Germany	Deputy Head
Arafat Jamal	IASC Secretariat	Chief
Bishow Parajuli	World Food Programme, Rome	Director, Government Donor Relations
Carsten Staur	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN in New York	Ambassador
Christoph Harnisch	ICRC	Head External Resources Division
Claus H. Sørensen	ECHO, Brussels	Director General
Corinna Kreidler	Norwegian Refugee Council	Deputy Director
Darlene Tymo	World Food Programme, Geneva	Deputy Director
Ed Schenkernberg van Mierob	International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Geneva	Executive Director
Eduoard Jay Deza Jye	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Bern, Switzerland	Deputy Head of Multilateral Affairs,
Einer Hebogård Jensen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Dept. Denmark	Head of Department, Ambassador
Eltje Aderhold	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Task Force Humanitarian Aid, Germany	Head
Emma Boekee,	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Directorate of Stabilization and Humanitarian Aid. Netherlands	Intern
Frank Schober	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Task Force Humanitarian Aid, Germany	Assistant Desk Officer
Geert Vansintjan	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Aid, Food Aid, Rehabilitation, Belgium.	Head of Unit
Hana Volna	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Czech Republic	Deputy Director
Hong-Won Yu	Canadian International Development Agency, International Humanitarian Assistance Directorate	Manager, Strategic Analysis and Planning Unit, IHA.
Ingrid Macdonald	Internal Displacement monitoring Centre (IDMC), NRC Geneva	Resident Representative
Jean Verheyden	OCHA, Donors Relation Section	Head of Desk
Jessica Birks	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), Humanitarian Affairs and Response Division	Senior Policy Advisor,
Jessica Eliasson	Sida, Sweden	Humanitarian Policy Specialist
Jette Michelsen	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, New York	Counsellor
Jiří Muchka	Embassy of the Czech Republic, Rome	Permanent Representative (FAO, WFP, IFAD)
Jitka Brodská	Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN, Geneva	2 nd Secretary
Joanna Macrae	Department for International Development (DfID), UK	Head of Profession and Senior Humanitarian Research Adviser
Johan Palsgård	Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN, Geneva	First Secretary
John Mitchell	ALNAP	Director
Julia Stewart-David	ECHO, Brussels	Deputy Head of Unit
Kristin Hedström	ECHO Brussels	Policy Officer
Latoko Toku	Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN, Geneva	First Secretary

Leonie Oates-Mercier	Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN, Geneva	Humanitarian Adviser
Leonor Nieto Leon	ECHO, Brussels	Head of Unit
Lisa Fry	Canadian International Development Agency, International Humanitarian Assistance Directorate	Senior Program Officer, International Humanitarian Assistance Directorate
Maj Hessel	Embassy of Denmark, Rome	Counsellor
Malgorzata Polomska	Permanent mission of Poland to the UN, Geneva	Counsellor
Marcello Cangialosi	Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, Geneva	First Secretary
Margriet Struijf	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Directorate of Stabilization and Humanitarian Aid.Netherlands	Coordinator for humanitarian aid Division of Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction.
Maria Ulff-Møller	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations, Geneva	First Secretary
Marieke Hounjet	Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA)	Advisor
Marie-Louise Koch Wegter	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations, Geneva	Deputy Representative
Marybeth Redheffer	DARA	Policy Research Officer
Mia Beers	US AID	Division Director
Mia Hallen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden	
Michael Bonser	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT),Humanitarian Affairs and Response Division	Director,
Miguel Garcia-Zamudio	Embassy of Mexico, United Kingdom	Political Affairs
Nance Kyloh	Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations, Geneva	Representative
Nancy Tuochy-Hamill	Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, Geneva	Attache
Nicolai Steen	DARA	Head of Disaster Risk Initiative
Øystein Lyngroth	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Norway	Head of Project
Pascal Petitat	Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, Geneva	Intern
Patrick Dupont	European Union Delegation in Geneva	Humanitarian Affairs Officer
Per Bymann	Radiohjalpen, Sweden	Secretary General
Per Orneus	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden	Head, Department for Multilateral Development Cooperation
Philip Tamminga	SCHR	Certification Project Coordinator
Rachel Scott	OECD	Humanitarian Advisor
Robert Smith	OCHA	Chief, CAP Section
Ross Mountain	DARA	Director General
Sacha Dyrdorf Kondrup	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations, Geneva	Intern
Sarah Bayne	The IDLgroup	Consultant
Scott Gardiner	Department for International Development (DfID), UK	Humanitarian Advisor
Sean Lowrie	Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA)	Director
Shinobu Yamaguchi	Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN, Geneva	First Secretary
Sophie Vanhaeverbeke	ECHO Brussels	Team leader oPt
Steffen Smidt	Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations, Geneva	Ambassador
Susan Eckey	Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN, New York	Minister Counsellor

Susan Fraser	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland	Deputy Director, Emergency and Recovery Section
Thomas Thomsen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Dept. Denmark	Chief Advisor
Ulla Næsby	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Dept. Denmark	Deputy head of Department
Victoria Romero	Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, Geneva	Counsellour
Ville Lahelma	Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN, Geneva	2 nd Secretary
Young-Kyu Park	Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN, Geneva	Counsellor

Annex 3 Materials consulted

Updated 25.01.2013

Author	Title	Year
Abby Stoddard	International Humanitarian Financing: Review and comparative assessment of instruments. A study for the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative commissioned by the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance	2008
ALNAP	The State of the Humanitarian System	2012
Andrea Binder and Claudia Meier	Opportunity knocks: why non-Western donors enter humanitarianism and how to make the best of it	2011
Arjun Appadurai	“Tactical Humanism,” UNESCO, <i>The Future of Values: 21st century talks</i> , UNESCO, Paris, 2004,	2004
DARA	Humanitarian Response Index 2011, 2012	
Development Initiatives	GHD Indicators – reissued	2008
Development Initiatives	Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Indicators: Phase one report (second draft)	2011
Development Initiatives	Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Indicators: Outline of Phase Two.	2012
DfID	UK Government response to Humanitarian Emergency Response Review	2011
Emma Visman et al	“Making climate science useful: Cross-regional learning from Kenya and Senegal, World Meteorological Organisation, Climate ExChange, 2012	2012
GHDI	Good Humanitarian Donorship – at country level. A Guiding note	Un-dated
GHDI	International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship, Chairman's Summary	2003
GHDI	Meeting Conclusions: International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship (Stockholm)	2003
GHDI	Report of the Implementation Group to the Second International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship (Ottawa)	2004
GHDI	Chair's Summary: Good Humanitarian Donorship Stocktaking Meeting (New York)	2005
GHDI	Chairs' Summary: Annual meeting of Good Humanitarian Donorship group with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) representatives	2010
GHDI	Guidance note for GHD Group co-chairs	2010
GHDI	Taking Stock of GHD – 2003 to date. A non-paper prepared by the 2009 – 2010 Co-chairs	2010
GHDI	Terms of Reference for the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) group	2010
GHDI co-chairs	GHDI co-chairs 2009-10, Non-paper	2010
Henrik Jespersen	Study of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA's engagement in fragile and post conflict states	2010
House of Commons	House of Commons, Science and Technology Committee <i>Third Report: Scientific Advice and Evidence in Emergencies</i> , March 2011	2011
Humanitarian Futures Programme	<i>Adapting to the Changing Global Humanitarian Architecture</i> , Stakeholders Forum Report – 2012 www.humanitarianfutures.org	2012
IASC	IASC Working Group Operationalizing the IASC Principals Transformative Agenda	2011
IASC	IASC Transformative Agenda - 2012	2012
Jan Kellett	Donor Government Perspectives on the Humanitarian Response Index (Summary report on an independent consultations process).	2012
Johan Schaar	Perspectives on Good Humanitarian Donorship (from Humanitarian Response Index 2007)	2007

Kofi Annan	“Two concepts of sovereignty”, <u>The Economist</u> , 18 September 1999	1999
Lord Ashdown et. al	Humanitarian Emergency Response Review	2011
Moises Naim	“Minilateralism: The magic number to get real international action”, <u>Foreign Policy</u> , July/August 2009	2009
ODI	Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles in Practice: Assessing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons in Sudan and Sri Lanka	2009
OECD/DAC	Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship. 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews	2012
Peter Walker and Daniel G. Maxwell	<i>Shaping the Humanitarian World</i> ,	2009
Richard Falk	“Dilemmas of Sovereignty and Intervention,” <u>Foreign Policy Journal</u> , 18 July 2011	2011
Sally Gregory	Lessons Learned from the Good Humanitarian Donorship Pilot in Burundi 2002-2005	2005
Yves-Kim Creac’h and Lillianne Fan	ASEAN’s role in the Cyclone Nargis response: Implications, lessons and opportunities, <u>Humanitarian Exchange Network</u> , Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 41, December 2008	2008

Annex 4
List of GHDI Member States

GHDI Members*

<i>Australia</i>	Estonia	Latvia	Portugal
Austria	<i>Finland</i>	Liechtenstein	Republic of Korea
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>France</i>	Lithuania	Romania
Brazil	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Luxembourg</i>	Slovak Republic
Bulgaria	Greece	Malta	Slovenia
<i>Canada</i>	Hungary	Mexico	Spain
Croatia	Iceland	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
Cyprus	<i>Ireland</i>	New Zealand	<i>Switzerland</i>
Czech Republic	Italy	<i>Norway</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Japan</i>	Poland	<i>United States</i>
<i>ECHO</i>			

*: The first founding group of 17 members are mentioned in *italics*.

Annex 5

Good Humanitarian Donorship in a Futures Context, By Randolph Kent, Humanitarian Futures Programme, Kings College

Good Humanitarian Donorship in a *futures* context

When the Good Humanitarian Donorship was launched in June 2003 in Stockholm, there was a clear appreciation amongst the 17 donor country participants that a far more systematic and consistently principled approach was needed to ensure more effective, efficient and accountable humanitarian assistance. Ten years on the humanitarian world, which was the focus of that original Stockholm gathering, has changed in various ways.

Some of these changes have to do with the global context in which humanitarian action inevitably takes place; others have to do with the increasingly evident weaknesses of the present humanitarian sector that a growing number of analyses is uncovering; and, others concern the changing assumptions that underpin humanitarianism in the emerging 21st century. In one way or another the GHD with its more than doubled membership will have to address if not adapt to these changes if it is to remain relevant in a far more complex and uncertain humanitarian future.

The futures context

Geo-political transformations. The emergence of the BRICS over the past decade is but one indication that the economic and political locus and dynamics of geo-politics are changing. Beyond the BRICS, *per se*, it is evident that more and more countries – from Latin America to South East Asia – are pursuing different forms of political objectives, alignments and processes that are by no means always consistent with established multilateral or intergovernmental systems or methods.

Indicative of the sorts of changing political objectives that are becoming increasingly evident is the Climate Vulnerability Forum (CVF). Established in 2009, a group of eleven nations from Africa, the Americas and Asia that emitted very small amounts of greenhouse gases banded together to promote low carbon and carbon-neutral economies. They were and are a mission-focused initiative or network (MFN), going outside conventional institutional structures, and using the publicity they generate to engage with influential global powers such as China and the United States. Similar to what in industry was labelled *ad hoc*cracies in the late 20th century,⁴⁸ so-called MFNs consist of temporary coalitions of actors brought together by

⁴⁸ D. Moynihan, *Leveraging Collaborative Networks in Infrequent Emergency Situations*, Collaboration Series, Washington, IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2005. Robert H. Waltermann Jr, *Adhocracy: The Power to change*, WW Norton, 1990, and Henry Mintzberg, *Organisational Configurations*. Mintzberg notes that the innovative organisation – reflecting adhocracy – must be capable of highly complex innovation (eg, research) must reflect a matrix organisation where workers move around a great deal, must be flexible and must have experts/workers grouped into functional units.

common interests, sustained in many ways by social networking, and unencumbered by the need to maintain and perpetuate institutional structures.

In that sense the CVF is indicative of a new and more fluid type of body – an MFN – that does not depend upon conventional multilateral or inter-governmental structures, but is willing to use the latter when so required. It is more than likely that humanitarian issues and interests will generate similar sorts of MFNs in the foreseeable future, and the GHD will in turn have to see how and in what ways it will engage with such fluid, socially networked entities.

The example of the Climate Vulnerability Forum as an MFN relates to another trend that will affect the geo-political context in which the GHD will operate. This second trend can be labelled as “fluid multipolarity,” and will be reflected in far more temporary and flexible alignments in which states will make common cause via far more transient, issue specific arrangements. The era of enduring common cause – marked by long-standing alliances and pacts – will make way for much more fluid, temporary issue and specific interest-based conglomerates. The GHD will therefore find that greater fluid multipolarity may well result in a greater inclination by states to move from fixed and permanent commitments to a pattern of negotiated and renegotiated obligations.

Mission focussed networks and greater fluid multipolarity will also find the GHD dealing with a third significant geo-political trend, namely, “minilateralism.”⁴⁹ There is increasing concern amongst some political analysts that the time and effort consumed in seeking to persuade member-states around the world to agree to multilateral arrangements and regime issues are inherently inefficient. The minilateralist position is that smaller groupings of states with common functional interests will increasingly be inclined to bypass the tortuous route of multilateral negotiations, and project their influence through arrangements that serve the interests of the like-minded. Whether the outcomes will be positive and over time in the interest of any single community is difficult to judge, but this trend is a further demonstration of the fluid nature of multilateralism in the foreseeable future, and the possible resistance to traditional external pressures such as those from the international humanitarian sector that can ensue.

Lessons from the past. In preparing for the future, those who are part of the Good Humanitarian Donorship will be aware that many aspects of humanitarian action have recently come under critical scrutiny, and that the GHD’s commitment to more accountable humanitarianism in the future will have to take on board at least four key lessons that should influence the funding as well as the operational imperatives of the GHD. These four concern a continuing failure to be anticipatory, or strategic, an inability to align policies with operational requirements, a poor record of innovation and a lack of a clear sense of the types of partnerships that will be needed to meet the capacities challenges that more complex crisis threats will expose.

In the most recent *State of the Humanitarian System*, the authors noted that a sense of amateurism continued to pervade the well-intentioned efforts of humanitarian

⁴⁹ Moises Naim, “Minilateralism: The magic number to get real international action”, *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2009

workers, workers from agencies that were predominantly Western based.⁵⁰ While this perceived amateurism pertained principally to a lack of contextual understanding, the same can also be said for a more general lack of interest and conception about the types of plausible crisis drivers for which one will have to prepare in the foreseeable future.

Little if any investment is made in efforts by those with humanitarian roles and responsibilities to anticipate potential threats in a strategically coherent way. An emerging number of government-developed “risk registers” are coming to the fore that identify future crisis drivers, but except in very rare instances do such possible risks work their way into strategic plans.⁵¹ That certainly is the case for a sample number of governments that are presently being surveyed by UNISDR, ALNAP, HFP and Ipsos MORI,⁵² and clearly is so for non-governmental and most multilateral organisations that have been reviewed over the past five years.⁵³ *Adaptation*, in other words, rarely follows *anticipation*, even in those relatively rare instances when the latter is practiced.

In part the lack of lack of *anticipation* does reflect the present humanitarian sector’s predominant concern with response. The fact that the sorts of responses that may be required to deal with future threats will require longer-term planning and analysis still seems to elude most. It is this lack of strategic vision that led the UK’s 2011 *Humanitarian Emergency Response Review* [HERR] to urge the Department for International Development to give much greater attention to *anticipation*, to speculating far more about “the what might be’s”. In so recommending, the HERR also recognised that far greater commitment to *innovation* and *innovative practices* would be demanded of a sector that more and more would have to deal with growing uncertainty and complexity. Standard approaches to foreseeable crises would, according to the HERR, require alternatives to the operating procedures so embedded in today’s humanitarian action.

Greater attention to anticipation, adaptive behaviour and innovation reflect lessons that can be learned from those outside the conventional or traditional humanitarian sector. As the most recent *State of the Humanitarian System* stresses, both the military and private sectors are playing increasingly important humanitarian roles as “non-traditional humanitarian actors”.⁵⁴ However, as potential partners all too many Western humanitarian agencies eschew the military except as “providers of last resort,” and the private sector still is seen as predominantly a funding source either through philanthropic practices of corporate social

⁵⁰ ALNAP, *State of the Humanitarian System* – 2012, page 59

⁵¹ House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Third Report: Scientific Advice and Evidence in Emergencies*, March 2011, see, for example, para 110 available at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/publications/>

⁵² Humanitarian Futures Programme, *Making Futures Real: How policy-makers prepare for future crises*. This project designed to review 650 policy-planners about longer-term disaster risks is being undertaken in collaboration with UNISDR, ALNAP and the polling firm, Ipsos MORI.

⁵³ Over the past seven years, the Humanitarian Futures Programme has undertaken assessments with a range of organisations about their respective *futures* capacities. These assessments can be found on HFP’s website (<http://www.humanitarianfutures.org>), and include seven UN country teams, the IASC-WG, the World Health Organisation, Save the Children and the US Agency for International Development.

⁵⁴ Op cit #3, pp 33ff

responsibility. Whether the GHD, itself, needs to see how best it, too, can engage with more diverse partners is an issue that will be considered later in this report.

Geo-political transformations and increasingly glaring weaknesses in the present humanitarian sector are issues that will inevitably affect the relevance and utility of the Good Humanitarian Donorship. At the same time they afford the GHD opportunities for transformative thinking and leadership. Neither, however, can be achieved unless the members of the GHD are sensitive to some of the paradigmatic shifts that are changing the face of humanitarianism. In this context, there are at least seven issues that should be considered by those preparing to deal with humanitarian action in the future:

[i] – **growing centrality of humanitarian issues.** Three decades ago humanitarian crises were considered aberrant phenomena, relatively peripheral to core governmental interests. Today, the implications, for example, of climate change and the social and economic consequences of such events as the Van earthquake and the tsunami-generated Fukushima catastrophe have resulted in making humanitarian crises increasingly central to political concerns and indeed government survival.

As humanitarian crises move to centre-stage of governmental interests, they are imbued with high levels of political significance – both domestically and internationally. While a government’s survival may depend upon the way it responds to a humanitarian crisis, the way that other governments and international actors respond to that crisis will, too, have increasingly political consequence. That said, the political consequences of external support for a beleaguered state are as old as humanitarian response, itself.⁵⁵ What is new and will increasingly be of significance is the growing politicization of humanitarian engagement. It is not merely the types of assistance that is provided, but the context – the perceived public relations support or overt or implied criticism – that comes with assistance. For both sides – recipient and donating governments – this context will increasingly affect wider interests including commercial relations and common security arrangements;

[ii] – **humanitarian centrality and government survival.** The growing centrality of humanitarian crises and its link to government survival also relates in part to an evident resurgence in the attention given to sovereignty. That humanitarian assistance – particularly in the context of international assistance -- is imbued with political significance and calculations is by no means a new theme. In the midst of a series of humanitarian crises in Africa and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1990s, the then UN Secretary-General warned states in sub-Saharan Africa that the international community could no longer tolerate the politicisation of humanitarian response and the consequent abuse of human rights.⁵⁶ Yet, that moral high ground had decreasing relevance as the political centrality of humanitarian crises intensified. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe were increasingly unwilling to abide by an externally imposed, international moral imperative.

Efforts to counter this tendency in Africa and around the globe persist. The International Federation of the Red Cross, for example, continues today to seek governments’

⁵⁵ Peter Walker and Daniel G. Maxwell, *Shaping the Humanitarian World*, Taylor & Francis Publishers, Oxford, 2009

⁵⁶ Kofi Annan, “Two concepts of sovereignty”, *The Economist*, 18 September 1999

commitment to abide by obligations under international humanitarian law; and persistent efforts to promote the right to protect also continue through an array of multilateral and bilateral fora. And yet, these and related initiatives are countered by a trend that does and will constrain their impact – the resurgence of sovereignty, or, the growing confidence in more and more governments that they can resist the prescriptions and perceived intrusions of Western-oriented institutions and states;⁵⁷

[iii] – **from supply driven to demand driven assistance.** The days when the international community – including donor governments -- could guide the ways that humanitarian responses are handled are decreasing. In light of the growing importance to governments of crisis-affected states to be seen to deal with humanitarian crises effectively will increasingly mean that they will also be more inclined to determine what they need and not passively accept what donors believe is required.

In a 2010 review of the attitudes of 21 governments towards international support for humanitarian crises, a theme consistent from participating governments was that “we do not want your boots on the ground.”⁵⁸ Potential appreciation was expressed for those innovations and techniques that international actors could provide that would strengthen approaches to prevention and preparedness. However, as evident from events in China and Myanmar in 2008 and Japan and Turkey in 2011, more and more governments are determined to make it clear that they will be the principal determinants of needs and not the international community.

In a related vein, it, too, is worth noting that in the context of supply versus demand driven support, governments of crisis-affected countries are increasingly turning to the private sector for assistance. As explained by a Pakistan government official in the aftermath of that country’s 2010 floods, the private sector are often more accommodating when it comes to working with local authorities. “They understand what we want, and are here for the long-haul;”

[iv] – **the vulnerability and resilience perspectives.** One of the cornerstones of the UK’s HERR had been its emphasis on “resilience.” For DFID the organisational challenge that resilience presented was how to bring the resources of development and humanitarian assistance together in such a way that their combined effects would promote ways to reduce crisis vulnerabilities and promote sustainable crisis prevention. A growing number of governments such as those of Kenya and Senegal are focusing on these sorts of approaches, and attempting to do so at community and central government levels, as evidenced by efforts “to make climate science useful”.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Richard Falk in “Dilemmas of Sovereignty and Intervention,” *Foreign Policy Journal*, 18 July 2011, notes that the concept of sovereignty has all too often been a mechanism for legitimising the space of states as a sanctuary for the commission of “human wrongs.” He also notes that the West has historically claimed rights of intervention “in the name of civilisation” normally in the non-West – a trend increasingly resisted.

⁵⁸ At its 26th Annual Meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur from 16-18 November 2010, ALNAP facilitated a special meeting of 21 government representatives – from Africa, Asia and Latin America – that linked into the meeting’s overall theme of the role of national governments in international humanitarian response. This special session was intended specifically to assist the research work for the DFID-funded Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR).

⁵⁹ Emma Visman et al, “Making climate science useful: Cross-regional learning from Kenya and Senegal, World Meteorological Organisation, *Climate ExChange*, Tudor Rose Publishers, Leicester, pp.218ff, 2012

Except in the most acute emergency circumstances, the humanitarian/development divide that has marked the humanitarian sector for almost half a century has grown increasingly dysfunctional, if not inherently contradictory. The fact of the matter is that only at the sharpest end of an acute disaster or emergency (save for the relatively rare instances of so-called “complex emergencies”) can one clearly disaggregate prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Here, therefore, is the mounting dilemma -- for those with humanitarian roles and responsibilities, the division between development and humanitarian action will prove conceptually inadequate to meet the complex crises of the future, particularly for governments who increasingly have to be seen to be proactive in anticipating and dealing with crisis threats;

[v] – **regional constructs as conduits and filters.** A growing number of states around the world are increasingly reluctant to accept the involvement of powers perceived to be part of Western hegemonic interests.⁶⁰ In that context, regional organisations such as ASEAN and ECOWAS will increasingly be seen as both conduits and filters for international assistance. In that sense, the role of ASEAN as an aid conduit to Myanmar in the aftermath of the 2008 Cyclone Nargis is instructive.⁶¹ Rather than be seen to be rejecting the assistance offered by the international community, Myanmar “used” ASEAN to assist in filtering out unwanted aid and guide proffered aid that was regarded as acceptable.

Regionalism, as described recently by representatives of ECOWAS, also offer member-states a context and “face” that is seen to be more politically and frequently more culturally sensitive to crisis situations than those who from the outside.⁶² As evidenced by ECOWAS’s series of humanitarian crisis related programmes, including its Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2010-2014 Programme of Action, ECOWAS member-states have encouraged the ECOWAS Commission to play a humanitarian role in the region that emphasizes the region’s commitment to self-reliance. This is not to suggest that regional organizations do not want to be part of a wider international humanitarian architecture, but rather that they wish to do so on a basis of mutual respect and interdependence;

[vi] – **expanding range of humanitarian actors.** Looking to the spectre of future crises and solutions, it is evident that the humanitarian sector as presently configured does not have the capacity needed to deal with what had earlier in this section been termed the changing types, dimensions and dynamics of humanitarian threats. With that in mind, the issue of capacity directly links to the collaborative partnerships and networks that humanitarian organisations need to develop, and the assumptions that humanitarian actors make about the humanitarian potential of “non-traditional humanitarian actors”. The latter encompass a bevy of new bilateral donors and regional organisations, the military, an extensive range of private sector organisations, the Diaspora, so-called “non-state actors”, and virtual on-line crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding networks.

⁶⁰ “In tandem with improved independent capacity has come a sense of frustration on the part of some host governments regarding international agencies’ lack of deference to national authority and sovereignty, and tensions around conflicting cultures and guiding principles.” Op cit. #3, p 27

⁶¹ Yves-Kim Creac’h and Lillianne Fan, “ASEAN’s role in the Cyclone Nargis response: Implications, lessons and opportunities,” *Humanitarian Exchange Network*, Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 41, December 2008

⁶² See, Humanitarian Futures Programme, King’s College, London, *Adapting to the Changing Global Humanitarian Architecture*, Stakeholders Forum Report – 2012 <http://www.humanitarianfutures.org>

As the number of such non-traditional humanitarian actors grows, the challenge for traditional humanitarian actors such as those represented in the GHD is not only how best to engage with them, but also to what extent do such disparate actors further complicate such mechanisms as the Central Emergency Response Fund and pooled funds? While one recognises that the importance of the GHD rests in no small part on its agreed principled approach to humanitarian response, one at the same time cannot ignore the practical consequences of its financial contribution to humanitarian assistance. Hence, in a world of multiple humanitarian actors, some, for example, with the sort of financial weight of the private sector, one is faced with the potential conundrum that the resource authority of the GHD might have decreasing impact?

In a world in which a growing number of states and regional organisations are more determined to assert and demonstrate their individual capacities, the GHD may well have to reconsider the incentives that it has to offer to participate in influencing the humanitarian sector;

[vii] – **multiple humanitarian principles.** Against the backdrop of the changes above, the assumption that “traditional” humanitarian principles are universal is part of a broader challenge to norms that have arisen in a sector dominated to date by a perceived Western hegemon. In a world in which different powers will emerge, with their concomitant local and regional perspectives and values, to what extent will even the historic importance of the principles of the Red Cross movement withstand the test of a form of globalisation that paradoxically is marked by deeply-engrained localism – deep-seated cultures and languages, customs and values?

In this paradoxical world, values and principles – in the words of the eminent anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai – will have to be based on “tactical humanism” where so-called “universals are not the result of values based on prior axioms,” but are produced out of engaged debate.⁶³ In this context the GHD will have to see to what extent the principles that reflect so much of its *raison d’être* are appropriate and relevant for the challenges that lie ahead.

Futures consequences and considerations for the GHD

Prediction is always hazardous, and it would be foolhardy to assume that the sorts of challenges and opportunities noted in the preceding section were inevitable, let alone irrefutable. Nevertheless, there is a body of established scholarship as well as practitioners’ views that would lead one to the conclusion that the sorts of transformations in the wider geopolitical context as well as the changes foreseen for the humanitarian sector are indeed plausible. To the extent that they are regarded as plausible, then it should prove of value to the GHD to consider how such transformations could affect its objectives, roles and the resources that it brings to the humanitarian sector.

⁶³ Arjun Appadurai, “Tactical Humanism,” UNESCO, *The Future of Values: 21st century talks*, UNESCO, Paris, 2004, p.18

With these in mind, the GHD might wish to explore its future relevance and direction along the following lines:

[i] -- **cultural and contextual relevance.** In light of the growing political importance to governments about the ways that emergencies are handled, it is more than likely that cultural differences and contextual relevance will create barriers between GHD “messages” and governments of crisis-affected countries and the regional organisations that represent many of them. Such messages may well range from the issue of principles to assumptions underpinning appropriate and timely responses to emergency aid;

[ii] -- **humanitarian multi-polarity.** The role of regional organisations will increase when it comes to humanitarian functions, and more and more governments will rely on a much wider range of non-traditional humanitarian actors, including the private sector. This may well leave the present membership and operating procedures of the GHD potentially isolated or at least of declining relevance when it comes to dealing with a humanitarian sector that has undergone major transformations;

[iii] – **restricted approach to humanitarianism.** It is increasingly likely that with a growing number of crisis threats and the increasing costs associated with humanitarian action, much greater attention will be given to such concepts as vulnerability reduction and resilience. This in turn will mean that the GHD will be confronted with an approach to broader “humanitarian issues” that will increasingly link development and humanitarian funding. Hence, the extent to which GHD’s mandate and expertise will remain relevant is an issue that will need to be addressed;

[iv] -- **alternative engagement fora.** To a significant extent “the humanitarian debate,” including operational priorities, principles, “transformative” agendas and the limited humanitarian role of the military, is seen as reflections of the concerns of Western fora. New constructs such as integrated regional platforms and more fluid alliances will witness new locations for humanitarian dialogues. In this context, different groupings of bilateral donors and diverse conglomerates of such groupings and “non-traditional humanitarian actors” will engage in increasingly diverse geographical locations. The issue for the GHD is the extent to which its principal Geneva focus will conceptually and geographically relevant;

[v] -- **GHD principles on the margin.** As discussed earlier, there are increasing challenges to the assumptions that underpin universal humanitarian principles. Even within the Red Cross movement, there are growing doubts about the utility of clinging to principles that might alienate others, and ultimately restrict opportunities to provide assistance to those in need. The importance which the GHD attests to its principled approach to humanitarian assistance – no matter how relatively broad and general – may prove to be more of an alienating rather than a binding factor in the emerging humanitarian construct.

Given the consequences of the contextual and transformational changes noted above, the GHD will want to consider its future role in at least five ways:

[i] -- **relevance of present membership.** The GHD will have to consider the extent to which its present membership reflects new types of bilateral and non-traditional donors. In suggesting that the relevance of the present donorship needs to be reassessed, one is not insensitive to the inevitable hazard that arises in efforts to be adequately all-inclusive or representative – namely, a level of breadth and heterogeneity that breeds dysfunction. Nevertheless, the GHD will want to consider more consistent and systematic linkages into other networks, eg, the World Economic Forum, to have a more sensitive view of donorship as well as to determine the best ways to make its own membership more representative;

[ii] -- **GHD in a fluid multipolar international context.** In light of the changing geopolitical and socio-economic contexts that are in various ways transforming the behaviour of states, themselves, as well as international institutions, the GHD may wish to consider a more regionally-based structure that will be able to be more sensitive to the particular crisis circumstances, cultures and context that define humanitarian boundaries;

[iii] – **new approaches to humanitarian action.** The GHD might wish to consider the ways that it understands the causes as well as responses to humanitarian crises. Not only are the types, dimensions and dynamics of humanitarian crises changing, but, so, too, are possible methods for dealing with them. In that regard, much of the humanitarian machinery that the resources of the GHD membership support to date needs to be reviewed. Capacities of international and non-governmental organisations should, for example, be assessed in terms of their relevance and suitability in dramatically changing contexts. Part of this exercise could also be linked to the sorts of regional constructs that may be appropriate for a more sensitive understanding about the ways that good donorship is perceived elsewhere in the world;

[iv] – **new alignments to add greater humanitarian coherence and a more resilience-oriented framework.** While the GHD may wish to review its membership and adjust to a changing international context, it, too, might seek ways to focus more on longer-term prevention and preparedness. There is growing awareness that far greater attention and resources are required to deal with vulnerability reduction and the promotion of resilience. The relevance of the GHD may well be judged by the ways that it can promote practical and systematic synergies between economic growth, development and humanitarian action;

[v] – **An agreed perspective on transformational change.** The GHD needs to undertake a more comprehensive analysis about the types of changes that will affect its present role, and in so doing to determine a role that could be more relevant in a futures context to the wider humanitarian sector.