

EU-Switzerland co-chairs

High Level Meeting 28 June 2019 Geneva, Switzerland Co-chairs' summary

The GHD co-chairs, European Union/DG ECHO and Switzerland hosted the second High-Level Meeting on the theme of **Innovative Funding and Delivery Modalities** on 28 June 2019 in Geneva. It counted with the participation of over 50 representatives of 28 GHD members and was co-chaired by Monique Pariat, Director General, European Commission's Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), and Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid.

The event started with a series of updates. Short progress reports on the GHD priority areas other than innovation, which include IHL, impact of Counter-Terrorism measures on humanitarian aid and impact of UNDS reform rollout on humanitarian response in the field, were provided by the co-chairs. GHD members confirmed their support to the co-chairs' approach and stressed that discussions should focus on aspects where GHD as a collective donor initiative could add value. For instance, some members noted that they would welcome concrete suggestions on how to best reconcile Counter-Terrorism measures and humanitarian aid.

GHD members were also informed on ongoing initiatives in relation to donor coordination on **cash**. The co-chairs presented the [Common Donor Approach for Humanitarian Cash Programming \(CDA\)](#) and the [Joint Donor Statement on Humanitarian Cash Transfers \(JDS\)](#) to be piloted in Bangladesh and Nigeria. Interested donors were invited to join the process in the pilot countries.

Innovative Financing Modalities:

Exchanges on the main theme of the meeting, innovative financing modalities, were informed by three sets of expert presentations. ODI HPG provided an overview of the current landscape of new financing partnerships for humanitarian impact, and highlighted opportunities as well as gaps in evidence, trust and expertise. Possible areas of engagement for GHD were also proposed. The ICRC informed on first lessons learnt in the conception and implementation of one of the pioneer instruments among new financing models in the humanitarian realm, the Humanitarian Impact Bond. UK and Germany, as well as the German Red Cross and the Centre for Disaster Protection, briefed on latest developments in crisis risk financing. The benefits of anticipatory approaches and the cost-effectiveness of investing more in early warning and early action were highlighted, drawing on experience from the field and empirical research.

The vivid debates proved that there is increasing momentum and interest in the area of innovative humanitarian financing. However, GHD members pointed out the need for a better understanding of and enhanced engagement with this new and fast-evolving "eco-system". Since this is still a new area for many donors, there is an appetite to learn more, both on specific tools and evidence on impacts, which is still scarce but evolving. A need to increase mutual trust and understanding between humanitarians and the new partners involved in these tools, including the private sector, was also noted. The relationship and complementarity with development actors and funding also remains to be explored. Certain approaches also require a change in mindsets and traditional ways of funding humanitarian response.

It was agreed that a continued knowledge exchange on opportunities, risks and experience related to this theme is necessary.

As far as the **role of GHD** in this area is concerned, the group noted that

- GHD can offer a platform to support the conversation by sharing practices, expertise and lessons learnt. A flexible way to continue the conversation among interested GHD members would be of value;
- Links with relevant partners and initiatives, for instance the Humanitarian Investing Initiative co-led by the WEF, ICRC and the World Bank, may also be worth exploring. At the same time, a dialogue with implementing partners may be sought to listen to their experience and needs;

- Collective messages may be a possible outcome of GHD discussions in this area. It is too early to think about a possible GHD principle/set of principles on innovative humanitarian financing.

The HLM agenda also included a short tour de table on **early warning**. The group would see merit in turning these early warning exchanges into more operational discussions.

Conclusions and way forward

The co-chairs concluded by appreciating the participants' active engagement in the meeting.

With regard to the way forward, the co-chairs proposed the following action points:

- The co-chairs will look into options to continue the conversation on innovative financing modalities with interested GHD members as well as to link up with relevant partners and initiatives in order to deepen understanding of risks and opportunities of those modalities;
- The co-chairs will look into options to prepare the early warning updates ahead of the next HLMs in order to turn these exchanges into more operational discussions;
- GHD members were reminded that the deadline to submit replies to the questionnaire on IHL is 12 July 2019. Collecting examples of GHD members' engagement in support to IHL will help inform future exchanges on this priority in the GHD context;
- One or two working-level meetings will be organized in the autumn to continue discussions on the different themes.