

EU – Switzerland co-chairmanship of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative 2020-2021

CONCEPT NOTE

Overall context

Today's challenging humanitarian context is not only complicated by existing threats (violations of International Humanitarian Law, impediments to humanitarian access, attacks against humanitarian and medical workers, politicization of humanitarian aid), but also new ones. With the unfolding of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 marks a turning point for the humanitarian system and global relief efforts on the ground. As needs are expected to reach unprecedented levels, the UN launched an inter-agency Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP). According to the UN, without action, the world may observe the first increase in global poverty since 1990 and 270 million people could face starvation by the end of the year¹. Even before COVID-19, 168 million people worldwide were predicted to need humanitarian assistance and protection². More than ever, it is a humanitarian imperative to ensure principled and collective action through GHD in these troubled times where global solidarity is at stake.

Overall objective

Positioning GHD as the most relevant platform for donor coordination and strategic engagement with the humanitarian ecosystem remains our overall objective, in line with donors' commitment to the GHD principles and in order to promote principled and effective humanitarian action and preserve the humanitarian space in an increasingly challenging environment.

In particular, the final year of our co-chairmanship will be a unique opportunity to further expand our strategic engagement with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on key issues of common interest related to the humanitarian system and aid efficiency. Our main ambition is to anchor GHD as the privileged donor platform and key interlocutor for exchanges with the IASC, notably at Principals' level.

Overarching theme

Promoting principled and effective humanitarian action and preserving the humanitarian space in an increasingly challenging context. What role for donors?

Donors must – individually and collectively – continue to address this challenging operational environment in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered in a principled, relevant, effective and efficient way. This responds to the 24 principles and good practice of Humanitarian Donorship, which all GHD members have signed up to, and which provide a framework to guide official humanitarian assistance for coherent donor action.

Expected outcomes within GHD (in-reach) and beyond GHD (outreach):

- Sharing of experiences on key challenges/concerns and donor practices within GHD, identifying scope for common action (**in-reach**)
- Raising key donor concerns (supported by field-based evidence) vis-à-vis relevant third parties, including common donor messages when possible/relevant (**outreach**)

¹ GHRP update, July 2020: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHRP-COVID19_July_update_0.pdf

² 2020 GHO, December 2019 : https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-2020_v9.1.pdf

GHD sub-themes

Pursuant to the initial concept note (2018 – 2020), the overarching theme will be explored through **three updated sub-themes and priorities**:

1) Exploring key challenges to principled humanitarian action linked to counter-terrorism measures, respect for IHL and access

The objective will be to identify and address challenges and concerns linked to counter-terrorism measures, IHL violations and access impediments, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indicative actions will include:

- Follow-up to the 'food for thought' on counter-terrorism measures in relation to funding agreements.
- COVID-19 lessons learnt and follow-up to IHL and access exchanges: beyond the 'food for thought' on impediments to humanitarian action.

2) UN Development System reform's progress: continued monitoring of opportunities, challenges and gaps three years on

The objective will be to continue monitoring the impact of the UNDS reform on humanitarian action in the field in its third year of implementation. Indicative actions will include:

- Follow-up conversation with ASG Robert Piper (building on the GHD HLM of July 2020) and/or the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC).
- Focus on specific country cases, as appropriate.

3) Innovative funding and delivery modalities: implementing the GHD Playbook on Organisational Readiness

The objective will be to promote the implementation of the GHD Playbook on Organisational Readiness. Indicative actions will include:

- Exploring synergies with new partners and initiatives (building on previous GHD webinars).

In addition to those thematic discussions, GHD meetings will provide an opportunity to exchange views and information on **specific issues**, such as:

- a **standing point on Early Warning – Early Action**, notably involving an IASC representative and building on earlier interactions in this area, with a view to sharing early warning signals on upcoming humanitarian crises and/or worsening existing ones as well as identifying the most appropriate (possibly joint/coordinated) early action(s)/response(s);

- **pressing issues**, such as particular pledging conferences, or other relevant developments, as and when needed.

Modalities of engagement

Our strategy will rely on two strands:

- a) engagement with the IASC Secretariat, IASC Results Groups and other related structures, mostly at expert-level;
- b) high-level engagement with the IASC Principals, building on previous exchanges with the co-chairs.

Other important elements will remain part of our approach, such as connecting GHD and the field; encouraging greater participation of GHD members at capital and principals' level; ensuring donors' commitment to the 24 GHD principles; as well as ensuring synergies with other relevant actors and initiatives, such as NGOs and the Grand Bargain. This will be done in an inclusive manner encompassing the whole membership, with the co-chairs as facilitators.