

PDR4

Preparedness, Risk Reduction, Resilience and Response

Mega disasters in Haiti, Pakistan and Japan as well as a growing number of slow on-set disasters and local and regional crises, such as those in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, highlight a trend of increased disaster risk and rise in the demand for humanitarian assistance worldwide. This trend requires a new approach to planning and delivering humanitarian assistance. Effective humanitarian assistance does not start in reaction to crises. Effective humanitarian assistance starts with strengthening preparedness, building resilience and planning for response to early warnings.

A series of information meetings organized by the Co-Chairs of the Good Humanitarian Donorship in 2011/12 provided an informal forum for discussion on preparedness principles as well as steps to translate principles into action. Discussions were grouped around four major themes:

- **Corporate or institutional preparedness.** How can we strengthen capacities of governments, agencies and civil society in order to ensure that a well prepared and coordinated international system reinforces national and local efforts when a disaster hits?
- **Strengthening preparedness at the country level.** How can we ensure that early warning leads to early action on the ground? How can we support long term disaster risk reduction and preparedness programmes in high risk countries?
- **Financing.** What obstacles do we face with regard to preparedness financing? What kind of funding mechanisms are needed? How can we improve preparedness funding in line with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation?
- **Partnerships.** Shifting the current response-based paradigm and taking a multi-hazard approach requires collective action. What can partnerships offer for strengthening preparedness and how can we better support partnerships?

Contributions to the discussions highlighted that partnerships will play a key role in shifting paradigms and creating political will to integrate preparedness into humanitarian action and development priorities. Networks such as the ISDR network of parliamentarians could be strengthened and broadened in scope. Joint activities of donor countries, emerging donors and disaster prone countries could increase attention and commitment to reducing risks and enhancing preparedness at the operational level.

The Good Humanitarian Donorship Group was encouraged to increase outreach activities based on partnerships and in coordination with other groups such as the OCHA Donor Support Group and the ISDR Donor Support Group. The Good Humanitarian Donorship Group was encouraged to continue close cooperation with the IASC Sub Working Group on Preparedness as well as the IASC Task Team on Preparedness Financing.

Discussions acknowledged the primacy of strengthening preparedness at local level. Following a twin track approach, medium- to long-term programmes to strengthen resilience and preparedness of local and national authorities could go along with better preparedness of international humanitarian agencies at country level. International agencies should be able to react without any delay to early warning signs indicating that a disaster would exceed national capacity.

Discussions revealed a multiplicity and diversity of actors and initiatives at international and national level. There is a need to promote coherent, strategic and concerted action.

Coherent early action of national authorities and international actors requires common analysis of risks in order to agree on common priorities. Building on existing tools, common risk analysis could be strengthened.

Discussions underlined the importance of communication and advocacy. The Good Humanitarian Donorship could help build political support and demand for preparedness through the provision of communication packages for decision makers and actors on the ground. Local actors in disaster prone countries need to know how to communicate their needs in order attract support. In order to promote solutions that work on the ground, collection and dissemination of best practices is of utmost importance.

Preparedness is cost effective but requires investment of financial resources. Discussions underlined the need to look into better prioritisation and effective use of funding. In order to make better use of existing funding for preparedness - bilateral and multilateral, humanitarian, development, climate change adaptation as well as crisis prevention - further analysis is needed. In this regard, discussions paid special attention to the Study commissioned by the IASC Task Team Preparedness Financing “Analysis of Financing Mechanisms and Funding Streams to enhance Emergency Preparedness”. Phase-2 of this study will start in June 2012, with a focus on country level analysis in 9 countries.

Participants agreed that advancing preparedness, risk reduction and resilience require an integrated approach by humanitarian and development actors. Integrating risk reduction and preparedness into development programming would be crucial, but remains a challenge. External development aid is often not available for all disaster prone countries, but limited to respective partner countries. In addition, development planning processes are not guided by the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship.

Preparedness will remain high on the humanitarian agenda. **The GHD Co-Chairs invite interested GHD members to join a new GHD Workstream on Preparedness, Risk Reduction, Resilience and Response.**