

Good Humanitarian Donorship Plenary Meeting, 14 December 2017

Summary

The meeting focused on options for GHD engagement with the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) and a discussion on strengths and weaknesses of the Humanitarian Response Plans.

1. IASC – GHD engagement

Rudi Müller (Director OCHA Geneva) and Tanja Schümer-Cross (IASC Secretariat) expressed interest and readiness to engage with GHD. Commenting on our asks for more transparency (“black box”) and openness on work planning/outcomes etc., Rudi explained that the IASC Secretariat was suffering from severe understaffing, which is hoped to improve after merging the secretariats of the IASC and the Emergency Directors Group (EDG) in the context of OCHA’s ongoing restructuring. The IASC is currently also reviewing its subordinate bodies (Task Teams, Reference Groups) in order to streamline activities, both in view of the ongoing UN reform and the Grand Bargain processes.

In view of a more strategic dialogue with the IASC both at technical and senior levels, GHD members and OCHA agreed we should not create formal structures/forums, and that engagement should have clear shared objectives. Members agreed that greater visibility of the IASC’s work would allow us to determine on which issues and how GHD could best engage. GHD members agreed on next steps: to (1) consult capitals and propose systemic issues for discussion with IASC at Principal level (e.g. at the yearly GHD HLM) and (2) identify common areas of work on which IASC working groups and GHD workstreams could have joint discussions (e.g. by inviting each other) or cooperation (e.g. a joint event). Members are invited to come forward with concrete proposals by the next GHD plenary meeting.

2. Humanitarian Financing and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)

GHD members, while acknowledging major recent improvements, identified a number of shortcomings of the current HRPs: (1) high dependence on UN presence on the ground, potentially overlooking needs in other places; (2) insufficient coverage (certain actors such as ICRC and their funding not included); (3) missing analysis of the consequences of underfunding, which would help prioritization; (4) missing prioritization across sectors and across contexts; (5) snapshots rather than continuous monitoring; (6) downsizing or inflation of numbers for political reasons (donors would prefer objective and reliable data); (7) persisting disconnect between the HRPs and the internal planning and programming of UN agencies and INGOs, i.e. the HRPs are not being used to their full potential. There was also a feeling that pledging events for specific contexts should be limited in number (risk of inflation) and bring value-added in terms of additional information or awareness-raising. Several GHD donors highlighted that there is an inherent conflict between un-earmarked, flexible funding and the call to pledge context-specific funding. OCHA took note of these observations.

3. 2018 GHD HLM

Due to time constraints, parameters of the next GHD HLM could not be discussed in depth, but there was a certain preference for New York, given that both ECOSOC HAS and the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting will take place there in early June 2018.