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Interviews available in English, French, Spanish, Danish and Portuguese

Index reveals donor governments are not fulfilling their commitments to keep their humanitarian assistance independent from other interests

Global report launched this week alerts to the growing politicisation and militarisation of governments' humanitarian aid

- **Since 2007, The Humanitarian Response Index ranks 23 leading donor governments' performance in humanitarian crises –in 2010 in 10 out of the 14 humanitarian crises analysed, political interests influenced aid decisions**
- **Denmark, Ireland and New Zealand are at the top of this year's Index - followed by Norway, Sweden and the European Commission**
- **Report urges governments to go “back to basics” at a time of increased needs and financial austerity: support neutral, independent humanitarian aid based on assistance and protection needs of affected populations, and also invest further in prevention.**

Brussels, December 10th - A significant number of humanitarian organizations believe that the donor governments that fund them are not keeping humanitarian assistance independent of political, economic or military objectives, according to DARA's *Humanitarian Response Index 2010* report, launched this week during the European Development Days in Brussels.

“Political agendas have impeded the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance to millions of people in need,” said Ross Mountain, Director General of DARA and Former Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nevertheless, Mountain pointed that *“Our field research indicates that people working in humanitarian agencies, including government officials working in humanitarian aid, are fully committed to preserving principled approaches to humanitarian assistance: the problem begins when other parts of governments seek to subordinate assistance to other aims.”*

The report ranks 23 leading governments' performance in 14 crises, which received over 60 percent of global humanitarian funding in 2009. The foundation of the analysis is the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship donors developed and signed in 2003. **Denmark, Ireland and New Zealand lead the Humanitarian Response Index 2010, followed by Norway, Sweden and the European Commission.** These donors do well in prioritizing the needs of people in crisis areas and keeping aid independent of other objectives. Nevertheless, challenges persist across all 23 donor governments analysed.

The politicisation of humanitarian aid has devastating consequences, which effectively means that access to affected populations is threatened and civilians are not receiving the protection and assistance they need. The lives of humanitarian workers have also been endangered by this worrying trend: in 2009, 276 humanitarian workers were affected by poor security conditions, 102 were killed, 85 wounded and 95 kidnapped.

Commenting on the report, Kathryn Schick, Director General of VOICE, a network representing 86 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide said *"The Humanitarian Response Index is an extremely important advocacy tool for all humanitarian actors. The report is timely especially when humanitarian departments are fully committed to continuing with the impartiality of aid and foreign affairs departments are pursuing different objectives."*

The Humanitarian Response Index 2010 also highlights the growing concern that vulnerability due to climate change is set to **increase needs in the immediate future but with less resources available**, further stretching the capacity of the humanitarian system to its limits.

In 2009, 23 donor governments (including the EC) provided over US\$11 billion of humanitarian assistance. This is a decrease of about 8% compared to humanitarian funding in 2008, with more cutbacks expected in 2011. However, the UN appeal for humanitarian operations in 2011 calls for \$US 7.4 billion, one of the largest appeals ever, dramatically highlighting the need for increased efforts to support effective, impartial and independent humanitarian aid across the world.

"Donor governments are making vital contributions to saving lives in crises and catastrophes," said Ross Mountain *"yet adopting a principled approach is the most effective way of having an efficient humanitarian response, it is a way of delivering value for money and maximizing impact in this austere financial era."*

The Humanitarian Response Index 2010 calls on governments to keep their humanitarian aid independent of political, security or economic objectives, advocating strongly for the protection of civilians, making greater investment in prevention and engaging with affected populations- listening to their needs and strengthening their own capacity to respond to humanitarian crises.

Donor	HRI 2010 RANKING
Denmark	1
Ireland	2
New Zealand	3
Norway	4
Sweden	5
European Commission	6
Switzerland	7
United Kingdom	8
Netherlands	9
Luxembourg	10
Finland	11
Canada	12
Australia	13
Germany	14
France	15
Japan	16
Spain	17
Belgium	18
United States	19
Italy	20

Further information: For individual country performance see contact details above.

www.daraint.org/humanitarian-response-index/humanitarian-response-index-2010/

THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX 2010

Between November 2009 and June 2010, HRI field teams interviewed 475 senior representatives of humanitarian organisations working in the 14 crisis-affected countries studied this year. Teams met the majority of the operational response agencies that receive donor government funding for the crisis, as well as government officials, local authorities and civil society organisations. In addition, teams interviewed over 75 donor representatives in the crises studied.

Crisis countries visited: Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Indonesia, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Yemen, Haiti and Zimbabwe. These crises (except Haiti) received over 60 percent of the funding mobilised to respond to crises in 2009.

The Humanitarian Response Index aims to identify and promote good donor practice and ensure greater transparency, accountability and impact of humanitarian assistance for the millions of people suffering the effects of crises – all the more important in these times of increased need and reduced aid budgets. For more information, please visit

<http://www.daraint.org/humanitarian-response-index/>

DARA

Founded in 2003, DARA is an independent organization committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of aid for vulnerable populations suffering from conflict, disasters and climate change. For more information, please visit www.daraint.org