

Humanitarian Response Index 2010 Overview Fact Sheet

What does The Humanitarian Response Index 2010 reveal?

The Humanitarian Response Index 2010 **reveals** that:

- ***Politicisation and instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid is an escalating trend.*** Donor governments are not fulfilling their commitments to keep their humanitarian assistance independent from political, security or other interests. While most donor governments are perceived by the organisations they fund as focusing on humanitarian objectives when allocating aid, a significant number believe that donor governments are not keeping humanitarian assistance independent of political, economic or military objectives.
- ***Continued challenges for access and protection.*** Donor governments do not still support protection of civilian efforts adequately to ensure protection needs of populations are met.
- ***Prevention, preparedness and linking humanitarian relief and development.*** Donor governments are also failing to adequately support prevention, risk reduction and recovery efforts. This is vital in order to prevent and minimise human suffering when all scenarios point to increased humanitarian needs.
- ***Supporting wider humanitarian reform.*** Donor governments also need to step up their leadership in bringing about changes and improvements to the way the world responds to crises, in particular, by improving their support for learning and accountability towards the people aid efforts seek to assist.

What are the basic facts?

- **An estimated 350 million people were affected by major disasters, conflicts and crises in 2009.**
 - There are over 10 million refugees in the world, and 27 million internally displaced people;
 - Tens of millions more lives are disrupted due to disasters, conflicts and emergencies each year.
- **In 2009, about US\$ 11.5 billion of humanitarian assistance was provided by 22 main donor governments and the European Commission, members of OECD's Development Assistance Committee.**
 - However, the UN reported a funding gap of just over 50% in late July 2009 for their humanitarian programs, and a similar amount in 2010.
- **The global economic crisis has led several donor governments to announce cutbacks to aid programmes, though many are attempting to maintain humanitarian assistance at current levels.**
 - However, humanitarian needs are greater than ever, and expected to increase dramatically due to climate change, disasters and conflicts.

- **In 2009, 276 humanitarian workers were affected by poor security conditions; 102 were killed, 85 wounded and 92 were kidnapped.**
 - The increasing politicization of aid means that in many countries, aid workers are no longer perceived as neutral, impartial and independent from government interests. This is affecting access to people in need of assistance and putting humanitarian workers lives at risk.
- **Out of 23 donor governments, none received a score higher than 6.8 on the ten-point scale of the Humanitarian Response Index.** There is still great room for improvement for donor governments to apply good practice and meet their commitments to support effective humanitarian action.

What are the key findings about the performance of government donors?

The Humanitarian Response Index, published by DARA is not an index on the quantity of funding provided by Western governments. Instead, it looks beyond funding to assess critical issues around the quality and effectiveness of donor practice in humanitarian aid.

Are donor responses based on needs of affected populations, and not subordinated to political, strategic or other interests?

- Donor governments generally do well in this area, particularly in survey-based indicators, indicating the humanitarian organizations are reasonably satisfied with the way governments are responding to needs. However, there is a widespread concern amongst humanitarian organizations that aid is being politicized by donor governments and recipient governments, affecting their ability to access populations and provide assistance.
- More than 60 % of donors received a score of 5 or below on the index's ten-point scale for the quantitative indicator for *Timeliness of funding to complex emergencies*. Meanwhile, donors' performance in the indicator for *Timeliness of funding to sudden onset disasters* receives a higher average score but there a huge difference between donors.

Do donors support strengthening of local capacity, prevention of future crises and long-term recovery?

- Performance in this area needs to be improved by all donors: less than 40% of the donors score above the overall average.
- In qualitative (survey based) indicators, the perception of donors is generally quite poor, for indicators on *Beneficiary participation in programming* and *Support for prevention and preparedness*. Donors like Finland, New Zealand, Ireland, France or Japan got below average scores for beneficiary participation, while France, Belgium, Italy, Japan, and Spain scored well below the average in the area of *Prevention and preparedness*.

Do donor policies and practices effectively support the work of humanitarian organizations?

- In general, donors showed reasonably good performance in this aspect, which assesses how well donors support the work of humanitarian organizations in terms of funding, coordination and other elements of good practice.
- However, 75% of donor governments fail to score above 5 on the index's ten-point scale for *un-earmarked funding* backed by similar perceptions at the field level: humanitarian organization felt that only 4 out of 20 donors are considered as good performers with scores significantly above the overall average for *Flexible funding* arrangements.

- This means that too many donors are still imposing restriction on humanitarian organizations on how, when, where or what kind of aid they can provide, and to whom.

Do donors respect and promote international humanitarian law and actively promote humanitarian access to enable protection of civilians affected by crises?

- This area shows the greatest range of scores is in terms of the perception of donor behavior by humanitarian organizations in how they promote safe access, protection and respect for international humanitarian law.
- On the survey-based indicator around *Facilitating humanitarian access*, which asks humanitarian organizations on how well donors support access to affected populations, donors scores ranged a low of 3.84 (Spain) to a high of 7.78 (New Zealand). The average score is only 5.22 on the index's ten-point scale.
- In the indicator for donor *Advocacy towards local authorities*, 80% of donors need to improve according to the survey results.

Do donors contribute to accountability and learning in humanitarian action?

- 50% of the OECD/DAC donors have significantly lower scores than the average in this pillar; with particularly low scores for donors like Belgium, France, Italy, Japan or Spain.
- Based on the HRI survey results, donors clearly need to improve in the area of *Accountability towards beneficiaries: only 25% of donors scored significantly above the average (donors such Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, EC and Germany*
- The indicator of *Support for learning and evaluations* humanitarian organizations felt donor did not provide sufficient support to implement recommendations from evaluations.