

HRI 2009 Overview Fact Sheet

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Overview:

This year's HRI report shows there is significant room for improvement in terms of donors' individual and collective performance. Only six donors achieve scores above seven out of ten points on the HRI's consolidated scale, while nearly half of the donors assessed do not achieve scores above six points. Collectively, donors have made some positive moves to address some gaps in the humanitarian system, such as improving the use of needs assessments, but much more needs to be done to apply good practice, particularly in the areas of access and protection and prevention and preparedness, in order to save lives and to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

Basic facts:

- About US\$ 10.4 billion of humanitarian assistance was provided by the 22 donor governments and the European Commission, members of OECD's Development Assistance Committee, in 2008 (OECD) to support the needs of over 250 million people affected by crisis (UN OCHA)
- This is an increase but not enough to meet needs: in late October the UN alone reported a funding gap of US\$3.6 billion for programs covering 43 million people (source: UN OCHA)
- Other parts of the humanitarian system, such as the Red Cross Red Crescent and national and international NGOs, are also facing serious constraints due to decreased funding and increased demands for services
- Some reports estimate that by 2030, climate change, disasters and environmental degradation will lead to over 660 million people affected and 500 million deaths (Global Humanitarian Forum)
- Other estimates forecast humanitarian costs to rise by up to 1600% percent due to increased demands from climate change, disasters, conflicts and crises (Tufts University)

Main areas for donor improvement

Neutrality and impartiality of aid:

- Indicators around the influence of political, economic or security objectives on donors' humanitarian assistance are some of the lowest scored in the HRI
- In field surveys, nearly 40% of respondents felt that donors' humanitarian assistance was influenced by political, economic, military/security interests
- Nearly a quarter of respondents reported that their donors placed conditions on funding that compromised their ability to carry out effective aid programs
- Indicators around the application by donor governments of international humanitarian law also scored low, with an overall average score of 5.87 out of 10

Prevention, preparedness and risk reduction:

- Donor support for local capacity and funding for international disaster risk mitigation mechanisms receive the lowest average scores in the index
- In field interviews, a quarter of respondents stated that their government donors did not encourage or facilitate incorporating risk reduction measures into their programs
- A similar number (25%) claimed that donors did not support actions to prevent and strengthen preparedness for future crises
- Fifty percent of respondents reported donors did not work with them to find long-term funding arrangements to address ongoing needs
- Over 30% of respondents stated that their donors did not work with them to strengthen and maintain their organizational preparedness and response capacity

Access and protection:

- In ten of the 13 crises covered by this year's Humanitarian Response Index, access of humanitarian organizations to affected populations was a major problem
- Many of the problems with access were due to barriers from the crisis-affected governments
- Last year, 260 humanitarian aid workers were killed, kidnapped or seriously injured, one of the highest figures on record. Attacks against aid workers increased four-fold in the past decade (source: UN OCHA)
- According to the HRI field survey, only half of donors actively worked to facilitate safe access and protection of humanitarian workers

- In field interviews, one in ten respondents felt donors did not do enough to support the protection of affected populations – but this figure only applies to donors that funded protection activities (many do not address these needs).

Learning and accountability:

- In the HRI field survey, only one in five of the people interviewed were “very familiar” with the 2003 declaration of Good Humanitarian Donorship which the world’s main donor governments committed themselves to in 2005
- Less than half were “somewhat familiar” and a third were “not familiar at all”, indicating that humanitarian organizations are not clear what they can expect from donors in terms of applying good practices
- Donor fared poorly in the indicator for conducting evaluations, with one of the lowest average scores in the HRI
- Only one in five respondents stated that their donors regularly monitor if they were applying quality standards in their programs
- Thirty percent of respondents felt donors did not provide them with timely, transparent and accessible information on their funding and decision-making

Data sources: Unless otherwise noted, all data is from the HRI 2009 index. Field survey data is based on 1589 interview responses to a survey of humanitarian organizations in 13 crises that received funding from OECD/DAC governments for their response.