





Crisis reports
Haiti

Haiti at a glance

The crisis and the response

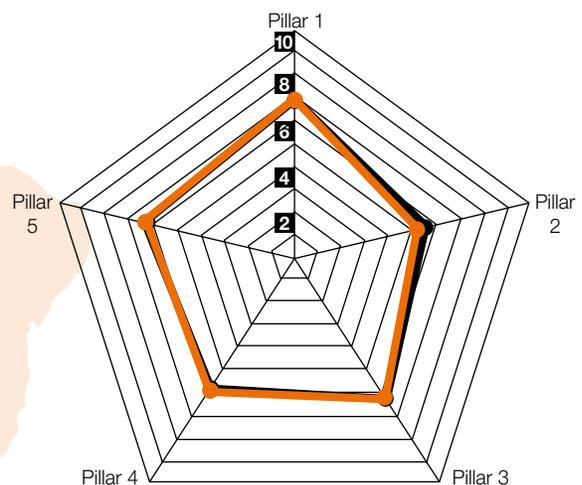
- The US military's post-earthquake management of entry to Haiti prioritised US flights and expensive search and rescue missions and delayed the response of experienced actors.
- An influx of small, often in-experienced, INGOs reduced the quality of the humanitarian response.
- It has proven uniquely challenging to determine the number of humanitarian actors, the total level of funding and to prepare accurate 3W (who does what, where) information.
- OCHA's ability to undertake basic post-emergency tasks was undermined by low capacity and sidelining of the HCT.
- The cluster system was weakened by the number of actors and failure to sufficiently involve the Haitian state or civil society.

Donor performance

- Funding decisions were largely made at headquarter level and not based on needs assessments.
- Donor failure to insist on UN and national government leadership of the response exacerbated frustrations and duplication of effort.
- Donors have funded INGOs to provide basic services and paid little attention to building the capacity of the Haitian state or civil society.
- There is an unprecedented mismatch between reconstruction pledges (US\$5.3 billion promised in March 2010) and actual disbursements (US\$509 by early October 2010).
- Looking prematurely towards recovery, donors have been slow to acknowledge the ongoing humanitarian crisis and mounting evidence of failure to provide adequate shelter or protection for the 1.3 million homeless displaced.

Key challenges and areas for improvement

- Donors should encourage simpler, compatible reporting formats.
- Quicker pooled fund disbursement is imperative.



—●— Haiti
—●— All Crisis Average

HRI 2010 scores by pillar

- Pillar 1** Responding to needs
- Pillar 2** Prevention, risk reduction and recovery
- Pillar 3** Working with humanitarian partners
- Pillar 4** Protection and international law
- Pillar 5** Learning and accountability

Note: Since the response to Haiti took place in 2010 and a new field questionnaire was used, survey responses from Haiti were not included in the calculations of the index.

- Donors must require greater accountability to beneficiaries and the Haitian government from INGOs they fund.
- Donors must acknowledge the pressing need to provide permanent housing for the displaced. They should only fund actors committed to sustainable and equitable urban development and transparent land allocation and registration procedures.

Haiti

Overwhelmed by the response?

The 7.0 magnitude earthquake on 12 January 2010 killed at least 220,000 people – over two percent of Haiti’s population – and displaced around 2.3 million people (OCHA 2010a). It impacted densely populated urban areas of the poorest country in the Americas while it was still recovering from a series of devastating hurricanes in 2008. Government response capacity was severely limited as 13 of 15 ministries were destroyed and an estimated one in five federal government employees was killed. Senior government and United Nations (UN) officials were among the dead (CBC News 2010).

The scale of the disaster, and the international response, was comparable to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. Amid the ongoing response, comprehensive evaluation and analysis is not yet possible. The answers to key questions remain unclear: Were there too many response actors? Are evaluation lessons from the tsunami being heeded? Has the international community shown it can respond effectively to a mega crisis in an urban environment? Will the post-earthquake promise made by Bill Clinton and other key actors to “build back better” be fulfilled? Or will Haitians feel let down by donor promises to a nation accustomed to aid dependency and unpredictable funding? It should be stressed this is a preliminary crisis report, based on a rapid mission to Haiti. A more considered analysis of how donors responded will be presented in Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) 2011.

The initial response

Haiti was a media-driven emergency. Harrowing images compelled action. Many donors attempted – insofar as possible in the immediate aftermath of such a major disaster – to base their funding on needs assessments. At the same time, many feel that major donors felt impelled to act before they necessarily had sufficient information.

The massive outpouring of international solidarity and the rapid, initially United States (US)-led response, helped avoid the potential further deaths and epidemics that were initially feared. Within a day of the disaster, the US military had arrived – the first of a contingent which grew to 22,200 personnel (US Southern Command 2010). Taking over the Port-au-Prince airport, the US military handled over 150 flights a day. US decisions on which flights to prioritise caused controversy, particularly when Hollywood star John Travolta was allowed to land his own Boeing 707 – carrying ready-to-eat rations and fellow Scientologists – while there was a backlog of 800 flights awaiting a landing slot (CBS News 2010a). Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) – which had been working in Haiti for 19 years – protested delays in aid delivery due to diversion of several initial flights to the neighbouring

Dominican Republic (MSF 2010). Brazil – which lost 18 of its soldiers serving in the military component of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) which it leads – was indignant when three of its aid flights were denied landing permission and joined France in formally complaining. A World Food Programme (WFP) officer noted that US military priorities “are to secure the country. Ours are to feed,” (Carroll & Nasaw 2010). There was concern about the US military’s undue focus on “security”. A US medical non-governmental organisation (NGO) found “an element of racism in believing that Haitians were going to riot and they had to be controlled,” (Bhatt 2010).

Many humanitarian representatives interviewed by the HRI team stressed the difficulties of coordination with military contingents, particularly those from the US. Cooperation between the incoming US military and the long-established MINUSTAH military contingent was problematic. This indicates that there is still significant effort needed to implement the Oslo guidelines – a framework for the use of military assets in response to natural disasters drawn up in 2004 and updated in 2007 (OCHA 2007). However, despite the frustrations expressed by many, there is general agreement among humanitarians that soldiers saved lives and enabled access by rapidly repairing the airport and port.

Doubts about search and rescue

The despatch of dozens of search and rescue (SAR) teams – six from the United Kingdom (UK) alone (Department for International Development 2010) – saved 134 lives and was hailed by the UN as the “highest number of lives” ever saved after an earthquake disaster (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2010). More than 1,900 SAR staff were deployed. Coordination was difficult in a crowded urban space and SAR teams lacked counterparts as Haitian civil protection teams were initially absent. French and Chinese SAR teams were criticised for prioritising the location of their own nationals, while Cuba and Israel were among those reported not to have kept records of where they had searched.

International teams got the publicity, but far more people were rescued by Haitians. One donor representative told the HRI team that the cost of each life saved by the SAR teams it supported was around US\$1 million. The donor community should to reflect on the costs of SAR teams compared to the benefits of investing in local response capacity. It is inevitable that SAR teams will be despatched after disasters, but dialogue is needed to determine appropriate numbers and to ensure better coordination.

Plethora of humanitarian actors

The earthquake generated an enormous response from private and public supporters of established humanitarian organisations, but also a wave of new actors unfamiliar with Haiti or post-disaster response. Close proximity to the US meant that, in the words of one HRI mission interviewee, “the barrier to entry was the cost of a plane ticket.” The exact number of actors remains unclear. Within three weeks of the disaster, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that there were 400 humanitarian agencies and a subsequent real-time evaluation estimated there were 2,000 operational agencies (IASC 2010). There are reports that there may be 8,000 national and international humanitarian and aid agencies in Port-au-Prince (BBC News 2010b), perhaps giving Haiti the highest number per capita of any country (Macnaughton 2010).

The result is a patchwork of efforts that make it difficult to get an overall picture of what is being done, where and by whom. Respondents noted that many international non-governmental organisation (INGO) and UN newcomers rarely consulted long-established agencies with experienced staff. One evaluation judged “the uncontrollable flow of frequently inexperienced small NGOs” as a major factor limiting the quality of the humanitarian response (Grünwald et al. 2010). The World Bank regrets “the arrival of many agencies new to the country tending to prioritize unilateral action over coordination” (World Bank Group 2010).

Needs assessments

Some humanitarians expressed concerns about the timeliness and accuracy of needs assessments in such a major disaster. Others argue the UN did as well as it could have been expected, given the tragic reality that UN staff and their dependents were among the dead. The HRI team was also told of concerns that the results of a Rapid Inter-Agency Needs Assessment for Haiti were only published in mid-February. Reportedly, its results were not seen by many donors before funding decisions were made. Some actors did not know it took place. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee report lamented that “assessments in the early stages of the Haiti response followed different standards, methods, and focuses, thereby hampering efforts to create an overview of cross-cluster needs,” (IASC 2010).

The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) has been criticised on several grounds, including lack of a gender perspective. In a submission to the March 2010 donors conference in New York, a coalition of women’s groups highlighted failure to consult with women earthquake victims, the absence of gender concerns in Haiti – as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – and failure to acknowledge, or seek to remedy, past gender inequalities in Haitian public institutions and access to state services (Haiti Gender Equality Collective 2010).

Haiti aid hard to track

The HRI 2009 noted that donor response to hurricanes in 2008 was disappointing (Gasser 2009). This was not the case after the earthquake. A massive influx of funding – probably 80 percent of it from the general public – left many humanitarian actors with more resources than anticipated. As with the tsunami, the challenge is for all actors to use resources effectively to meet immediate and long-term needs.

The exact amount of money donated to the Haiti response will never be known. According to OCHA’s Financial Tracking System (FTS), as of 9 October 2010, over US\$3.5 billion had been raised. However, significant donations have not been reported to the FTS. By far, the largest response has been from the US

– according to the FTS, 34.7 percent of the total – far ahead of Canada (4.1 percent). As of 9 October 2010, 70 percent of the funds sought in the 2010 Revised Humanitarian Appeal had been provided. So widespread was international sympathy that numerous non-traditional donors – many themselves major recipients of humanitarian assistance such as Afghanistan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – contributed funds.

A factor further complicating quantification is the significant role played by states such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and the Dominican Republic who were among the first to send medical and rescue teams and have subsequently provided substantial bilateral aid. These non-traditional donors have largely worked outside established coordination mechanisms. Cuba’s substantial humanitarian presence – as with its 2004 post tsunami and 2005 Pakistan earthquake missions – has gone largely unreported (Fawthrop 2010).

FTS data suggesting that private donations total US\$1.24 billion, 36.8 percent of the total humanitarian assistance, is generally believed to be an under-estimate. Many INGOs reported an unprecedented response from their supporters. By July 2010, the American Red Cross had received US\$468 million (CNN 2010). MSF reported receiving 91 million euros in private donations (MSF 2010) and in the UK, the public provided £101 million for the work of major NGOs (Disasters Emergency Committee 2010).

There is a major mismatch between reconstruction pledges and actual disbursements. In March 2010, 59 donors at the Haiti Donor's conference pledged US\$6.04 billion in support of the Action Plan for Recovery and Development. However, by late September, only US\$538.3 million had been delivered (Office of the Special Envoy 2010). The US has not delivered anything towards its US\$1.15 billion pledge. Analysts warn that US procrastination in delivering on its pledges is setting a negative precedent for other major donors (IRIN 2010a).

The separately-administered Haiti Reconstruction Fund was pledged US\$509 million, but by early October 2010 had only received US\$66.8 million. Over 80 percent has been provided by Brazil, with no delivery of significant pledges made by the US, Spain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia or France (Haiti Reconstruction Fund 2010).

In October 2010, the Haitian prime minister lamented that many aid pledges subsequently factored in debt forgiveness or money already spent on the humanitarian emergency (Reuters 2010). A network of Haitian civil society actors notes that the process of securing funding "is characterised by a near-total exclusion of Haitian social actors and a weak and non-coordinated participation by representatives of the Haitian state," (Bell & Field 2010).

There is uncertainty about how and where public and private funding will be used. An Associated Press study of US federal government documents found that 33 cents in every US\$ of immediate post-earthquake US aid went to the military and one cent to the Haitian government (The Grio 2010). The International Peace Operations Association (IPOA) – the trade body of private military companies (PMCs) – held a post-earthquake sales fair in Miami to showcase their expertise – pledging to donate profits to the Clinton-Bush Haiti Relief Fund (Fenton 2010). This prompted complaints from US activists concerned at their increasing influence and disregard for human rights and national sovereignty (Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti 2010). US government funds have been provided to PMCs for damage assessments, security guards, shipping, clean-up, construction and long-term planning (*ibid*), drawing parallels with "disaster profiteering" of Blackwater in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Scahill 2010).

Should camps have been prioritised?

A key emerging issue for discussion are the implications of the initial decision to focus aid on makeshift settlements in Port-au-Prince. Failure to provide assistance in the provinces to which many residents had fled caused many to return to the city. Many humanitarians argue that the focus should have been on where people were living when the quake struck, rather than creating camps where, in the words of one informant, people "are putting down roots" as living conditions are often better than they enjoyed prior to the disaster.

Critics point to the insufficient coverage of services and inability to adequately manage the 1,300 informal camps, engage beneficiaries in aid distribution or provide adequate shelter and protection. It is clear that many camps are unlikely to be dismantled as quickly as once anticipated. There is no clear communication from either the government or many international actors as to what services camp residents can expect or what long-term shelter plans are being developed. One critic contends that despite declarations of commitment to recovery "the UN and Haitian government have done little more than move citizens from one set of temporary housing to another," (Haiti Advocacy Working Group 2010). Some response actors strongly dispute this assessment.

Many urban sites where survivors live have commercial value. A survey in six camps found that coercive attempts to evict earthquake victims are intensifying and alleged that "people are not consulted about their needs and aid has trickled to a halt" (Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti 2010). A Canadian-Haitian academic team found that seven months after the disaster, 40 percent of camp residents did not have access to water and 30 percent lacked toilets of any kind (Schuller 2010). Despite the fact that many INGOs talk about empowering residents to select recipients and distribute aid, some commentators argue that committees are unrepresentative, perhaps as a result of INGOs' lack of local knowledge. Less than a third of people living in camps are reported to be able to name those on "their" committee. Two-thirds of members are men, despite well-documented concerns about gender-based violence (*ibid*). The shelter cluster lead, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), has been criticised for not appointing managers in each camp. Others point out it was unrealistic to ask IOM to assume responsibility for so many sites and that many INGOs were reluctant to assume camp management responsibilities, given these challenges.

Bill Clinton's many hats

In no other response to a natural disaster has one individual exercised as much influence as former US President Bill Clinton. Wearing various hats, he is UN Special Envoy, co-chair of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), head of the Clinton Foundation and co-chair of the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund (which has raised over US\$50 million). Several people interviewed by the HRI team acknowledged Clinton's ability to focus attention on Haiti. He is a vociferous critic of the US politicians who have blocked congressional approval of pledged US reconstruction aid (Katz 2010). However, informants noted the frequent gap between his rhetoric and the actions of both the Clinton Foundation and the Special Envoy's Office. Some interviewees reported that the Foundation does not properly coordinate with either the Haitian Department of Civil Protection (DPC) or clusters. Clinton's relationship with the US State Department remains unclear. Many complained of the arrogance of Clinton Foundation staffers – described by one informant as a “bunch of 24-year-olds” running around telling government officials and humanitarian workers what to do.

Clearing debris and allocating land

It has been estimated that only five percent of the 26 million cubic yards of rubble has been removed (Smith 2010). Clearing rubble is clearly a huge technical challenge. The question of who owns the land on which destroyed houses lie and where to take rubble is unresolved and the government is unable to make decisions. In some upmarket neighbourhoods the private sector is shifting rubble, but in general, little is being done and the fleet of available trucks is grossly inadequate. Many donors are unwilling to meet the cost of debris clearance, estimated by the Prime Minister's office at US\$300 million.

The IHRC is co-chaired by former US President Bill Clinton and Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive. Half of its directors are from multilateral financial institutions, the others members of Haitian elite families. After a stormy parliamentary session, the IHRC was given controversial emergency powers to make land use decisions without the need for any public consultation. Critics argue that landowners and the IHRC are more interested in developing sweatshop factories, offices and upmarket housing than providing land for sustainable housing and livelihoods for the displaced (Albert 2010). It is reported that there are disagreements among donors about how the IHRC approval structure should work, who is authorised to sign off disbursement of funds from the World Bank-administered trust fund and how much discretion should be given to the IHRC secretariat (IRIN 2010b).

Inclusion of Haitians in recovery planning

For decades, the capacity of the Haitian state has been weakened by the “brain drain” from the Haitian government to internationally-funded NGOs and INGOs. The UN Assistant Secretary-General of Peacekeeping Operations has sympathised with the government's post-earthquake frustrations, noting that the international community has a long history of weakening the national government by working with outside organisations: “we complain because the government is not able to (lead), but we are partly responsible” (Katz 2010). Decades of funnelling aid through NGOs has left state institutions weak and made Haitians look to NGOs for basic public services in a country described by the US Institute of Peace as “a republic of NGOs” (Kristoff & Panarelli 2010). An INGO director reflected the reality of the frequent lack of state presence by telling the HRI team that “by default we are taking on state responsibilities.” Haitians appear to increasingly resent the relative affluence of foreign aid workers (Salignon & Evrard 2010). Many critics note the limited formal avenues for either the Haitian government or civil society to shape recovery programming (Bell 2010).

OCHA struggles to fulfil basic roles

OCHA, like many organisations, has had high staff turnover. A Head of Office was only appointed in August 2010, following several interim appointments. The basic “who, what, where” information that OCHA tried to gather relied on people providing information, instead of OCHA staff actively going out and obtaining it. Information systems were mostly Internet-based, which – in the words of one informant is “sexy, but doesn't necessarily work” in circumstances where many organisations had problematic Internet access. Most interviewees did not rate positively the Haiti oneresponse.info website. Frustrated with OCHA's system, several clusters resorted to using Google Groups and Google Docs, with one person describing Haiti as “a Google response”. An incoming cluster lead noted that it would have been better to use old-fashioned Excel sheets, rather than fancier Internet-based systems.

Managing and monitoring the Emergency Relief Response Fund (ERRF), a pooled funding mechanism established in Haiti in 2008, has been challenging for OCHA. In the early months of the response, there was only one OCHA staffer in Haiti to deal with proposals for ERRF support, so the vetting process was passed to clusters. Clusters with strong coordinators submitted more projects than those with weaker leadership. In principle, the ERRF offers a rare opportunity for Haitian NGOs to access international funds. Several submitted projects to the protection cluster only to get no reply for several months. Some informants note its positive elements but others criticise the ERRF for its lack of transparency. It is not yet clear whether efforts to support national NGO access to the ERRF will bear fruit.

Humanitarian Country Team sidelined

At the beginning of the crisis, the pre-existing *Comité Permanent Inter-Organisations* (CPIO) – later restyled the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) – did not meet for over two weeks. It was convened only after NGOs on the CPIO wrote to the UN Haiti Humanitarian Coordinator and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in UN headquarters. Failure to assert the primary strategic decision-making role of the HCT enabled the emergence of a Coordination Support Committee (CSC) which brought together the government, certain parts of the UN, some donors and the US and Canadian militaries. The CSC, while probably one of the more functional coordination mechanisms, did not involve non-UN actors. The HRI team was told that several HCT meetings simply became occasions to provide information on what the CSC was doing. As the US and Canadian military presence declined, so too did the role of the CSC. However, an important issue remains to be addressed by donors – why did they allow the functions of the HCT to be usurped?

Clusters: the same old problems?

The cluster approach was introduced in Haiti in 2008. An evaluation completed just before the earthquake found it had improved coordination but was weak on ownership and accountability; had been implemented in a top-down fashion without regard for existing national coordination structures; did not sufficiently engage with national NGOs; was held back by OCHA's limited capacity and that the link between the cluster approach and the Humanitarian Coordinator remained unclear (Binder & Grünewald 2010). All these shortcomings became further manifest after the disaster.

“The exact amount of money donated to the Haiti response will never be known.”



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Several HRI mission interviewees reported disappointment with the calibre of cluster leaders. One noted that Haiti was “an opportunity to showcase what had been built in the last few years. The people they had initially were maybe very technically savvy, but they did not have the skills to run a cluster. In terms of getting the ‘A team’ there, quickly, it didn’t happen.” To make matters worse, there has been a high turnover in cluster coordinators. Only the camp coordination camp management (CCCM) cluster has had the same coordinator since February 2010.

At the outset of the crisis almost all cluster meetings took place at MINUSTAH's Logistics Base (Logs Base). The inaccessible venue, strict security procedures and the use of English deterred Haitian attendance. Only the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) cluster was co-chaired by the government from the outset. Only WASH and the education cluster exclusively used French (Global Education Cluster 2010). Cluster leads had a hard time identifying local NGOs to invite and those who did attend reported the meetings were often irrelevant. The government was only peripherally involved at the outset. Those appointed to attend cluster meetings were often businessmen without links with relevant ministries. The government was insufficiently represented and it took a long time to re-establish relationships with relevant line ministries. Donors could have done more to promote government co-leadership of clusters.

When it comes to protection, the Haiti experience highlights the inadequacies of the concept of “provider of last resort”. It is widely acknowledged that the international community is incapable of protecting the inhabitants of many camps against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), theft and forced evictions. It has to be asked whether in the aftermath of a massive natural disaster in a country already facing massive protection problems – and with no immediately identifiable government partner to work with – it is realistic to expect a protection cluster to substitute fully for gaps left by the state.

Questions are also being asked about the early recovery cluster. The HRI team was told that the UN Development Programme (UNDP) shut down the cluster in August without apparent consultation or explanation.

Coordination frustrations

The huge number of newly-arrived and generally inexperienced INGOs greatly complicated early coordination. One interviewee told the HRI team that “UN initial coordination was a circus: 250 people, under a tent without a microphone!” Some major INGOs were suspicious of donor attempts to promote coordination but given the enormous influx of privately donated funding, many INGOs no longer really needed large support from public donors. Some, the HRI team was told, were so well-resourced that they saw little need to co-ordinate. In any case, many had other priorities: finding new office space, assisting their own staff affected by the disaster and hiring new staff. Many were reluctant to spend time in traffic to attend Logs Base meetings which they found ineffective and thus stopped attending. The result was that there were no effective forums in which the government, donors, the UN, IOM, the Red Cross and NGOs could come together to discuss strategy.

For the first six weeks of the response, a number of major government donors, together with representatives from OCHA and the office of the Haitian Prime Minister, met each day to share information. This was appreciated by many in the humanitarian community. However, the mission was told that some major actors did not know about the meetings. Several informants noted that the group’s work was not adequately communicated to other response actors.

Cash for work programmes highlighted the inadequacies of coordination and information sharing. Through the early recovery cluster, UNDP used one rate for those recruited while another donor and its partners used a different wage based on the government’s legal minimum wage. The health cluster provided another example. The Clinton Foundation helped the Ministry of Health set up a complicated registration system that gathered information in different formats from those being used by the health cluster.

Challenges

At least 1.3 million people – both earthquake-displaced people and pre-quake urban homeless and slum-dwellers – remain displaced in around 1,300 camps in Port-au-Prince. Several hundred thousand others are sheltering with host families and some half a million are thought to have been displaced outside the city. A few have been provided with transitional housing, but in general camps are overcrowded, lack sufficient lighting, and tents and tarpaulins offer scant protection. As funding dries up, there is likely to be an exit of INGOs and UN agencies and withdrawal of vital INGO-provided health, education and livelihoods support.

Many of those interviewed by the HRI team are still understandably focused on immediate issues. However, some are expressing concerns about the slow pace of recovery planning. The Brookings Institute warned in September 2010 that “the recovery process is not going well and reconstruction has barely started... recovery efforts on the ground have been slower than usual – slower than for the 2004 tsunami or the 2005 Pakistan effort” (Ferris 2010). There does not appear to be a concerted plan to meet the sustainable housing needs of either camp residents or those living with host families. There are reports that armed gangs are regrouping (Berg 2010) and that displaced women are increasingly vulnerable to crimes of theft and sexual violence. Arguing that the humanitarian response “appears paralyzed,” Refugees International reports an increase in gang rapes (Teff & Parry 2010). The Women’s Refugee Commission fears that reproductive health services made available by the influx of new agencies will close unless donors fund the Haitian authorities to take over (Tanabe 2010).

Aid pledges are not being honoured and there are reported tensions between the World Bank, the IHRC, the Obama Administration and Congress over aid management (Clark & Charles 2010). Médecins du Monde has warned that “in 2011, aid to Haiti is likely to fall significantly. Aid agencies will start to leave and their local employees will lose their jobs, mobile clinics will close and the range of health services available to the poorest will be reduced. By 2012, there may well be nothing left to show for the unprecedented humanitarian response” (Salignon & Evrard 2010).

Lessons learnt and recommendations for the future

It is disappointing that many relevant recommendations from the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition and those in the last HRI report on Haiti appear to have not been heeded in the earthquake response.

Areas for further analysis and dialogue between donors and other humanitarian stakeholders include:

1 Leadership and coordination:

Lack of clarity about the initial response role of the US military vis-à-vis UN peacekeepers, the confusing role of Bill Clinton, the uneven coordination provided by many clusters and the relatively minor engagement of the Haitian authorities and civil society in long-term recovery planning points to the need to discuss how to improve civil-military coordination of immediate response and clarify responsibilities during recovery from natural disasters.

2 Transparency and accountability:

There is evidence that there have been too many actors, unclear communication, different priorities, lack of transparency on total disbursements, little emphasis on participation and fostering ownership of Haitians in response planning and little promotion of a culture of accountability towards beneficiaries. These major gaps in adherence to *GHD Principles* require discussion.

3 Clusters:

Convening of cluster meetings in accessible locations, the over-use of English, the limited engagement of government and civil society and the quick turnover of coordinators highlight the need to discuss how to make the cluster system more effective.

4 Long-term dependence on external actors:

Changed power dynamics and access to considerable sources of funding have made many response actors less dependent on traditional donors. Haiti demonstrates the risk that if NGOs become major service providers they may undermine state capacity. Governments need to discuss how to ensure greater accountability of international actors and take a coordinated approach to building greater state response capacity, perhaps drawing on relevant experience from Central and Latin America.

5 Land:

Discussion is needed on how the international community can help address unresolved issues of access to land and develop transparent land allocation procedures to enable permanent shelter for the homeless. Funding land registration schemes which do not recognise informal tenure will only exacerbate tensions.

6 Developing an exit strategy:

It is not sustainable to expect international actors to continue to raise funds to provide key services. The donor community should initiate discussion about an exit strategy and how to attract recovery and development actors when emergency response agencies depart.

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Information based on field interviews with key humanitarian agencies in Haiti from 24 August to 4 September 2010.

The HRI team, composed of Philippe Benassi, Lucia Fernandez and Manisha Thomas (Team leader), contributed to this report. They express their gratitude to all those interviewed in Haiti.