

HRI THE
2011 HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE
INDEX

DARA
IMPACT
MATTERS



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

LEVERAGING DONOR SUPPORT
FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT



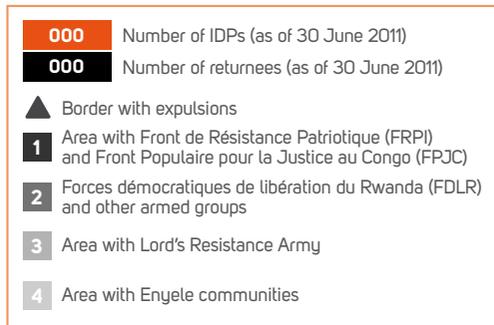
CRISIS AT A GLANCE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

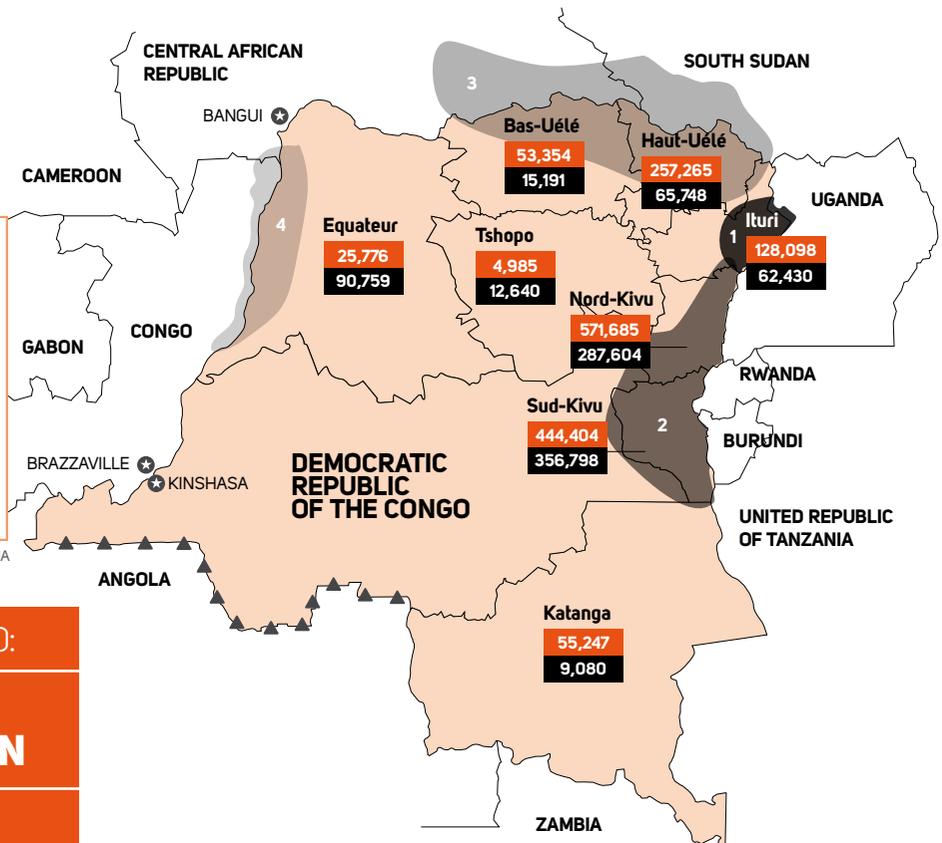
TOTAL

1.5 million IDPs (as of 30 June 2011)

887,610 returnees (as of 30 June 2011)



Source: OCHA



TOTAL FUNDING TO DRC IN 2010:

US\$ **580.7** MILLION

91% INSIDE THE HAP

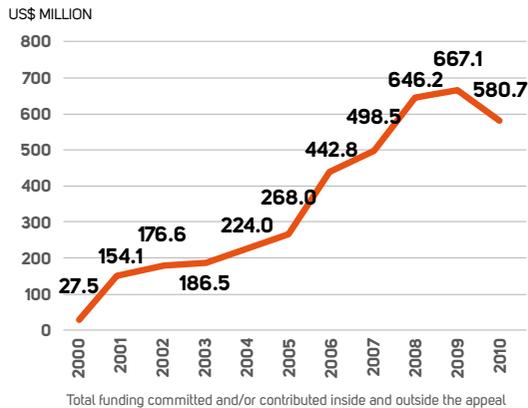
THE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE

- The deadliest armed conflict since the end of the Second World War, with over 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and nearly 200,000 refugees.
- The DRC has been among the top ten aid recipients over the past decade. Donors provided over US\$3.3 billion in humanitarian assistance and US\$6.7 billion in peacekeeping during this period.
- Despite this, widespread violence, lack of protection of civilians and pervasive sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), combined with health epidemics, malnutrition, and natural disasters continue to affect millions of people.
- The world's largest UN peacekeeping force, MONUSCO, and a government stabilisation initiative, STAREC, have been unable to stem armed violence in the North and East.
- Elections in November 2011 are unlikely to resolve years of conflict, weak state institutions and a lack of capacity to address basic needs.
- Humanitarian funding has decreased since 2009. In 2010, the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) was 64% funded. By the 21st of October 2011, the HAP (the equivalent of a CAP) was only 58% covered.

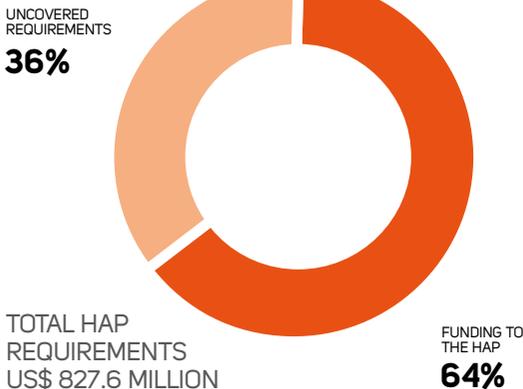
CRISIS AT A GLANCE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

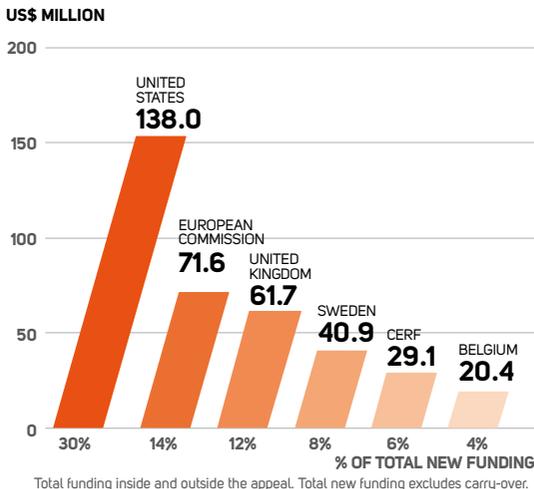
TOTAL HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO DRC



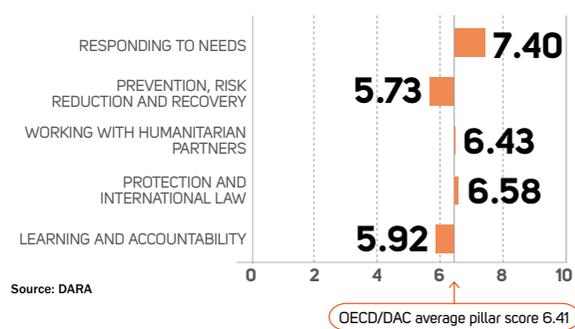
2010 DRC HAP COVERAGE



MAIN HUMANITARIAN DONORS IN 2010



HRI DONOR PERFORMANCE BY PILLAR



Colors represent performance compared to donor's average Humanitarian Response Index score:
 ● Good ● Mid-range ● Could improve

DONOR PERFORMANCE

- Donor governments have been strong supporters of humanitarian reform efforts in the DRC and have established a Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) group in-country.
- Donors are generally appreciated for their support for critical humanitarian assistance and for more flexibility to address changing needs, but less so for their support for transition, recovery and linking relief to development (LRRD).
- There are concerns about the poor linkages between humanitarian funding and support provided by donor governments for other areas of assistance, such as development, state-building and security.
- Donors are encouraged to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, particularly for protection and gender issues, and to measure impact to ensure the gains in humanitarian reform can be consolidated.

LEVERAGING DONOR SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has consistently been among the top ten recipients of humanitarian assistance in the last decade, with over US\$3.3 billion in aid provided during this period. The country has also received significant international support in the form of development assistance

and peacekeeping. Since 2004, the international community spent over US\$6.7 billion on peacekeeping operations alone (GHA 2011). The HRI field research to the DRC in April 2011, which included extensive interviews and a

■ NOVEMBER ELECTIONS ARE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE IMPACT OF MASSIVE INTERNATIONAL AID TO DRC

survey of key humanitarian actors in the country, suggests there has been steady but uneven progress towards more coordinated and effective responses – with of course great room for improvement.

Humanitarian needs in the DRC are far from over. However, the gains made so far, particularly in the area of gender and protection, may be at risk if donor governments do not provide sustained support to meet humanitarian needs, better efforts to support transition, recovery and capacity-building, and a more coordinated and integrated strategy to link humanitarian, development and security agendas. With national elections scheduled for late November 2011, this is a good opportunity for the international community to reflect on the impact of this massive amount of support, and how to best achieve a transition from a series of chronic humanitarian crises to long-term stability and recovery.

THE CRISIS

While it is common to speak about the humanitarian crisis in the DRC, in reality, the country is simultaneously confronting several different crises – not all of them humanitarian – across all parts of this vast territory. Each crisis has its own unique context and dynamics, making it difficult to plan and implement programmes, much less assess the effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response in a concise manner, or come to firm conclusions about long-term solutions to respond to chronic humanitarian needs.

On the political front, the international community continues to support state-building programmes in the lead-up to November's national elections. But these efforts have been undermined by a long history of corruption, kleptocratic rule and unaccountable elites. The current government under Joseph Kabila has requested international assistance for the elections, and several donor governments have pledged support for the process. Surprisingly, so far only a few violent incidents have marred the process. Yet, there are strong fears that further instability may result if the elections are not perceived as fair and impartial. At the same time, many actors raise concerns about the need to check the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the Kabila regime (ICG 2011).

The macro-economic situation has improved in the country recently. However, any benefits are bypassing vulnerable and crisis-affected populations, and chronic poverty continues to accentuate humanitarian needs. Epidemics from preventable diseases like cholera, measles and meningitis have ravaged parts of the country, an indicator of the general weak state of the health system. Volatile and high food prices worldwide are

also contributing to food insecurity in parts of the country. As a result, displacement, malnutrition, morbidity and mortality remain high. Finally, natural disasters, ranging from floods, landslides and drought continue to affect the country frequently.

However, the greatest concern continues to be protection of civilians. Violence and conflict are still widespread across many parts of the country.

■ THE GREATEST CONCERN CONTINUES TO BE THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND GIRLS

Poor transportation infrastructure, bureaucratic procedures and corruption make it costly and difficult to regularly access large parts of the country. At the same time, the security situation remains critical, with over

142 attacks on aid workers recorded in 2010 in North and South Kivu alone (OCHA 2011a). The most obvious manifestation of the difficulties of providing adequate protection lies in the horrific and widespread problem of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in the DRC. SGBV has been closely linked to issues of protection, access and insecurity in the past, though it now appears prevalent throughout society at the domestic level.

Several peace agreements, an ambitious stabilisation plan (STAREC), the presence of the largest peacekeeping force in the world, the UN Organization Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), and considerable international efforts to build the professional capacity of national security forces have been unable to stem severe violence and the related humanitarian consequences. Years of conflict, combined with weak state institutions and limited economic opportunities, means that violence has become entrenched as a means to gain power and wealth for many actors, or simply to make a living, underlining the challenge of finding any lasting solutions to the conflict.

In the sparsely populated North-East, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) kills, abducts, and plunders local people. Military campaigns against the LRA have so far had limited effect. In the eastern part of the country, military operations by the national army, the FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo)¹ against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), a Rwandan Hutu rebel group, seem to have stabilised the security situation somewhat, but the situation may be short-lived, as many of the underlying tensions have not been resolved. At the same time, Burundian and Ugandan rebels, as well as various local Mai-Mai groups, are also wreaking havoc in the region. There are numerous disturbing reports that badly trained and under-paid FARDC personnel and the national police are themselves responsible for many human rights violations, including organised group rape. According to some analysts interviewed, the STAREC plan is not yet achieving lasting results, and the military operations may actually be undermining governance and the rule of law.

On the country's South-Western border, the DRC and Angola have carried out violent expulsions of each other's nationals, with refugees from both claiming they have been "forcibly expelled and subjected to degrading treatment, including torture and over 1,357 confirmed cases of sexual assault". Officially, the government has taken steps to prevent and halt human rights violations but several reports rate these measures as insufficient at best (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect 2011).

DONOR PERFORMANCE

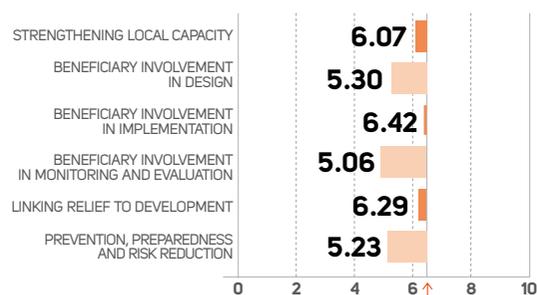
Against this complex backdrop, the international community faces many concurrent and competing demands and priorities, including supporting international diplomacy and policy initiatives in the Great Lakes region, state-building efforts and the electoral process, along with the multiple humanitarian crises facing the country. Part of the challenge is that donors differ considerably among each other on their structural set-up and funding patterns for security, development, human rights, and humanitarian activities.

The DRC has been a pilot country for implementing the humanitarian reform process, including the Humanitarian Country Team, the cluster approach, and common funds like the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the country-level Pooled Fund (PF). All these initiatives would not have prospered without the support and leadership of donor agencies, who embraced the reform agenda and have actively attempted to apply *Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Principles* in the country. Under the lead of the three main donors to the DRC, the United States (US), European Commission (EC) and the United Kingdom (UK), an in-country GHD group has been a useful platform to promote reform efforts, exchange information and analysis, prevent duplication, and coordinate actions.

— A slow decline in funding

However, despite strong political commitment to supporting humanitarian actions, since 2009 humanitarian funding to the DRC has been declining, potentially placing at risk many of the positive gains made over the past five years. The 2010 Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP), which appealed for US\$827 million in humanitarian aid, was 64% covered, at US\$580 million (OCHA 2011b). Nearly half of this was provided by three donors, the US, the EC and the UK. By mid-October, the 2011 HAP had raised slightly over US\$481 million, 58.3% of the US\$721 million requested (OCHA 2011c). US funding dropped significantly, from US\$154 million

DONOR PERFORMANCE ON PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES



Source: DARA

Colors represent performance compared to donor's average Humanitarian Response Index score:

● Good ● Mid-range ● Could improve

in 2010 to US\$89 million in 2011. Many of the other main donors in the DRC have also reduced their humanitarian funding support, notably Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany, although additional funding may be allocated to the DRC by donors before the end of this year.

This is somewhat compensated by increases in the EC's funding from US\$72 million to US\$87 million, as well as increases by the UK, Japan and Canada. To their credit, many donors have continued and strengthened their support to the CERF and the PF, which have grown in size and importance in the DRC. However, CERF allocations have decreased in 2011, with only US\$4 million allocated to the DRC, compared to a maximum of US\$29 million in 2010 (CERF 2011).

Part of the explanation for the drop in humanitarian funding may be the shifting priorities of donors towards post-conflict and state-building efforts, despite continued large-scale humanitarian needs. Donors also indicated that it was sometimes hard to find solid local or international partners. They are sceptical about high staff turnover in many humanitarian organisations and the associated lack of capacity to deliver. Maintaining the focus on humanitarian issues is a concern for many actors. As noted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA 2011a),

Vehicles stuck on a flooded road close to Lake Albert. The poor quality of roads in North Eastern DRC make it difficult to transport humanitarian aid to remote areas. © Zahra Moloo/IRIN

“humanitarian action is at risk of being crowded out by other initiatives, such as the Government stabilisation plan, the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy, and other regional United Nations peace-consolidation programmes taking centre stage.”

■ Gaps in support for transition and recovery

In HRI field interviews and a survey on donor practices among humanitarian actors in the country, respondents consistently rated donor governments poorly on questions around their support for prevention, preparedness, capacity building, recovery and linking relief to rehabilitation and development (LRRD). Yet, from the perspective of many respondents interviewed, this is precisely where donors need to ensure flexible bridge funding between humanitarian activities and other non-humanitarian recovery and development programmes in order to avoid gaps in support.

In the words of one respondent, “In certain parts of the country, the situation has started to evolve into

a post-conflict scenario, where organisations might initiate development projects,” but donor recognition and support for this was difficult to obtain. This was echoed by other interview respondents: “In general, there is a lack of thematic balance by the donors. They support nutrition, but not subsequent food security.” In other instances, there was a sense that donor

focus on regions undergoing or emerging from conflicts was at the expense of addressing needs in other parts of the country. For example, according to



one respondent, Congolese in the relatively stable West are asking, “whether they should start using arms to receive aid”.

Not all humanitarian actors share the perception that they should assume responsibility for transition and recovery. Some donors and humanitarian organisations see these issues first and foremost as development issues. One respondent stated, for example, that LRRD projects should preferably take place when the state presence is strong or has become consolidated sufficiently to guarantee the sustainability of projects.

As the early recovery cluster lead, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has attempted to integrate early recovery as both a cross-cutting issue and specific theme, but this has yet to be translated into an effective approach in other programmes. Several people interviewed considered the limited donor funding for the early recovery cluster as an indication of the lack of donor interest, or confidence, in incorporating

■ DONORS MUST REINFORCE INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO TRANSITION AND RECOVERY AND ENCOURAGE LOCALLY-OWNED INTERVENTIONS

more transitional or development activities into humanitarian action. At the same time, there is an expectation from many donors and other actors that UNDP must do a better job of defining a more nuanced, longer-term recovery and development strategy with approaches adapted to the different contexts coexisting in the country.

For their part, several donors interviewed cautioned against setting high expectations for humanitarian action: “The HAP cannot make up for years and years of neglect and lack of investments in social infrastructure such as health centres, wells, etc. That must be the objective of development interventions focusing on alleviating poverty in general.” In this respect, many humanitarian donor representatives – similar to some of the humanitarian organisations interviewed – expressed concerns that development and security actors must also take their responsibility in building ties, and that humanitarian funding and activities should not be used as a stop-gap measure to cover longer term needs. However, the practical reality for many humanitarian organisations is that funding options are limited, and few more developmentally-oriented organisations are ready to step in to address transition and recovery needs, so

funding for gender-related programming appears to be available (IASC 2011). Nevertheless, it seems clear from the HRI interviews and survey responses that a common understanding of the gender approach and its implications for humanitarian action is still needed.

Many respondents conceded that the gender marker was a good starting point for raising awareness of the issues, but felt that the gender approach was not understood correctly by donors and other humanitarian organisations, and called for more policy guidance on gender issues. As an

■ A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENDER APPROACH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION IS STILL NEEDED

example, ECHO, one of the major donors in the DRC, was criticised because it has still not released a long-announced new policy on gender. Other respondents felt that a more qualitative approach based on an in-depth analysis of the field context was needed: “The gender marker is

about minimal requirements. It's not about making a qualitative analysis of the real situation,” said one respondent. Other respondents criticised donor-imposed quotas for women staff and participation in programming: “They demand quotas despite the difficulty of finding qualified women in the province. They want quotas for women's participation despite the great workloads that women already have.”

Underlying all this was the sense by several people interviewed, particularly international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), that too many actors, donors and humanitarian agencies alike, still missed the basic point that a gender-sensitive analysis is not just about programming specifically targeting women and girls, but of ensuring programming is sensitive and appropriate to the needs of all different actors. “It is about the quality of aid,” said one interviewee. This

THE GENDER CHALLENGE

inevitably, they are left to fill the gaps. Gender is a crucial cross-cutting issue. The high incidence and media profile of gender-based violence in the DRC has led to greater efforts to address gender needs in programming. The implementation of the GenCap gender marker, which assesses the extent to which programmes incorporate gender equality into programme objectives, was piloted in the DRC. Most respondents, especially UN agency staff, indicated that the gender marker had been used successfully in the selection criteria for allocations of the PF. With nearly 37% of PF projects deemed as contributing to gender equality and 2% specifically for addressing SGBV, sufficient donor

point was reinforced in a recent World Health Organisation report on SGBV in the DRC, which notes that the needs of men and boys, many of whom are themselves victims of rape and sexual assault, are often overlooked when dealing with issues of SGBV: "Certain donors have myopia about helping only women. We visited a programme where a donor had prioritised handing out sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment to conflict rape survivors. So, the husbands couldn't get STI treatment, which is clearly counterproductive because you're just allowing the STI to be passed back and forth between partners," (IRIN 2011). Finally, humanitarian gender initiatives can benefit considerably from action by development and security actors to achieve better protection, better education, democratic representation, and equal economic opportunities for women.

— Looking forward: An agenda for donors

Regardless of whether the situation in the DRC is classified as a humanitarian emergency, a transition situation, post-conflict or development context, the country illustrates the difficulties of finding ways to simultaneously meet humanitarian, development, security and protection needs. The relationships among different actors remain a conundrum. No actor has a complete overview. So it would be a huge achievement if activities within and among these three areas would be coordinated. Given that state and civil society in the DRC are at best only very slowly and haphazardly recovering from decades of decline, insecurity, and corruption, it is simply not clear whether and in which ways international actors can ensure such mutual coordination.

One place to start would be greater coherence and coordination within donor governments on the different initiatives they fund and support and to show how they are working towards addressing immediate needs while working towards building the capacity and resilience of the Congolese people. Here, the positive experience of the GHD group in the DRC could be consolidated and expanded so that it does not simply look at strictly humanitarian issues, but also considers where and when the

context may require more support for transition and recovery, and facilitate the appropriate linkages with development funding and actors.

Donor support for more flexible and long-term funding arrangements would also be a positive move. One suggestion is to build on the experience of the CERF and the PF, and consider whether donors could contribute to a similar mechanism specifically targeting activities that may fall between the boundaries of humanitarian and development funding, yet are essential to bridge gaps in needs. Longer term funding arrangements would also help address the high turnover of staff in smaller NGOs, and ensure continuity of programming and cluster coordination.

A second area where donor governments could contribute is on improving monitoring, evaluation and measuring impact of interventions. Within the wider donor community, there is great concern on showing value for money, and the DRC is no exception, especially considering the massive funding provided there. It is not yet possible to fully explain or measure the impact of years of humanitarian assistance for the Congolese population in crisis areas. As one respondent asked, "Are we really assisting those people in terms of potable water, rape prevention, preventing child recruitment, etc.?"

The HAP is a valuable stepping stone towards better evaluation and impact assessment because it focuses on general objectives over individual project outputs. Nevertheless, both donors and humanitarian organisations still focus more on outputs than on outcomes, and any support by donors to change this dynamic would be welcome. This should include support to OCHA to continue to develop and implement a more robust impact assessment framework for humanitarian actions. However, if such a framework does not adequately assess and integrate the impact of interventions in other areas, such as more development-oriented governance, community capacity building, conflict prevention, or preparedness activities, the exercise will miss an opportunity to show how donors' overall



funding to the DRC is being leveraged effectively. This would also serve to rationalise the use of resources by showing how funding in one area complements and enhances funding provided in another.

On a more practical level, donors could work more closely together and with their operational partners to monitor the context at the field level. This is particularly the case of gender, where donors could go beyond the gender marker exercise to consider funding allocations based on how well gender is integrated into plans, and then follow-up with more field-level verification of how their partners are addressing gender in practice – which is hardly the case today in the DRC – and how donors could

contribute to improving their partners' work.

While larger donors like the US, ECHO and the UK have more capacity to monitor the situation – certainly appreciated by most actors interviewed – smaller donors have more difficulties in adequately monitoring and following up with their partners. Joint monitoring and evaluation would reduce the amount of reporting and field visits. Another possibility is to divide tasks so that some donors take the lead on coordinating approaches to specific issues such as transition, recovery or LRRD.

Regardless of whether the DRC stabilises further following the elections – and this is not at all clear – donors must reinforce more integrated approaches to transition and recovery, and in particular encourage locally-owned interventions. In the meantime, they must continue to push for better access and protection to affected populations, and be ready to ensure rapid and flexible support for more transitional activities when and if the situation permits.



INFORMATION BASED ON 62 FIELD INTERVIEWS WITH KEY HUMANITARIAN ACTORS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (KINSASHA AND GOMA) FROM 6 TO 14 APRIL 2011, AND 189 QUESTIONNAIRES ON DONOR PERFORMANCE (INCLUDING 126 QUESTIONNAIRES OF OECD/DAC DONORS).

THE HRI TEAM WAS COMPOSED OF COVADONGA CANTELI, BELÉN DÍAZ, DENNIS DIJKZEUL (TEAM LEADER) AND ALBA MARCELLÁN. THEY EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO ALL THOSE INTERVIEWED IN THE DRC.

NOTES

1 The FARDC is an amalgamation of the state's original armed forces with various demobilized armed rebel groups and militias, poorly trained, insufficiently funded and often not under clear central command.

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HRI THE 2011 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX

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