



## **Advancing Localisation through a Localisation Task Force Design questions & clarity of understanding – a resource note**

**29 July 2020**

This GMI resource note starts from the widely shared observation that international relief agencies, four years after the World Humanitarian Summit are not succeeding to make the structural shift to supporting and reinforcing rather than undermining and replacing local and national actors.

Section I, identifies some key reasons why that is. One of them is persistent confusion about what 'localisation' means in practice, where in the international relief sector it applies, and why it was and remains an urgent policy priority. Section II, refers you to GMI resource notes to clarify the why, what and how. In some countries, a localisation task force is now being designed to take that policy- and practice agenda forward. Section III sets out key questions to help you think through the design of such task force. Section IV, contains core text of key commitments which relate to localisation undertaken by international relief agencies: Grand Bargain (2016), Charter4Change (2016), Principles of Partnership (2007).

### **I. Slow Progress**

Twenty-five years after the commitment to 'build on local capacities' in the Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and INGOs, 13 years after the 'Principles of Partnership', 9 years after the 'New Deal' and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and 4 years after the Grand Bargain and Charter 4 Change commitments made at the time of the World Humanitarian Summit, are international aid agencies supporting and reinforcing rather than undermining and replacing local and national actors?

Globally, local and national actors are expressing frustration that little has changed in terms of international assistance agencies sharing power, resources, capacities, risks and benefits with local and national actors.

There are various reasons why the Grand Bargain and Charter 4 Change commitments are not more noticeably translating into practice. Among them: opposition from some international aid agencies who see this as a threat to their business model; reservations and hesitations related to how 'risk' will be managed if local and national actors are in the lead; commitment but uncertainty what localisation in practice actually means i.e. how you 'do' it. Across all that lies confusion: People use the term 'localisation' but actually interpret it in very different ways, some in line with the intent of the Grand Bargain, some not. They are also not clear what problem(s) the Grand Bargain as a whole, and localisation as a component of it, is supposed to address, and why it has emerged so strongly on the agenda at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

Though the Grand Bargain (and Charter 4 Change) are short, very readable and precise, they are actually not read and referred to. Back-donor but also internal agency incentives are not always aligned with this policy- and practice objective. By default, some international agencies have argued that 'localisation' can only be achieved through another round of 'capacity-building', for which they of course then get new funds. Why decades of 'capacity-building' have not led to noticeably stronger organisations and collective crisis-management capacities in many countries, is a question not asked. More of the same is unlikely to provide better outcomes.

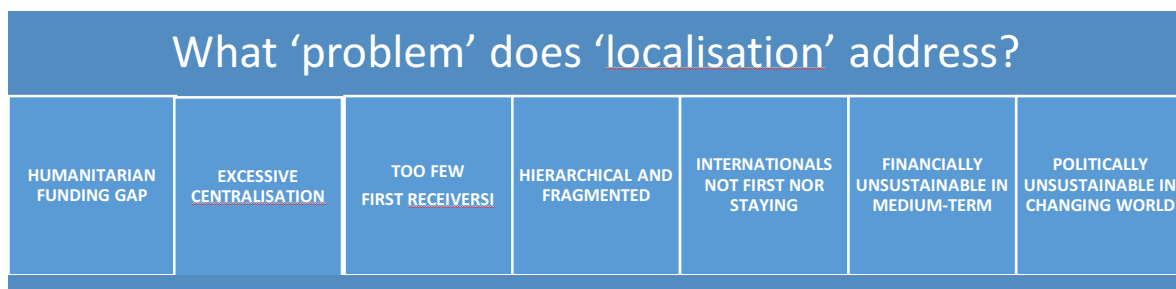
More research is not needed. Global research on localisation for the past 4 years has amply diagnosed the multiple obstacles, hesitations and reservations, many of which are structurally related to the political economy and the mind-sets in the international humanitarian or relief sector; some are contextual. The way forward now is to learn by doing.

Those opposed to localisation will not come on board. Progress must be made with coalitions of the willing. Those standing still because of hesitations and reservations, many of them valid, can best be convinced not by further debate but by demonstration through positive examples. Even those committed however, first need to get clarity about the why and what of localisation, at strategic and operational level. Without such clarity, no clear outcome objectives for collective action can be formulated, with a pathway to achieve them.

## II. Understanding Localisation

Several GMI papers, which draw on years of engagement with international and local/national actors in a diverse set of countries, seek to bring clarity and structure into the conversation.

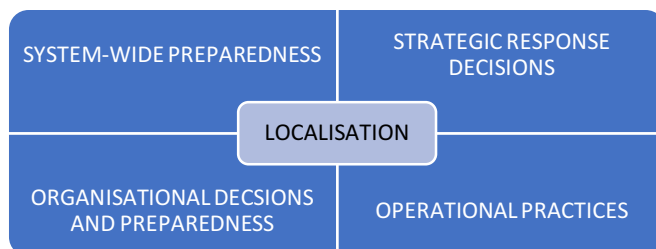
**GMI 1 February 2020: Why Localisation?** Examines the rationale for this policy- and practice commitment, in light of the economics of humanitarian action, but also the political economy of the sector.



It also draws attention to the questions whether an international welfare system, still largely funded by some Western countries, and largely implemented by (expensive) international agencies is financially sustainable. And whether it will remain geo-politically viable? We see some governments imposing restrictions on the presence and operating space of international agencies, for a variety of reasons. Others may invite them in, on the assumption that international solidarity funding will be less if it is not accompanied by international aid agencies on-the-ground. The economic and political fall outs of the COVID-19 pandemic may bring these considerations more to the foreground.

**GMI 15 April 2020: Localisation- Holistic perspectives urgently needed.** Explains that a 'localised response' is the normal state of affairs, and that 'localisation' only becomes a policy- and practice objective after a wave of 'internationalisation', where international actor take over and substitute for local/national ones. 'Localisation' then seeks to reduce and eventually reverse internationalisation. It does not intend to get rid of international assistance, but to reset roles as they should be: international assistance providers supporting and reinforcing, not undermining and replacing local actors.

The combined commitments of the Grand Bargain constitute an agenda for the reform of the international relief sector. Localisation is a component of that. Localisation also plays out at the level of the collective response to a crisis with humanitarian consequences.

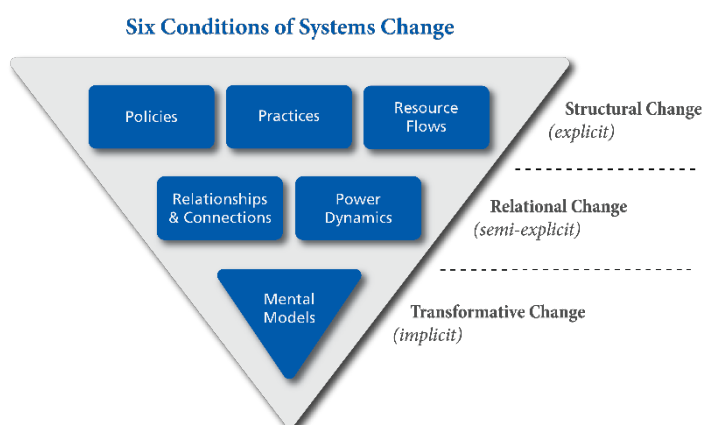


This resonates very well with the four archetypal 'models' of collective humanitarian action, identified in a think piece for the 2014 Montreux XIII Donor conference. The text box on the next page summarises these.<sup>1</sup> In this framework, localisation would be the deliberate shift, by design and not by default, from a 'comprehensive' response to a 'collaborative' and 'consultative' relationship between international and local/national actors.

<sup>1</sup> Ramalingam, B. & J. Mitchell 2014: Responding to Changing Needs. Challenges and opportunities for humanitarian action. Montreux XIII Meeting paper. ALNAP pp. 28-35

Comprehensive	The mainstay of the humanitarian sector and the result of a large-scale international mobilisation. <i>“It is based on the notion of limited or no capacity, and a central role for international agencies in managing, coordination and delivering assistance. There are many issues with this model in terms of its insensitivity to context, the lack of engagement with local and national actors, and a tendency to be supply-driven rather than needs-oriented.”</i>
Constrained	An approach found where humanitarian space is limited by encroaching political interests, which can manifest themselves as legal, procedural but also security challenges. This creates complex, ambiguous and challenging settings
Collaborative	The international response works hand in hand with national and local actors. Domestic response capacities for coordination, management and delivery are of major importance. <i>“This model currently leads to numerous tensions with the international system, because of the strong tendencies and preferences to work in the comprehensive model.”</i>
Consultative	Found in countries where there is considerable domestic capacity to respond to disasters. The international actors are called upon to express specific gaps and niches in domestic capacity and are incorporated into the architecture of domestic response.”

The resource note also contains an insightful diagram that shows how systems change happens. It confirms that localisation is not just a matter of policies, practices and resource flows. Influential underneath are the dynamics of relationships, which are shaped by the distribution of power and/or how power is used and possibly abused. At a still deeper level are mindsets: sometimes unconscious assumptions, beliefs and possibly biases and prejudices about ‘us’ and ‘the other’, that reveal themselves in behaviours and narratives. Localisation therefore spans the range from sector reform to the personal.



Given the balance of power, localisation first and foremost requires change in how international aid agencies operate, as they need to share power, resources, capacities, risks etc. rather than instrumentalise local and national actors behind their agendas. This has institutional implications.<sup>2</sup> Some are also more ‘fit-for-partnering’ than others. Local and national actors on the other hand are advised to articulate their standards of integrity, quality and accountability, individually and collectively. How they do that needs to be effective, but also adapted to their context: it need not be a mere copy of those of international agencies.

**GMI 1 June 2020: Localisation: Different interpretations different outcomes.** Leaving aside the interpretation that localisation means ‘working with partners’ -which does not say anything about the quality and terms of that collaboration - GMI has identified eight different interpretations of ‘localisation’. No wonder the conversation can be confusing and get acrimonious. Not all interpretations are in line with the intent of the Grand Bargain however (i.e. addressing the problems that led to the Grand Bargain commitments), or with the longer-term perspective and ambitions of local/national organisations. Be clear about your understanding of ‘localisation’, and whether it is admissible.

**GMI 9 June 2020: Dimensions of localisation.** This working note highlights key dimensions where local/national actors want to see change in their relationship with international agencies, including their international ‘partners’. Those are complemented by a number of cross-cutting issues. There is a work form that can be used to assess where the collaboration is at now, and to agree on

<sup>2</sup> GMI recently ran a first edition of its on-line workshop on the institutional implications of localisation. It can be offered on demand.

priority change objectives in one or more dimensions at a time. Some dimensions, like the quality of relationship, quality and quantity of funding, and effective capacity-support but also capacity-sharing, are closely interlinked.

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY	PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION	FUNDING & FINANCING	CAPACITY	COORDINATION MECHANISMS	VISIBILITY	POLICY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respectful and equitable</li> <li>• reciprocal transparency and accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deeper participation of at-risk &amp; affected populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .quality</li> <li>• quantity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . sustainable organisations and collaborative capacities</li> <li>• stop undermining capacities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• national actors greater presence and influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roles, results and innovations by national actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• national actors greater presence and influence in international policy debates</li> </ul>

**GMI 30 June 2019: The Finance and Economics of Localisation.** Explains why the 25% target of the Grand Bargain, stated as such, is not a very meaningful indicator. It also highlights that any ‘capacity-strengthening’ will have no sustainable impact if local and national organisations are kept financially anaemic, deprived of some flexible core finance that enables them to invest in their organisational development, and to attract but especially to retain good staff.

***Localisation can happen by design or by default.***

Localisation happens by default when security, legal or other constraints limit the presence and operational freedom of international aid agencies, so that they start working more with (or through) local and national ones. It also happens by default when international funding decreases and international agencies need to scale down and consider leaving and ‘handing over’ to local actors. Localisation ‘by design’ happens when international relief agencies deliberately seeks to support and reinforce local and national actors, as a programmatic and strategic objective, so that they can reduce their role or even leave, as they eventually will have to. Here, relief agencies collectively engage in legacy planning.

“What legacy, in terms of more resilient communities and strengthened organisational and collective local and national capacities, will we leave behind?”

**Find These and Other GMI Insights on Localisation and Partnerships on**

<https://www.gmentor.org/equitable-partnership>  
<https://www.gmentor.org/facilitation-and-partnership-brokering>

GMI is a consulting, advisory and mentoring company with core competencies in positive relationships, healthy partnerships and constructive collaborations, within groups and teams, within and between organisations, between organisations and social groups, in stable and conflict situations, and through change processes.

### III. Designing and Managing a Localisation Task Force

As a localisation/partnership task force is created, key questions are

1. Who is involved in shaping its design?
2. What is its purpose?
3. What is the composition? Who is included and in what capacity?
4. What would make it well-functioning and eventually successful?
5. To whom is it accountable and how?



#### Design

Starting up a localisation and/or partnership task force poses certain dilemmas: Who is involved from the very outset in drafting its terms of reference and designing its set-up? If this is done only by international actors, it risks being criticised from the outset as not walking the talk. As this directly concerns local actors, it does not seem advisable to leave them out when foundational decisions are being made. Should a large number of concerned parties and stakeholders be involved however: perhaps not: design by large committee rarely turns out elegant and functional. However, how can we design something if there is confusion about the fundamental why and what of 'localisation'. The task force is a vehicle to achieve a purpose: can we design the vehicle if we are unclear about the purpose? Perhaps a somewhat iterative process is required?



#### Clarifying Purpose

Clarity of purpose aligns the collective efforts in a shared direction. Here some ideas for consideration:

The first purpose would be to ensure that all interested parties have a clear and common understanding of why localisation and why now, what interpretations are in line with the Grand Bargain and other localisation commitments and which ones are not, and that localisation plays out at the collective strategic, and at the operational level. So ask yourself:

- Is there clear understanding on why localisation (what problem is it supposed to address?) and why now?
- Is there familiarity with the various references that notably international actors have elaborated over the years, including but not limited to the 1994 Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and INGOs, the 2007 Principles of Partnership, the Grand Bargain, the Charter 4 Change, and other relevant references in e.g. the Sphere and CHS standards?
- Is there shared clarity localisation is both a strategic and an operational issue, and that the Grand Bargain requires reform in how the international relief sector operates?
- How is the term 'localisation' understood? Although different people and agencies all use the term 'localisation', it may be interpreted in very different ways. Different interpretations lead to different visions of 'outcome'. Many of these visions are not in line with the intent of the Grand Bargain. Can you map the different interpretations, and explain why some conform to the purpose of the Grand Bargain, others not?

The second purpose might be to develop a clear vision statement of what strategic success would look like, but also what realistic objectives are within the medium-term e.g. three years.

- Is there a vision for collective outcome on localisation? Even among those agencies that understand 'localisation' in a transformative manner, i.e. as a change in roles from replacing

or instrumentalizing local and national actors to reinforcing and supporting them, the various efforts tend to be fragmented. This lack of complementarity and even cross-learning between different localisation initiatives is an obstacle to achieve a cumulative impact that is more than the sum of its parts.

- Is there a critical self-reflection among international agencies? Many ‘capacity-building’ approaches over the past two decades have been wrongly conceived and poorly delivered, did not lead to sustained impact and hence have shown little value-for-money. ‘More’ of the same capacity-building will not change that – only ‘different’ capacity-support can.

This applies to international and local/national actors alike.

The third purpose is developing shared strategy and action plan, with clarification of roles and responsibilities

- Are there progress markers identified and how they will be periodically reviewed and corrective action taken, if needed. Progress towards and achieving the medium-term objectives will be confronted with enabling and constraining factors. Some of the constraining factors are under the control of participating agencies. Others they can and must try to influence.
- An outcome statement must be formulated in terms of a set of local and national, individual but also collective, capacities. To illustrate, here some examples of what this might look like: In two and a half years from now there will be six more medium-sized CSOs, on a solid footing, with a number of identified capabilities; In two years from now, in three Governorates there will be functioning forums involving local governmental and non-governmental actors, that effectively collaborate around a joint programme and action plan; In two years from now, an existing national (or regional) resource center will have become an effective provider of organisational development support, particularly in the areas of finance and administration for not-for-profits, while in three years from now another entity will become recognised as the national ‘go-to’ place for refugee and migration studies, policy advice, and training. Networked capacities and collaborative practices are a key part of the outcome objective.

Can these purposes be served by one task force, or is it better to have one focus on the strategic level and another on the operational level? Although closely interlinked, the strategic and operational conversations are not identical, and may require involvement from different people. How to avoid then disconnects between the two?



### Composition of the Taskforce

Should the reflection on the composition not come before the questions about purpose and understanding? They are indeed closely interlinked: On the one hand the members will have to clarify the purpose, on the other hand the purpose will signal who should be involved.

Here some questions for reflection:

- Given the (likely/provisional) purpose(s), who must be included, in what capacity (individual/organisational/network, task expertise etc.), and when?
- Is it an NGO/CSO Task force? Should it include UN agencies, donors, the government representatives? As full participants, as observers? Note that not all international agencies have signed up to the Grand Bargain or the Charter 4 Change, particularly INGOs. But most key donors to global humanitarian action, and most multilaterals, plus the ICRC and the IFRC have, voluntarily, signed up to the Grand Bargain. Donors certainly to a large degree control the structural incentives in the sector. As there is a degree of finger pointing between these



international stakeholder groups about who is *'not walking the talk'*, a more inclusive composition might make sense?

- Who else should be at the table who can contribute to the discussions and provide alternative perspectives and support in the longer term? Should development actors be included, in line with the Grand Bargain commitment for closer connection between humanitarian and development actors (the 'nexus'), and the presence of both in country?
- Should 'everyone' be included - one consideration is that a coalition of the willing can advance. Would striving for maximum inclusion turn the task force into a talk shop?
- Is the composition balanced, not just in numbers but in 'influence'? Many localisation forums around the world, including the Grand Bargain workstream on the topic, have little or no presence of local and national governmental and non-governmental actors. Can a localisation task force aspire to credibility if it does not include local and national actors on the same, 'level playing field' the Grand Bargain promises? Even if they have a presence, they may be outnumbered, or unable or unwilling to speak with a more independent voice, because they don't want to jeopardise their existing 'partnership' with one or more international 'partners'. How will that be resolved?
- Should the government be included? Which part of the Government? As full participant or as observer? What are the generic, and contextual, arguments in favour or not? If not included, how will the government be engaged in what is an issue of strategic importance for the country, and not just for 'its 'civil society'?
- Associated with this is the question of who leads / co-leads the task force? Can it be one chair, two international co-chairs, an international and national co-chair? Is there value to be had in an independent third party as chair, or support from third party facilitators?



### Functioning and Effectiveness

*What would make someone say the localisation task force is well-functioning and, eventually, successful?*

Some of the possible attention points related to effective function, can be:

- Who is involved in developing the ToR of the task force? Only or primarily internationals?
- Chairs of a task force have power and influence. What competencies are required from whoever chairs or co-chairs the task force? Should chair-personship be based on agency affiliation, or primarily on individual competencies?
- How will the task force operate to create and sustain basic trust among participants?
- How is the agenda for meetings set?
- How is it ensured that all members have access to the same information? (a level playing field)
- What are the expectations about responsible and constructive participation?
- What language(s) are the meetings in?
- Does the localisation task force talk about power, the power asymmetry of 'power over', and the untapped potential of 'power with'?
- How does the task force take decisions?
- What protocol is there when there is a possible or actual 'conflict of interest'?
- What concrete (SMART) medium-term changes objectives will it set? What becomes the allocation of tasks and responsibilities so that collective efforts take place in a concerted and complementary manner? When, how and by whom will progress be reviewed?
- How will the task force periodically assess its own effectiveness?

- To function well, the task force will incur some costs. How will the costs be covered?



### **Accountability to whom and How?**

Does the task force have a clear accountability framework?

- How does the task force handle its internal accountability, i.e. of participants towards each other?
- What external stakeholders is the task force accountable to? How will it exercise that accountability in practice?



## IV. PRIMARY DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCY COMMITMENTS TO LOCALISATION

### 1. GRAND BARGAIN (core text related to localisation)

#### **Commitment 1: Greater Transparency**

**Rationale:** The Grand Bargain commits us to identifying and implementing a shared open-data standard and common digital platform which will enhance transparency and decision-making. This will demonstrate how funding moves from donors down the transaction chain until it reaches the final responders and, where feasible, affected people. The ‘do no harm’ principle will be safeguarded, both in terms of politicized context and protection concerns. The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is the most advanced option for a shared open-data standard. The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is a well-established, voluntary information platform for recording international humanitarian aid contributions, which we accept needs further improvements.

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Publish timely, transparent, harmonised and open high-quality data on humanitarian funding within two years of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. We consider IATI to provide a basis for the purpose of a common standard.
2. Make use of appropriate data analysis, explaining the distinctiveness of activities, organisations, environments and circumstances (for example, protection, conflict-zones).
3. Improve the digital platform and engage with the open-data standard community to help ensure:
  - accountability of donors and responders with open data for retrieval and analysis;
  - improvements in decision-making, based upon the best possible information;
  - a reduced workload over time as a result of donors accepting common standard data for some reporting purposes; and
  - traceability of donors’ funding throughout the transaction chain as far as the final responders and, where feasible, affected people.
4. Support the capacity of all partners to access and publish data

#### **Commitment 2: More support and funding tools for local and national responders**

**Rationale:** National Societies and local civil society are often the first to respond to crises, remaining in the communities they serve before, after and during emergencies. We are committed to making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary recognising that international humanitarian actors play a vital role particularly in situations of armed conflict. We engage with local and national responders in a spirit of partnership and aim to reinforce rather than replace local and national capacities.

*Aid organisations and donors commit to:*

- (1) Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders, including preparedness, response and coordination capacities, especially in fragile contexts and where communities are vulnerable to armed conflicts, disasters, recurrent outbreaks and the effects of climate change. We should achieve this through collaboration with development partners and incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements.
- (1) Understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organisations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden.

- (2) Support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.
- (3) Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transactional costs.
- (4) Develop, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and apply a 'localisation' marker to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national responders.
- (5) Make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders, such as UN-led country-based pooled funds (CBPF), IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and NGO-led and other pooled funds.

### **Commitment 7: Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding**

**Rationale:** Multi-year planning and funding lowers administrative costs and catalyses more responsive programming, notably where humanitarian needs are protracted or recurrent and where livelihood needs and local markets can be analysed and monitored. Multi-year planning must be based on shared analysis and understanding needs and risks as they evolve. Collaborative planning and funding mechanisms for longer programme horizons that are incrementally funded can produce better results and minimise administrative costs for both donors and aid organisations. They can identify results which highlight the linkages between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and conflict management initiatives that are fundamental to decreasing humanitarian needs.

- (6) Increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments and document the impacts on programme efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with their implementing partners.
- (7) Strengthen existing coordination efforts to share analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions while respecting the principles of both.

### **Commitment 8: Reduce the earmarking of donor contributions**

**Rationale:** Flexible funding facilitates swifter response to urgent needs and investment in fragile, potentially volatile situations, emergencies and disaster preparedness, as well enables response to needs in situations of protracted and neglected conflicts. It strengthens decision-making bodies which include key stakeholders such as affected and refugee-hosting states as well as donors. It supports management systems and the use of cost-efficient tools as well as reduces the amount of resources spent on grant-specific administration, notably procurement and reporting.

Flexible funding requires accountability throughout the length of the transaction chain from donor to the field. Reducing earmarking should be considered as a means to achieving humanitarian collective outcomes. Increasing donors' confidence in the quality of aid organisations' own prioritisation processes will encourage donors to increase the flexibility of their contributions.

*Aid organisations and donors commit to:*

- (1) Jointly determine, on an annual basis, the most effective and efficient way of reporting on unearmarked and softly earmarked funding and to initiate this reporting by the end of 2017.
- (2) Reduce the degree of earmarking of funds contributed by governments and regional groups who currently provide low levels of flexible finance. Aid organisations in turn commit to do the same with their funding when channeling it through partners.

*Aid organisations commit to:*

- (3) Be transparent and regularly share information with donors outlining the criteria for how core and unearmarked funding is allocated (for example, urgent needs, emergency preparedness, forgotten contexts, improved management)
- (4) Increase the visibility of unearmarked and softly earmarked funding, thereby recognising the contribution made by donors.

*Donors commit to:*

- (5) Progressively reduce the earmarking of their humanitarian contributions. The aim is to aspire to achieve a global target of 30 per cent of humanitarian contributions that is non earmarked or softly earmarked by 2020.

### **Commitment 9: Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements**

**Rationale:** Reporting requirements have grown over the years for specific and valid reasons including legal requirements associated with accountability and managing risk, to build trust, raise funds, for diplomatic purposes and to improve quality. A wide range of sectors and organisations report to one another, including institutional donors, UN agencies, IOM, international and national NGOs and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. We have a common interest in ensuring that programmatic reporting is substantive and qualitative while also lean enough to allow for the most efficient use of resources to assist people in need.

*Aid organisations and donors commit to:*

- (1) Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing its volume, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing common report structure.
- (2) Invest in technology and reporting systems to enable better access to information.
- (3) Enhance the quality of reporting to better capture results, enable learning and increase the efficiency of reporting.

### **Commitment 10: Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors** (this is now to be mainstreamed across all other commitments)

**Rationale:** The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and Core Responsibility Four of the Secretary-General's Report (change people's lives – from delivering aid to ending need) both articulate the importance of shrinking humanitarian needs while also recognising the humanitarian financing gap. This is particularly important in situations of fragility and protracted crises.

A better way of working is not about shifting funding from development to humanitarian programmes or from humanitarian to development actors. Rather, it is about working collaboratively across institutional boundaries on the basis of comparative advantage. This way of working does also not deviate from the primacy of humanitarian principles.

*Aid organisations and donors commit to:*

- (1) Use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term with the view of contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly increase prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery. This will need to be the focus not only of aid organisations and donors but also of national governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.
- (2) Invest in durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced people and sustainable support to migrants, returnees and host/receiving communities, as well as for other situations of recurring vulnerabilities.
- (3) Increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts. Perform joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination in order to achieve a shared vision for outcomes. Such a shared vision for outcomes will be developed on the basis of shared risk analysis between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peacebuilding communities.

## 2. CHARTER 4 CHANGE OF SIGNATORY INGOS

### Localisation of Humanitarian Aid

We the undersigned organisations, working in humanitarian action welcome the extensive consultations and discussions which have been generated during the World Humanitarian Summit process. We believe that now is the time for humanitarian actors to make good on some of the excellent recommendations arising through the WHS process by committing themselves to deliver change within their own organisational ways of working so that southern-based national actors can play an increased and more prominent role in humanitarian response.

In the case of international NGO signatories we commit our organisations to implement the following 8 point Charter for Change by May 2018.

In the case of southern-based NGOs working in partnership with international NGOs we endorse and support this Charter for Change. We will be holding our international NGO partners which have signed this Charter to account and asking those which are not signatories to this Charter to work towards signing up:

- 1. Increase direct funding to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action:** At present only 0.2% of humanitarian aid is channelled directly to national non-government actors (NGOs and CSOs) for humanitarian work – a total of US\$46.6 million out of US\$24.5 billion. We commit through advocacy and policy influence to North American and European donors (including institutional donors, foundations and private sector) to encourage them to increase the year on year percentage of their humanitarian funding going to southern-based NGOs. We commit that by May 2018 at least 20% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to southern-based NGOs. We commit to introduce our NGO partners to our own direct donors with the aim of them accessing direct financing.
- 2. Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership:** We endorse, and have signed on to, the Principles of Partnership, (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) introduced by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007.
- 3. Increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs:** A significant change in approaches towards transparency is needed in order to build trust, accountability and efficiency of investments channeled to national actors via international intermediaries. We commit to document the types of organisation we cooperate with in humanitarian response and to publish these figures (or percentages) in our public accounts using a recognised categorisation such as the GHA in real-time and to the IATI standard.
- 4. Stop undermining local capacity:** We will identify and implement fair compensation for local organisations for the loss of skilled staff if and when we contract a local organisation's staff involved in humanitarian action within 6 months of the start of a humanitarian crisis or during a protracted crisis, for example along the lines of paying a recruitment fee of 10% of the first six months' salary.
- 5. Emphasise the importance of national actors:** We undertake to advocate to donors to make working through national actors part of their criteria for assessing framework partners and calls for project proposals.
- 6. Address subcontracting:** Our local and national collaborators are involved in the design of the programmes at the outset and participate in decision-making as equals in influencing programme design and partnership policies.
- 7. Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening:** We will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response. We undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by May 2018 we will have allocated resources to support our partners in this. We will publish the percentages of our humanitarian budget which goes directly to partners for humanitarian capacity building by May 2018.

- 8. Communication to the media and the public about partners:** In any communications to the international and national media and to the public we will promote the role of local actors and acknowledge the work that they carry out, and include them as spokespersons when security considerations permit.

To sign or endorse this Charter for Change please email [admin@charter4change.org](mailto:admin@charter4change.org) with the full name of your organisation and the country in which your organisation is based.

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

A Statement of Commitment Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007 The Global Humanitarian Platform, created in July 2006, brings together UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations on an equal footing.

- Striving to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations we serve,
- Acknowledging diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognizing the interdependence among humanitarian organizations,
- Committed to building and nurturing an effective partnership,

... the organizations participating in the Global Humanitarian Platform agree to base their partnership on the following principles:

• **Equality:** **Equality** requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.

• **Transparency:** Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.

• **Result-oriented approach:** Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.

• **Responsibility:** Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.

• **Complementarity:** The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.