



UNDP/Silke Von Brockhausen



REGIONAL CONSULTATION SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

DUSHANBE, 28-30 JULY 2015

CHAIRS' SUMMARY

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Regional Consultation for South and Central Asia was held at the Ismaili Centre Dushanbe in the capital of Tajikistan from 28 to 30 July 2015. It was co-hosted by the Government of Tajikistan and the Aga Khan Development Network, and chaired by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. This was the last of eight regional consultations.

In the spirit of the Summit's multi-stakeholder approach, the consultation brought together nearly 200 participants from across the 16 countries covered by the regional consultation¹, representing academia, affected communities, civil society organizations, governments, media, national and international non-governmental organizations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, private sector, International Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, regional organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, programmes and funds, youth, and observers from countries that have already hosted or will host World Humanitarian Summit consultations or events. The meeting was preceded by preparatory stakeholder consultations that involved over 7,640 people across the 16 countries. Their views and priorities were presented in the Regional Stakeholder Analysis, which was used as the basis of discussions in Dushanbe.

The consultation recognized the significance of the Summit process in stimulating fresh approaches to long-standing challenges. Building on the recommendations and conclusions of previous consultations and the outcomes of the regional preparatory stakeholder consultations, the discussions emphasized the leadership of UN Member States, working together with other stakeholders where appropriate, and focused on:

¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

- Putting crisis-affected people at the centre of humanitarian action;
- Context-specific and appropriate localization of preparedness and response;
- Development of clearly-articulated frameworks for planning, funding and delivery of humanitarian assistance in different contexts, specifically (i) disaster, (ii) conflict and (iii) protracted crisis.

The Dushanbe discussions either reiterated or expanded upon a number of themes common to other consultations:

1. The current framework for humanitarian action outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of the various parties, as well as the central role of affected governments, including in managing response operations and triggering requests for or acceptance of international humanitarian assistance.
2. Promoting a global commitment that reiterates the core humanitarian principles, recognizing the rights and needs of those at risk to (i) be made and kept safe and protected, (ii) ask for and receive assistance, and (iii) be enabled to find durable solutions. This requires a whole-of-society approach.
3. Dismantling artificial boundaries between humanitarian and development silos, whether governmental, inter-governmental or non-governmental, in order to place people and the communities in which they live, rather than humanitarian and development institutions, at the centre of our collective endeavours.
4. Making better and more consistent use of existing policies and guidelines to support effective humanitarian action.
5. Placing protection of people caught up in crises – regardless of the type of crisis – at the centre of all humanitarian response operations and activities.
6. Ensuring that governments and other humanitarian stakeholders adopt an inclusive approach that focuses on vulnerable groups in all humanitarian activities, and in a context specific manner.
7. Strengthening the relationship between humanitarian affairs and human rights, as articulated in both international humanitarian and international human rights law. This requires state and non-state actors to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure humanitarian access.
8. Explicitly addressing the increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian situations, including against aid workers, and the related need for providers of humanitarian assistance to integrate measures to mitigate this in both their advocacy and programming work and human resources policies.
9. Systematically documenting and sharing information on local communities’ coping mechanisms, best practices and lessons learned to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their preparedness and response.
10. Investing more in understanding the interplay between political, development, human rights, humanitarian and other factors in the preparatory process leading up to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit to ensure the Summit delivers substantive change.

The following summary of recommendations from the regional consultation has been prepared by the Chair, in consultation with the WHS South and Central Asia Regional Steering Group. These synthesize proposals from the thematic discussions held on the first and second days of the consultation, and the subsequent stakeholder review on the third day. The summary does not reflect the full range of discussions and proposed recommendations that emerged from the consultation, and therefore should not be considered a consensus document.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Overarching Recommendations

1. Humanitarian governance structures should be reformed to make the humanitarian system more efficient and effective in practice. Decision-making, leadership and representation in these structures should be equitable for all States and reflect national ownership.
2. Governments, working together with international humanitarian agencies, should encourage and support national and regional NGO networks, particularly in developing countries.
3. The way global humanitarian assistance is researched, calculated and presented should be changed in order to reflect national expenditures, in-kind support and other contributions.

4. Governments, international and national NGOs should work with local CSOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies to strengthen accountability systems where they exist and ensure effective monitoring and reporting on gender equality, women's access to services and assistance, the rights of women and gender based violence takes place during crisis situations.
5. All law enforcement and military bodies should strengthen education and training of their staff on the specific needs of women and children and explain how to respond to these needs. Clear lines of responsibility should be established to ensure that this happens.
6. Governments, humanitarian organizations and donors should allocate sufficient resources to address psychosocial needs. Psychosocial needs should be integrated into standard procedures for community-based participatory assessments and programming, including through training for parents and teachers on children's mental health and peer-to-peer approaches for children and youth.
7. Where appropriate, governments, working together with relevant stakeholders, should cooperate with inter/multi-faith consortia and dialogue forums to support trust building and solidarity, and actively involve them in coordination of preparedness, response and recovery.
8. Linkages and dialogue should be strengthened between disaster and conflict management actors led, where appropriate, by governments, to allow greater cross-fertilization of approaches to risk analysis, preparedness and response.
9. The United Nations Secretary-General's report on the World Humanitarian Summit should reflect the rich dialogue and networking opportunities fostered during the regional consultations and recommend that this be continued through strengthening and diversifying participation in existing humanitarian coordination forums and mechanisms at national, regional and global levels to (i) promote confidence amongst different stakeholders and (ii) serve as a platform for knowledge sharing and enhanced cooperation.
10. Drawing on related global agendas, Member States, the Secretary-General, and all concerned stakeholders should establish a means to periodically review actions taken or progress made on the World Humanitarian Summit recommendations.

Humanitarian Action in Disasters

11. Governments should adopt a whole-of-society approach to disaster preparedness, recognizing the diversity of, and within, communities and the need to work with multiple actors at all levels. Humanitarian organizations should complement government efforts where appropriate.
12. Humanitarian information and messaging should be clearly communicated, tailored for specific audiences and delivered through appropriate mediums, particularly for and with the assistance of partners such as youth, the private sector and media.
13. Academia, the private sector and humanitarian practitioners should work together to build an evidence base that shows return on investments in disaster preparedness, particularly regarding preservation of development gains.
14. Governments should ideally legislate, and at a minimum promote, to ensure sufficient participation of women, including through affirmative measures in leadership and decision making processes during both preparedness and response.
15. Women, children, people with special needs and older persons must be enabled to independently get out of harm's way, with special consideration being taken in preparedness planning for their mobility.
16. Regional agreements should be established between governments regarding protection and social safety nets for disaster- and climate-induced cross-border displacement wherever appropriate.
17. Procedures and organizational structures/mandates should be revised to promote the use of integrated planning frameworks, reflecting that preparedness, response and early recovery are not linear or sequential.
18. Ensure dedicated, predictable and sustainable financing is available for disaster preparedness and early recovery. These funds should be accessible to international and national stakeholders and aligned with national disaster risk management policies. Clear criteria and mechanisms should also be implemented to enable disaster-prone countries to access finance, including via multilateral financial agencies.

Humanitarian Action in Conflict

19. Promote a global commitment that places the protection of and access to services by affected people at the core of humanitarian, development, and peace-building efforts.
20. Humanitarian and peace-building activities should be complementary where possible, but kept separate where necessary to preserve humanitarian space.
21. Humanitarian funding should be flexible enough to respond to evolving needs in conflict settings, prioritizing outcome-based funding to address communities' own prioritized needs and solutions in consultation, where appropriate, with governments.
22. Enhance the capacity of States and other stakeholders to improve conflict early warning and strengthen links to planning and early action. This will address a recognised gap in current preparedness measures and support the synchronization of emergency response and recovery with development and peace-building efforts.
23. Governments, together with humanitarian, development and peace-building actors, should work to support community-level conflict risk reduction, invest in social capital formation and strengthen local structures. Where appropriate, humanitarian actors should undertake context-sensitive protection work through these community organizations, and not create parallel structures.
24. Humanitarian actors should invest the necessary human and financial resources to develop effective and safe modes for communicating with communities in conflict contexts. These should also focus on improving transparency and accountability on assistance provided.

Humanitarian Action in Protracted Crises

25. The IASC should propose, for consultation and agreement with UN Member States, humanitarian organizations that are not part of the IASC, and development partners, definitions of protracted crises (nuanced according to context) and clear operational criteria for systematic and predictable transition from humanitarian action to that of a developmental and/or peace-building nature.
26. Planning, programme and funding instruments should be adapted to the requirements of protracted crises and the related needs of the affected country(ies), e.g. multi-year financing, etc.
27. Launch a global wide-ranging advocacy campaign to help tackle xenophobia surrounding negative associations with refugees.
28. To address the disproportionate degree to which certain countries host refugees, the international community must ensure more equitable sharing by providing support to and resettling people affected by protracted crises. Sustainable return and reintegration remains the most preferred durable solution. Where necessary and appropriate, this should be facilitated, including by enhancing investments in countries of origin to close development gaps that may hinder achievement of this durable solution.
29. Host countries should make arrangements for the issuance of documentation confirming legal status for refugees and internally displaced persons.
30. Support, where appropriate, the self-reliance of refugees and displaced populations by promoting their integration, reintegration or resettlement (as appropriate) through livelihood programmes taking into account the specific needs of affected people, especially women and youth.
31. The international community should support host countries by exploring a basic international social protection package/fund for long-term refugees, including risk-financing mechanisms to cover health insurance, education and vocational training, livelihood grants, and other areas.
32. States should work together to provide a better framework for legal migration in order to reduce risks of human trafficking, making better use of international instruments and organizations and supporting productive workforce development.
33. Governments and their partners should, where possible, provide refugees, IDPs and migrants with basic services, including but not limited to education, health (particularly maternal and child health and psycho-social support), and livelihood and skills development.
34. Where appropriate, humanitarian action should be climate-friendly and should avoid serving as a potential contributor to climate change.