



REGIONAL CONSULTATION
North and South-East Asia
July 2014

REGIONAL CONSULTATION TOKYO, 23-24 JULY 2014

Credit: OCHA/Gemma Cortes

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

The World Humanitarian Summit regional consultation for North and South-East Asia was held in Tokyo, Japan on 23 and 24 July 2014. It was co-hosted by the Government of Japan, Government of Indonesia and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In the spirit of the summit process' multi-stakeholder approach, the consultation brought together some 140 participants from the 16 countries of North and South-East Asia¹ representing Member States, local, regional and international civil society organizations, affected communities, United Nations agencies, regional organizations, businesses and the private sector, and academic institutions, as well as observers from six countries that have hosted, or will host WHS consultations². The consultation was organized around the four themes of the summit, in addition to which cross-cutting issues were discussed.

Participants declared their willingness to coordinate efforts in the event of a major humanitarian crisis striking Asia. They recognized the importance of various groups including affected people, their governments and militaries, international agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations and others working together more closely in humanitarian action and thus being stronger and more effective in their collective and coordinated response to meet the needs of affected people.

Participants agreed that, for true economic recovery to occur, humanitarian action needs to move away from notions of charity and goodwill for victims and towards a greater sense of investment in empowering people to live in dignity. The importance of human security was underscored.

Participants reinforced the need for rapid development of greater coherence between WHS and the other global processes taking place between now and May 2016 (2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015 General Assembly, at which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [successor to the Millennium Development Goals] are to be agreed, and the 2014 & 2015 Conferences of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).

Participants voiced their appreciation to the Co-Chairs and Regional Steering Group members for an inclusive and consultative process leading to the final North and South-East Asia Regional Consultation in Tokyo.

The main conclusions and recommendations articulated by participants of the regional consultation are summarized below.

1. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam

2. Australia, Cote d'Ivoire, Hungary, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Turkey

Humanitarian effectiveness



CONCLUSIONS

- Humanitarian action is an expression of national, regional and global solidarity.
- Humanitarian action is a shared responsibility, with everyone involved having clearly defined roles, and with governments taking the overall lead.
- Any new thinking about humanitarian action should focus on including and empowering local communities and their representatives to be in a position to respond more effectively.
- Accountability to affected people, as well as observance of the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence, are fundamental to effective humanitarian action.
- The gap between humanitarian and development funding must be bridged at all levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) National and International Legal Frameworks:

- Learning from and building upon best practice, governments should develop comprehensive legal frameworks for humanitarian action that are more systematic at integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR), preparedness, response and recovery than is currently the case in most countries, and which are multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-dimensional.
- Humanitarian actors, including regional and international organizations, should work together with governments to put into place comprehensive and inclusive coordination, planning and response frameworks at the national level. International coordination mechanisms (i.e. clusters) should be subordinate to national and sub-national government-led mechanisms.
- Donor countries and agencies should respect the way in which disaster-affected countries seek or accept offers of international assistance and adjust their procedures accordingly.
- The United Nations and other international organizations need to re-examine their roles in the changing humanitarian landscape, recognizing the leading roles national and local actors need to play in humanitarian action.

- The United Nations and other international organizations need to intensify efforts to ensure that their structures do not reinforce the humanitarian/development divide.
- Those gathered for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit should consider accountability as a humanitarian principle.

(b) Reporting

- Improved reporting by all stakeholders is needed to capture a more accurate picture of humanitarian funding and assistance. Making this work will require better articulation of the benefits of reporting. Reporting must cover:
 - Donations from the private sector, including as goods and/or services provided;
 - Resources received through domestic channels;
 - Remittances and other resources received through diaspora networks.

(c) Funding and Accountability

- Adherence to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles needs to be renewed.
- In the same way that donors demand accountability of humanitarian actors in their programming, an open and transparent accountability framework should be put into place to measure donor performance against the GHD principles.

Reducing vulnerability and managing risk



CONCLUSIONS

- Member States should intensify efforts to manage disasters and cross-border disaster risks, working at all levels of society. Governments need to ensure that necessary measures are taken and resources allocated to strengthen the resilience of communities to withstand and cope with recurrent shocks.
- Governments and humanitarian actors need to work together more intensively and systematically to build the capacity of communities, including vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled people among others, by investing in community-based approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR), and recognize the important role women can play in leading humanitarian action.

- An empirical evidence base, including risk analysis and damage/loss statistics, is needed to inform policy and action linked to DRR.
- Stronger linkages with key post-2015 processes, including the 2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), are needed to ensure better alignment between humanitarian and development approaches and action and DRR.
- There is a need to better prepare for, and ensure that clearer roles and responsibilities are defined to respond to, mega-disasters in the region.
- In planning for future risk scenarios and trends, the increasing risk of complex, overlapping and new challenges, including disasters arising from nuclear and other technologies as well as diseases, requires closer collaboration between humanitarian and other actors, including the scientific community and private sector.
- Engagement with and inclusion of the perspectives of children and young people is required, recognizing that in addressing future challenges, we need to listen to and talk to the next generation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All stakeholders should support the establishment of a common position on the relationship between the various inter-governmental processes taking place between now and 2016, and the World Humanitarian Summit process.
- All stakeholders should ensure that specific and measurable indicators are included in the post-2015 DRR and development processes, with emphasis on reducing the need for humanitarian response and assistance resulting from natural disasters.
- All stakeholders should ensure the compilation of stronger evidence on future risks and the economic impact of these risks in order to build a better case for more investment in and prioritization of DRR, including preparedness and early warning, and at national, regional and international levels.
- Ensure joint risk analysis, planning, financing and advocacy by humanitarian, development and climate change adaptation actors to break down the artificial silos created, and ensure greater alignment of approaches and action on DRR, including preparedness and early warning.
- Develop stronger collaboration and partnerships, including with the private sector, to better prepare for and respond to disasters.

Transformation through innovation



CONCLUSIONS

- Innovation needs to focus on preparedness and DRR as well as immediate response.
- End-to-end and disaster resilient communication systems should be strengthened to better document and share information. Innovation in this area of work is already splintered and needs better joining up; there is not necessarily a need for “new”, rather a need for “more coherent” approaches.
- There is a risk that individual efforts by donors and humanitarian actors do not result in wide-spread systems change, but in one-off solutions that are not shared and diffused.
- Those involved in humanitarian action are not calling for additional coordination mechanisms for innovation but rather a more conducive environment in which they can collaboratively work together on innovation.
- Incentives for innovation and learning are needed, as is a more robust tolerance for failure.
- Governments and the humanitarian community need to capitalize on regional organizations’ emerging role in humanitarian response for the repository, dissemination of knowledge and expertise on innovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) Establish 3 Fs (forums, framework and funding) in the region:
- **Forums:** Utilise regional organizations (or similar) to create a regional network for knowledge sharing and expertise on innovation and to convene regional forums where innovations can be shared, showcased and recognized.
 - Create a regional humanitarian journal on innovation to ensure the sharing of information on advancements in humanitarian innovation.
 - **Framework:** Establish a regional-level framework that addresses the principles and ethics of innovation.
 - **Funding:** Establish humanitarian innovation funds at the national and/or regional level, with allocations to be made available from within the existing budgets for research and development and innovation of all actors and organizations. It is proposed that these allocations should be at a minimum of 0.25 per cent for local CSOs and a minimum of 1 per cent for international organizations and governments.

(b) Partnerships:

- Proactively foster innovation through steps such as supporting humanitarian research and development (R&D), enabling partnerships with relevant actors inside and outside the humanitarian system, and establishing related incentives that encourage private sector investment.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- People affected by conflict need security and hope. Humanitarian action must enable this.
- Humanitarians' need to talk to both regular armed forces and armed non-state actors should be respected, in line with internationally agreed humanitarian principles.
- Local communities and their representatives need to be included in humanitarian needs assessments in conflict situations.
- The importance of building trust between those who aim to deliver assistance and those who can facilitate this happening needs to be prioritized.
- Historical and current approaches to civil-military relations in conflict situations need to be better understood by those involved in providing humanitarian assistance.
- The importance of ensuring access to information by migrants as well as other conflict-affected populations requires strengthened focus.
- Local civil society organizations should be supported by international organizations to advocate for civil-military coordination with national militaries in specific conflict contexts where they have a comparative advantage, for example when access of international humanitarian actors is curtailed.

RECOMMENDATIONS**(a) Guidance**

- Region-specific guidelines on civil-military coordination in conflict settings should be developed, building on international practice.
- Related investments should be made in training and capacity building of both humanitarian and military actors to enable better mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities.

(b) Legal Provisions

- The development of regional conventions for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons and migrants should be proposed for inclusion in the Secretary-General's report to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

(c) Strengthening institutional capacity

- Existing regional institutions and networks for conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding should be strengthened, expanded and adequately resourced.

(d) Interaction

- Humanitarian organizations should create occasions to interact with the military at the highest possible level. Exchange programmes at regional level should be organized and facilitated between the highest ranks of the military chain of command and humanitarian organizations to share experiences and good practices on how to promote the respect of international humanitarian law.