Annual Report on World Humanitarian Summit Commitments - Humanitarian Aid International 2016

Stakeholder Information

Organisation Name
Humanitarian Aid International

Organisational Type
NGO - International

City and Country where Headquartered
Gurugram, India

Focal Point Name
Sudhanshu S. Singh

Region
Asia

Twitter ID
humanaidint

Remain engaged and invest in stability

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International will collaborate with other Southern NGOs and networks to hold governments and other stakeholder groups accountable, so that they uphold their mandates and calibrate early solutions.	Advocacy	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts
Humanitarian Aid International programmes will systematically address the root causes of poverty and work as deterrent for people to join violent struggle.	Operational	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The experience of Humanitarian Aid International (HAI) is scant efforts are made to resolve violent conflicts. There is more emphasis on delivering aid, seeking access and advocating for granting asylums than seeking sustainable solutions which compel people to displace, uproot and seek safer asylum elsewhere. Over the years, refugee camps are turning into permanent settlements. Major chunk of humanitarian funding gets absorbed in protracted conflict zones at the cost of unmet needs of natural disaster affected people. While the frequency and scale of natural disasters increase, we need to amend the paradigm so that needs are adequately addressed.

Achievements at a glance

We are initiating a coalition of networks of NGOs in the South Asia region which can take up discussion with respective governments and other stakeholders to advocate for seeking solutions to conflicts. A regional conference has been planned to come up with recommendations, which will take place this year. We understand, poverty is one compelling reason which abets conflict. Our humanitarian and development programmes breaks the silos to address root causes of poverty and vulnerability and structural causes of poverty and justice to discourage factors which force people to join violent struggles. We regularly use social media and publish articles appealing to global leaders to have more emphasis on seeking solutions to perennial conflicts, to address causes, not merely the symptoms.

How is your organization assessing progress

HAI is relatively a new organisation. We are constantly advocating what we have advocated, but we need to build our capacity further, network more with the like minded organisations, so that we could amplify our voice and influence the decision-making authorities. We are content with the efforts we have made but not yet with what we have achieved. We expect global organisations also to have more focus on seeking solutions, emphasizing on resolving conflicts than merely being confined to delivering aid, which unknowingly contributes in consolidating the problems.

Challenges faced in implementation

Challenges are several; strategic interest of global power is an impediment in seeking solutions to conflicts. While some conflicts get more attention, some other get completely overlooked. Civil society space is shrinking in many states. There is growing reluctance to take up inconvenient advocacy issues which may bring an organisation in direct confrontation with the state. Thrust on aid delivery helps in financial sustainability, but advocacy may challenge operations of an organisation. These are major barriers in seeking sustainable solutions.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will convene a regional conference in South Asia, which will come up with recommendations for different stakeholders. We shall also continue our policy and public advocacy using social media and through publications.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Remain engaged and invest in stability , what would it be

Protracted crises need faster resolution so that disaster affected people can get the aid they require for restoring normalcy, mitigate risks and strengthen resilience.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

☑ Accountability to affected people

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 1C - Remain engaged and invest in
stability

(2A) Respect and protect civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International commits to work on improving the policy environment in order to protect the rights and entitlements of the vulnerable and at risk communities.	Policy	Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

HAI believes, there are enough policy instruments to protect lives of at risk population. However, there are serious limitations in putting those policies to practice. Most of the affected population is also not aware of the rights enshrined for their protection. Information is power. Lack of information doesn't make them an informed rights holders, so that they could challenge duty bearers and claim their rights. HAI focuses on building awareness and also challenging deliberate contempt of the existing policy regime.

Achievements at a glance

Our achievement has been limited, and primarily confined to spreading messages and advocating through social media. In our documents and messages we highlight the complete impunity some global powers enjoy and remain unchallenged despite violating international humanitarian laws and principles. HAI realizes that it is too small of an organisation to bring about desired changes on its own. This is why, our focus has been on lobbying with others to highlight the flaws.

How is your organization assessing progress

HAI takes part in advocating for granting asylum, refuge and protection to displaced population. While we see success in advocating that message, we haven't yet succeeded in asking for addressing the root causes or displacement and the factors which create risk for people in conflict zones.

Challenges faced in implementation

The international structure, mandated for resolving conflicts, is politicised. Often those are expected to resolve problems, who are part of it. International NGOs and multilateral agencies are not adequately mandated to work on conflict resolution. National NGOs are too powerless to make any impact.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will use all forums to advocate for seeking solutions so that the percentage of displacement could be brought down. Granting asylum is a relief but not the ultimate solution. The ultimate solution is repatriation of displaced population to their home countries where they find protection and conducive environment for their well-being.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Respect and protect civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities , what would it be

The principle of neutrality shouldn't be followed universally if it is not in the larger interest of affected population. Sometimes we need to take sides to challenge power structures, and to protect extremely vulnerable people.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

☑ IDPs   ☑ Refugees

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 2A - Respect and protect civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of hostilities

☑ 3A - Reduce and address displacement

(2B) Ensure full access to and protection of the humanitarian and medical missions

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International will strive to ensure that international humanitarian law (IHL) is strictly adhered to by all state actors. Punitive actions must follow in case of any violation. Humanitarian Aid International will advocate and lobby for safety of aid workers who are increasingly at risk in conflict zones. It will demand zero tolerance for civilian deaths in the name of collateral damage. It will adhere to and promote the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and impartiality in all circumstances. It will promote greater awareness on IHL among the civil society organisations and Southern NGOs so that they would reaffirm their rights-based programming and uphold the rights and entitlements of the people affected by disasters, climate change, conflicts and extreme events.	Advocacy	Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

We made our commitment on this issue because of rampant violations of IHL not only by non-state actors but also by state actors with complete impunity. We saw such examples even after the WHS, when MSF hospitals were attacked by state forces. Such violations seriously harm the humanitarian sector and discourage humanitarian workers to work in conflict zones. State actors must be held accountable for any violations to ensure protection of civilians, humanitarian workers and infrastructures.

Achievements at a glance

This is an advocacy issue and we have been constantly raising it at all platforms, including social media. HAI manages a platform of frontline NGOs in India. We are building awareness among them on IHL and also planning to provide intensive training. HAI regularly participates in PHAP events and we use that platform also to raise concerns about violations of IHL, and advocate for strict measures in place to punish the guilty. State actors must uphold to what they have committed. NGOs must expose, highlight and advocate if violations are noticed.

How is your organization assessing progress

We are not satisfied with the progress. Only having instrument doesn't change anything in reality unless proper implementation is ensured. The global community still needs to do a lot to ensure that no violations take place. How can we take a stand against non-state actors if the state actors continue doing the same, and go unpunished because they belong to a powerful nation? It is in the larger interest of all that IHL is adhered strictly.

Challenges faced in implementation

Everyone realises the problem but is reluctant to develop a solution as a real solution mean challenging the power houses. Violations are done by those global powers which dominate global strategies, and influence the UN Security Council. There is something significantly wrong in the system. If we are genuinely interested in protecting civilians and workers to ensure respect for IHL, some changes with bold resolve become imperative.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

Advocacy will be scaled up. We are planning to organise training for the member organisations of our platform to amplify the advocacy efforts. We will also network with other international organisations to make accountability more robust.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Ensure full access to and protection of the humanitarian and medical missions , what would it be

Let the policies be more meaningful through robust adherence and implementation.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 2B - Ensure full access to and
protection of the humanitarian and medical
missions

(3A) Reduce and address displacement

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Given the high number of refugees and asylum seekers and long periods of displacement, Humanitarian Aid International will advocate for special programmes with host communities, in order to minimise hostility and ensure better integration. It commits to be inclusive of excluded and invisible people in all programmes, particularly of women, children, elderly, disabled and socially marginalised. It firmly believes that the ultimate solution to displacement is not providing refuge and granting asylum, but seeking permanent and lasting solutions to conflicts, so that displaced people settle back to their places of origin with absolute safety and protection. However, until solutions are agreed, the displaced populations' right to life with dignity must be ensured. Protection of the rights of population on the move, or in displacement must be a top priority.	Advocacy	Leave No One Behind

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

We observed that the entire thrust was on treating the symptoms instead of root causes. For example, while there is widespread efforts to grant asylum, there has been scant efforts to seek solutions so that displacement could be reduced. HAI made this commitment for seeking sustainable solutions to displacement and for refugees.

Achievements at a glance

We have published a few papers and also used various platforms including the social media to advocate for sustainable solutions. HAI participated in couple of national and regional planning workshops, wherein efforts were made to make it part of the policy/strategy documents that comprehensive solutions of displacement should be sought instead of symptomatic treatment. HAI has developed a platform of Indian organisations which is taking up the issue of displacement nationally too.

How is your organization assessing progress

A lot has yet to be done. The humanitarian sector still focuses more on ensuring access to deliver aid and enhancing acceptance for refugee population in host countries. These are vital efforts to save lives and ensure protection. However, equal emphasis should also be given to resolve conflicts. The mandated bodies for seeking solutions, need to be held accountable.

Challenges faced in implementation

HAI is still a small organisation to make a significant impact on the discourse. We are not yet internationally operational - programme wise. Our efforts are confined to advocacy only as of now.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We continue to network with larger organisations and advocacy institutions to amplify our voice. In 2017, we will strategise further about aligning our programme with other international actors to take up the advocacy issues more effectively.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Reduce and address displacement , what would it be

Right diagnosis of problems will help us to seek permanent cure. Humanitarian sector should focus more on seeking solutions, instead of inadvertently sustaining the problems.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

☑ IDPs   ☑ Refugees

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 3A - Reduce and address displacement

(3D) Empower and protect women and girls

Individual Commitments

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Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

We believe exclusion is built in all programmes unless a perspective on inclusion is developed. There are invisible people in all communities which tend to continue to suffer unless efforts are made to make them visible. HAI follows this inclusive perspective in all of its programmes.

Achievements at a glance

HAI has taken more concrete steps in India in this regard. We responded to two natural disasters last year where from day one our focus was on marginalised people who get excluded from processes. Consequently, we could bring in women, children, elderly, disabled and socially marginalised people at the forefront of our programmes. We advocate the same in localisation process too. Where we have succeeded is to convince that local, small and frontline organisations need to be made part of the localisation debate and process.

How is your organization assessing progress

The progress has been satisfactory on whatever we have done in this regard. We were successful on promoting inclusion nationally as well as internationally. However, constant follow-up will require to make it a practice.

Challenges faced in implementation

The biggest challenge faced was the patronising attitude in the global North and trust deficit on national organisations. Most of the global processes are still dominated by powerful actors who make decision on behalf of the frontline organisations without giving them enough space to articulate their opinion.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We will sustain our efforts on the agenda of inclusion. We are also part of the IASC HFTT group, which provides us a good platform to pursue our agenda.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Empower and protect women and girls , what would it be

Believe the local capacity and start building from what exists at the ground.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 3G - Address other groups or minorities

(3G) Address other groups or minorities in crisis settings

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Given the high number of refugees and asylum seekers and long periods of displacement, Humanitarian Aid International will advocate for special programmes with host communities, in order to minimise hostility and ensure better integration. It commits to be inclusive of excluded and invisible people in all programmes, particularly of women, children, elderly, disabled and socially marginalised. It firmly believes that the ultimate solution to displacement is not providing refuge and granting asylum, but seeking permanent and lasting solutions to conflicts, so that displaced people settle back to their places of origin with absolute safety and protection. However, until solutions are agreed, the displaced populations' right to life with dignity must be ensured. Protection of the rights of population on the move, or in displacement must be a top priority.	Advocacy	Leave No One Behind

(4A) Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International commits to break the silos of humanitarian and development programmes by bringing resilience at the centre stage. All of its humanitarian and development programmes will lead to addressing risks, vulnerability and exposure.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

There are structural causes adding to risks and vulnerabilities. Keeping our responses confined to disasters will not have lasting solution. Without backward-forward linking, we won't be able to able to mitigate risk factors. If humanitarian programme is undertaken in isolation, we will keep responding to same disasters year after year. Breaking silos is necessary to make vulnerable communities more resilient.

Achievements at a glance

We responded to two natural disasters last year. Both the responses were followed up through development programmes and linkage building. Our humanitarian and development programmes are always based on risk reduction and strengthening resilience.

How is your organization assessing progress

The beginning has been satisfactory, but a lot more has yet to be done.

Challenges faced in implementation

Inadequate funding, particularly for slow onset disasters make it extremely challenging to plan for a comprehensive response cycle. Often inadequate funding compels us to close the response after the relief phase. This is a serious impediment to integrate risk reduction and resilience strategy in the response cycle. At the global level too, most of the funding gets absorbed by protracted crises, leaving little resources for natural disaster affected people.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

We are building up a national pool fund in India so that we have enough resources in advance to plan for a comprehensive response cycle which mitigates risks and strengthens resilience.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems , what would it be

Believe in the capacity of national actors, don't encroach their fundraising space. Empowered frontline organisations will ensure robust humanitarian response mechanism.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Keywords

☑ Country-based pooled funds

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 4A - Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems ☑ 5B - Invest according to risk

4B Anticipate, do not wait, for crises

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International believes that the corporate sector has tremendous potential to contribute to alleviate humanitarian suffering. It will constantly work with the corporate sector enterprises and national governments for poverty reduction, income generation, vulnerability reduction, education and livelihood diversification, especially in disaster-affected areas by facilitating stakeholder engagement.	Partnership	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The corporate sector has been growing exponentially especially in the global South. Many corporate activities exacerbate risk and vulnerability and create more marginalised groups. This is why it is critical to engage them in resilience programmes. Disasters also adversely impact corporate interest. Their engagement will help in faster recovery for the affected population and also mitigating their loses.

Achievements at a glance

HAI is establishing a national platform which consists of homegrown NGOs, faith-based institutions, corporate and media houses. This platform will work under a national resilience programme to address risk and vulnerability factors and strengthen resilience, in addition to responding to disasters. We will also soon roll out a roster plan which will have professionals from the corporate sector to complement smaller organisations during disaster response, to make responses more robust, innovative and resilience focused.

How is your organization assessing progress

We are still at initial stage of platform formation. However, some corporate houses have shown keen interest towards the entire concept. In 2017, the platform will take more concrete shape

Challenges faced in implementation

We primarily face challenges from large INGOs which have already registered themselves in India as Indian organisations. HAI finds it difficult to compete with them and enter into corporate partnership. Moreover, some corporate houses don't implement their CSR programmes meaningfully. They somehow try to manipulate it to fulfill their statutory obligations under the CSR policy.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

In 2017, HAI expects to have some key corporate houses on its platform, contributing in its national resilience programme, disaster responses and also contributing human resource to the HAI roster for supporting smaller grassroots organisations. HAI also expects to make corporate partners more sensitive towards their activities so that they don't add to risk and vulnerability.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Anticipate, do not wait, for crises , what would it be

Mitigated risks and vulnerability factors don't only help the marginalised communities but also serve the corporate interest by reducing their loses.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 4B - Anticipate, do not wait, for crises

(4C) Deliver collective outcomes: transcend humanitarian-development divides

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International commits to break the silos of humanitarian and development programmes by bringing resilience at the centre stage. All of its humanitarian and development programmes will lead to addressing risks, vulnerability and exposure.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
Humanitarian Aid International commits to constantly strive for the synergy of humanitarian programmes with development programmes of all actors, in order to address the root causes of poverty and vulnerability.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Humanitarian funding is not increasing in proportion to the scale and frequency of disasters. Moreover, most humanitarian aid gets absorbed in conflict zones, neglecting needs of natural disaster affected people. This is why it is important to break the silos so that development funding can be used to mitigate risk and vulnerability factors, and humanitarian programmes can be provided a continuum to strengthen resilience.

Achievements at a glance

HAI has four thematic areas, namely, 1) humanitarian response, 2) disaster risk reduction, 3) climate change and adaptation and 4) humanitarian advocacy. These programmes complement each other, instead of being implemented in isolation. The HAI platform is strengthening its capacity to be more comprehensive in approach so that a disaster response leads to development programme. We have yet to prepare a national resilience programme, which will hopefully be done in 2017, to connect all four thematic areas.

How is your organization assessing progress

HAI is a new organisation. We have developed the strategy and basic infrastructure, such as the HAI platform, but we have yet to develop a national programme, and mobilise resources to undertake planned activities through the platform.

Challenges faced in implementation

HAI responded to two disasters last year, but failed to mobilise adequate resources to complete the entire cycle and link them with development programmes. This happened primarily because recurrent disasters stop attracting people's and donor's attention. More aid comes for providing immediate relief, but not for the activities which help the affected people to recover, rehabilitate and strengthen resilience.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

Now we are establishing a pooled fund so that we don't struggle to mobilise resources while responding to a disaster. Moreover, once our platform has representation from corporate entities, it is likely that necessary resources would be mobilised from them.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Deliver collective outcomes: transcend humanitarian-development divides , what would it be

Growth and development shouldn't be used interchangeably. Blind race for growth is adding more to risk and making more people vulnerable.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 4C - Deliver collective outcomes:
transcend humanitarian-development
divides

5A Invest in local capacities

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International firmly believes that local actors do have the capacity to respond. They only lack resources to be more prompt and effective. Being a local actor, Humanitarian Aid International is better placed to address this gap. It will commit itself to strengthen the network of local organisations, and support them with adequate resources (professional, technical and financial) to reduce the response time.	Partnership	Invest in Humanity
Humanitarian Aid International commits to address the flaws of humanitarian financing by bringing local actors at forefront of humanitarian response, in order to reduce the administrative expenses, so that maximum resources are utilised on programmes.	Advocacy	Invest in Humanity

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The current international humanitarian architecture has been systematically eroding response capacity of local actors while talking for their empowerment. This flaw can be addressed only when local organisations realise their potential, assert their rights and highlights the flawed practices instead of waiting for international organisations to transfer the power. HAI is doing exactly the same as a southern organisation.

Western organisations define the architecture as they control resources. This process has drastically harmed traditional response capacity of those organisations which are still the first to respond to disasters.

Achievements at a glance

HAI published a position paper on localisation, which is being used as an advocacy tool to demand for rights of local organisations. HAI has also established a platform of frontline organisations to make them more effective and efficient in disaster response. HAI is also part of the IASC HFTT to work on the localisation marker. This platform is used to push the voice of local organisations, and to make the process more inclusive of frontline organisations.

How is your organization assessing progress

The progress has been satisfactory. The actors involved in the Grand Bargain process are genuinely interested in empowerment of local organisations and transferring at least 25% funding as directly as possible to them. The HAI platform is also giving a forum to Indian frontline organisations to articulate their concerns which is now heard internationally.

Challenges faced in implementation

There is little time to implement the localisation process meaningfully. The localisation marker has to be finalised by June 2017, which leaves little time for making the process more inclusive. Moreover, some international organisations are not willing to give up their control over resources. They are an obstacle in properly defining the 'local actors'.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

HAI is planning a consultation in India with frontline organisations to orient them on the Grand Bargain and Charter4Change, and then seek their inputs to feedback into the global process. HAI is also advocating for similar consultations in other countries. HAI will keep its engagement continued in the IASC HFTT to keep the process inclusive.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Invest in local capacities , what would it be

Empowerment of local organisations will make humanitarian architecture more cost efficient, which will ensure that the maximum scarce resources reach the people instead of sustaining some large organisations.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Specific Initiatives

☑ Charter for Change ☑ Grand Bargain

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 5A - Invest in local capacities

(5E) Diversify the resource base and increase cost-efficiency

Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
Humanitarian Aid International commits to address the flaws of humanitarian financing by bringing local actors at forefront of humanitarian response, in order to reduce the administrative expenses, so that maximum resources are utilised on programmes.	Advocacy	Invest in Humanity

Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

Western organisations don't respect the local economy. They follow their own expenditure pattern in the country of operation which inflates the economy and makes it further challenging for local organisations to function. There is a need to make a self-sufficient response mechanism which operates on low overheads so that the maximum resources are utilised on direct programme activities.

Achievements at a glance

The HAI platform is working in that direction. Capacity of frontline organisations is being strengthened to be prompt and comprehensive in response. A national pooled fund is being developed to support the quick launch of response. HAI is also developing a roster. Roster members are expected to provide voluntary support to HAI member organisations for two weeks per year, if there is a need. This will not only augment the response capacity but also bring down the operational cost significantly

How is your organization assessing progress

The progress is satisfactory but a lot has yet to be done. The concept was launched only a few months back. While the platform has been established, the pooled fund is under formation, and the roster development will start in the coming months.

Challenges faced in implementation

The biggest challenge comes from international organisations which have already captured the national space. Their presence doesn't provide a level playing field. Smaller organisations find it almost impossible to compete with bigger brands in the sphere of fundraising.

Next step to advance implementation in 2017

HAI will keep on advocating that international organisations must not raise funds in the global South. This space should be left for local organisations so that they can try to grown on the resources available within their own countries.

If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Diversify the resource base and increase cost-efficiency , what would it be

Bigger International NGOs should be willing to downsize and scale down if they want local organisations to grow. Instead of getting registered locally, enter into partnership with local organisations. That will be the win-win situation.

Tag with other relevant transformations, keywords, initiatives

Agenda for Humanity

☑ 5E - Diversify the resource base and increase cost-efficiency

Additional Reports

Attachment
HAI_Position_Paper_Localisation.pdf