



Reinforce Local Systems and Invest in Local Capacities

Analytical Paper on WHS Self-Reporting on Agenda for Humanity Transformation 4A and 5A

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Executive Summary:

One of the most prominent outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit was the commitment in the Agenda for Humanity (A4H) to reinforce local systems (Transformation 4A) and invest in local capacities (Transformation 5A). The A4H stresses the importance of respecting local leadership and capacity; not putting in place parallel structures; and providing direct, predictable financing and long-term capacity support to local actors. As of 18 June 2018, ninety-nine (99) stakeholders reported back on progress toward reinforcing local systems in 2017; and 53 reported on progress in investing in local capacities.

There are some positive signs that international actors are working to provide more space and opportunity to national and local actors. A few donors are using their influence to incentivise such a shift amongst their funding partners. There are some examples of progress in enabling stronger local actor engagement in coordination structures; building national platforms to strengthen the voice of national civil society; and enabling local actors to make their voice heard in global debates.

Many donors identify pooled funds as a promising avenue for increasing investment in local actors. Many donors increased their funding for pooled funds, especially OCHA-led Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), as well as the Start Fund and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). CBPFs received a record US\$ 824 million from 26 Member States, of which 24% went directly to national NGOs. A number of actors, not least INGOs, strengthened financial tracking systems so as to be able to identify and report what percentage of their humanitarian spending reached local actors. It is an important step forward to develop a baseline that enables us to monitor progress over time. PACT self-reports also indicate modest progress toward improving participation from communities affected by disasters, including in the context of delivery against the Core Humanitarian Standard.

Whilst there are many valuable examples of progress cited in the self-reports, stakeholders also note continuing challenges towards faster and fuller delivery of the WHS localisation agenda.

¹ This paper was co-authored by Floriana Polito and Yvonne Tangheroni Ingabire (CARITAS Internationalis), Michael Mosselmans (Christian Aid/ACT Alliance), Mike Noyes (Action Aid) and Sudhanshu Singh (Humanitarian Aid International) under the coordination of Kate Katch (UN OCHA).

The most often-reported challenges relate to funding modalities. Donors face constraints that hinder their ability to invest in local actors – including limited human resources to manage multiple grants, due diligence and legislative challenges, and risk aversion. There are insufficient funding mechanisms to enable investment in capacity building as well as in the core administrative costs of national front-line responders. Further challenges include a lack of buy-in at country level, wherein reforms proposed by the headquarters of international humanitarian actors are not always fully supported by or well-known to their field staff. At the same time, not all local actors are familiar with the WHS commitments and hence are not well-positioned to hold international actors to account.

This paper recommends, inter alia, that pooled funds commit to allocate more of their resources to national actors; that international actors develop new funding mechanisms that would enable faster progress toward the Agenda for Humanity localisation commitments; and that strengthened efforts are needed to facilitate local actor engagement in country-level humanitarian coordination.

Overview of the current landscape

Two years on from the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain, the demands on the humanitarian system continue to grow. Agencies are juggling with the twin demands of responding to immediate needs whilst promoting the system change sought. In 2017, over 200 million people around the world were dependent on international humanitarian assistance.² Conflict continues to be the main driver of need, often amplified by environmental issues like drought. Famine conditions were threatened in four countries during the year, but, encouragingly, early and targeted responses prevented already bad situations becoming worse.

The localisation agenda remains a core plank of Grand Bargain implementation and greater clarity on the scope and scale of the subject area has developed in 2017. From this, in early 2018, the IASC³ has shared an agreed definition of what is considered a local actor. With regard to the target of “at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible” by 2020, funding reported to UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service as being channelled directly to local and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or delivered through one intermediary, accounted for 3.6% of total humanitarian assistance in 2017. This represented an increase from 2.3% in 2016 (GHA report 2018).

Data Source

At the World Humanitarian Summit, more than 200 stakeholders made almost 700 commitments to advance Transformation 4A “Reinforce and not replace national and local systems” in the Agenda for Humanity. In 2018, 99 stakeholders reported on progress made during 2017 to advance commitments under 4A, representing the highest number of stakeholder reports across the Agenda for Humanity for this reporting period.⁴ Fifty-three stakeholders reported on the related Transformation 5A “invest in local capacities”.⁵

² Source: Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018, Development Initiatives, June 2018.

³ Source: IASC Task Team on Humanitarian Financing, January 2018.

⁴ The reporting was for the period 1 January 2017-31 December 2017. The reports received was as of 18 June 2018 in the Platform for Action Commitments and Transformation (PACT) – agendaforhumanity.org

⁵ An additional 8 stakeholders reported under different transformations or submitted initiative reports that strongly relate to transformation 4A, and an additional 5 stakeholders submitted reports related to 5A. These reports were also considered in this analysis.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the information provided by stakeholders in their WHS commitment reporting in the Platform for Action Commitments and Transformation (PACT) to review the areas or trends of progress and challenges being identified by stakeholders under Transformations 4A and 5A. The reporting in the PACT under Transformation 4A and 5A is the sole source of information in this paper unless otherwise specified.

Within the reporting under Transformation 4A, stakeholders were invited to report on achievements under one or more sub-categories⁶ with the rest of the reporting form on challenges and areas for future progress relating to the wider transformation 'reinforce local systems'. Within the subcategories available, over 50% of stakeholders (55) reported on the sub-category "strengthening national/ local leadership and systems" and almost 35% (34) reported on the subcategory "people-centred approaches". This paper only reviews the data related to these two subcategories to enable more detailed analysis in this paper.⁷

Positive trends emerging from self-reporting

National and local actors moving from implementers to partners

Almost 50% of stakeholder reports on strengthening national and local leadership and systems focused on collaboration and partnerships. A number of these reports demonstrated some positive signs that international actors are making increased efforts to move from the traditional direct implementation model towards an approach that gives more space and opportunity to national and local actors.

ActionAid reported on the Transforming Surge Capacity project that established a collaborative localised surge roster, facilitating local deployments. Oxfam implemented the Financial Enablers Project and Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELNHA) to demonstrate how local actors could lead response in specific contexts. The Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships Project started to be implemented by six INGOs (led by Christian Aid) to strengthen local/national actors in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan. Humanitarian Aid International established and supported a platform of grassroot NGOs in India to establish better partnerships with international actors. World Vision partnered with 48 local organisations in Somalia while also advocating with donors and the Somalia Humanitarian Country Team to fund local organisations. In addition, a number of stakeholders, including Norwegian Church Aid, UNICEF, and Trocaire reported on new internal policies that put principles of partnership with national and local partners at the centre of their programmes.

Donors also reported on how they are using their political and financial influence to support this cultural shift. Denmark redesigned its Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partnership approach, to require its 17 Danish strategic CSO partners to work with local/national partners. The French Development Agency (AFD) also created incentives for French NGOs to work in partnership with local CSOs to build long-term solutions. Australia is investing AUD 50 million in the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen response led by local and national actors. Switzerland invested 50% of its funding to local actors on capacity building so that they could better participate in humanitarian programmes.

⁶ The sub-categories were: strengthening national/local leadership and systems; building community resilience; people-centred approaches; cash-based programming; and adherence to quality and accountability standards.

⁷ Percentage of stakeholders reporting on the other subcategories under 4A were: Cash-based programming (38%); Adherence to quality and accountability standards (26%); building community resilience (26%); and other (15%).

Promising examples of increased representation of national and local actors in international coordination mechanisms

A major stepping stone toward supporting national and local leadership in crises and ensuring that international actors are not investing in parallel international coordination and response mechanisms is to increase local and national representation in decision-making processes, including coordination structures. In 2017, approximately 10 stakeholders demonstrated some promising examples of good practice in a limited number of countries, accompanied by the development of training packages and guidelines that should consolidate and expand these.

At the field level, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) engaged with members in ten countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia to provide customised support and understand the role of local fora in the humanitarian coordination architecture of major current responses. ActionAid reported on The Shifting the Power Project, which supported local NGOs to engage in coordination mechanisms in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kenya.⁸ Inspired by this work, a Pacific Shifting the Power Coalition was established, supporting local women's organisations to link with national coordination mechanisms in that region. Member States too are making efforts to increase the role of local actors in coordination mechanisms. Australia supported national leadership of disaster coordination and response in the response to the Ambae volcano event in Vanuatu. Chile developed training courses for local disaster risk management coordinators.

Progress was also reported in terms of the creation of coordination mechanisms among national humanitarian actors, including in Ethiopia and Bangladesh (also within the Shifting the Power Project). Humanitarian Aid International has started to develop a Southern Charter to improve coordination of local/national NGOs, promote awareness of localisation commitments, and increase accountability between national and international actors for fulfilment of those commitments.

A number of stakeholders also reported on developing new policy positions and training with the aim of increasing involvement of national and local actors. UNICEF has developed a localisation in coordination training module with the aim of promoting principled partnerships, making capacity building of local partners more systematic and accountable and promoting local leadership or co-leadership in coordination bodies. The Caritas Internationalis confederation has developed a position paper to renew and improve its existing commitments to partnership and strengthen its member organisations' engagement in international coordination mechanisms and systems.

The above examples demonstrate good practice that should be applied and expanded. Nevertheless, widespread systematic change is not yet evident. Increased reporting from stakeholders who lead or participate in coordination mechanisms along with more reporting from southern actors on their experience of coordination could better assist this assessment.

A greater voice and visibility for national and local partners

Increasing visibility of the role of local and national actors in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery is critical to supporting and enabling national and local leadership. A number of

⁸ This information has been supplemented by these reports to provide the countries of where this has been achieved:
<https://startnetwork.org/resource/how-has-shifting-power-influenced-local-and-national-partners-response-emergencies>
<https://startnetwork.org/resource/localisation-aid-are-ingos-walking-talk>

international stakeholders reported on efforts to increase recognition and visibility of local and national actors, including through media publications. Christian Aid surveyed partners globally to understand how they would like to be featured in communications and began to name and credit partners across all communication channels. Oxfam implemented a new internal policy on the improved representation of local partners in communication products. Other stakeholders reported on their efforts to increase representation of local actors. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy facilitated events and worked to ensure that southern organisations had a seat at the table and their voices were heard in international coordination mechanisms and global processes.

Greater use of pooled funds to fund local actors

The Agenda for Humanity called for increased provision of direct and predictable financing to national and local actors; to address blockages to direct investments at the local level; and to increase the overall portion of humanitarian appeal funding channeled through UN country-based pooled funds to 15%.

In 2017, stakeholders identified pooled funds as one of the most effective mechanisms for increasing the quantity and proportion of funding channeled to local actors. UN OCHA reported that in 2017, its Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) received a record US\$ 824 million from 26 Member States. US\$ 164 million (24%) of the funding was directly allocated to national NGOs, an increase from US\$ 74 million in 2015 and US\$ 134 million in 2016. While the increase is positive, it still only amounted to 5% of Humanitarian Response Plans.

A number of Member States reported contributing to this increased funding available to pooled funds and cited pooled funds as one of the most manageable and promising avenues for increasing support to national and local actors. For example, Australia channelled AUD 32 million through pooled funds; and France EUR 5.5 million. Germany, Canada and Iceland reported on increased funding to CBPFs. In addition to its CBPF contribution, the UK contributed £ 10 million (and was the lead donor) to the Start Network's Start Fund – the first multi-donor pooled fund managed exclusively by NGOs. Belgium programmed EUR 63 million on a 2-year basis through eleven CBPFs, as well as allocating EUR 1 million to the Start Fund. Ireland increased its contributions to both the Start Fund and the CBPFs. Switzerland provided 5% of its funding to pooled funds including the CBPFs and the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund. In another positive pooled fund-related development, ACT Alliance changed the rules of its Rapid Response Fund so only national and local ACT members are eligible.

Improved tracking of funding to national and local actors

To assess progress in meeting commitments to channel more resources toward local and national actors, it is essential to track and measure financial flows. In the past, aid organisations have faced challenges in obtaining from their financial management systems how much of their funding reaches local actors. In 2017 UN OCHA, CAFOD and Development Initiatives, under the auspices of the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, completed a process to determine how funding to national and local actors should be defined, in collaboration with the Grand Bargain localisation workstream co-convenors IFRC and the Government of Switzerland. In the WHS commitment reporting, an increasing number of organisations (CARE, Norwegian Church Aid, Oxfam, ActionAid, Christian Aid, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, Catholic Relief Services, Humanitarian Aid International, Sweden, UNHCR and UNICEF) identified how much of their humanitarian funding was channelled to national and local responders in 2017 and demonstrated transparency by reporting this through the PACT. Stakeholders identified that targets in the Grand Bargain and

Charter for Change incentivised them to improve data systems. CARE and Oxfam were among those stakeholders who reported putting significant effort into necessary information management systems reform. The reporting on the PACT is an encouraging sign that transparency is increasing; data systems are improving; and a baseline is being established against which progress can be assessed over time.

Organizational improvements to embed people-centred approaches in programmes

Reports on implementation of commitments that seek to ensure people-centred approaches increased marginally from last year (17% compared to 13% in 2016), with the majority of those reports focused on improving participation from, accountability to and engagement with communities affected by disasters. Stakeholders that reported demonstrated a positive trend in fostering participation and feedback from affected communities to ensure that programs adapt to their needs in the most suitable custom.

GOAL Global established a Complaints Response Group to process complaints in a transparent manner and works with complaint response mechanism (CRM) systems in nine countries. Caritas Internationalis set up an Accountability Sectorial Working Group that focuses on community engagement and participation, needs assessments and analysis, information sharing, feedback and complaint handling and protection mainstreaming. In Niger, CARE established community early warning systems with affected people participating in the analysis of data for trigger indicators and capacity/resilience assessments. A few stakeholders (Good Neighbours International, World Vision in partnership with Save the Children and Plan International) focused on child-friendly participation mechanisms and programs.

Stakeholders also reported on developments and improvements in tracking tool systems to monitor progress and data collection on the effectiveness of complaint mechanisms. Help Age has initiated a Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool that collects data on disability and age disaggregation, capacity assessments for older people, and feedback from communities it serves. Several stakeholders (Concern Worldwide, Norwegian Church Aid, World Vision) cited Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) certification as a useful method to periodically monitor and assess the quality and effectiveness of their programmes in being responsive and accountable to the communities they support.

Obstacles/Impediments to collective progress on the transformations

More than two years ago, global leaders and key humanitarian actors made commitments to reform the ways the system had been functioning, to reinforce national and local systems and to give more recognition and support to local and national actors, who are often the first responders. Two years down the line, progress is being made and the commitment of many stakeholders remains. Nonetheless, change has been slow and persistent obstacles remain across funding, longer-term strengthening of national and local actors and systems; adapting coordination mechanisms and ensuring sufficient buy-in and implementation at the field level.

Insufficient funding and inflexible funding modalities to support national and local response and longer-term capacity building

Funding or funding modalities were considered the two largest challenges to progress by over 50% of the stakeholders that identified challenges to advancing progress on 4A – reinforce local

systems, and almost 70% of stakeholders that identified challenges to advancing 5A – invest in local capacities.⁹ From the stakeholders that provided further information, the challenges focused on 1) limitations of donors to invest in national and local actors; 2) access constraints of national and local partners to funding, including pooled funds; and 3) insufficient funding for capacity building (particularly long-term) and inadequate systems to track capacity building funding and impact.

A number of stakeholders (CAFOD, Norwegian Church Aid, Action Aid, Christian Aid, Trocaire, Doz.e.V., Humentum UK) pointed to donor policies and practices as one of the key limitations to increasing funding to national and local actors, citing risk aversion, a lack of confidence in local and national front-line responders, slow progress on harmonising and simplifying due diligence requirements, and inflexible funding. A number of donors (Australia, Spain, European Union, France, Germany, Malta) recognized there were internal challenges to provide direct funding to national and local actors noting limited human resources to manage multiple and smaller grants, due diligence or legislative constraints, and the longer-term nature of developing partnerships with national and local partners that can slow immediate results.

To remedy the tension between constraints and commitment to provide more funding and support to national and local partners, donors often cited increasing contributions to pooled funds along with new or improved funding stipulations with UN agencies and INGOs to partner with national and local partners (as recognized above under achievements). While the use of pooled funds is overall positive, a few stakeholders (ActionAid, UN OCHA, Trocaire, Humanitarian Aid International) cited continued constraints faced by national and local partners to access bilateral and pooled funds. For example, UN OCHA reported “new implementing partners without prior funding and implementation experience remain without access to country-based pooled funding”.

Insufficient funding for capacity building of national and local partners, along with short-term and inflexible funding was also a common theme through stakeholder reports. Christian Aid, CHS Alliance, Cordaid, France, IOM, and Turkey reported on insufficient funding and resources to enable them to provide sufficient capacity building to partners. Others (CAFOD, Catholic Relief Services; Oxfam; Anglican Inter Faith Network of the Anglican Communion; Concern Worldwide; Doz e.V.; Kesh Malek; UN Industrial Development Organization) also pointed to the short-term and projectized nature of the majority of humanitarian funding that makes it difficult for international aid agencies to find the resources to invest significantly in strengthening local capacities over the long-term and inflexible funding arrangements that do not allow for contributions toward local partners’ core administrative costs. As noted by CAFOD, “Annual funding cycles and/or funding cycles tied to a specific response/intervention are not conducive to long-term organizational capacity building. Stringent, non-flexible donor requirements limit our ability to support the capacity development of partners”.

Capacity building alone is not enough to deliver on the objectives behind the localisation agenda of improving humanitarian response and putting decision making closer to the affected people. This can only be done by investing in response funding for local actors. Going forward, improving direct funding to national and local partners will require donors to continue to work to overcome or find ways to work around policy or legislative constraints. Different mechanisms or tools used (pooled funds or through international partners) will also need to be examined to ensure they are providing sufficient and flexible funding to national and local partners. Organisations will also need

⁹ As of 5 June 2018, under 4A – 81 stakeholders reported on challenges, 42 of those stakeholders identified funding amounts and/or funding modalities as an obstacle to progress. Under 5A – 43 stakeholders reported on challenges, 30 of those stakeholders identified funding amounts and/or funding modalities as an obstacle to progress.

to work harder to find ways to invest in core costs and longer-term capacity building that can sustain humanitarian skills and knowledge of local partners between crises. Ireland calls for a collective donor effort to reform: “All donors need to strive to provide reasonable levels of unearmarked/core funding. This must be a collective effort/responsibility.” At the same time, while resolving funding constraints is essential, as Interaction noted in its report, “[It is] critical that this conversation become a more holistic conversation inclusive of real discussion of power dynamics rather than an exercise in simply ensuring more funding to local actors”.

Promoting culture change and ensuring buy-in at the country-level for more nationally and locally led response

Bringing about cultural change within an organization and across the humanitarian sector, along with ensuring sufficient buy-in and implementation were two other challenges that featured prominently in the PACT reporting.

The reports of some stakeholders demonstrate there is still work to be done to address perceptions and practices that inhibit a shift toward greater national and local led response, with stakeholders citing trust deficits on local knowledge and local coordination mechanisms, challenges to find trustworthy partnerships in emergency contexts, or preferences to continue to fund local and national responders through intermediaries. Even where a change process is underway, international organizations (Christian Aid; Norwegian Church Aid, CARE, GOAL Global) noted that cultural change is a slow process that can take a period of years to change consistently. Christian Aid noted shifting away from INGOs implementing directly ‘requires flexibility and trust which systems and ‘culture’ are not ready for...It inevitably means changes for international actors, that impact on roles, identity, behaviours, and practices... INGOs need to have a distinct role from national actors where both parties see how they complement one another’.

Other international and national stakeholders (CAFOD, Food for the Hungry; GOAL Global, Humanitarian Aid International, INTERSOS, IOM, Oxfam, UNICEF, Welthungerhilfe) identified a lack of buy-in or implementation at the country-level as one of the impediments to progress. Stakeholders often cited translating commitments made at the headquarters level across to implementation at the country-level. For some stakeholders it was an issue of insufficient awareness of commitments at the country-level; for others it was headquarters inability to control or actively influence the daily decisions of country offices in who and how they partner with. Others pointed to country offices having competing priorities, challenges in rolling out changes because of security issues, difficulties in securing staff time and commitment for training, and in some cases to accept and follow new procedures and policies. In addition, most local and national actors are unaware of the commitments made for them, hence unable to hold the international actors accountable, as reported by a national NGO. A couple of other INGOs felt that field staff might not be receptive to changes all the time, and their large structure poses challenges to bring about changes in systems, attitude and culture in a short span of time.

Positive change is underway though it remains uneven and in continual need of prioritisation. A transformation in the partnership pattern between local and international actors requires multi-year investment, adequate resources including dedicated staff within international actors, and for country-level offices and national and local partners to be made aware of commitments with clear implementation plans put in place.

Persistent barriers to effective participation of national and local partners in international coordination structures

Approximately 20% of stakeholders who reported on challenges under 4A and 5A referred to a range of coordination issues. Of those challenges that related more specifically to empowering national and local leadership in response, only a few stakeholders (ActionAid, CHS Alliance, United Kingdom) raised concern that local and national partners still find it difficult to participate in or have a sufficient voice in international coordination mechanisms. Barriers cited include language, power dynamics within the global humanitarian system that privilege international actors, limited trust by donors in local coordination mechanisms, multiple donor requirements and agency policies. Even less stakeholders (France, European Union) referred to the need to better reinforce and work within national and local systems, including the need to better support local authorities in their leading role.

The absence of more stakeholders noting these challenges is surprising given it is consistently raised as an issue in other reports and evaluations.¹⁰ At the heart of the call in the Agenda for Humanity, and supported politically at the Summit, was the need to shift toward more nationally and locally-led and coordinated responses, with tailored international support based on a clear assessment of context and complementarity. Despite some positive signs that international actors are working to provide more space and funding to national and local actors, the work must not stop at increased financing or involvement of national and local organizations within international processes or mechanisms. All stakeholders should continue to strive toward a flexible and tailored international response that allows for national and local actors to be the central drivers of relief and recovery efforts.

Recommendations

1. Managers of country-based pooled funds and other pooled funds should increase targets for the allocation of funding directed toward national and local actors.
2. Donors, UN agencies and international NGOs should consider developing new or adapting existing funding mechanisms to support strengthening core humanitarian capacities of national or local organisations outside of crisis response periods.
3. Donors, UN agencies and international NGOs should adopt provisions to ensure national and local organisations receive adequate overhead payments, and include as part of partnership arrangements, commitments to contribute toward core costs.
4. UN agencies and international NGOs should increase efforts to assess in-country national and local coordination and response mechanisms with the purpose of providing a more

¹⁰ See: Global Mentoring Initiative (K.Van Braband & S.Patel), "Debating the Grand Bargain in Bangladesh: How are Grand Bargain Commitments Shaping the Response to the FDM/ Rohingya Influx", 9 March 2018, pg. 3
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58256bc615d5cb852592fe40/t/5aacc26a88251b563033d651/1521271410735/Final-Debating+Grand+Bargain+and+Rohingya+response.pdf>

See, Oxfam, "Mid-term Evaluation of the Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors (ELHNA)", March 2018, pg. xviii
<https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Files/rapporten/2018/ELNHA%20MTE%20Executive%20summary%20and%20management%20response%20for%20publishing.pdf>

See: Humanitarian Advisory Group, "When the Rubber Hits the Road: Local Leadership in the First 100 days of the Rohingya Crisis Response" pg.7-9
<https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/When-the-Rubber-Hits-the-Road-Localisation-Final-Electronic-1.pdf>

context-specific and complementary response with existing national and local systems where possible. Response evaluations should include an assessment of how national and local coordination and response mechanisms have been utilized and how international response efforts are complementary.

5. International humanitarian organisations and donors should increase the exchange of information, including on due diligence, on local actors to facilitate the quick identification of local partners in a crisis response that could be supported directly.
6. To increase the voice of national and local actors within international coordination mechanisms, increased effort should be made to make information accessible and the process of participation less burdensome for smaller organisations.
7. Headquarters of international NGOs, UN agencies and donors should develop and implement a communication strategy to inform country and regional offices on relevant local action commitments. Country offices should communicate commitments to local and national partners with a context specific strategy on how the commitments will be implemented.
8. Organisations should continue to undergo internal reforms to prevent slow-moving systems from adapting to change; and take a human rights approach to increase accountability to people.

About this paper

All stakeholders who made commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in support of advancing the Agenda for Humanity were invited to self-report on their progress in 2017 through the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation (PACT) (agendaforhumanity.org). The information provided through the self-reporting is publicly available and forms the basis, along with other relevant analysis, of the annual synthesis report. The annual synthesis report will be prepared by OCHA and will highlight trends in progress, achievements and gaps that need more attention as stakeholders collectively work toward advancing the 24 transformations in the Agenda for Humanity. In keeping with the multi-stakeholder spirit of the WHS, OCHA invited partners to prepare short analytical papers that analyze and assess self-reporting in the PACT, or provide an update on progress on initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.