



OCHA

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of Humanitarian Affairs

Fit for the Future Series

An end in sight: Multi-year planning to meet and reduce humanitarian needs in protracted crises

**THINK
BRIEF**

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KEY MESSAGES

- **Protracted is the new normal.** The majority of today's humanitarian crises are protracted in nature. More than 90 per cent of humanitarian appeals last longer than three years and the average length of a humanitarian appeal is now seven years. About 89 per cent of humanitarian funding from OECD DAC members goes to crises lasting from the medium to the long term.
- **Humanitarian crises are mostly predictable, both in contexts of natural hazards and conflict.** Most crises are a complex combination of both and require context-specific responses. There is a growing body of evidence emerging from humanitarian risk modelling that can support all actors to take a more anticipatory approach to crisis response. For example, 62 of the 64 countries that had one or more humanitarian appeals in the past 10 years were ranked among the 100 most at-risk countries. Moreover, of the 50 countries with the highest risk of humanitarian crises, more than three-quarters had an inter-agency humanitarian appeal in the last ten years.
- **Strategic plans must define clear, collectively agreed outcomes.** Crises are an intrinsic part of the development process and managing their risk is essential to avoid development setbacks and leverage opportunities for a more resilient future. A clear definition of the shared outcomes that all crises respondents, including development actors, aim to achieve in protracted crises over a multi-year horizon is essential for meeting and reducing needs, and for setting the path for a gradual reduction of humanitarian appeals in contexts where other actors may be better able to support in a more sustainable and localized way.
- **Strengthen local capacity for response as part of humanitarian action.** Wherever gaps are identified, build local response capacity, or at least do not undermine existing ones, as part of regular humanitarian operations to gradually reduce the international humanitarian footprint in some protracted crises. This entails reversing the response/capacity-building ratio of humanitarian operations over time as international humanitarian actors gradually rely on local actors to respond to future crises.
- **Move from assessing to analysing.** The humanitarian system in particular must make the move from merely assessing needs after humanitarian crises to proactively and systematically analysing risks, severity trends and coping capacities, through qualitative and quantitative indicators. It must also make better use of baseline data, in addition to strengthening needs-analysis capacity.
- **Transforming multi-year planning into multi-year action.** Multi-year planning already is a reality in protracted crises. But in many contexts it hasn't translated into multi-year programming. Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators must be empowered to act more like CEOs with overall responsibility over programme management and act as brokers of solutions, and less as coordinators of inter-agency interests.
- **Shift from spending to investing.** The siloed funding mechanisms used to support humanitarian and development action in protracted crises are not fit for purpose. A more diverse and predictable financing pool, in addition to existing voluntary donations to humanitarian assistance, would contribute to a more sustainable approach to crisis management and overall effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

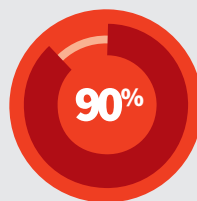
PROTRACTED AND COMPLEX ARE THE NEW NORMAL

This Think Brief addresses the question of whether the current direction of international humanitarian assistance, as articulated in its inter-agency appeals¹ is fit for the diversity, length and specificity of needs and risks in different types of protracted crises. The paper advocates a deep rethink of the way humanitarians plan their activities, interact with other actors and finance their operations. It will propose new collective approaches to outcome-oriented multi-year planning to meet needs, reduce vulnerabilities and pave the way for a reduction of humanitarian assistance over time, in favour of more sustainable solutions.

Perceptions vs. reality

Humanitarian action is usually associated with fast response and quick and limited results, with an emergency modus operandi that focuses first and foremost on immediate life-saving impact. Humanitarian tools and operational arrangements have therefore been designed to offer short-term timely support to people affected by conflict, natural disasters or, most frequently, a mixture of both. However, the assumption that humanitarian action is mostly focused on short-term responses is increasingly incorrect. As humanitarian funding requests continue to skyrocket, currently displaying a growth of 660 per cent² since the Millennium Development Goals were launched in 2000, humanitarians increasingly find themselves responding to crises that have no end in sight. Due to this increasingly protracted nature of humanitarian crises, 90 per cent of humanitarian appeals last longer than three years and their average duration is seven years.

Certain emergencies dominate the humanitarian-needs landscape. For example, in the past 10 years, three emergencies (Sudan, DRC and Somalia) have accounted for 50 per cent of all the funding requests through coordinated inter-agency appeals. Syria and its regional impact currently account for 40 per cent of global humanitarian require-



90% of humanitarian appeals last longer than three years



89% of humanitarian funding from OECD member states goes for protracted crises.



7 years is the average length of a humanitarian appeal

ments. About 80 per cent of 2015 funding requirements are for Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR) - crises that are likely to continue having humanitarian consequences over the coming years in the absence of a definitive political solution. The failure of national, regional and global governance mechanisms to mitigate the impact of these crises over many years has led to the erosion of development gains. Protracted crises such as Somalia, Palestine, Chad, DRC and CAR have had humanitarian appeals every year for the past decade. As a consequence, 89 per cent of humanitarian funding from OECD-DAC members goes towards protracted crises that last over the medium to long term³ (see figure 1).


"It is simply not enough to save a person's life. We don't want to leave them in extreme vulnerability either. The moral imperative extends all the way to reducing and eliminating needs."

Stephen O'Brien, USG and ERC

1 The term inter-agency appeal refers to the collection of Consolidated Appeals (pre-2013), Strategic Response Plans (SRPs), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and other appeals.

2 In constant prices, that is, adjusting for the impact of inflation.

3 Development Initiatives (2015) *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*.

 Peter Maurer @PMaurerICRC
@ICRC needs short, medium and longer-term programmes to respond to today's complex protracted emergencies #conflict

Complexity

Protracted crises are complex and do not easily fit generalizations. Chronic vulnerability and multidimensional poverty can be underlying causes of humanitarian need, especially when combined with recurrent or cyclical shocks in contexts where social safety nets are dysfunctional or non-existent or where corruption limits the Governments' effectiveness to operate and Government crisis risk management capacities are low. This can undermine the societies ability to manage ongoing and future shocks and stresses. These crises fundamentally need development-oriented solutions that build resilience to a broad range of risks at all layers of a society, in line with the priorities set in the Rio+ 20 outcome document and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.

In conflict related crises, including in contexts of longterm internal or cross-border displacement, the absence of political solutions perpetuates humanitarian needs and creates the demand for humanitarians to deliver long-term assistance. In high-intensity conflicts, direct humanitarian activities may indeed be the only opportunity to meet the needs in a principled manner.

Many contexts, particularly where host States are sufficiently strong and can cope with high influxes of cross-border dis-

"Modern fire departments spend most of their time on fire prevention rather than putting out fires. Yet when it comes to humanitarian crises, billions are spent on firefighting and very little on prevention. A serious rethinking of the international community's approach to managing the risks of major crises and disasters is long overdue."

Rasmus Heltberg, World Bank

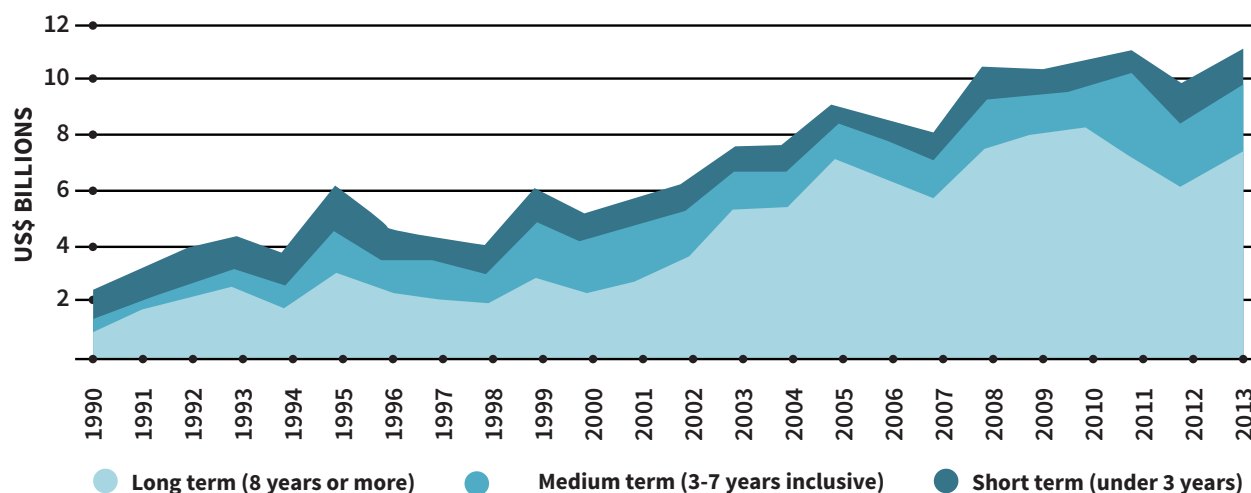
TYPOLGY OF PROTRACTED CRISES

- 1) Crises in contexts affected by recurrent or cyclical slow-onset natural hazards, which may be combined with low-intensity conflict, chronic vulnerability and elements of State fragility, particularly where Government-led systems of social protection work poorly and national crisis risk management capacities, including access to risk financing, are limited. Examples include parts of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.
- 2) Crises in contexts affected by low-frequency but high-intensity natural hazards, such as earthquakes or cyclones, in contexts of pre-existing chronic vulnerabilities, which are compounded by environmental degradation, epidemics and displacement. Example: Haiti.
- 3) Crises in States that are suffering from medium-to high-intensity conflict and large amounts of internal and/or external displacement and thereby require a political solution. Examples include Syria, Iraq and Yemen.
- 4) Crises in middle-income States hosting large influxes of forcibly displaced people from neighbouring countries with relatively strong capacity and substantial domestic resources to manage crises. Examples include Jordan, Lebanon, Iran and Turkey.

placement, may benefit from alternatives to camps solutions⁴ and the opportunities that the social-economic impact of local integration may have. In most cases such as Somalia, DRC and Sudan, the humanitarian response landscape is a complex combination of different shocks and stresses that create new risks and exacerbate existing ones, leading to crises that last over multiple years. As affected States, cities and communities have limited capacity to provide social protection and limited access to risk financing, they face

⁴ UNHCR's policy is to pursue alternatives to camps, whenever possible, while ensuring that refugees are protected and assisted effectively and are able to achieve solutions. UNHCR (2014) Policy on Alternative to Camps, UNHCR/HCP/2014/9, date of entry into force: 22 July 2014

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FROM DAC DONORS, 1990–2013: LONG-, MEDIUM- AND SHORT-TERM RECIPIENTS OF OFFICIAL



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC and UN CERF data. Global Humanitarian Assistance 2015.

Figure 1

ever-growing prospects of new intensive and extensive risks,⁵ but they lack the adequate toolbox to manage them properly.

Humanitarians like to think of themselves as firefighters responding to emergencies. But increasingly, as the evidence suggests, they spend most of their time providing assistance in crises with no end in sight. Rapid surge capacity for managing “quick in, quick out” emergencies will always be a core function of the international humanitarian system, but the current humanitarian tools and services have not adapted to reflect the new reality that the majority of today’s crises require very specific risk management skill sets, and new approaches and partnerships for dealing with different types of protracted crises. The Humanitarian Reform in 2005 and the IASC Transformative Agenda in 2012-2013 substantially reinforced the system’s capacity to deal with sudden-onset disasters and mega crises, such as level-three (L3) emergencies, but they provided little guidance on dealing with small-scale, slow-onset recurrent crises or large-scale displacement-related crises that are expected to last over the long term. The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) has recognized this fundamental weakness and will propose ways to address this.

5 Intensive risks are those of low probability but high impact, while intensive risks are those of high frequency, but lesser impact. Overtime, the impact of extensive risks can erode people’s resilience and push entire societies through the tipping point into chronic vulnerability. They are a major driving factor to protracted crises.

WHY IS HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE LASTING LONGER?

About 80 per cent of the crises in which OCHA operates are complex emergencies that combine conflict and the humanitarian consequences of State collapse and fragility. Forced displacement has reached levels never seen since the Second World War. Today, there are about 60 million refugees and displaced people worldwide⁶. If they were a country’s population, that country would be the world’s twenty-fourth most populous. It is estimated that people spend an average of 17 years⁷ in displacement. All the crises to which humanitarians have found themselves responding for a decade or more with no end in sight are linked with the long-term nature of displacement.

A combination of emerging global challenges, such as climate change, population growth, urbanization, global interconnectedness, pandemics and food insecurity, is creating new humanitarian risks and exacerbating existing ones. Drought cycles in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa have led to recurrent food insecurity and malnutrition. The nexus

6 UNHCR, available at: www.unhcr.org/558193896.html

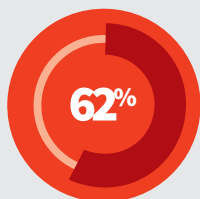
7 IDMC (2014) A record 33.3 million now displaced by war worldwide, as one family flees inside Syria every 60 seconds. Press release. Available at: www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201405-globalOverview-2014/1.-Global-PR-FINAL.pdf



17 is the estimated average number of years people spend in displacement worldwide



60 million is the number of refugees and displaced people today, the highest level since the Second World War



62% of the world's poor will live in fragile States by 2030

between chronic poverty, climate-related extreme events, desertification and conflict over scarce natural resources, such as water in these regions has created a chain reaction leading to crises that last longer than ever before.

These trends are expected to worsen in the coming decades. Demand for food is expected to grow by 70 per cent by 2050.⁸ By the time the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) end in 2030, 47 per cent of the world's population will live in areas under high water stress, and 62 per cent of the world's poor will be in fragile States, compared with 43 per cent today.⁹

Crises last longer because once a humanitarian operation is initiated, the focus on improving the delivery of services by humanitarians tends to side-line other actors who could meet humanitarian needs and support communities' resilience to shocks and crises, thereby reducing the need for an

international humanitarian presence¹⁰. As more sophisticated international humanitarian tools and services are activated, more chronic needs are identified and humanitarian aid per capita increases over time. Humanitarian actors then start a cycle of response to chronic needs without a strategy for ensuring the interoperability¹¹ of support systems and connecting with other actors who have the capacity to address the root causes of vulnerability at different levels of society. This needs to be addressed simultaneously, with a better understanding of connections between regional, national, provincial, city, community and household levels.

"We need to update our annual appeal model and move towards multi-year planning and financing".

Stephen O'Brien, USG and ERC

WHY IS MULTI-YEAR PLANNING IMPORTANT?

Humanitarian effectiveness

Those involved in crisis response, including humanitarian actors, have the responsibility to plan in the most strategic and efficient way to offer life-saving assistance that respects people's dignity and fosters self-reliance and sustainability. Failure to do so is failing to deliver on the most important of all humanitarian principles: humanity. Even in contexts where donors may not have the political appetite to provide multi-year funding, multi-year planning in protracted crises is key for ensuring a more effective collective response that more clearly focuses on outcomes, rather than parallel and incoherent sets of short-term inputs and outputs, and which realistically addresses people's long-term needs in a sustainable way. Managing crisis risks must be seen as an intrinsic element of development.

Advocacy

In addition to being the most effective way to address predictable long-term needs, multi-year planning can serve as an advocacy platform towards donors and the broader in-

8 OCHA (2014) Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises.

9 OECD (2015), States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions, OECD Publishing, Paris.

10 OCHA (2015) Understanding Humanitarian Need from a Financing Perspective: The Drivers of Cost. Draft Preliminary Findings. Non-paper, June.

11 OCHA (2015) Interoperability: Humanitarian Action in a Shared Space. Think Brief.



The number of internally displaced people worldwide has reached 38 million in 2014. This is the equivalent of the population of London, New York and Beijing combined. In the picture, a father and his son walk through the ruins of their home town of Homs, Syria. Credit: UNHCR/ B. Diab

ternational community to highlight that many of today's protracted crises present development challenges that require the appropriate investments and political support. This is regardless of financing considerations and the disincentives created by siloed institutional donor funding streams that reinforce the humanitarian-development divide.

Development interlinkages

Protracted displacement should be approached with a development lens. This is due to the social and economic impact of long-term displacement, as well as the opportunities that may arise from integrating displaced people into the local workforce, as well as taxation returns, improved social cohesion and increased productivity due to new skill sets joining the market.

Recognizing that recurrent crises, such as in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, are fundamentally linked to governance and political factors as part of a complex nexus between conflict, displacement and climate change, means that the right approach to tackle these crises cannot rely on humanitarian assistance alone.

Resilience

Humanitarians must be open about their limited role and plan their emergency activities as part of coherent strategies. Each type of actor must play their particular role, enabling resilience in a complementary way in line with joint strategies and building their own responsible and gradual disengagement paths from the outset of their interventions. This can only be done if long-term outcomes are defined from the beginning of international humanitarian involvement, even if the fluid dynamics of emergency response will constantly require reviewing and adapting the strategy to achieve these outcomes. At the moment, outcomes for inter-agency humanitarian strategies are not clearly articulated because the humanitarian community is measured and held to account on the basis of short-term outputs, such as the quantity of food aid delivered rather than the speed with which displaced communities could be resettled/returned, or the transition of service delivery to actors with a better comparative advantage for long-term engagement, such as the private sector, local civil-society organizations or Governments.

“This emphasis on aggregate results (...) has resulted in priority being given to the kinds of result that can be measured and delivered within short programming cycles. It has focussed attention at the lower end of the results chain – on spending, activities and outputs – at the expense of long-term and sustainable impact.”

Independent Commission for Aid Impact¹²

Risk management

A growing body of evidence shows that crises are mostly predictable, both in natural hazards and conflict situations. Risk modelling/analysis can enable a more anticipatory and foreseeable approach to humanitarian response, but further efforts need to be made to ensure that a better understanding of risk is translated into actions that effectively support resilience at all layers. For example, donors have supported humanitarian organizations to respond to needs in Sudan for over 20 years. But if those donors had received evidence that their operations would have lasted for a generation, would they still have planned their budgets on a reactive yearly framework, with all the inefficiencies and lack of strategic vision that it entails?

Risk modelling could have predicted 96 per cent of OCHA's surge deployments in the Asia-Pacific region over a five year period.¹³ Today, humanitarian risk indexes, such as the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) do provide a 3 to 5 year trends of humanitarian risks.¹⁴ Emerging tools, such as the OECD's resilience systems analysis framework, can help decision makers to translate this understanding of risk into coordinated policies and programmes that build resilience at all layers of society.

12 See the findings of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact on DFID's approach to delivering impact from June 2015, available at: icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICAI-report-DFIDs-approach-to-Delivering-Impact.pdf

13 OCHA (2014) Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises.

14 Index for Risk Management, available at: www.inform-index.org/

Delivering on the SDGs

The world is gearing up to establish the SDGs as the new framework for a 15-year vision that promises to “leave no one behind”. To deliver on the universality ambition emanating from the SDGs, as displayed in the Secretary-General's synthesis report,¹⁵ humanitarian and development action need to be better aligned and coordinated so that protracted crises, including displacement, can be addressed with a longer-term perspective that builds resilience. This needs to draw on the comparative advantage of national and international actors, including Government, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and affected communities themselves, and it should be focused around clear outcomes that facilitate the responsible disengagement of international humanitarian assistance actors over time.

Delivering on the SDGs will require a paradigm shift in the way humanitarian and development actors develop their strategic plans, run their programmes and finance their activities. “Business as usual” is no longer appropriate. (See annex for a case study on a new approach to managing the risk of crises.) This challenges the very notion of linear transition, or a continuum between humanitarian and development. To support vulnerable people towards a sustainable path, both aid communities need to work together, based on a shared context and risk analysis, to pave the way for a gradual reduction of humanitarian caseloads by ensuring vulnerable people can withstand a range of shocks and crises, and in doing so protect development investments. This is at the core of sustainable outcomes that are less reliant on international humanitarian support, and it is something that the World Humanitarian Summit should address.

“There is no solution for people who are suffering and in humanitarian need through humanitarian action alone. That's why development is the key; it is the solution for everybody.”

John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division, OCHA

15 Available at: www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

THE EVOLUTION OF MULTI-YEAR PLANNING IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

The shift towards multi-year planning in the humanitarian context has already happened. As of 2015, 15 consolidated appeals/humanitarian action plans¹⁶ in protracted crises have adopted a strategy spanning beyond the traditional one-year length. This is a great achievement, as the debate is no longer about whether or not to plan multi-year, but rather how to do it more effectively.

Kenya and oPt

The first multi-year humanitarian appeal was developed in 2011 in Kenya covering three years, in acknowledgment of the fact that the nature of crises in certain contexts changed very little over time. The protracted nature of the Somali refugee camps in Kenya made it particularly conducive to a multi-year approach. The following year, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) followed suit and developed a two-year strategy, for 2012-2013 as the core planning assumptions and strategy remained the same since the first humanitarian appeal in 2003. The departing point was thus to develop a two-year strategy not because long-term outcomes needed to be achieved, but rather as a pragmatic recognition that the humanitarian landscape was static, and humanitarian plans would remain similar from year to year in the absence of fundamental changes.

Resilience agenda

In 2012, as part of the emerging resilience agenda, following a series of joint commitments by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the UNDP Administrator, OCHA issued guidelines on how to develop humanitarian multi-year plans under the 'experimental methods' section of its appeals guidance. The practice was encouraged to Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) with caution as an innovation to be explored.

16 2011: Kenya, 2012: oPt, Kenya; 2013: Chad, Somalia, Kenya, oPt; 2014: Djibouti, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, South Sudan, Iraq, Chad, Somalia and oPt; 2015: 9 Sahel, Somalia, oPt, Djibouti, Yemen, Lebanon, Haiti. This does not count the regional Sahel appeal in the sense as it is a chapeau for the 9 national ones. Despite the fact that the 2014 strategies in Iraq and South Sudan were multi-year, their 2015 strategy did not make any mention of the previous strategies.

"We need an exit strategy and I know what it looks like: It is governments putting in place the right policies and development actors and governments making the right investments."

Robert Piper, United Nations

The expansion of multi-year humanitarian appeals 2010-2015

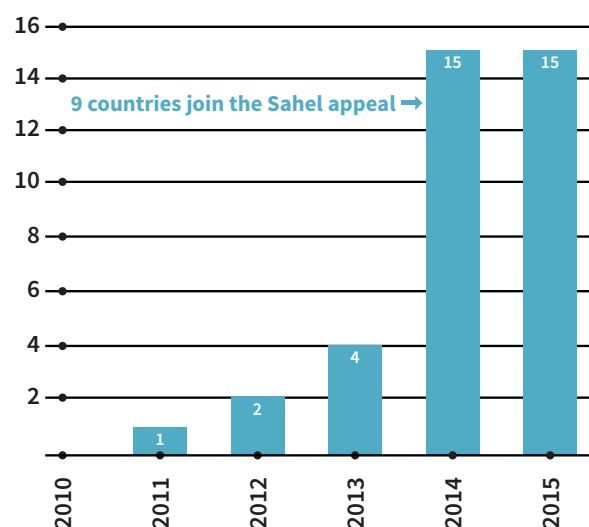


Figure 2

The new guidance enabled a second wave of humanitarian multi-year planning in 2013 with the three year strategies in Somalia and Chad, and in 2014 with the two year strategies in Yemen, Djibouti, South Sudan and Iraq, as well as the 2014-16 regional strategy in the Sahel encompassing joint goals and objectives across the nine national appeals.¹⁷ This model also included a larger range of activities beyond immediate life-saving towards a vision of humanitarian planning that aims to reduce vulnerability to cyclical shocks. It also allowed for a better understanding of risk in humanitarian strategies and the inclusion of more resilience-oriented activities in the plans. The following subsections provide a snapshot on three recent multi-year planning experiences.

17 The Chad 2013+ strategy was integrated into the new Sahel strategy in 2014 and therefore did not complete its initial planned cycle.

Excerpt from the 2013 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) guidelines on multi-year planning:

“These CAP guidelines already encourage HCTs to conceive their strategies in a multi-year arc, because getting populations out of humanitarian crisis takes at least that long. Nonetheless the guidelines also advise that specific objectives should be annual, because stakeholders do expect humanitarian action to have short-term results, and because specific needs and appropriate responses are hard to project too far into the future in inherently unpredictable complex emergencies. (It can be worthwhile to outline general objectives in a multi-year sequence, to show a phased strategy.)”

Somalia

On the Somalia experience, there were mixed reviews about the impact of the new plan. At first, it was perceived that the appeal was “inflating” costs and “over-reaching” humanitarian activities into development work. However, the final year of the three-year strategy, took on a narrower focus given that the New Deal for Fragile States¹⁸ was expected to pick up programmes to address some of the needs that until then had been covered through humanitarian operations. As a result, funding requests as part of the 2015 Somalia appeal decreased by 7 per cent compared with the previous year.¹⁹ Humanitarian needs did not decrease over the period, but the fact that development actors stepped up resilience activities allowed for the reduction of the appeal. Stronger links with development and peace and security strategies allowed for the 2015 humanitarian appeal to focus on the most life-saving priorities, while additional needs were targeted through different aid mechanisms. Paradoxically, this has contributed to certain scepticism from some field humanitarian leaders who felt they would not be able to sustain the same level of humanitarian funding through a multi-year approach.

The fact that similar concerns of “inflated appeals” were also raised in countries displaying single-year humanitarian

plans, such as Afghanistan in 2011, suggests that the real problem may lie on the blurred definitions of what types of activities can fit into a humanitarian plan under the resilience umbrella, rather than relating to the length of the planning cycle. The lack of clarity on a long-term vision for eventually linking up a multi-year humanitarian plan to development activities of the Government and international partners, as well as contributions from the private sector, civil society and diaspora groups, also might have created the perception that multi-year plans would prolong the humanitarian presence beyond necessary, and did not sufficiently articulate the path towards a responsible reduction in the humanitarian funding request in favour of more sustainable approaches.

Iraq and South Sudan

Due to severe underfunding as well as spikes in needs that led to the declaration of L3 emergencies in 2014, Iraq and South Sudan launched appeals in 2015 that were not substantially linked with their multi-year predecessor. One of the key elements to enable successful multi-year planning is the flexibility for constant adaptations and revisions in a light way, which was not the case for either of these countries. This could be due to the cumbersome process of adapting frameworks that were created for single-year planning to multiple-year needs instead of fundamentally rethinking planning assumptions and coming up with new guidance that is context specific and adapted for long-term crises.

Haiti

In 2015, Haiti launched a two-year transitional plan (TAP) aiming to end the five-year cycle of continued single-year humanitarian appeals since the 2010 earthquake and the consequent confluence of displacement, cholera epidemics and other disaster impacts. The goal was to bring humanitarian and development actors together to develop an outcome-oriented strategy based on a shared understanding of risk. However, despite the fact that the plan aimed to “mobilise resources of a humanitarian, transitional and development-oriented nature”, it ended up falling between the cracks of two different aid systems and their traditional planning-and-coordination mechanisms that were not designed to leverage the opportunities raising from a more coherent approach. For example, the lack of a simple and transparent solution for tracking the funds received as part of the TAP has limited the scope of humanitarian advocacy around the plan, which

¹⁸ A Government-led development framework

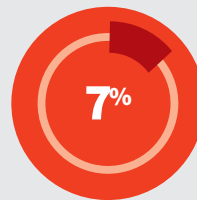
¹⁹ OCHA (2014) Q&A on the 2015 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan.



An aerial view of the world's biggest refugee complex, the Dadaab in north-eastern Kenya. It hosts 350 thousand somali refugees and is 23 years old as of 2015.
Credit: IOM/UNHCR/Brendan Bannon

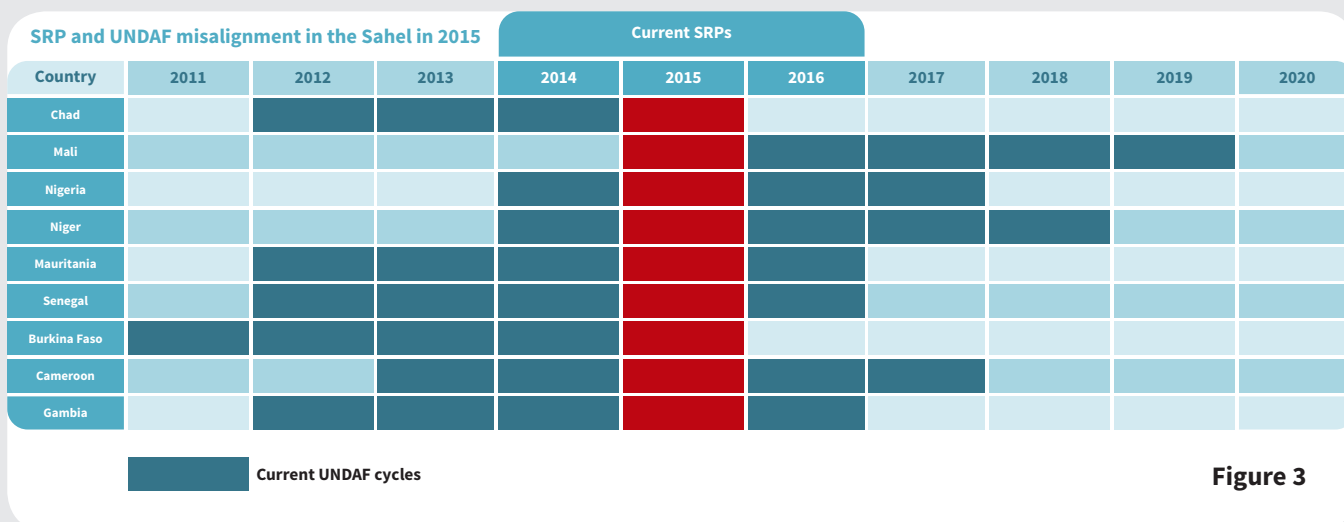
is traditionally focused on underfunding numbers based on OCHA's Financial Tracking Service. Financial tracking for the TAP is expected to be done locally through the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office (RCO). The lack of ownership of the TAP by humanitarian actors, mostly at HQ level, and their donors has led to the perception that the TAP is purely a development plan and has fostered discussions on whether to consider launching an ad hoc humanitarian appeal just a few months after the TAP was launched.

The Haiti example is an interesting case of a hybrid plan, that was created to respond to a context-specific demand, adapting the humanitarian planning templates, and with the strong engagement of OCHA and the RCO at the field level, whose potential is being hindered by traditional tools, services and procedures that were designed to support an aid system that is neatly separated between development and humanitarian spheres.



7% is the reduction in the Somalia humanitarian appeal from 2015, the last stage of a three-year strategy, compared with the 2014 appeal.

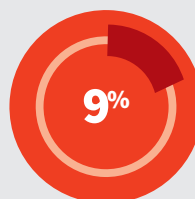
Thus, despite the progress, there are significant system-wide and internal institutional challenges and bottlenecks to overcome in order to truly translate multi-year strategic planning into good multi-year programming, and to adapt the modus operandi of the international humanitarian system to the new reality of crises that last over the medium to long term, and which thereby have an impact not only on meeting needs, but also on reducing them with the support of other actors.



CHALLENGES TO MOVING FROM MULTI-YEAR PLANNING TO MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMMING

Despite the fact that multi-year strategies account for the majority of the appeals worldwide,²⁰ their impact on country-level programming remains challenged as of 2015. At the national level, projects in OCHA's Online Projects System (OPS) remain based on a one-year time frame despite the push for multi-year planning. Data from the Sahel 2014-2016 appeal suggests that just 9 per cent of projects are indeed multi-year.²¹ A number of factors may have contributed to this:

- **Misunderstanding among key partners and NGOs** who continue to plan and develop programmes over a yearly time frame due to institutional inertia or lack of incentives from donors, despite the fact that the strategy allows for multi-year programmes.
- **Multiple single-year planning instead of truly multi-year action.** Projects and activities included in common humanitarian plans remain mostly based on yearly sched-



Only 9% of the 527 projects that comprise the Sahel 2014–016 appeal are multi-year.

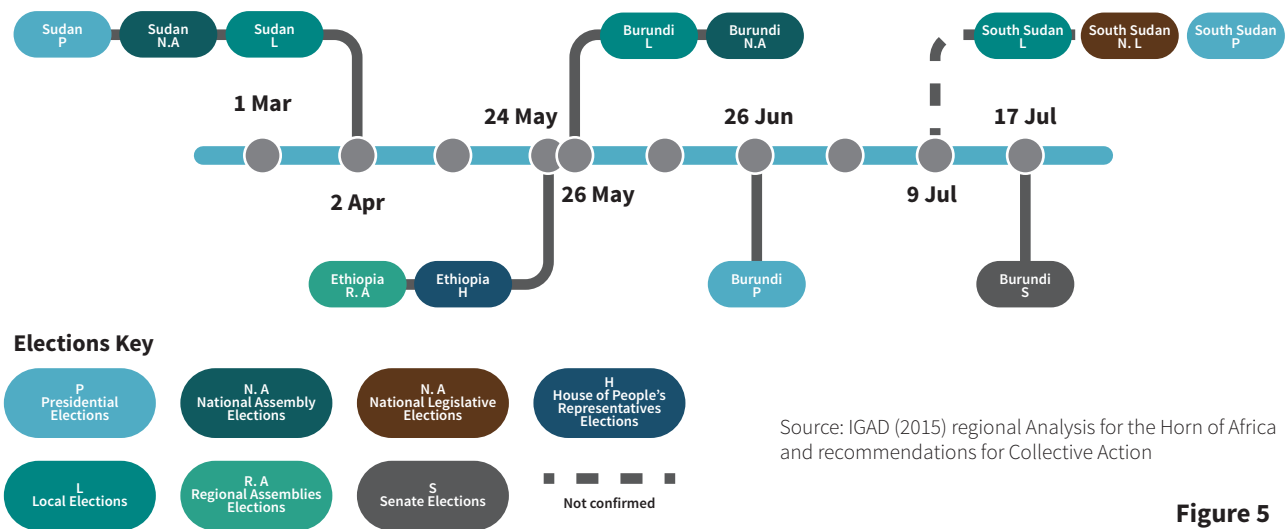
ules. They end up being repeated over the three years of the strategy, rather than using the multi-year opportunity to redesign planning assumptions and sequence short-term and long-term expected outputs and outcomes.

- **The misalignment of UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework), Common Country Assessments (CCA) and Humanitarian Response Plans (SRP).** Crisis risk must inform regional and national development planning in order to effectively build resilience over the long term. Despite the fact that most multi-year strategies refer to UNDAFs and national planning documents, their direct link in terms of joint outcomes and objectives remains elusive. This is partly due to the fact that planning cycles remain misaligned, and that where there are regional humanitarian strategies, such as in the Sahel, UNDAFs and CCAs in the region remain uncoordinated and follow different cycles. Just fixing the misalignment would not be enough, as some development agencies believe that the CCA/UNDAF process is not fit for purpose and needs to be paired with other processes beyond the UN (see figure 3).

²⁰ As of 25 June 2015, there are 25 countries with non-flash appeals, 15 of which are multi-year. This includes traditional SRPs/HRPs and other appeals such as the DPRK Needs and Priorities and the Haiti Transitional Appeal. It does not include flash appeals (they are supposed to be punctual and short-term by definition), the regional refugee appeals nor the regional Sahel appeal, to the extent that it is a combination of the nine national appeals already counted. (Source: FTS and ReliefWeb).

²¹ Internal OCHA document

Examples of dynamic benchmarks 2015 elections timeline in the Horn of Africa



Source: IGAD (2015) regional Analysis for the Horn of Africa and recommendations for Collective Action

Figure 5

- Flexible Humanitarian Response Plans schedule remains a challenge.** The experience in the Sahel with delaying the HRP cycle to January in order to include better food security data did not bear the results expected. The nature of the existing planning data changed little from previous years, but the consultative process through December has proven to be a challenge for HCT approval and HC clearance.
- Donor obstacles and reluctance in providing multi-year funding.** Despite the fact that most donors continue to provide single-year funding, there has been improvement over the past years: 16 OECD/DAC members (out of 29) now engage in some form of multi-year funding for the UN, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international NGOs (see figure 4). Overall, single-year donor policy does not create incentives for agencies to adopt a more strategic multi-year planning horizon and thus remains a major hurdle to move towards that direction. However, according to the preliminary results of a recent evaluation, multi-year funding alone does not necessarily translate into multi-year programming.²² A multi-year humanitarian strategy is also necessary.
- Planning assumptions are not informed by sound risk analysis.** Risk modelling and a growing evidence base on the likelihood of continued crises have not yet fully been integrated in the humanitarian planning process. The pilot sub-national INFORM initiatives in the Sahel and the Horn in 2015 provide a good opportunity for scaling up sub-national risk and analysis and integrating it into the humanitarian planning cycle alongside good practices on resilient systems analysis.²³
- Information is widely available, but it does not affect decision-making.** Despite an increasingly sophisticated and accessible understanding of risk, obstacles remain in integrating this knowledge into policies and programmes that have a concrete impact on people's ability to effectively manage risk and withstand shocks and crises. For example, in the Horn of Africa, where the risk information was available about nine months before the food crisis, humanitarian and development leadership were not able to act on the existing information and did not know how to adapt their programming accordingly.²⁴ The incentives to do so were missing given the current reactive approach to aid.

22 Valid Evaluations (2015) Briefing note, DFID evaluation of Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing in protracted crises, May.

23 OECD (2014) Resilience Systems Analysis Guidance.

24 More information on the barriers and disincentives for early action can be found at Hillier, D. and Dempsey, B. (2012) A Dangerous Delay: The Cost of Late Response to Early Warnings in the 2011 Drought in the Horn of Africa. Available at: www.oxfam.org/en/research/dangerous-delay

| OECD DAC members providing multi-annual humanitarian funding | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Multi-annual funding to selected: | | Funding timeframe |
| | UN Agencies and Funds | NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Movement | |
| Australia | ✓ | ✓ | 4 years |
| Belgium | ✓ | ✓ | 18 months – 3 years |
| Canada | ✓ | ✓ | 2-5 years |
| Denmark | ✓ | ✓ | 3-5 years |
| European Union | ✓ | ✓ | Up to 3 years |
| Finland | ✓ | ✓ (ICRC) | 4 years |
| Germany | ✓ | ✓ | 3 years |
| Ireland | ✓ | ✓ (ICRC and IFRC) | 3 years |
| Luxembourg | ✓ | ✓ | 3-4 years |
| Netherlands | ✓ (CERF) | | 3 years |
| New Zealand | ✓ | ✓ (ICRC) | 2 years |
| Norway | ✓ | ✓ | 3-4 years |
| Sweden | ✓ | ✓ | Up to 4 years |
| Switzerland | ✓ | ✓ | 2-4 years |
| United Kingdom | ✓ | ✓ | 2-4 years |
| United States | | ✓ (NGOs) | 2-3 years |

Source: Scott, R. (2015) Financing in Crisis? Making humanitarian finance fit for the future. OECD Development Co-operation Working Paper 22

Figure 4

- **Benchmarks are linked to budget cycles rather than more context-specific events** (e.g., election cycles, weather seasons, return of refugees/IDPs). In a multi-year strategy, benchmarks need to be dynamic and context specific. In the Horn of Africa, for example, strategies should be planned around reaching certain objectives in line with events that may have an effect on stability and potentially cause further displacement, such as disputed elections in contexts of State fragility, as the 2015 elections in Burundi demonstrated.
- **The process for developing project-based strategies is not conducive to achieving collective outcomes.** Humanitarian actors tend to focus on their projects rather than on the overall contribution of the collective strategy

to achieve results. This may also be due to the lack of direction from HCTs /cluster leadership about designing multi-year programmes.

- **Lack of global initiatives to promote multi-year planning.** The lack of a global position on encouraging multi-year funding (e.g. from the ERC or through the IASC) has hindered the wider practice across humanitarian crises. To date, many of the multi-year appeals have been initiated due to the strong risk-informed leadership from the RC/HC on the ground.
- **Unwillingness of the affected Government to view the crises as a longer-term issue.** It has been noted that some affected Governments are unwilling to view the crisis as more than a short-term intervention. Sometimes this may be due to lack of foresight, or even lack of data to corroborate the likelihood of a longer response. It can also be an explicitly political stance.

WAY FORWARD

OUTCOME-ORIENTED MULTI-YEAR PLANNING

Key elements of outcome-based multi-year planning

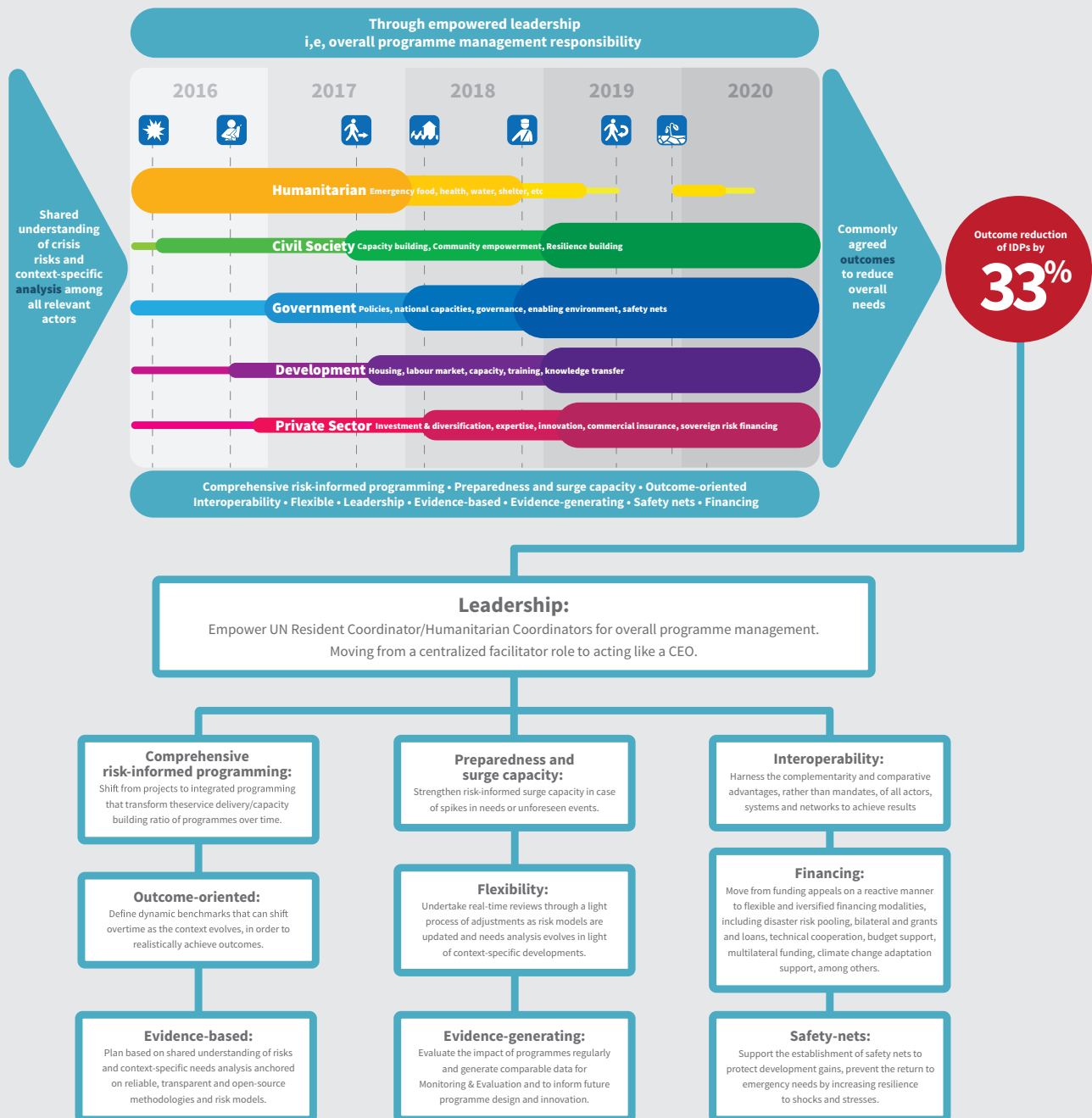
To effectively implement multi-year planning and reap its benefits, the collective action of various actors working at different layers of society are required to adopt three main changes, which are elaborated in this chapter. After a shared understanding of the risks and needs faced in a given situation and the definition of a shared outcome, such as the reduction of needs and resilience to shocks by a given amount, actors must come together to answer the question: What does it take to achieve that outcome? The plan must be designed around the answer to this fundamental question, building on a diverse set of comparative advantages of all actors, rather than on traditional mandates.

These are the three key steps:

1. Shared understanding of risk and context-specific analysis.
2. Common outcomes with targets to meet and reduce overall needs
3. Programming that strengthens local capacity to respond to future crises.

What does it take to accomplish outcomes over 5 years?

Based on a shared understanding of risks and needs among all relevant actors, a collectively agreed outcome must be defined. Achieving that outcome will depend on a variety of self-reinforcing activities undertaken by a diverse set of actors, according to their comparative advantages rather than institutional mandates. Such a plan to achieve the agreed results would be owned by an empowered RC/HC or senior government officials, with overall programme management responsibility, accountability for results and the fundamental role of coordinating the broader financing architecture required to support such plan, among all actors involved, rather than the traditional fundraising for appeals.



To achieve these steps, many key enabling factors need to be in place:

- **Empowered and risk-informed management and leadership.** The advent and spread of multi-year planning were heavily related to strong risk-informed leadership. In the Sahel, the appointment of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator played a key role in coordinating approaches across borders and defining multi-year objectives. Even in contexts where a Regional Coordinator is not present, despite the clear transborder spillover of crises such as in the Horn of Africa, the leadership of RC/HCs in contexts such as Somalia and South Sudan was fundamental for making multi-year planning a reality.
- **Planning based on risk.** There has been significant progress in the past few years in producing risk analysis for example through the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit in the Horn, or through INFORM and its global/regional/country rollout. There is still room for improvement in this regard, but more importantly, risk analysis needs to have a greater impact on current planning and programming.
- **Flexible, predictable and coherent funding.** The dichotomy of separate humanitarian and development funding pots within the same donor institutions has been a significant impediment to more risk-informed multi-year planning. Donors must provide more flexible and ideally multi-year funding.
- **Robust planning and monitoring framework.** The key aspect of the multi-year planning is to build in the flexibility to adapt and reorient programming in order to achieve the outcomes. To do so, there needs to be an effective monitoring framework, as well as a relatively light

“In contexts of chronic vulnerability, we need to transcend these labels of humanitarian versus development. What matters to affected people is whether aid comes quickly and in the right manner.”

Hansjoerg Strohmeier,
Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, OCHA

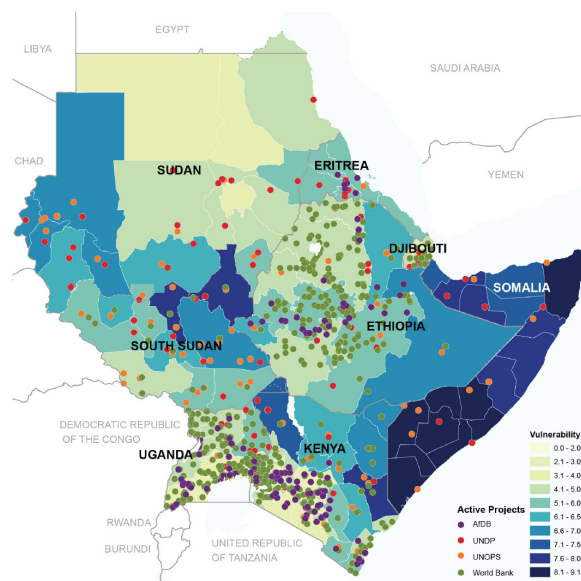
process of updating the planning document accordingly. The current process of humanitarian planning and UNDAF planning is deemed to be too cumbersome and static.

1. Shared understanding of risk and context-specific analysis

Strategic plans should be based on shared analysis, of risks and context. They account for inherent obstacles and display strategies to address them.

Risk analysis, complemented with other information inputs such as baseline data and needs analysis provides the necessary evidence base for long-term planning. Humanitarian plans have traditionally displayed an element of core assumptions or scenarios, but it was usually based on perceptions and opinions expressed in workshops, or on consultations that were not necessarily anchored in a transparent, open-source methodology to analyse risks. Understanding how risks are created and accumulated and translating that into multi-year

Humanitarian risk and development projects compared.



Source: IGAD (2015) regional analysis for the Horn of Africa and recommendations for collective action

Figure 7

action allows for a truly transformative approach that seeks to work on the underlying factors exacerbating humanitarian risks.

Understanding risk is just the first step in the process of risk management. To reduce the potential negative consequences and capitalize on the opportunities emanating from managing risks, humanitarian and development actors must agree on an initial shared risk analysis and concrete actions to address these risks and build resilience in a coherent and coordinated manner, even if different actors will conduct different activities according to their comparative advantages. Humanitarian actors are usually focused on managing residual risks at the household or community level that were not sufficiently reduced or prevented. However, other actors are well positioned to take the lead in building new opportunities for ensuring that future development setbacks are avoid-

ed. Given the cascading impact that unmanaged risk can have in increasing other risks and creating compounding effects, it is important that risk is managed jointly and that different activities at different levels of society are undertaken simultaneously, instead of in a linear transition from relief-to-development approach.

New tools for enabling this joint risk analysis have been developed and are now being implemented in different contexts. For example, in 2015 the UNDP Administrator and the Emergency Relief Coordinator instructed RCs/HCs “to use INFORM during the CCA/UNDAF formulation process to support joint analysis and understanding of risks, as well as to feed into the development of common strategies and priorities for addressing them.”²⁵

25 Helen Clark and Valerie Amos joint letter on the Index for Risk Management (INFORM), March 2015.



More than 200 thousand chadian citizens returned from Libya after the conflict in 2011. They arrived in communities under severe food insecurity, putting pressure on coping capacities of their host communities. The compound effect of displacement, cyclical natural hazards and chronic vulnerability contributes to the protracted nature of the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel. Chad has launched a humanitarian appeal year after year, for more than a decade.

Credit: OCHA/ Rodolpho Valente

The combination of risk analysis with other types of information, such as the focus of development programmes in a given context, allows for evidencebased planning when considering what obstacles are hindering collective action. For example, figure seven compares the results of INFORM in the Horn of Africa with the presence of development actors. This mismatch is a major obstacle in implementing a joint multi-year strategy and must be addressed for the outcomes to be achieved.

2. Common outcomes with targets to meet and reduce overall needs.

Outcome-oriented planning with dynamic benchmarks and shared objectives to enable collective crisis risk management are needed. Referring to “humanitarian” and “development” in contexts of protracted displacement or recurrent natural hazards only perpetuates the institutional divide and contributes little to a truly transformational approach that would effectively lift people out of a state of dependency on humanitarian handouts, build their resilience and strengthen self-reliance. For transformation to happen, a 15-year vision²⁶ of the desired impact on people’s lives is needed, to which both UNDAFs and HRP’s can be aligned and common objectives defined. This vision must also take into account the contributions from bilateral donor funding, the private sector and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank Group, regional and national development banks and hybrid public-private partnerships, such as the African Risk Capacity (see annex 1).

Defining clear outcomes allows for a multi-year vision, but getting there requires flexible, context-specific, dynamic benchmarks that are designed around local events that may not be aligned with the usual year-end or mid-year review.

- **What would a collective outcome look like?** Planning over a multi-year span allows for setting outcomes over a five-year period that are more ambitious than yearly ones. For example, in displacement situations it could aim for a percentage of refugees and IDPs

being integrated locally into the labour market and having access to social safety nets, or being given resettlement opportunities under conditions that are conducive to self-reliance.

- **What are dynamic benchmarks?** To achieve this long-term outcome, planning for collective crisis management would be done around context-specific benchmarks, such as election cycles, drought and flood patterns or harvest cycles, that may shift over time and require greater flexibility in order to maximize opportunities for achieving the outcome. Progress would not be measured through outputs such as assistance provided or people transported, but on their impact on people’s lives.

3. Programming that strengthens the local capacity to respond to future crises.

Collective action set to reverse the “response/capacity-building ratio” of programmes overtime through dynamic handovers, preferably to local partners is needed. Actively aiming towards an increasing localization of the response is a key element of an effective multi-year planning framework. This essentially means promoting the notion of “reinforce, don’t replace” whereby international humanitarian action should complement national capacity and, if necessary, build that capacity. This can be done through a number of components:

- **Recognize and support national institutions to deliver an effective response.** In the 2000s, Mozambique was recovering from civil conflict while also dealing with flooding and cyclones that required frequent and concerted international humanitarian action. But due to a conscious effort to reinforce its national disaster management capacities, Mozambique has set a good standard for being able to manage its disaster response effectively through domestic resources.
- **Increase direct investment in national and local institutions.** This can be done by directing a growing percentage of funding over time and reducing barriers to accessing international funds, i.e., reversing the response/capacity-building ratio. This would mean promoting and imposing a local capacity-building/de-

²⁶ The time frame of the SDGs, which is also aligned with the reality that many humanitarian appeals have lasted longer than 10 years

velopment component to humanitarian programming from the start. An example is the disaster management system in Bangladesh. Until the mid-1990s, that country's cyclones and floods continuously required international humanitarian interventions. Since then, thanks to a variety of programmes such as the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, the Government has established the Standing Orders on Disasters, which has effectively managed to respond to humanitarian needs largely within its own capacities.

- **Make capacity development meaningful and measurable.** In all contexts, identify existing national and local capacity for response and acknowledge gaps that hinder it. From the earliest stages, make direct investments in providing support and targeted training to national and local partners to ensure a sustainable response in the future. The international community's support to the National Disaster Management Agency of Indonesia (BNPB) is a case in point. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, BNPB has been strengthened to such an extent that international humanitarian assistance is rarely requested for the numerous seismic and hydrological disasters affecting the Indonesian archipelago every year. Another example is the work of IFRC, OCHA, ICVA and SDC to try to facilitate better triangular cooperation on capacity development through the Disaster Response Dialogue initiative.
- **Reinforce resilience and self-sufficiency at all layers of society.** Coping-strategy investments made in crisis response should support affected people to meet their needs. Such investments should adjust with phases of crises, as traditional coping strategies become more challenging in protracted contexts. The effort to increase resilience in the Sahel is an excellent example, where the international community's support of Government initiatives such as 3N (Nigériens Nourish Nigériens) in Niger is placing the Government in the driver's seat. It builds trust among the donor community that the Government is fulfilling its obligations and leading the response process in a sustainable way, aiming to reduce humanitarian needs and the international humanitarian footprint.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLECTIVE OUTCOMES FOR GREATER SUSTAINABILITY

With the publication in 2014, of *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises*, OCHA laid out a vision for a more anticipatory and proactive approach to humanitarian crises, and it highlighted the importance of translating increasingly sophisticated and accessible risk information into concrete policies and programmes. OCHA's 2015 flagship policy report will take a step further and question the foundations of what humanitarian effectiveness does and does not mean. One of the main recommendations of the forthcoming report is the need for a more risk-informed and context-specific approach to crises, recognizing that coherence is central for effectiveness. Nowhere is such thinking more required than in tackling today's protracted crises.

Building on the advances of the past years, and in order to address some of the challenges that emerged from the first wave of humanitarian multi-year planning, there is a need to re-assess the very essence of what multi-year strategic plans need to achieve. Humanitarians have planned to improve the quality of aid delivered for meeting humanitarian needs, but outcome-based multi-year planning enables humanitarian effectiveness to be seen through the prism of meeting immediate humanitarian needs; transitioning from the role of international humanitarian actors in meeting these needs; engaging actors who may have a better comparative advantage; and reducing the needs over time by supporting resilience to a broad range of shocks and crises at all layers of a society.

Humanitarians are often heard saying that the end goal of their interventions is to eventually make their presence redundant, or "work themselves out of business". In practice, this rarely happens, with evidence suggesting humanitarian aid per capita in protracted emergencies increases overtime.

Humanitarian action in certain protracted crises may be displacing longer-term development investments by a range of actors who have a greater comparative advantage. Outcome-based multi-year planning would ensure that humanitarians "walk their talk", and that they indeed plan their

operations with a realistic exit strategy and an outcome that is more than just providing quality humanitarian aid.

The end goal should be to develop strategies that have a transformational impact in protracted crises in order to gradually reduce the humanitarian caseload. This can only be done through a concerted approach that aligns development, peace and security, governance and residual emergency relief strategic engagements. Humanitarians clearly cannot do it alone, but given the unprecedented demand, it is their responsibility to raise the alarm and advocate a more joined up and sustainable approach. That is at the core of the humanitarian imperative. Thus, instead of expanding humanitarian agencies' mandates through inflated humanitarian appeals, the overall goal would be to phase them out whenever possible in contexts of protracted crises and rely on shorter-term appeals, while refocusing humanitarian action worldwide for contexts that are truly an emergency. That is the lesson from the 2008 food crisis and the approach undertaken in the comprehensive framework for action, in which humanitarian and development interventions were planned and implemented concurrently.

About 89 per cent of the resources supporting humanitarian action globally go to operations such as Syria, Yemen, the Horn of Africa or the Sahel. However, it is the natural disaster response model from crises such as the 2004 Asian Tsunami upon which the humanitarian tools and services are developed. Strengthening rapid response capacity will always be a priority, but so must be the development of tools and services that are fit for delivering in the majority of the crises that require international humanitarian assistance today. These should not be mutually exclusive.

Changing course will require a serious rethinking of the way humanitarians and development actors have been accustomed to work in protracted emergencies, as well as a hard conversation with donors to provide the right incentive to enable such change.

"There is a compelling need to try to get ahead of the curve of future crises and disasters, to avert huge and costly development setbacks and lives lost."

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator and Chair of the UNGD

Below are some suggested ways forward:

1. Redesign planning tools for a post-2015 world.



Adapt the Humanitarian Planning Cycle, the tools and services that support it, such as the Financial Tracking Service, as well as development frameworks, such as UNDAFs/CCAs, to be fit for the realities of hybrid strategies in contexts of protracted crises. This would also require more flexible and dynamic strategies, with real-time revisions rather than static models of one-time assessments and mid-term reviews.

2. Plan to achieve collective outcomes over a multi-year strategy in protracted crises.



There must be a clearer link between the actions humanitarians plan to undertake and the outcomes achieved. For that, it is necessary to ensure that humanitarian appeals are evidence based, relying on sound needs and risk analysis and projecting a realistic picture of humanitarian needs and their length. Humanitarian crises are mostly predictable and humanitarian strategies must reflect that.

3. Support multilateral organizational reforms aimed at multi-year, outcome-driven strategic frameworks.



Donor funding approaches can also provide incentives for humanitarian and development actors to adapt their planning tools. The international humanitarian system can be more proactive and risk-informed if donors fully support this change. Multi-year funding is one example of how to create incentives for a more strategic approach to managing crises that last over the long term. However, it is not the only example. Donors should request humanitarian partners to display the links of their work to a longer-term vision in line with the SDGs and its commitment of leaving no one behind.

4. Advocate a humanitarian-development call for action in protracted crises.



All partners engaged in crisis management and development must come together to reinforce the message that humanitarian crises are development setbacks and will continue eroding donor investments in governance and peace if not managed in a sustainably way. All the relevant actors will only come together if the in-

centives are right, and if political champions use the opportunities around the SDGs and the WHS to ensure high-level commitments from Governments, financial institutions, NGOs and the UN.

5. Risk-informed humanitarian and development leadership for achieving humanitarian outcomes at all levels.



The successes emanating from multi-year strategic plans are linked with strong humanitarian leadership, from the Sahel's experience aligning objectives around nine countries to Haiti's innovative approach to transition. This suggests that leadership is paramount for pushing the boundaries of the current approaches to humanitarian and development planning.

6. Create regional platforms for risk-informed multi-year action.



In the absence of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, use the convening power of the Emergency Relief Coordinator or the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator to provide regional coherence to multi-year strategies. UN RCs/HCs in adjacent protracted/recurring-crisis countries should establish cross-border/regional coordination to tackle cross-border risks and attract regional support/funding.

7. Measure the impact of current multi-year strategies through evaluations.



The evidence on what works and what doesn't work for multi-year planning needs to be further investigated and analyzed. Humanitarian actors, through the IASC, should consider undertaking evaluations of multi-year plans at the regional and national levels. It would allow for correcting mistakes, adapting approaches and building on the successes of current experiences. Generating a body of evidence around the effectiveness of multi-year planning, context-specific practices and experiences would also allow for scaling up innovative approaches to other crises.

ANNEX 1: CASE STUDY: THE AFRICAN RISK CAPACITY

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) is a Specialized Agency of the African Union which operates under an innovative public-private structure that transcend humanitarian and development divides and puts governments at the driver's seat of preparedness and response. It is composed by two main branches, first the ARC Agency, a development finance institution that provides financial tools and infrastructure to help countries manage natural disaster risk and adapt to climate change, which currently counts 26 AU countries as members and is supervised by a governing board of African ministers. Second, the ARC Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd),²⁷ a specialist hybrid mutual insurance company and Africa's first ever disaster insurance pool, aggregating risk by issuing insurance policies to participating governments and transferring it to the international market.

ARC Ltd uses the satellite weather surveillance software Africa RiskView, developed by the United Nations World Food Programme, to estimate the impact of drought on vulnerable populations – and the response costs required to assist them – before a season begins, and as it progresses, so that index-based insurance payouts, are triggered at or before harvest time if the rains are poor. However in order for a country to be eligible to purchase an insurance policy, and thus become a member of ARC Ltd, it must first demonstrate through a peer review process led by ARC Agency its ability to effectively use a potential payout. Early intervention on its own cannot ensure intended beneficiaries receive assistance if contingency plans and channels to distribute aid are not in place to take advantage of early funds. The role of ARC is to set, enforce and, over time, to improve standards for contingency planning and early intervention to ensure the potential cost benefits of early assistance are realized to outweigh the insurance premiums countries must pay to participate in the pool.

With a USD 200 million initial capital commitment provided by the governments of Germany (KfW) and the United Kingdom (DFID), ARC Ltd issued drought insurance policies totalling USD 129 million for a total premium cost of USD

17 million to a first group of African governments – Kenya, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal – in May 2014, marking the launch of the inaugural ARC pool. Following drought in the Sahel in 2014, three of these countries received payouts in January 2015, before the launch of the UN's consolidated appeal, to implement responses to assist affected populations. Five additional countries joined the second pool in 2015 for drought coverage totalling USD 190 million and for a total premium cost of over USD 26 million. ARC aims to introduce flood and cyclone coverage for its Member States by 2016 and has a target of insuring over 20 countries against for drought, flood and cyclones, totalling over USD 800 million, by 2020. In addition, in February 2015 following the Ebola crisis, the Agency was mandated by its Member States to explore viral risk coverage and aims to pilot outbreak and epidemic insurance in select countries in 2017.

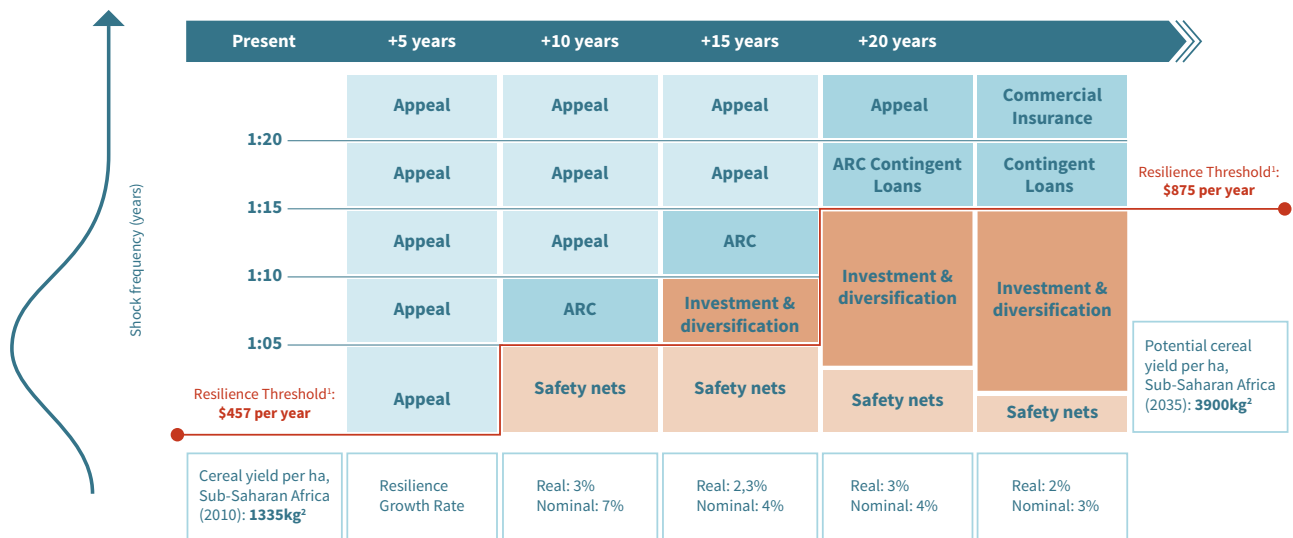
A new model for managing humanitarian risks and increasing effectiveness

The ARC model fundamentally challenges the way the international humanitarian system currently operates. With African states willing to allocate more domestic resources to natural disaster financing, at a time when humanitarian funding gap continues to widen, ARC creates an exciting opportunity for allocating international humanitarian resources in a more cost effective manner and overtime phasing out the appeal's based model for managing certain predictable humanitarian risks. In the long-run, as countries build capacity for early response to predictable disasters such as droughts and floods, and scale their ARC coverage, humanitarian assistance needs for such disasters will decrease, freeing up scarce funds for complex risks or other conflict-related humanitarian situations that cannot be easily managed by governments nor financed by insurance-like instruments. However while African countries are taking action by participating in ARC, it is clear that they will continue to need international support until they can fully manage their own natural disaster risk.

This is where a reformed international humanitarian system can play a key role. To date, the share of ARC coverage against total drought funding requirements ranges from about 5% to 30% depending on the country, with the rest still largely coming through the UN consolidated appeals

²⁷ <http://www.africanriskcapacity.com/>

Role of African Risk Capacity (ARC) in increasing resilience to shocks and economic and growth



¹ Resilience Threshold: Limit of national coping capacity ² Source: World Bank

³ Current yield in Latin American countries. Source: World Bank. Improvement results from better use of technology in agriculture.

Figure 8

process. Countries are constrained financially from expanding coverage or lack both financial and operational capacity for greater coverage expansion. In this context, the prospect of aligning humanitarian efforts with ARC's government-led risk management system arises. This would require a paradigm shift for humanitarian planning and programming.

First, Humanitarian Country teams (HCTs) should make use of AfricaRisk View analysis to inform their own strategic planning and revise humanitarian strategies to account for the ARC's impact on current and future projections of needs. Second, HCTs should work with the ARC to strengthen the government's contingency planning and humanitarian coordination capacity. Finally, by matching ARC funding for example, through the taking out of mirroring insurance policies, the humanitarian community and its donors could bolster government-led response efforts, by providing

both increased insurance-based financing and timely operational execution in times of need, and more effectively allocate resources across the full portfolio of emergencies faced by humanitarian actors. This can be done by moving predictable natural disaster risks to government-led annual insurance programs whenever possible and leaving the UN consolidated appeals process for those risks that cannot be readily managed.

Such a shift would align incentives between national and international activities, helping to create an integrated risk management system that would support a gradual and sustainable transfer of greater responsibility to governments for disaster response as national financial and operational capacities improve. In light of the pressing needs and demands on the international humanitarian system ahead, such an opportunity to take manageable pieces of risk off the humanitarian table should be explored.

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