



# New Way of Working



OCHA

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Feb 2014, Kaedi, Mauritania: Mothers seeking care for their babies at the CRENI in Kaedi. **Credit:** OCHA / I. Brandau

## INTRODUCTION

The volume, cost and length of humanitarian assistance provision over the past ten years has grown dramatically, in large part due to the protracted nature of crises. For example, inter-agency humanitarian appeals now last an average of seven years and the size of appeals has increased nearly 400 per cent in the last decade.<sup>1</sup> This trend has given new urgency to the long-standing discussion around better connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts. At the same time, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out not just to meet needs, but to reduce risk, vulnerability and overall levels of need, providing a reference frame for both humanitarian and development actors to contribute to the common vision of a future in which no one is left behind.

Against this backdrop, the largest number of stakeholders at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) identified the need to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and to overcome long-standing attitudinal, institutional, and funding obstacles.

<sup>1</sup> Inter-agency appeal funding requirements have increased from US\$4.8 billion in 2006 to \$19.7 billion in 2016. World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2016, OCHA, December 2016.



Uganda – Workshops for building fuel efficient stoves brought people together to improve community cohesion while producing practical products for improving food security, nutrition, and health. **Credit:** UNDP

While nothing should undermine the commitment to principled humanitarian action, especially in situations of armed conflict, there is, at the same time, a shared moral imperative of preventing crises and sustainably reducing people’s levels of humanitarian need, a task that requires the pursuit of collective outcomes across silos.

It is this notion of “collective outcomes” that has been placed at the centre of the commitment to the New Way of Working, summarized in the Commitment to Action signed by the Secretary-General and 8 UN Principals at the WHS, and endorsed by the World Bank and IOM. Transcending the humanitarian-development divide by working to collective outcomes was also widely supported by donors, NGOs, crisis-affected States, and others and received more commitments at the WHS than any other area. The New Way of Working frames the work of development and humanitarian actors, along with national and local counter-parts, in support of collective outcomes that reduce risk and vulnerability and serve as instalments toward the achievement of the SDGs.

Ending needs by reducing risks and vulnerability is now a shared vision, under the SDG umbrella, that transcends this decades-old divide. The New Way of Working offers a concrete, doable and measurable path forward. The changes required to make this approach work are institutionally and financially complex and will need time to operationalize. The results, however, will not only improve the lives of the most vulnerable, but the reductions in risk and vulnerability are essential to ensuring that development progress is accessible to all communities, including those affected by crises.

This approach is highly context-specific. Humanitarian principles are immutable and must always guide humanitarian action and be respected. At the same time, respect for

humanitarian principles and better coordination with a variety of actors are not mutually exclusive and humanitarian action can be undertaken in a way that can contribute towards achieving the SDGs. Determining whether humanitarian principles are at risk will require highly context-specific, pragmatic decisions to inform the best approach to increase coherence between development and humanitarian efforts.

**“***We must bring the humanitarian and development spheres closer together from the very beginning of a crisis to support affected communities, address structural and economic impacts and help prevent a new spiral of fragility and instability. This approach relates to the New Way of Working agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit. To achieve this, we need more accountability, on the level of each individual agency carrying out its mandate, but also its contribution to the work of the United Nations system and of the system as a whole. A strong culture of accountability also requires effective and independent evaluation mechanisms.”*

**António Guterres, UN Secretary-General-designate, December 2016**



Feb 2014, Kaedi, Mauritania: Ambassador Faeqa Saeed Al-Saleh of the LAS visits the Centre for Nutritional Rehabilitation and Education (CRENI) in Kaedi, southern Mauritania. Mauritania is severely affected by the food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel region. **Credit:** OCHA / I. Brandau



Oct 2016, Jérémie, Haiti, Laura Simon stands in front of debris of her home destroyed by Hurricane Matthew. **Credit:** UNICEF

## DEFINING THE NEW WAY OF WORKING

Recognizing that humanitarian and development actors, governments, NGOs and private sector actors have been progressively working better together to meet needs for years, the New Way of Working aims to offer a concrete path to remove unnecessary barriers to such collaboration in order to enable meaningful progress.

The New Way of Working can be described, in short, as working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes. Wherever possible, those efforts should reinforce and strengthen the capacities that already exist at national and local levels.

A collective outcome can be described as the result that development and humanitarian actors (and other relevant actors) want to have achieved at the end of 3-5 years. For example, the reduction of cholera infections in a city commonly struck by cholera from 50,000 today to zero in 2021; or the 'legalization' of housing of an additional 100,000 long-term IDPs in a given city and their integration into municipal services by 2021.

A **collective outcome** is a commonly agreed quantifiable and measurable result or impact in reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increasing their resilience, requiring the combined effort of different actors.

A **comparative advantage** is the capacity and expertise of one individual, group or institution to meet needs and contribute to risk and vulnerability reduction, over the capacity of another actor.

A **multi-year timeframe** refers to analysing, strategizing, planning and financing operations that build over several years to achieve context-specific and, at times, dynamic targets.

The approach is not a “hand-over” from humanitarian to development actors. Rather it acknowledges that in protracted situations, humanitarian and development actors need to work side-by-side and collaborate. Where context allows without undermining humanitarian principles, the New Way of Working sets a path for contributing to shared outcomes of reducing humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability through a range of well-aligned short-, medium- and longer-term contributions by humanitarian and development actors.

Humanitarian and development actors are already increasingly undertaking multi-year and vulnerability focused interventions. However, to measurably reduce vulnerability, barriers to working toward a common result must be broken down, and collaboration incentivized and enabled at a systems level.

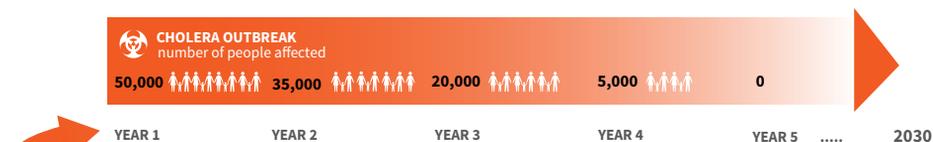
The aim of strong national and local ownership of collective outcomes is an integral part of the New Way of Working, shaped by the operational context and comparative advantages of different actors. This shift to “reinforce and do not replace” the roles of national and local actors in the prevention and delivery of assistance was also among the most prominent outcomes of the WHS, and is central to the change in mindset and behaviour required to sustainably reduce need, risk and vulnerability.

## What is a collective outcome?

A collective outcome can be described as the quantifiable and measurable result that development, humanitarian and other relevant actors want to achieve over a multi-year period of 3-5 years.

The graphic below shows a model collective outcome using the example of reducing cholera infections in a country from 50,000 today to zero in 2021.

## What does a collective outcome look like?



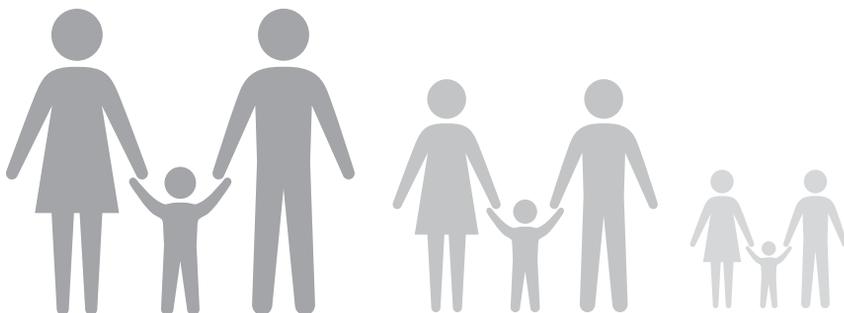
USE COLLECTIVE OUTCOME AS THE TARGET TO PLAN TOWARDS

## Collective Outcome

Eliminate new cholera outbreaks and reduce transmission by x%

MEETING NEEDS AND REDUCING RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES.

Achieving the collective outcome over 3-5 years would represent X% progress towards SDG 3.3 to combat waterborne diseases by 2030.



<sup>2</sup> Sequencing refers to one programme (e.g. humanitarian) "handing over to another" (e.g. development) over time as thresholds are met; layering refers to multiple programmes (humanitarian and development) providing assistance to the same people at once over different time scales (humanitarian programmes would last less long); and integration refers to how all the assistance comes together coherently.

<sup>3</sup> New UN System Approach to Cholera in Haiti: [http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/haiti/Haiti\\_UN\\_System\\_Cholera.pdf](http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/haiti/Haiti_UN_System_Cholera.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

These collective outcomes will act as the target which all actors work towards, and shape their plans and programmes coherently based on what is required to achieve the outcome and who has which capacity to contribute to its achievement.

### How will collective outcomes shape the way actors work together in protracted crises?

Planning for collective outcomes requires a review of which actor can contribute what capacity to the collective outcome, and agreement on how best humanitarian and development programmes can be sequenced, layered and integrated to best address the most vulnerable people. In all cases, it is about providing assistance to the same – the most vulnerable – households in the same geographical areas.<sup>2</sup>

#### Example: New UN System Approach to Cholera in Haiti

*While the New UN System Approach to Cholera in Haiti is a specific approach that is distinct from the New Way of Working, it illustrates how different actors can work together towards the common goals of meeting and reducing needs. “Nearly 800,000 Haitians have been infected by cholera since 2010 and more than 9,000 have died of the disease. In 2016, the Secretary-General announced a new approach to cholera in Haiti. The Secretary-General is actively working to develop a proposal on material assistance and support to those most directly affected by the cholera epidemic. At the same time, the UN, in partnership with the Haitian Government, is intensifying its support to treating and reducing cholera, and ultimately ending the transmission of the disease. This can be achieved by building durable access to water, sanitation and health systems, and by investing in those long-term solutions now.”<sup>3</sup>*



**Humanitarian:** Critical life-saving programming to meet and reduce risk and vulnerability.

*Deployment of Rapid Response teams to areas where cholera is reported to provide clinical treatment, rehydration, disinfecting homes and community areas, chlorinating water supplies, and managing potentially infectious solid waste. Provision of cholera vaccination as a preventative measure.*



**Development:** Strengthening institutions, infrastructure and capacity and providing basic social services to improve individual and community resilience. *Supporting stable, long-term access to clean water and decent sanitation, as well as health infrastructure.*



**Government:** Providing leadership and coherence to achieve the collective outcomes in line with the SDGs. *Leadership of response including coordination through line ministries.*



**Multilateral Banks:** Providing longer-term financing to support sustainable development. *“The UN is working with key partners such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and others to ensure investment in longer-term development solutions now, contributing to Haiti meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.”<sup>4</sup>*



**Civil Society:** Providing local and grassroots level action in support of collective outcomes. *Meeting needs as first responders and reducing risk and vulnerability through public information.*



Oct 2016, Camalaniugan, Cagayan, Philippines – The Government rapid damage assessment team (right) talks to the affected community following Typhoon Haima. **Credit:** OCHA / T. Arao

## ADVANCING THE NEW WAY OF WORKING

Achieving the New Way of Working will require broader partnerships among UN agencies, international and local NGOs, private sector, civil society actors and governments, as well as closer alignment, where possible, between humanitarian and development processes and the way they are coordinated and financed. Exploring opportunities for improved coherence and complementarity and, where appropriate, closer alignment in four main areas will be critical.

**(i) Analysis:** Predictable and joint situation and problem analysis are needed to come to a joint problem statement and identify priorities based on the vast amount of reliable data that is being collected.

**(ii) Planning and Programming:** Better joined-up planning and programming between humanitarian and development actors to enable them to agree on a set of collective outcomes and plan backwards from those envisioned 3-5-year results, asking what it takes to achieve them and which actors have the comparative advantage to deliver.

**(iii) Leadership and coordination:** Leadership and coordination by an empowered UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) who facilitates joint problem statements, and the identification, implementation and financing of collective outcomes,

engages with the national and local authorities and supports connectivity between all actors and capacities available in country to contribute to such outcomes. To fulfil these functions, the RC/HC would need to be supported by adequate capacity and resources, and collective and individual accountability of actors contributing to this approach would need to be strengthened.

**(iv) Financing:** Financing modalities that can support collective outcomes. Especially in protracted crises, financing must include a broader range of flexible and predictable multi-year programming and diversified funding tools that are aligned to enable layering of short-, medium- and long-term programs, including by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks. Most importantly, financing should be more closely tied to the progress towards achieving collective outcomes.

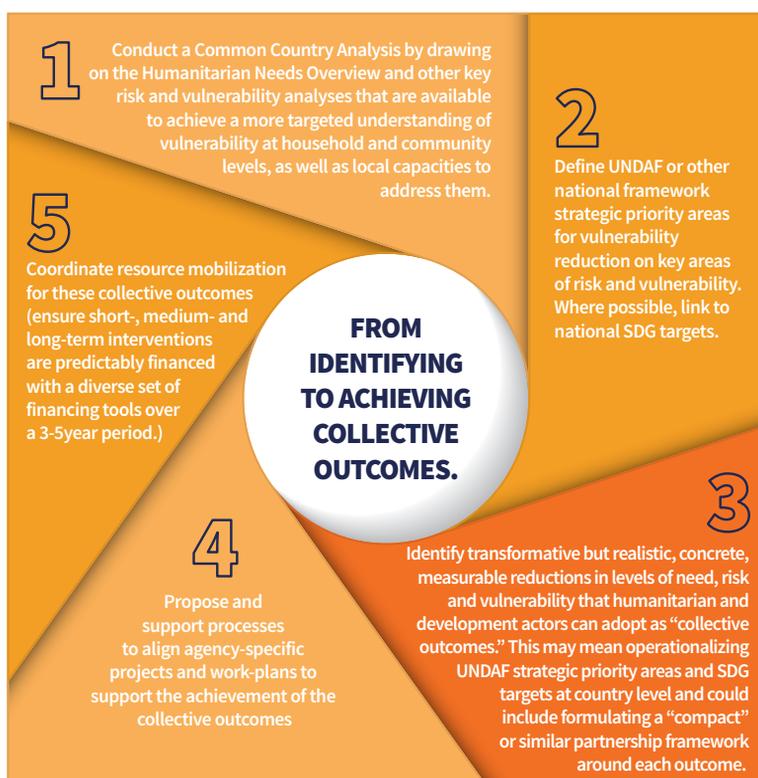
**“***We want to see a more collective, a more efficient and a strategic response to crises from the UN and other actors. We want to also ensure that development assistance links up with humanitarian efforts to create jobs, health care and education in fragile situations. People need opportunities. The New Way of Working requires humanitarian and development actors to work together at country level to provide aid for long-term needs and to build resilience and self-reliance.***”**

**Ulla Tørnæs, Danish Minister for Development Cooperation,  
December 2016**

Oct 2016, Jérémie, Haiti, collapsed homes appear on top of a hill. **Credit:** UNICEF



Identifying ‘collective outcomes’ that will reduce risk and vulnerability will help formulate a concrete and measurable contribution towards Agenda 2030 over the next 3-5 years.<sup>5</sup> In some settings, identifying the link between collective outcomes and national plans to pursue the SDGs, in areas such as nutrition, education, health, and others, can offer a clear means to align short- and medium-term programming to bring the most vulnerable onto the path of development progress. While the application of the New Way of Working will vary based on context, the steps below provide a basic example of how collective outcomes can be set and met in dynamic contexts:



<sup>5</sup> The new UNDAF guidance refers to “a shared vision and articulation of collective outcomes by a wide range of partners, including UN and non-UN actors, based on their comparative advantages and over multiple years. Coherent planning and programming is context specific. United Nations entities strategically plan together activities, interventions and programmes and who does what, where, how and when, within their mandates and with their comparatives advantage, directly aimed at contributing to reduced needs, vulnerability and risk, thus contributing to achieving sustainable development, including sustainable peace.” [https://undg.org/main/undg\\_document/undg-meeting-22-february-2017/](https://undg.org/main/undg_document/undg-meeting-22-february-2017/)



May 2015, Kunduz, Afghanistan. Assistance provided in response to conflict-induced displacement in Kunduz, following an inter-agency mission.  
**Credit:** OCHA / Mohammad Sadiq Zaheer

## **THE NEW WAY OF WORKING TO ADDRESS PROTRACTED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT**

The New Way of Working is particularly relevant to addressing protracted displacement, including internal displacement. Estimates suggest that of the 65 million people who have been forcibly displaced due to conflict and violence, the majority of them – nearly 41 million people – have been displaced within the borders of their own country. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are among the world’s most vulnerable people. They face key humanitarian and development challenges such as limited access to health and education services as well as economic and social marginalization. In the absence of durable solutions to their plight, the number of IDPs in protracted situations keeps rising.

There is a growing consensus emerging for a new and comprehensive approach to meet the challenges of displacement that goes beyond addressing immediate humanitarian needs. Applying the New Way of Working to situations of protracted internal displacement will provide a coherent approach to reduce the vulnerabilities of IDPs and host communities, build their resilience over time, harness the respective expertise of humanitarian and development actors, and leverage international financial institutions and the private sector, together with national Governments. OCHA has commissioned a study on protracted displacement that will be published in mid-2017.



Jul 2015, Sana'a: Bayt Mayad neighbourhood, Yemen. On 13 June 6 missiles hit the area. Houses were destroyed and number of civilians died and got injured. **Credit:** OCHA / Charlotte Cans

## THE WAY FORWARD

A wide-spread shift to working towards collective outcomes is new, but important steps are already being taken in many contexts to work collaboratively and with longer-term perspectives in mind.

Achieving sustained and whole-of-system change will require overcoming political, institutional and structural obstacles at all levels, as well as realizing fundamental changes in attitudes, behaviours and approaches. It will mean supporting new approaches in relevant contexts, measuring concrete results over multiple years, and adapting financing to diversify and layer types of investment to support the achievement of collective outcomes.

In addition to holding the promise of better long-term results for people in crisis, the New Way of Working represents an opportunity to deliver greater efficiencies and have a greater impact with the limited (and diminishing) Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources. This needs to occur hand in hand with a smarter use of financing, as suited to each context— both in terms of what is financed (with a greater focus on prevention, sustainability and localized response) as well as in the types of financing given, increasing the use of concessional financing, risk insurance, bonds, and similar means alongside short-term funding for acute crisis response.

Operational and policy discussions are already moving forward on the New Way of Working, including in relevant working groups and in the field.

“A real transformation is needed and we need a definition of success. It is not about how many parcels of food we have delivered, but rather how many less people need our help, if a similar event would appear. This would force us all to consider what the outcome would look like and how we would work together to achieve that outcome.”

**Garry Conille, Under Secretary General, Programmes and Operations, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, December 2016**

Colombia. This UNTFHS-funded project worked to promote comprehensive responses to internal displacement in conflict-affected areas of Colombia. The photo shows members of the Embera tribe, a community near the front lines of the conflict which faces the greatest risk of displacement. **Credit:** UN/Mark Garten





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**Cover picture:** Jul 2015, Sana'a, Yemen. Zubeir (right) and his friend came to get water from this water point in MUSAIK, a neighbourhood of Sana'a. In this neighbourhood, more than 30,000 people are dependent on water distribution, according to GIZ, the German cooperation agency. Every day, three trucks of 3,000 liters each serve a few distribution points in the neighbourhood. The project is a cooperation between GIZ and UNICEF. Because of the commercial blockade and the lack of fuel, most water pumps are not able to function and people rely on water trucking.

**Credit:** OCHA / Charlotte Cans