

Annual Meeting of the Signatories of the Grand Bargain
Geneva, 20 June 2017
Chairs' Summary

"The purpose of the Grand Bargain is not efficiency in itself; or a better alignment of bureaucracies. It is to protect and alleviate the deep suffering of all those for whom every day is a struggle for survival."

Peter Maurer, ICRC President, Keynote Speaker

In May 2016, the principals of 15 humanitarian agencies and 15 government donors met in Istanbul and launched the "Grand Bargain". Faced with a growing gap between spiralling humanitarian needs and the resources available to meet them, we agreed to take actions together to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian ecosystem. One year later, our ranks have swelled. From the original 30, we are now 52 signatories, and we gathered together in Geneva on 20 June 2017 for our first Annual Meeting to take stock of progress and define our priorities for the next year.

As we met in Geneva, we were conscious of the ongoing toll of humanitarian crises around the world. Major conflicts in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere show few signs of abatement. We are attempting to support millions facing famine in four countries while half a dozen other countries stand on the cusp of a similar tragedy. Countless other crises, natural and man-made, are pushing people into poverty and extreme vulnerability.

These are the people we must ultimately hold ourselves accountable to. Our goal is better outcomes for the communities around the world who look to us for support. In this light, the drive towards an efficient, effective and inclusive humanitarian ecosystem that can adequately address the growing humanitarian needs is more important than ever.

At the same time, we realize that more efficiency and effectiveness will not address the humanitarian financing gap on their own. As the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing so clearly articulated, that will require political solutions and action to address root causes, and a significant deepening and diversification of existing sources of financing.

Progress to date

At the 1st Annual Meeting, it was clear that we remain committed to what we have agreed in the Grand Bargain. We believe the Grand Bargain has successfully mobilized key humanitarian stakeholders and provides a much-needed forum for donors and aid organizations to drive progress on a common vision of maximizing the impact of our humanitarian work. The independent annual report prepared by GPPI as well as the independent field-based evaluations highlighted that we have made some important achievements in just one year.

These include specific activities, such as reductions in reporting requirements, a shift toward multi-year planning and funding, and increases in cash programming and support for pooled funds, as well as changes in mindset. Many signatories are actively working to institutionalize the commitments and integrate them into their policies, strategies, and work in the field whilst other are undertaking new research. Many signatories are also active in the ongoing discussion of the 10 workstreams, working

to clarify definitions, develop work plans and baselines. However, we also realize that we are still at the beginning stage. Many of the change processes that the Grand Bargain has set in motion are still in an incubation stage and not all are progressing at the same speed.

We must now build on these successes and close the gaps. The GPPI report highlights the need for us to maintain the political momentum, increase synergies across the different workstreams, communicate better with outside stakeholders, and move quickly to make changes visible at the field level.

Moving forward

A number of priority issues and challenges were raised by those present throughout the day as well as some concrete proposals, which are outlined below. Agreed action points following the discussion are highlighted.

1. Reinforcing the quid pro quo and getting the sequencing right

We have built a common view of the Grand Bargain, understanding that some areas require mutual action between donors and agencies, for instance donors agreeing to more unearmarked and multiyear funding and working towards simpler reporting, while aid organizations provide more transparency on how funding flows, look at reducing duplicate management costs and at improving multiyear planning, linked to joint assessment and effective and objective evidence based analysis to inform response plans and appeals.

We agreed that other areas require collective action, and we recommit to work together to implement the commitments to localization, cash-based assistance, joint needs assessments, the participation revolution, and the humanitarian development nexus during emergencies and protracted crises.

With regard to the quid pro quo activities, sequencing can be very important. For instance, donors cannot provide multi-year funding without multi-year plans, and it is more difficult for local actors to access direct funding if reporting requirements are not simplified.

Action:

- Relevant workstreams are requested to work internally and with other workstreams to promote measures to relieve bottlenecks due to sequencing.

2. Prioritization and streamlining of workstream activities

We agreed we wanted to improve the efficiency and impact of our work and a number of participants raised the need to prioritize our work within each workstream, including identifying quick wins for each workstream.

Many participants raised the need to improve communication across workstreams and to ensure coordination. Most speakers noted that they lacked the capacity to follow all of the workstreams, and support was voiced for finding ways to reduce the number of separate meetings. A few participants also suggested to merge different workstreams, so as to diminish the number of meetings and processes; this issue could be taken up by the facilitation group 2017-2018.

Action:

- Each workstream is requested to identify its 3 priority activities and priority outcomes for the next year (if it has not already done so).
- The co-conveners of the various workstreams are requested to communicate with each other to determine if they can merge or cluster their work (for instance, through coordinated or joint meetings).

3. Analysis and reporting

Participants stressed the importance of common starting points and baselines. This included baselines for implementation of each commitment so we can see the outcomes. It also included baselines for impacts, including through measuring the perceptions of affected populations and field staff.

Action:

- Workstreams are requested to set out baselines for each of the commitments in the next annual report so that the rate of implementation and impact can be measured going forward.
- Signatories are asked to measure not only the implementation of the commitments once the baselines have been established but also to independently assess the views of communities and field staff, following on from work already undertaken.

4. Contextualizing commitments and piloting initiatives at the field level

A number of participants raised the importance of contextualizing the commitments and to make changed approaches visible in the field. There was significant support for field implementation, with different views of what should be piloted. Those present agreed it was important not to overburden field colleagues who already deal with limited resource and significant needs.

Action:

- Signatories and workstreams are invited to find ways to implement actions related to Grand Bargain initiatives at the field level.

5. Ensuring adequate attention to gender

Many participants reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a stronger profile for gender in implementing the Grand Bargain, voicing specific recommendations in this regard around women's voice, leadership and participation in implementation of commitments as well as the importance of collecting disaggregated data.

Action:

- The Informal Friends Group on Gender is invited to further share their "Aide Mémoire" and to propose additional steps to the Facilitation Group to ensure adequate attention to gender in Grand Bargain activities.

6. Coherence and synergies with external processes

Participants emphasized the importance of coherence and synergies with external processes. A structured dialogue with key external actors was specifically recommended. The IASC and Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative were raised as priority stakeholders in this regard, as well as the UN-led “New Way of Working” process. The point was however made that the Grand Bargain has a specific character due to its mixed membership; as one participant put it, “it has to stand on its own feet”.

Action:

- The Facilitation Group is requested to ensure a structured dialogue and communication with the IASC, the GHD, and other key external processes.

7. Reaching out to non-signatories to enable implementation

Participants called for greater consultation and dialogue with key partners, in particular host governments and local and national actors, to ensure that different views and perspectives inform efforts to implement the Grand Bargain. Australia offered to undertake efforts to increase diplomatic engagement with affected countries, while IFRC and ICVA offered to undertake efforts to better involve local and national actors in affected countries.

Action:

- The Facilitation Group is requested to develop a strategy and identify roles with regard to outreach, in consultation with the eminent person and advocate(s).

8. Institutional issues

The Facilitation Group will coordinate the above work and should remain a lean and effective unit. The current Facilitation Group will continue in its role until 31 August 2017. We agreed that the new Facilitation group for the year commencing 1 September 2017 will consist of:

- For the NGOs: InterAction
- For the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: ICRC
- For the UN Agencies: OCHA and UNHCR
- For the donors: UK and Germany, with Sweden to undertake this role the following year if able.

We welcomed Kristalina Georgieva’s offer of re-engagement as the Grand Bargain’s eminent person.

We also agreed to recruit a number of Grand Bargain advocates, each with comparative advantages with different key stakeholders, to champion the cause of the Grand Bargain. Dame Barbara Stocking was nominated by acclamation as the first Grand Bargain advocate.

The Facilitation Group will identify a small number of additional advocates over the coming year and develop terms of reference for what we would like these advocates to prioritize.

In addition, we welcomed the offer from NRC and the World Bank, to provide resources for an additional staff member for the IASC-hosted Grand Bargain Secretariat.

9. Next annual meeting

The next meeting will be held immediately before or after ECOSOC HAS in New York in June 2018. The Facilitation Group will work to identify the co-chairs for this meeting. The independent annual report will be prepared in time for this meeting.

Closing

Let us reiterate here the important words of Kristalina Georgieva which resonated with the meeting: "We have a moral duty to recognize that the world has changed, dramatically, whereas our action is falling dramatically behind... Never before have we been so generous; but never before so insufficient. The shortfall is the difference between life and death, and the difference between hope and hopelessness."