# **Grand Bargain Consultation – Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning and Funding**

12-13 September 2017, Canadian Permanent Mission, Geneva (5 Avenue de l'Ariana)

## **Consultation Context, Objectives and Participation**

The Government of Canada and UNICEF, as co-convenors of the Grand Bargain work stream on Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning and Funding (MYHPF), supported by OCHA and NRC, organized a global workshop on 12-13 September hosted by the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva<sup>1</sup>. Based on field experience and literature, the workshop aimed at sharing and consolidating good practices, challenges and lessons learned on MYHPF and defining priority areas for joint engagement going forward. The intent was to provide an opportunity where current guidance, evaluation findings and studies could be analysed together, grounded in the experience of selected Humanitarian Country Teams who have undertaken or are currently undertaking multi-year humanitarian planning. Two recent studies in particular were useful background to inform this meeting, the evaluation of Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning undertaken by OCHA and the Humanitarian Financing Task Team's review of Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing<sup>2</sup>. In addition, a broader synthesis of the literature in these two areas supported by UNICEF pulled together lessons learned and recommendations on Multi-Year planning and funding.

As efforts to strengthen multi-year humanitarian planning and funding are not new, the workshop's discussion process paid particular attention to previous and on-going work in these areas. Efforts must collaborate with and add value to existing processes under the IASC, the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, amongst others. This workshop provided an opportunity to differentiate and leverage these adjacent initiatives with the intent of defining concrete steps forward.

#### **Workshop Objectives**

- 1. To consolidate learning on good practice and challenges in multi-year humanitarian planning and funding based on field experience and the literature
- 2. Refine good practice benchmarks for Multi-Year Humanitarian Response Plans
- 3. Define focus elements for the 2018 work plan of the MYHPF work stream

## **Participation**

The workshop was broadly attended (over 40 participants<sup>3</sup>) including representatives of institutional donors, NGOs, UN Agencies, ICRC/IFRC and Humanitarian Country Teams from the West Bank and Gaza, the DRC, Chad, Uganda and Sudan. Many participants also "wore two hats" bringing with them insights about the work of other Grand Bargain work streams.

## **Workshop Presentations and Discussion**

## **Presentations: Background on MYHP and MYHF**

The Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning and Funding commitment, the 7<sup>th</sup> Grand Bargain commitment, aims to increase the extent and quality, efficiency and effectiveness of multiyear humanitarian planning and funding while strengthening the coordination and links to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Annex 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> IASC HFTT (FAO, OCHA and NRC), "Living up to the Promise of Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing (August 2017) and OCHA, "Evaluation of Multi-Year Planning" (February 2017).

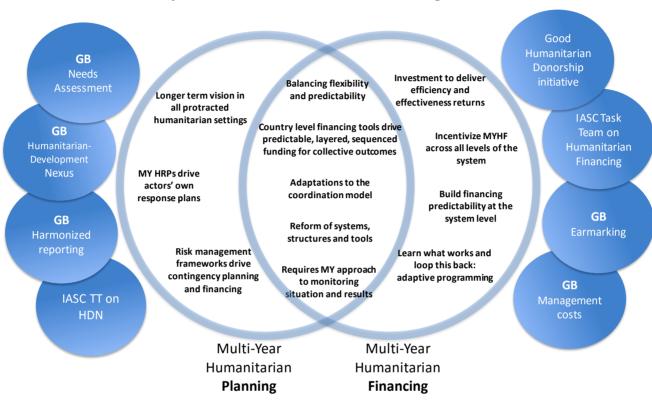
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See Annex 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The specific Work Stream commitments were: to (1) increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments and document the impacts on programme efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with their implementing partners; (2) support in at least five countries by the end of 2017 multi-year collaborative planning and response plans through multi-year funding, and monitor and evaluate the outcomes of these responses; (3) strengthen existing coordination efforts to share

The efforts under this commitment are clearly linked to other Grand Bargain Work Streams and adjacent processes, such as the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and joint needs assessments.

The workshop began with two presentations reviewing key lessons learned and main recommendations from the perspectives of planning and funding<sup>5</sup>. The illustration developed after the workshop based on the five presentations captures these overlaps and some of the important relationships with other processes:

# **Summary of Recommendations and Connecting Processes**



In follow-up discussions participants also flagged the importance of system-level changes, including tackling of issues such as data aggregation to track MYHF flows, and better incorporating multi-year contributions by non-traditional humanitarian donors such as the private sector. The importance of ongoing needs assessments to capture changes in the context was connected to the question of periodization, and the balancing of short- and longer-term responses across the humanitarian-development nexus.

## Presentations: Key Challenges and Lessons from the field

Humanitarian Country Team representatives from Sudan, Chad and Uganda shared reflections on their Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning processes<sup>6</sup>. These brought out considerable convergence in terms of how challenges were presented, especially related to the alignment of systems and approaches such as needs assessments. Other key issues involved:

analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions while respecting the principles of both.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> <u>Presentations</u> by **Agnese Spiazzi**, OCHA Programme Support Branch and **Lydia Poole**, Independent Aid Financing Consultant.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Presentations by representatives of the <u>Sudan</u>, <u>Chad</u> and <u>Uganda</u> Humanitarian Country Teams.

- Bringing partners and national authorities, when/as appropriate, on board with the multi-year planning approach and results-based planning.
- Improving knowledge management and strategic monitoring to generate evidence and learning
- Finding the operational connection, points of convergence or platforms for coordination with the development stream and other non-humanitarian actors – while navigating the need to preserve humanitarian principles and humanitarian space

Uganda's presentation that focused on the Comprehensive Refugee Response highlighted a key challenge in the multi-year approach in terms of contingency planning to address the volatility in the protracted humanitarian contexts. After its framework was established Uganda faced a huge and unexpected influx of South Sudanese refugees.

A prominent lesson learned across the three experiences was the centrality of multi-year financing. Each country team noted the need to develop innovative funding mechanisms, promote donor interest, and the importance of drawing in international finance institutions into the process. Another lesson shared by all three was the importance of enhanced coordination between humanitarian and development actors and the mechanisms for this, such as joint analysis, joined-up planning, monitoring and information management.

Humanitarian Country Team representatives from West Bank and Gaza and the DRC were asked to reflect on these presentations and they picked up on a number of points. Both attach great importance to MYHP given the long duration of their protracted crises. In West Bank and Gaza, a multi-year humanitarian strategy is being developed that clearly adheres to humanitarian principles and preserves the humanitarian space. The DRC has evolved tools supportive of multi-year funding such as its common humanitarian fund, its stabilization coherence fund and its participation in the African Risk Capacity facility. The DRC emphasized the importance of building the business case for support.

In the open plenary discussion a key observation of these five different cases was that no "one-size-fits-all" approach was possible given the varying contexts, histories and stakeholders. It was also emphasized that within multi-year plans, mechanisms are required to respond to surges in caseloads or unforeseen emergencies. MYHF enables early and rapid response, leading to efficiency and effectiveness gains in humanitarian operations. Representatives from the HCTs highlighted some key issues for attention and/or further support going forward, including more guidance, clearer messaging and adaptation of tools and systems, establishing platforms to promote knowledge sharing, lessons learned and good practice. Country representatives also highlighted the importance of continuing the exchange between the headquarters and HCTs and to maintain a two-way learning process, to ensure global guidance and decisions are informed and supported by field evidence and practices.

## **Analysis and Group Discussions**

The synthesis of lessons learned, recommendations and country experience in Multi-Year Planning and Funding was intended to provide the foundation for more thorough analysis by participants. Donor representatives discussed financing issues, while the others were divided into three smaller groups organized around their differing perspectives – NGO/Red Cross, field and UN. The donor discussion looked at the scope of the multi-year financing and what level of ambition can be expected as a result. The groups considering multi-year planning focused on what constituted a "good" MYHP, and what the barriers were to achieving this.

#### **Donors on Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing**

Many of the donors present indicated that they had increased the levels of multi-year funding in recent years. These donors will soon need to report on the benefits of this approach, and what has been achieved in greater efficiency and improved results. Therefore, greater effort in developing an evidence base that supports multi-year humanitarian funding by multi-year planning and programming is required. It was discussed that donors can help partners better report by being more explicit in their expectations.

With regards to results that are expected from multi-year planning and programming, donors agreed that they were looking for improved outcome level results but discussed the importance of avoiding

humanitarian actors being converted into development actors. The two perform different functions. The challenge will be for humanitarians to articulate what outcome level results look like that are better and different from results that are based on single year planning but that are still different from development results.

Donors discussed the challenge of increasing multi-year funding as this reduces their budgets that are available for responsive funding over the course of the year; for example, to flash appeals, pledging conference as well as the general evolution of global humanitarian needs.

Operational partners called for improved donor coordination and planning at the country level. However, many donors questioned the extent to which this would be beneficial for protracted humanitarian contexts as many donors do not have a humanitarian field presence and provide financing based on a balance country earmarking and unearmarked/softly earmarked funding. Donors wondered if it might be useful to increase dialogue with partners to share information about how donors program.

Multi year funding levels have been increasing and have mainly gone towards multilateral humanitarian organizations. At the same time multi year funding has not been evident at the field level and has not been transferred to NGOs. Donors discussed the need to better understand why multi-year funding seems to be "stuck" at the first transaction layer.

## Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning: NGOs/Red Cross

Passing the benefits of MYHF through the results chain to NGO implementers was seen as a top priority. For improved efficiency NGOs point to the importance of creating true multi-year agreements rather than agreements covering several years but still requiring full annual proposals and due diligence processes. For the multi-year process to work, there needs to be a shared vision, sufficient flexibility and more trust by the different actors in the system.

Needs assessment and analysis was also identified as a key issue area. In a multi-year planning environment these need to be dynamic in order to be able to contextualize trends. Increased data accessibility would promote this. Barriers include rigid mind-sets, political pressure and fund raising influence. Expectation management, including for the affected population and others on the ground, become an issue with Multi-Year planning, as the commitment stakes are higher.

## **Field perspective**

Amongst field participants there was agreement that results-based management and monitoring systems are currently the weakest parts of humanitarian planning. This is critical to guiding strategic management over the multi-year period and providing the evidence of the benefits/advantages of Multi-Year Planning and its efficiency and effectiveness gains. Countries often lack the capacity and the financial resources necessary to put robust systems in place. Related to that, field participants highlighted the need to strengthen joint analyses underpinning MYHP to provide projections on the expected evolution of the humanitarian situation, and to more clearly identify immediate drivers of humanitarian needs, as well as underlying root causes and systemic factors. More comprehensive guidance in this area is called for.

It is important for multi-year plans to be built around theories of change showing the evolution of strategies and activities over the plan period. A longer planning period allows actors the opportunity to invest more in innovative approaches and alternatives.

#### **UN headquarters perspective**

Discussion focused on the need for multi-year planning to identify and distinguish short-term humanitarian results and immediate contingency planning as well as approaches and operational strategies that also make a contribution towards longer-term resilience (e.g. achieving access to water by re-establishing community-managed water sources (systems or pumps). The discussion highlighted that there is still a need for guidance on the humanitarian-development nexus in humanitarian response planning, providing criteria and considerations to guide context-specific planning, with clear linkages and distinctions between the two.

The importance of the MY humanitarian planning as the space to safeguard humanitarian principles was highlighted.

Needs assessments that are appropriate for multi-year humanitarian planning need to probe more deeply into underlying causes and especially providing analysis of existing capacities and capacity gaps at the national and local levels (e.g. CSOs, communities, etc.), so as to inform longer term vision and strategies implemented by development partners or government authorities.

Challenges remain in managing the shared accountability under multi-year plans, given mandates and resources, as well as in protecting and managing the time to adequately involve the broad range of stakeholders required, especially including CSOs. Finally, there is need of clear guidance on budgeting and costing processes and methodologies for multi-year plans, noting that there is ongoing work to address this gap in annual humanitarian planning.

## **Emergent Priorities: Country Team Level**

Country Teams were invited to reflect on what kind of support and global engagement would be useful to advance Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning and Financing going forward. This discussion was prefaced by a presentation of what support is currently offered.

Representatives from the HCTs highlighted some key issues for attention and/or further support going forward. These included simplified guidance on MYHP and its operationalization, clearer messaging on MYHPF at the technical/operational and the senior levels, adaptation of tools and systems to make MYHPF possible and visible, establishment of knowledge sharing/community of practice platforms to collect and share lessons learned and good practices, more support to countries, and stronger engagement with, and visibility of local actors, when/as appropriate. HCT representatives also mentioned the need for further guidance and technical assistance on developing solid joint analyses providing the required evidence and projections to inform MYHP, and on designing and operationalizing MYHPs, including strengthening of their monitoring frameworks.

Country representatives also highlighted the importance of continuing the exchange between the headquarters and HCTs and to maintain a two-way learning process, to ensure global guidance and decisions are informed and supported by field evidence and practices.

## **Elaborating Priorities: Towards a 2018 Work Plan**

Scanning across the themes raised by the discussion groups four clusters of issues emerged as having a common resonance. These clusters were described in plenary and participants were invited to dig deeper to identify actionable priorities for consideration by the Work Stream as 2018 priorities.

## **Multi-Year Needs Assessments**

Key issue is the analysis frameworks necessary to clearly distinguish the assessment of immediate needs (which is a humanitarian function) versus the assessment of underlying vulnerabilities (that more concerns longer-term development). While the Work Stream on MYHPF will advocate for solid joint analyses providing the required evidence and projections to inform MYHP, it also acknowledged that advancing progress on this area is beyond its responsibility. The Grand Bargain needs assessment work stream is undertaking efforts towards this direction and a continuous engagement between these two platforms will be ensured. Key components for follow-up are:

- Monitoring systems to provide evidence on the progress against expected results and enhance accountability of the humanitarian community.
- Joint needs analyses need to project or forecast future years' needs and to clearly distinguish immediate drivers of humanitarian needs from structural/root causes. (As well, not all future needs will call for humanitarian action). A needs analysis framework could help partners on the ground.
- Access to broader datasets beyond data conventionally used in humanitarian analyses (e.g. data from national statistical offices).

#### **Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing**

Studies to date have found it challenging to quantify the current levels of multi-year funding. Some of the challenges have been related to the absence until recently of a reporting platform for multi-year funding, differences in donor fiscal years, and a lack of consistency regarding how donors might define multi-year funding. It was felt that a better mapping of the current state of multi-year funding approaches would help in better informing ways in which multi-year funding could be better transformed from a multilateral humanitarian organization to an NGO partner. Key components towards a solution would entail:

- Map out the different forms of MYHF and attempt to quantify volumes.
- Exploring more systematically the barriers to multi-year humanitarian funding on the part of donors and intermediaries to get past the bottlenecks that prevent multi-year resources from reaching first-line responders.
- Engage further with the OCHA Financial Tracking System and other financial information systems such as IATI so as to improve the evidence base underlying multi-year funding.
   Consider how alternative funding streams (e.g. the private sector) can be aggregated to provide an overall picture of multi-year funding available.
- Encourage a peer-to-peer exchange of what is working. This might include looking at how the DRC has used pooled funding in its Multi-Year Humanitarian programs.

#### Stronger results-based management and evidence base for multi-year planning

Alignment between other Grand Bargain work steams especially needs assessment and humanitariandevelopment nexus was identified as a necessity in carrying out each of the proposed actions:

- Develop/clarify simple global guidance on the humanitarian-development nexus in multi-year humanitarian response plans and the criteria/considerations for its introduction in different contexts (e.g. a decision-tree), drawing on good examples and practices.
- Following from the above, develop clear common messaging to target audiences: RCs/HCs, HCTs, cluster coordinators, national government and other national actors as well as through development fora/processes.
- Socialization of guidance/messaging and good practices through: webinars for/with country teams doing/starting multi-year planning; knowledge platform; dissemination. Proposed that all GB signatory agencies have some role in this individually, though knowledge platform should be collective.
- Development of a joint pool of experience facilitators in applying strong RBM through to
  monitoring planning and implementation to support HCTs engaging in multi-year planning
  (recognizing that no one organization has adequate capacity in this area to cover the needs at
  the level of the collective HCT).

### **Next Steps**

The priority areas for global engagement identified in the workshop to advance MYHPF will inform the development of key actions for different actors as part of the 2018 work plan. These conclusions will also inform the participation of Work Stream representatives in the upcoming high-level Grand Bargain meeting in October 2017. On-going sharing of documents, reports and contact lists amongst stakeholders engaged in Multi-Year Humanitarian Planning and Financing will be facilitated by a DropBox space where all workshop participants will have access.

# **Annex 1: Workshop Agenda**

Tuesday September 1				
8:30	Arrival and coffee			
0.00.000	Welcome by the Government of Canada			
9:00-9:30	Participant Introductions, Overview of agenda			
	1. Key lessons and good practice in multi-year planning and funding/financing			
9:30-10:30	Presentation based on MYHPF evaluations, reviews and synthesis of literature; followed by			
	discussion			
10:30	break			
	2. Reflection on different country experiences			
11:00-12:30	Presentations by HCT representatives for Uganda, Chad and Sudan; comments by DRC and			
	oPt; followed by discussion.			
12:30	lunch, served at the Canadian Mission			
	3A. MY Humanitarian Planning – Defining good practice benchmarks			
13:30-15:00	Group work followed by plenary discussion to identify assessment criteria or benchmarks to			
	define successful MY humanitarian planning			
	3B. MY Humanitarian Funding – Agreeing the scope of ambition			
	Parallel session with donor participants. Group work and plenary discussions to prioritize			
13:30-15:00	key practical actions to deliver against commitments, and to identify critical enablers and			
	risks from other Grand Bargain work streams, NWOW and SG reforms of the UN			
45.00	development system.			
15:00	break			
15:30-17:00	4. Bringing the understanding of MY Humanitarian Planning and Financing together			
17.00 17.15	Rapporteurs from each group (MYHP and MYHF) will share conclusions. Plenary discussion.			
17:00-17:15	5. Recap from day 1 Where are we in the process			
Wednesday Septemb	·			
Special sessions target	ting HCT representatives and operational agencies involved in support to MYP			
0.00 10.00	6. Defining useful support to further advance MYP processes			
9:00-10:00	Group work followed by plenary discussion defining support that would be useful to			
December of all non	advance results on MYHP and MYHF			
Reconvening of all par 10:00-10:15				
10:00-10:15	7. Recap and introduction on process  8. Defining change strategy and potential next steps			
10:15-12:30	5 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
(with flexi-break)	Group work and discussion in plenary to define the Theory of Change of multi-year			
(with hexi-bleak)	humanitarian planning and funding (what needs to happen to support change) and to prioritize next steps.			
12:30-13:00	9. Wrap-up and closing			
12.30-13.00	3. wrap-up and closing			

# Inputs

- Synthesis papers on lessons/good practice on MY humanitarian planning and MY humanitarian financing
- Executive summary of "Multi-Year Funding for Humanitarian Response Plans" (forthcoming, 2017)
- Executive summary of "Evaluation of Multi-year Planning" (February 2017)
- HCT presentations on recent experiences in Sudan, Uganda and Chad

Shared in advance

Shared at workshop

**Annex 2: Workshop Participants** 

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