WORKSHOP ON LEARNING FROM JOINT HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

Geneva, 21-22 May 2019

Summary and way forward

Summary

In the context of the Grand Bargain Needs Assessment workstream, OCHA and ECHO have organized a stock-taking workshop to initiate discussions on some recent approaches to joint humanitarian-development analysis to help towards the formulation of policy-relevant recommendations. Examples from five countries (Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen) as well as broader expertise from participants were used to inform recommendations to reinforce a humanitarian-development-(peace) nexus approach in needs analysis.

A first dimension that needs to be underlined is the strict adherence by humanitarian actors to International Humanitarian Law and the humanitarian principles. All actors, both humanitarian and development, need to place this fundamental element at the centre of discussions around joint assessments as it will, in many circumstances, introduce different perspectives between the concerned actors. A case by case approach is therefore required when it comes to undertaking joint needs assessments / analysis, and defining collective outcomes and ways of working.

Development and humanitarian actors agreed on the importance of enhancing coordination and cooperation, identifying synergies and shared principles. Hurdles to conducting joint humanitarian-development analysis and defining collective outcomes remain nevertheless numerous and need to be tackled if we want to reinforce collective outcomes. These include issues related to: already existing complexity of inter-sectoral assessments within the humanitarian and development sectors individually (see below); mandate and inter-agency competition; focus on one's priorities and preference given to these compared to the Governments' or the assessment's outcomes; varying objectives of the analysis; timing; coordination mechanisms; roles and responsibilities (not least, and depending on the context, for the national authorities); translation of the analysis results into planning and programming; data availability; moving away from sectoral towards inter-sectoral assessments; lack of country ownership; heaviness of the exercise and how to make it as nimble and "fit for purpose" as possible; etc. In this context, since to a large extent the same actors are involved in both humanitarian and development processes, funded by a variety of sources, a mapping of actors (enumeration of the organisations; areas where they work; sectors; partners; donors; target populations) and their interrelation was considered as a precursor to devising an in-country coordination mechanism.

The group recognised the importance of parallel initiatives related to data management (data responsibility; data sharing; confidential and proprietary data; etc.) so the issue of data and potential

platforms for data sharing was not addressed. The "peace" dimension of HDPN was also considered as difficult to address in such short term.

An interesting point that regularly came in the debate is the artificial sequencing humanitarian-development continuum, since the humanitarian event should instead be seen as a disruption of the development process. The sequencing could therefore be inversed and approached in terms of the development-humanitarian (and ultimately a return to development) nexus, which would have implications as to how joint assessment/analysis processes are envisioned.

The debate also underlined the need to align existing tools so that they can serve both purposes without appearing to be "dominated" by either the development or the humanitarian sectors, underlining that needs assessment and analysis are an integral part of an overall planning process.

Differences between the two "types" of assessment start at the objective level since assessment of the humanitarian situation aim to identify the most immediate severe needs, to inform prioritized decisions on saving lives, whereas assessments done from a development perspective focus on institutions, infrastructure, chronic problems and vulnerabilities to inform decisions on poverty alleviation and economic growth. Differences in the way humanitarian and development actors do assessments and analysis also include timeframe, request, methodologies (geographic coverage and unit of analysis, scope, frequency, sequencing and timing). The utility of humanitarian data for development can be limited because perceived as less rigorous.

This poses systems challenges for information sharing and information management, the high transaction cost involved and the need to field-test these systems. Good cooperation and adequate inter-operability of data-collection and information systems are important ways to improve these links. For example, through data interface (level, geographical scope, frequency, time horizon) and layered approach. But there will be situations and contexts where humanitarian principles and space may be compromised by joint assessments and analysis.

Commonalities between humanitarian and development assessments may exist where the same organization is active along the full spectrum, even though the affected populations that are considered may not always be the same ones, due to a different geographical coverage, different timing, scope of needs, etc. Commonalities between the two types of assessments include:

* Data driven, evidence-based, analytical
* Supports decision making and planning
* Multi-sectoral
* Same organizations involved
* Clusters partially correspond to the sectors
* Affected population
* Similar data search for e.g. physical damage, impacts on the affected population, response priorities, costs.

Given this, it is important (and feasible) to build a bridge to get 1) Common understanding of the situation, 2) Joint understanding of the needs and root causes/drivers of the crisis, 3) Joint analysis on consequences and how to reduce needs and risks (immediate and future), 4) Comprehensive basis for collective outcomes, for planning and coordination.

This does not preclude the fact that assessments will serve specific purposes and having unique or single needs assessments and tools is not envisaged. Rather, the emphasis should be on improving the existing needs assessments and analysis approaches and tools with the view to enhance the nexus approach and reinforce coordination[1] (e.g. integrating development-oriented information needs into humanitarian assessment/analysis tools). For improvement to occur, there needs to be trained people, time, and a deliberate effort to span boundaries. Having dedicated staff resources focused on implementing joint humanitarian-development analysis is indispensable, as the same staff who should lead the needs assessment and analysis exercises are often requested to perform a variety of tasks (operational implementation, fund raising, reporting, administration,....) that limits their capacity to invest sufficient time in more strategic tasks and in tasks outside their traditional humanitarian or development remit.

Another point is the risk of substitution by humanitarian aid for a lack of government and development presence or engagement. Most marginalized areas and populations – often border areas far from a capital with higher probability of refugee and displaced populations being present – are places where humanitarian aid should not be left alone, but where notably development should be active too, as well as insisting at government cooperation level on equity, human rights and protection (and respect of humanitarian principles). And of course, if humanitarian and development areas and scope of activities don't overlap then there is little to jointly analyze.

Finally, what is the incentive to change the way of working, or to adhere to a stronger joint humanitarian-development (and peace) analysis? In particular, the group concluded that the existing system does not provide a clear incentive for joint analysis and that this needs to be better articulated/realised, for both humanitarian and development senior managers. For example, managers' performance is often measured on the budget raised, despite evolution on the ground and of the needs. In this context, if a reduction of budget as a result of better planning between humanitarian and development programmes occurs, this may be considered as failure because this would go against the rationale or 'business model' of certain actors in terms of organizational existence and competition for funds, instead of considering the positive aspect of reduced (humanitarian especially) needs. Some actors, notably NGOs and local authorities, are sometimes excluded from the joint humanitarian-development assessment and/or analysis process, so are reluctant to invest much time if an opportunity to contribute arises, since not all present actors can usefully participate. In certain contexts, donors tend to prefer to finance humanitarian action rather than development action, because it reduces their perception of the (fiduciary) risk exposure (for example by avoiding to work with Governments).

In sum, key points to enable joint analysis include:

1) Setting common objectives by identifying what decision-making processes / strategic planning documents will be the target of joint analysis;

2) Developing joint analysis frameworks in line with the objectives of the research, which will require some degree of compromise between dev/hum agencies;

3) Identify coordination platforms that can host joint analysis and actors that are able/willing to facilitate/lead the process;

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[1] To be effective, coordination needs to be unanimous across all clusters/sectors and not left to specific agencies or actors. Coordination needs to be considered in Country Plans and supported by appropriate funding since it comes on top of other, numerous and time consuming, administrative and operational tasks.

4) Invest in analysists – because profiles that are at ease with analysis across humanitarian sectors (WASH, Health, Foodsec, Education, etc.) AND that have a good understanding of key development dimensions (legal systems, economic dynamics, institutions, etc.) are extremely rare.

Particular constraints that are hampering joint needs assessments include:

* Data security, data protection and data ownership issues, including ethical concerns, security and risk concerns and those of competition.

* The perception of some actors that there are relatively high resources available in humanitarian aid can in itself represent a disincentive for collaboration ('funding competition business model') preventing sufficient investment in prevention and preparedness (such as in: 'reducing humanitarian needs versus key generating and spending budget success indicators for country directors'). Donors also have an important role to play in this respect.

* The additional transaction cost of joint approaches may be high and the process to reach results cumbersome if the parties are not really affiliated and do not see the value or sense in making their comparative advantages work for greater, more system-wide, benefits (even though current government-led multi-sector joint LHD approaches with a technical entry-point – such as the SUN Movement in the case of nutrition – do exist to orient affiliations in a same direction).

* Humanitarian Needs Assessments and analysis which are not aligned with national priorities in a larger debate in recognition of humanitarian principles and human rights.

Conclusions and Way forward

In the last session, suggestions for next steps in strengthening collaboration for joint humanitarian-development needs assessments and analysis were made as follows:

A. LESSONS LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT
- Efforts to address the 'nexus' have been ongoing for some time and there are significant lessons to be learned from the various approaches (e.g. from profiling/assessment in protracted displacement situations). For enhanced cooperation to occur, it is important that a range of field-based actors contribute. Joint humanitarian-development analysis should proactively seek and involve actors that are present on the ground and are not sufficiently represented (NGOs; local organisations and local representatives; etc.). This workshop could not benefit from sufficient feedback from the field and gain insights from the unique approaches which were employed to address the varying complexities of different locations.
- A mechanism to systematically capture experiences and lessons learned from joint humanitarian-development analysis should be established (reviewing existing *modus operandi* to avoid new mechanisms). This requires identifying who leads the humanitarian-development-peace nexus within the international community (see point C) and could take responsibility for developing/maintaining such mechanism (which could potentially expand to other aspects of the nexus beyond analysis).

B. COORDINATION OF JOINT HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS IN THE FIELD
- When feasible, national/local authorities should lead coordination between humanitarian and development actors to conduct joint analysis. Development actors

should integrate consideration of humanitarian dimensions/linkages to development in their analysis, and humanitarian actors should if possible consider development needs and challenges in their analysis, in order to better enable prevention and anticipatory planning and coordination, and they should support local authorities in doing so as well.

- When national authorities cannot be expected to coordinate, humanitarian and development actors need to define context-relevant ad-hoc coordination mechanisms that will reflect the situation on the ground and ideally involve authorities in a different capacity. This should build on existing coordination platforms, and avoid establishing additional structures. Resident Coordinators (RCs)/Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and (Humanitarian) Country Teams are well placed to define coordination mechanisms, making sure that participation is not limited to UN agencies and recognizing that most organizations work across the humanitarian development spectrum, while defining mechanisms for strategic coordination with key donors, bilateral actors, IFIs, in order to create authorizing environment/"political" space for assessment .

C. SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AT GLOBAL LEVEL

- Define appropriate incentives mechanism to encourage joint needs analysis in a humanitarian – development – peace nexus approach.
- Leadership for the humanitarian-development-peace nexus: while the Joint Steering Committee aims at strengthening the coordination between UN agencies as well as with the World Bank, there is no mechanism that includes non-UN actors, such as NGOs, civil society, academia, the private sector, donors and regional development banks. Such clarity would be required to clarify who triggers or engages in consultations with the authorities, and who should be involved to support humanitarian-development-peace nexus analysis.
- Political support: donors should demand and use joint humanitarian-development analysis to review their risk appetite and direct funding to enable exit of humanitarian actors in situations of protracted crisis earlier than currently is the case.
- Promote a multi-annual approach to addressing root causes of chronic vulnerabilities identified by joint humanitarian-development analysis.

D. JOINT ANALYSIS APPROACH

- Fit for purpose: a case by case approach based on a thorough review of what information is already available should be followed, in order to optimize data collection and avoid unnecessary massive assessment and analyses exercises.
- Assessment and analysis working groups can play a critical role to engage with the respective humanitarian and development 'analysts'.
- Neutral and competent coordinators need to be put in place for effective joint assessment-analysis processes.
- The objectives of joint humanitarian-development analysis must be carefully defined and genuinely agreed upon by the actors involved, clearly identifying the added value of expected results to all relevant stakeholders (Government, humanitarian, development and peace). Identify and define a clear, common goal that will bring, and keep, the relevant actors to the table. Objectives should be aligned if possible to national priorities.

- A common analysis framework (at country level) must be defined to ensure that the analysis results meet the decision-making requirements of both humanitarian and development actors and support the formulation of collective outcomes where relevant.
- Leverage the integrated nature of work by organizations and agencies whose work encompasses both humanitarian and development elements.

E. CAPACITIES

- Existing assessment/analysis training programmes should be reviewed to integrate the nexus approach (particularly induction and other non-specialist training)
- Country needs analysis expertise should be reinforced; these experts should ideally serve – where appropriate – both humanitarian and development purposes. Funding for this capacity should be shared between humanitarian and development donors.
- National capacity must be strengthened, even in countries where working with the national authorities is not possible at a given time. This should be possible by working at local level and/or with technical counterparts.

F. INCENTIVES AND ADDED VALUE

- Review working structures and procedures to organize dedicated cooperation between humanitarian and development actors ('boundary spanning')
- Change business model (of some concerned non-profit actors) and look into ways of institutionally defining success differently than by total budgets, and annual planning

NEXT STEPS

- *Key messages for senior management in agencies and donors*
  Based on the Workshop outcomes, a summary of the success factors for joint humanitarian-development analysis and key messages for senior management in agencies and donors will be prepared. After endorsement by the GBNA partners, the paper will be shared with the Eminent Person at the Annual Grand Bargain meeting end June 2019.
  Who: OCHA and ECHO
  When: draft to circulate by 28 May, to finalise by 14 June

- *Literature review and field interviews*
  The workshop had only limited time and resources to perform a lessons' learnt exercise. Resources (either provided by participating organisations or through donor support) should be made available to review country examples and perform interviews, providing recommendations. This should also pave the way towards the establishment or a more systematic mechanism to capture lessons learned on joint analysis.
  Who: TBD – call for volunteers *(can be an inter-agency group)*
  When: ASAP

- *Opportunities for joint humanitarian-development-peace analysis*
  All GBNA partners will seize opportunities to implement and strengthen joint humanitarian-development-peace analysis, including EU/UN/WB Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment and Post Disaster Needs Assessment, preparation of Country

Assessments for UNDAFs, as well as local or national initiatives to develop collective outcomes. Participation of humanitarian and development staff in scoping exercises and trainings will also be encouraged.

Who: All GBNA partners

When: continuous

- *Strengthening of analysis capacities*
  Possibilities will be explored to complement existing initiatives to develop and reinforce joint analysis capacities by humanitarian and development partners with a focus on coordination and technical analysis skills for joint assessment/analysis.
  Who: Core group of GBNA partners and others engaged in relevant capacity strengthening efforts.
  When: asap

Calendar for next steps

1) Circulation to workshop participants on Tuesday, 28th May
2) Feedback by workshop participants to OCHA and DG ECHO until Friday, 31st May
3) Wednesday afterwards (5th June), OCHA and DG ECHO circulate revised document to all Grand Bargain members/ Deadline for reply: Friday 14th June
4) Share ahead of Grand Bargain annual meeting (27th June)

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