

CAFOD statement for the Grand Bargain Annual Review Meeting 2023

CAFOD highlights the following three priorities for the next phase of the Grand Bargain:

1) Ensuring that humanitarian action better supports and acts on priorities raised by grassroots local networks and community-based organisations: In the most hard-to-reach parts of countries affected by crisis, it is often informal and voluntary groups and networks that have access and are delivering assistance and protection. Current approaches of most major donors and international agencies to due diligence, quality and accountability assurance represent barriers to effective partnership with and support to such groups. CAFOD supports such groups drawing on our own flexible funds, and we are working through platforms like the Start Network, DEC and others to promote wider change in the sector to scale up support to them. In Sudan, for example, CAFOD was implementing the pilot UN pooled fund grant onto community-based organisations in Khartoum building on our work with CBOs elsewhere in the country prior to the conflict. We believe these groups have a vital role to play and must not be sidelined as access opens up for the international response to scale up. With six other INGOs we are scoping opportunities to promote Due Diligence Passporting and other means to promote more proportionate, enabling approaches to due diligence. Next steps on the Grand Bargain Risk Sharing, Localisation and the Participation Revolution should make strengthened partnerships with such groups a priority. Linking to the OCHA flagship initiative on people centred coordination and Grand Bargain National Reference Groups could provide entry-points to pilot new approaches, scale up good practices and generate learning to inspire global change.

2) Catalysing accountability for quality partnership: Until now, only a handful of Grand Bargain signatories have published substantive actions to implement the outcomes from the Caucus on the Role of Intermediaries. All signatories should do so, and donors should align their efforts to hold both UN agencies and INGOs accountable. Key elements include coverage of overheads costs consistent with good practices in the IASC Overheads and Localisation Guidance; cascading of quality funding; local actors in leadership or co-leadership roles within programmes and consortia; and systematic three-way reflection on partnership quality between donors, intermediaries and local actors. At the country level, all Humanitarian Country Teams and Clusters should develop clear Localisation Roadmaps with measurable, monitorable objectives and benchmarks to track change and promote accountability.

3) Unlocking progress at the country level: As long as localisation remains confined to policy rhetoric at the global level, and not action at the country level, we will fail to realise our commitments on empowering local actors. To unlock progress, each donor should commit to support and help convene a country-level dialogue on localisation in at least one context during the first two years of Grand Bargain 3.0. In doing so, they should loop in other donors in the country donor coordination group, centre the leadership of the country-level local NGO network, and explore scope to link to the UN-led coordination processes. The added-value of these country level processes is that they can think creatively and identify solutions beyond the parameters of the UN-led/dominated process, which can then be brought back into the HCT and clusters.