

Abstract

In advance of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, consultations are being conducted in Ireland with the view of ensuring that Ireland's approach to humanitarian action is adequately prepared to meet future challenges. Stakeholders in the public sector were canvassed for their views on a range of pertinent topics in this regard by means of a survey. A considerable number of issues arose that the stakeholders considered ought to be further addressed, ranging from macro-level proposals relating, for example, to the financing of humanitarian action to more micro-level proposals designed to harness the capacities of disaster-affected communities and governments. The results of this consultation will be considered together with those from other stakeholders, including humanitarian NGOs, the private sector, diaspora, and academia, in developing a new agenda for Ireland's policy on humanitarian action.

Introduction

The Irish humanitarian community is using the opportunity of the World Humanitarian Summit¹ to re-affirm its national commitment to principled humanitarian action and to articulate a new humanitarian agenda to better respond to current and future humanitarian need. The consultation process, which involves four phases,² brings together the breadth and diversity of opinion within the different humanitarian groups of actors in Ireland that are engaged in humanitarian action. These groups include the public sector (primarily, the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Environment); the private sector (private companies involved in humanitarian action); the diaspora of disaster-affected countries living in Ireland; humanitarian NGOs and other agencies involved in the sector; and academia. In addition to the national consultation, a series of global, regional and online consultations are ongoing.

All of the consultations address four broad thematic areas.³ The first theme concerns *humanitarian effectiveness*. Improving the effectiveness of its work has long been a concern to the humanitarian community and while progress has been made in professionalising the sector and enhancing accountability, partnership and humanitarian financing, further work remains to be done.⁴ The second theme concerns the *reduction of vulnerability and the management of risk*. The importance of this theme becomes clear when the challenges posed by global trends such as unplanned urbanisation, demographic trends and environmental changes to lives and livelihoods are considered.⁵ The third theme relates to *transformation of the humanitarian sector through*

¹ The WHS is an initiative announced by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2014 to build a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system by bringing all key stakeholders together to share best practices and find innovative ways to make humanitarian action more effective. A three year consultation process will lead up to the summit itself, which is scheduled to take place in Istanbul in May 2016. The process is being managed globally by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

² **Phase 1** (September - December 2014): Review its current status and formulate positions on key humanitarian issues post 2016. Each group will be supported to present its position on issues related to the four thematic areas and select representatives for each area in Phase 2.

Phase 2 (January - April 2015): A thematic group (with representatives from each of the five stakeholder groups) will be established for each of the WHS's themes. The output will be a position paper on each thematic area.

Phase 3 (June 2015): Ireland will host its own humanitarian summit to share information from the previous two phases and discuss the submission of Ireland's contribution to the WHS in July 2015. In the lead up to this summit there will be a process for agreeing and disseminating the final documents. This summit will target members of all of the stakeholder groups and key actors relevant to the WHS from outside of Ireland.

Phase 4 – leading to the WHS (phase 4)

³ These four themes were first articulated by UN OCHA as part of the WHS - see www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/file/437077/download/475965

⁴ Ibid, 1-2.

⁵ Ibid, 2.

innovation. Innovation is considered to include new technologies and partners together with new products and services to help better address rising humanitarian need.⁶ The fourth theme concerns *servicing the needs of people in conflict*.

The Irish consultative process is supported by the Irish Government. The process is being managed by UCD's Centre for Humanitarian Action and guided by a Steering Committee that comprises representation from all the aforementioned humanitarian groupings. The Irish consultative process will culminate in an Irish Humanitarian Summit in June 2015. As part of phase I of the Irish consultation process, representatives from the public sector in Ireland were consulted and their views concerning the four broad thematic areas were gathered, documented and analysed. This paper presents the results of these consultations.

Background and rationale

A Department of State is a department or ministry of the Government of Ireland. There are currently sixteen individual departments of state, each of which is headed by a Minister of the Government who is appointed by the President on the nomination of the Taoiseach and approved by Dáil Éireann.

The Minister of the Government has the power to suggest and propose new or amended legislation to the Government relating to matters that arise in his or her own department. Ministers are also entitled to make 'statutory instruments' also known as delegated or secondary legislation. Statutory instruments allow the minister to give effect to or implement legislation without the need to have every detail passed by the Oireachtas. The Oireachtas consists of the Office of the President of Ireland together with Dáil Éireann (Lower House) and Seanad Éireann (Upper House).

Of the sixteen Departments of State, most have some involvement in humanitarian action. However, the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade (in particular Irish Aid, Ireland's overseas development programme), Defence, Justice and Equality, Finance, Health, Environment, and Agriculture, Food and the Marine have a more direct role than other departments.

Research Design

The research design was predominantly qualitative and was based on a survey design, using a self-complete semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 1), and a focus group discussion. A questionnaire was chosen to facilitate comparison across the five Irish humanitarian groups and ultimately, comparison across the countries participating in the global WHS process. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the guidance questions developed by UN OCHA as part of their four thematic papers.⁷ The questionnaire thus contained questions relating to the humanitarian system as a whole and did not explicitly address particular sectors. The questionnaire was drafted and shared with representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade who tested it for accuracy and relevance. Slight modifications were made before the questionnaire was finalised and circulated. The researchers ultimately received one completed questionnaire, which was drafted by representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and incorporated the opinions from a number of other public sector bodies.⁸

⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁷ A list of 31 questions adapted from those provided by OCHA as a guide to the four thematic areas: Humanitarian Effectiveness (11); Reducing Vulnerability and Managing Risk (13); Transformation through Innovation (5); and Serving the Needs of People in Conflict (3)

⁸ A number of public sector bodies were consulted and participated to varying degrees in the research, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Department of Defence; the Defence Forces; the Department of Justice and Equality; the Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture; the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government; and An Garda Síochána (Ireland's police service).

Data analysis involved several steps. Firstly, responses were summarised to make appropriate for coding. Next, questions were reviewed and narrowly coded using *NVivo* software package for qualitative analysis. Narrow codes were then consolidated to broad thematic codes to develop a master coding frame, which was then used to code all responses. Broad codes were then reviewed and sub-codes were developed. After the codes were cleaned, the questions were then coded using a common coding frame. The coding of questions can be found in Appendix 2. Finally, the responses were analysed.

A focus group discussion was also held, which served to validate preliminary findings and gather further data. The focus group discussion findings are presented alongside the findings from the questionnaire throughout the next section.

Data Presentation and Findings

This section presents the data collected from the survey. The data was coded on the basis of a coding frame consisting of the three broad codes and sub-codes identified from the data. The broad codes relate to the actors relevant to humanitarian action, the substantive issues relating to the humanitarian system and the methods whereby the respondents foresee the substantive issues being addressed. Secondary and tertiary codes were also developed. The coding frame with secondary codes is presented in Table 1, the frame with broad codes in appendix 2.

Table 1: Coding frame

Broad codes	Sub-codes
Actors	International
	National
	Local
	Other
Issues	Frameworks
	Knowledge
	Risk
	Money
	Relations
Methods	Establish
	Implement
	Increase or Decrease
	Reform
	Not mentioned

The findings address the four thematic areas identified by the World Humanitarian Summit Steering Committee:

- humanitarian effectiveness
- reducing vulnerability and managing risk
- transformation through innovation and
- serving the needs of the people in conflict

Theme 1: Humanitarian Effectiveness

Issues relating to the thematic area of humanitarian effectiveness were assessed in accordance with six sub thematic areas:

- working with and accountability to affected people and governments;
- building upon local and national responses to emergencies;
- models for engagement in different contexts;
- mechanisms to support better inter-operability among actors engaged in humanitarian action;
- humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence; and
- humanitarian financing

Working with and accountability to affected groups and governments

The respondents to the questionnaire mentioned that Ireland directs its assistance to where needs are greatest, including to forgotten and underfunded emergencies. The respondents emphasised the importance of the humanitarian principles as well as the relevant legal frameworks. Irish Aid stated in particular that it will contribute to ensuring effectiveness by promoting consultation, contextual analysis, evidence-based interventions and the development of the capacity of local actors. This reflected an assertion made by one of the participants in the validation meeting that ‘government leadership and sovereignty’ is essential in disaster-affected countries. There was general consensus from both the survey responses and the validation meeting that humanitarian assistance must be localised, build resilience and prioritise the most vulnerable.

Possibly reflecting their roles within the public sector of a donor country, the respondents also emphasised the importance of the development and promotion of standards in ensuring that the needs of different stakeholder groups within affected communities are adequately accounted for. They emphasised the importance of targeted funding and appraisal of implementing partner proposals as a means of ensuring that all stakeholders are meaningfully included in needs assessments and that data is disaggregated by gender, age and diversity. As a donor government, implementing partners are requested to involve stakeholders in programme management and to ensure feedback mechanisms are in place. They also stated that a context-specific approach be undertaken, particularly in fragile contexts, including through the use of technology. The Department of Defence also emphasised the importance of the inclusion of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 concerning Women, Peace and Security in the preparation of Crisis Management Concepts and Operations Plans. The focus group participants also emphasised the importance of empowering women and youth in post-conflict settings in order to avoid relapses. However, the challenges of ensuring accountability towards local people in missions with a military mandate in which Ireland might be participating were also highlighted.

Building upon local and national responses to emergencies

The respondents registered a strong commitment to ensuring that local actors and affected communities are 'empowered and supported to better prepare for and respond to disasters.' This should involve strengthening local authorities, local NGOs, and communities. This could be achieved through systems strengthening and the regional pre-positioning of supplies. The respondents advocated that each policy community be clear concerning how their specific background and skills can contribute to the resilience approach. For donors like Ireland this would involve ensuring DRR is firmly embedded in development programmes and investments. The respondents emphasised how they use local infrastructure and markets where possible in programmes and policies, thereby promoting south-south partnerships and enhanced access to information. The respondents also stated that local actors and communities should be involved in needs and vulnerability assessments and in the design of preparedness, mitigation and response programmes.

Models for engagement in different contexts

In response to the question concerning how the governance of humanitarian action ought to better take into account the specific context of emergencies, including the type of emergency and the capacity and enabling environment of the host government, the respondents recognised that different contexts demand different consideration of guidelines, standards and codes of conduct, particularly in conflict scenarios in which guidelines for civil-military coordination assume importance. Related to this is the respondents' assertion that local and regional approaches over global approaches to this issue are to be preferred. In humanitarian situations where a functioning government exists, the minimum standards and legal frameworks provided by the host state should take precedence. Mention was made in this regard of Ireland's approach to disaster management whereby the lead Government Department for any particular emergency is determined by the nature of the emergency. On the other hand, where a government is not functioning, unable or unwilling, guidelines and standards must reflect humanitarian principles. The particular needs of different stakeholders (women, men, boys, girls, disabled, elderly, etc.) ought to also be reflected in guidelines, standards and codes of conduct.

Mechanisms to support better inter-operability among actors engaged in humanitarian action

In terms of the improvement of the collaboration and coordination between the different humanitarian actors, the survey respondents emphasised that they support the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the UN's Transformative Agenda. In terms of the Cluster system, the respondents emphasised the involvement of local actors, including supporting the engagement of host government and local authorities. Predictable leadership and accountability were also considered essential. The respondents also indicated that donors will support the implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard together based on comparative advantage, interest and capacity. The importance of the EU Comprehensive Approach was also emphasised by the respondents. Domestically, the respondents indicated that improved communication of the capabilities of the Defence Forces to respond to various emergencies is vital, in particular with local authorities and other domestic actors. The focus group participants also mentioned the need to appropriately harness the diaspora community in humanitarian assistance and enhance relationships between INGOs and the private sector. The communication and coordination problems that beset the initial emergency phase were also recognised by the participants.

The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence

In relation to how the humanitarian principles can make humanitarian action more effective, the respondents recommended the incorporation of an additional principle concerning accountability to beneficiaries as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. The respondents also emphasised the non-politicisation of aid and advocacy, and stressed the importance of raising awareness of the principles with non-traditional actors. The respondents also noted the need for ‘strengthened and systematic monitoring’ of breaches of the humanitarian principles as well as ensuring that reporting is standardised. The importance of respect for international humanitarian law was also emphasised.

In terms of raising awareness of the meaning of the principles within the international humanitarian system and with other actors, the respondents provided a number of suggestions. One emphasised the importance of multilateral dialogues as key opportunities for raising awareness of the principles – the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid was mentioned as a key success in this regard. The respondents also emphasised the importance of beneficiary accountability through empowering beneficiaries, including women and minority groups, and providing incentives within reporting mechanisms as vital in raising awareness of the humanitarian principles outside of the humanitarian system itself.

Humanitarian financing

In response to the question concerning how humanitarian financing can incentivise changes in humanitarian action to make it more effective, the respondents emphasised the need for donor governments to link financing with results achieved and beneficiary accountability. The respondents also stated that pooled funding and consortia incentivise donors and implementing partners.

The respondents also addressed the role of the private sector within the humanitarian system and called for greater incentives for the humanitarian system to link with longer-term development financing. Incremental increases in specific targeted interventions in areas ranging from DRR through preparedness and resilience-building, GBV prevention and response, and national leadership was also emphasised as a means of enhancing effectiveness provided the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles were respected.

Overall, the respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that humanitarian financing is undertaken in a manner that is coherent with other global processes, in particular in the context of the revision of the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the importance of localising humanitarian response through ‘increasingly agile and adaptable financing mechanisms’ was emphasised. In this regard the respondents stated their support for pooled-funding mechanisms that provide direct funding to local civil society.

With regard to how the humanitarian budget can be safeguarded as part of the overall development budget, the respondents stated their support for safeguarding the humanitarian budget both in Ireland and abroad through multilateral fora. They also emphasised the importance of engaging with non-traditional donors and the private sector in relation to humanitarian financing more widely. The respondents also indicated that the evidence-based approach should be further established concerning the cost effectiveness of particular aspects of humanitarian action, for example, the benefits of preparedness over response or the impact on development gains of humanitarian crises.

Information Management and Information Sharing

The importance of ‘sound and rigorous needs assessment’ was emphasised by the respondents in response to the question concerning how data can be used efficiently for actors to respond to people’s needs. While many tools and systems exist and are used by the respondents, in particular those provided by the EU and UN, further improvements can be made. These can be achieved through ‘the use of innovative technology, including for real-time monitoring and analysis and through partnerships, particularly with the private sector for expertise, training and resources.’ Existing national information systems could also be better utilised according to the respondents. ‘Emergency assessments and analyses that are sector- and context specific and that use standardised tools and participatory methodologies’ provide the basis for evidence-based decision-making. ‘Systematic and periodic’ evaluations of humanitarian action through real time and impact evaluations were considered important for lesson learning.

Summary: Theme 1

As Table 2 shows, the actors mentioned most frequently within the responses under the theme of ‘humanitarian effectiveness’ are other actors followed by international and local actors. In terms of topics mentioned by the respondents, relations among actors and knowledge are mentioned most frequently followed by frameworks such as legal systems and principles.

Table 2: Broad issues addressed under Theme 1

		Question No.										Total
		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2	2	2	1.8	1.9	1.10	
actors	international	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	10
	national	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
	local	2	2	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	11
	other	3	2	3	2	4	4	4	0	5	1	28
issues	frameworks	3	3	0	2	2	4	3	0	1	0	18
	knowledge	1	4	3	3	0	2	3	1	1	5	23
	risk	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	money	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	4	6	0	14
	relations	3	3	4	1	3	2	1	4	2	0	23
methods	establish	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
	implement	1	3	3	2	0	2	3	0	1	1	16
	increase or decrease	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	6
	reform	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	14
	not mentioned	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2

Theme 2: Reducing vulnerability and managing risk

The theme of reducing vulnerability and managing risk was explored in relation to six sub thematic areas. These are:

- understanding risk, vulnerability and future threats
- managing recurrent and predictable shocks
- managing future uncertainties and unprecedented shocks
- preparedness for resilience in conflict
- rising risk in urban areas and
- preparedness and risk financing

Understanding risk, vulnerability and future threats

The survey respondents stated that the major threats and challenges that face humanitarian preparedness and response include conflict, climate change, urban disasters, technological disasters and cyber emergencies, health emergencies and financial shocks. In the case of conflict, the main challenge posed to humanitarian actors is responding to increasingly complex and protracted crises that require sustained humanitarian presence, specific expertise for remote access or negotiated access, and long term resourcing that bridges humanitarian and development approaches. Climate change leads to a greater threat from natural disasters and increasing urbanisation leads to disasters with huge consequences. Planning with major infrastructural and socio-political considerations is required in order to counteract this. Nuclear accidents are increasing in frequency, and health emergencies are becoming more complex (e.g. the recent Ebola outbreak); these emergencies are putting a strain on available funding.

On the issue of the current level of understanding of risk and vulnerability and how it can be improved, the respondents asserted that distinguishing unpredictable risks from recurrent stresses and predictable crises is highly important. This can be achieved, according to the respondents, 'through prioritisation of contextual analysis of risk and vulnerability, which is linked to targeting by implementing partners.' It was also asserted that 'analyses should be underpinned by understanding how relief links with development and sustainable approaches to resilience.' The respondents also noted how the use of innovative spatial and geo-statistical tools can enhance risk and vulnerability analysis. They also asserted that the EU's INFORM initiative can assist with the development of international standards in the area of predictive modelling for risk management and resilience prioritisation.

Managing recurrent and predictable shocks

On the issue of further developing the resilience of communities to mitigate and manage risk and reduce the humanitarian need, the respondents stated the importance of linking humanitarian and development activities. Ireland does so by carrying out the following initiatives: good practice models in selected partner countries; dedicated budget and partnership funding; and partnerships and policy engagement. It uses a number of programmes to carry out these initiatives such as *Country Strategic Planning* (used in key partner countries to reduce vulnerabilities), Irish Aid's humanitarian budget (used to fund the UN, the Red Cross/Crescent and NGO programmes) and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 for disaster reduction efforts. In response to the question

concerning how the gap between early warning and response can be closed, the respondents called for more effective communication with vulnerable populations for early warning and early action. They also referred to Ireland's efforts in pre-positioning of funding and stocks that can be quickly deployed at the onset of disaster. Ireland also has a dedicated group of individuals that are prepared to deploy at short notice in areas including logistics, telecommunications, sanitation and health. Other measures suggested by the respondents that help to close the gap between early warning and response include supporting political empowerment and representation around responding to early warnings, the use of technology, and the capacity development of institutions and local NGOs, CBOs and regional organisations.

On the issue of breaking down the silos between humanitarian and development assistance, the survey respondents argued that Ireland recognises the importance of transitioning from relief to development. Prioritising the breakdown of these silos has offered the mainstream humanitarian and disaster risk reduction (DRR) communities an opportunity to work across silos by sharing an analytical approach with development and climate change stakeholders. The government of Ireland has also developed funding mechanisms that facilitate access to funding by implementing partners and that are flexible according to contextual analysis and need, and which are predictable for long-term investments in preparedness and resilience. In this vein, Ireland supports reform of global aid architecture as the current system supports a more compartmentalised approach. Ireland also supports the EU effort of linking its humanitarian and development branches through the Resilience Communication and Action Plan by developing tools to roll this approach at national level, notably through the Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework. The need to erode silos was also highlighted during the validation meeting.

Managing future uncertainties and unprecedented shocks

In response to the question concerning how Ireland ought to help at risk countries deal with recurrent shocks, the respondents pointed to a range of approaches in which Ireland is engaged as a donor.

- Collaboration with countries with which Ireland has ongoing partnerships;
- Provision of flexible financing;
- Developing the capacity of local NGOs and local authorities;
- Technical support, which includes the deployment of highly skilled personnel through the Rapid Response Initiative and CSP missions;
- Climate change adaptation support to global, regional and country initiatives;
- Social protection programming, particularly cash transfers;
- Disaster risk reduction in key partner countries;
- Resilience interventions relating to natural resources management, energy efficiency, food security, and livelihoods;
- Analysis and dissemination of best practice;
- Systems-building to enhance national partner government's institutional capacity
- Women, Peace and Security initiatives in national political dialogue and strengthening participation;
- Political and diplomatic engagement in fragility contexts, including through the UN and EU;
- Peacekeeping to support international peace and security; and the
- Rapid Response Initiative.

Preparedness for resilience in conflict

The respondents indicated that countries could be better prepared for and manage conflict induced displacement if they are more context-sensitive and further develop early warning systems. Most conflict prone countries lack the capacity to ensure preparedness and as such need support. The respondents stated that they carry out this support role by developing partner countries' early warning systems and prepositioning supplies. In this endeavour, all donor countries should see it necessary to engage in division of labour and ensure that equipment, food and non-food items are positioned regionally before crisis occurs. Ireland also supports the development of partner countries' displacement preparedness and management initiatives. Particularly encouraged was the participation of minority and vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly and the disabled.

Rising risk in urban areas

The respondents advocated that municipalities and civil society could be better supported to address the rising risk of humanitarian need in urban areas if their capacity development is enhanced. It could be done through the south to south cooperation and experience sharing (inter-city consultations), research and technology, and investment in early warning systems. In addition, initiatives such as infrastructural development, adaptation and retro-fitting and quality vulnerability analyses, hazard mapping and safe shelter awareness were also mentioned. Participation of urban populations through various structures in preparedness planning can ensure more successful communication of early warning as well as localise contingency plans. Another key component in preparedness considered by the respondents was municipal budgeting for risk prevention and response as well as decentralised decision-making.

Preparedness and risk financing

The respondents stated that changes are needed to the current financing mechanisms to enhance preparedness and risk management. Ireland in this regard supports practical changes in long term financing mechanisms in the face of increasing and unprecedented humanitarian need. An example of such a shift in funding mechanisms is the incorporation of an emergency facility in the Global Fund for AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis global funds. The respondents mentioned that Ireland supports a flexible financing approach to link development with relief and recovery and to target DRR and resilience. The respondents also highlighted that Ireland advocates that as part of the WHS process, it supports financing for innovation and methodologies that facilitate anticipatory responses. During the validation meeting, participants also noted that disaster-affected governments ought to be further encouraged to put a percentage, e.g. 10%, of their emergency budgets towards disaster risk reduction interventions.

Summary: Theme 2

As Table 3 shows, the actors mentioned most frequently within the responses under the theme of 'reducing vulnerability and managing risk' are local actors. In terms of topics mentioned by the respondents, risk and knowledge are mentioned most frequently.

Table 3: Broad issues addressed under Theme 2

		Question No.											Total
		2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	
actors	international	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	national	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	5
	local	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	5
	other	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	1	1	0	3	11
issues	frameworks	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	knowledge	0	3	1	3	0	1	4	3	2	1	1	19
	risk	0	3	0	5	2	1	4	3	1	3	2	24
	money	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	4	8
	relations	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	2	2	2	0	11
methods	establish	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	implement	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	1	2	9
	increase or decrease	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
	reform	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
	not mentioned	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3

Theme 3: Transformation through innovation

In response to the question concerning why innovation is important and necessary in the humanitarian sector, the respondents asserted that innovation is important as it can lead to the introduction of new technologies that are capable of making humanitarian action more effective. Examples of such innovation include the use of cash transfers via mobile phone technology and for better quality data collection and management. Innovation enhances efficiency and can reduce costs. In harnessing the potential of innovation it was considered important to consult adequately with affected populations. Innovation should also be enhanced through engagement with the private sector's expertise, resources and training both in the affected nation and internationally.

In terms of how various actors ought to organise to support innovation to go to scale, the respondents stated that they would support initiatives that promote innovation such as targeted funding to bring innovative approaches to scale in a sustainable manner. The promotion of knowledge sharing at the national and regional levels was also encouraged. In order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency it was stressed by the respondents that it is important to ensure an adequate evidence base. Partnerships at the national and international level with a range of actors, including with the private sector, academia and host governments were also considered crucial. In

relation to the latter category of actors it was stressed that innovative approaches ought to be incorporated into national planning where appropriate.

Concerning the issue of how affected communities can be assisted in managing disaster risk and build their resilience, the respondents stated that communities should be involved with needs assessment and analysis as well as programme design, implementation and monitoring, together with the various components of the humanitarian community. The respondents stressed the importance of this approach in particular in relation to disaster risk reduction. The respondents also stressed that capacity development is a prerequisite of community participation. Contingency planning needs to become routine and ought to include pre-positioning and budgetary planning. The importance of innovation and research was also highlighted as was the role of regional bodies for cross-border partnerships and information exchange.

Summary: Theme 3

As Table 4 shows, the actors mentioned most frequently within the responses under the theme of ‘transformation through innovation’ are local actors. In terms of topics mentioned by the respondents, knowledge and relations among actors are mentioned most frequently.

Table 4: Summary of responses under Theme 3

		Question No.			Total
		3.1	3.2	3.3	
actors	international	0	0	0	0
	national	0	2	0	2
	local	2	0	5	7
	other	1	1	2	4
issues	frameworks	0	0	0	0
	knowledge	4	3	4	11
	risk	1	0	3	4
	money	1	1	1	3
	relations	2	2	4	8
methods	establish	0	0	0	0
	implement	0	1	2	3
	increase or decrease	1	1	0	2
	reform	0	1	0	1
	not mentioned	0	1	1	2

Theme 4: Serving the needs of people in conflict

The respondents were asked what the particular needs of people affected by conflicts are. They responded that their needs were dependent on the nature of the conflict in question. Where there is displacement, needs relating to housing and household possessions become important.

Protection and security needs also loom large in conflicts, particularly those of women, children, the elderly, the disabled and minorities. The particular security and protection needs of humanitarian workers striving to access affected areas were also mentioned. The respondents highlighted that the responsibility to ensure security rests primarily with the government in the affected country.

In terms of the principles and professional standards that ought to guide humanitarian action in conflict, the respondents referred to how Ireland’s humanitarian policy is in aligned with a range of policies that detail humanitarian principles and standards. These include the fundamental humanitarian principles, the Good Humanitarian Donorship approach, the relevant international law instruments, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and relevant UN Security Council resolutions such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The respondents also referred to the professional standards and guidance to which Ireland’s implementing partners adhere, including the OCHA Guidelines on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination and the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets, the IASC Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence, the Core Humanitarian Standard and the Sphere standards.

In response to the question concerning how humanitarian aid ought to be delivered in conflict settings in order to ensure those most in need are served, the respondents highlighted the importance of adhering to and being perceived as adhering to the fundamental humanitarian principles and the principle of ‘do no harm’. Also highlighted was the importance of needs analyses that are conducted with regard to the context and that benefit from consultation with, participation of, and accountability to beneficiaries, together with the design and implementation of interventions that ensure the safety of humanitarian workers. The respondents also stated their support for the EU Comprehensive Approach and the need to deploy a range of tools and approaches, including communication with the public, the military and other actors as well as IHL training. The importance of regional approaches and partnerships was also mentioned by the respondents. A participant in the validation meeting raised the question as to how the sub-optimal overcrowding of NGOs in conflict settings such as in Syria can be addressed. Another participant highlighted the distinct pattern of conflict relapse and the need to invest pre-emptively in post-conflict settings in order to reduce the likelihood of conflict recurring and humanitarian assistance being required.

Summary: Theme 4

As Table 4 shows, local and international actors are the stakeholders mentioned most frequently within the responses under the theme of ‘serving the needs of people in conflict’. In terms of topics mentioned by the respondents, frameworks are mentioned much more frequently than other topics. The primary proposal for change in the humanitarian system under this theme is to implement existing systems better.

Table 5: Summary of responses under Theme 4

		Question No.			Total
		4.1	4.2	4.3	
actors	international	0	1	2	3
	national	0	0	0	0
	local	3	0	0	3
	other	0	0	2	2

issues	frameworks	0	6	3	9
	knowledge	0	0	1	1
	risk	0	0	0	0
	money	0	1	0	1
	relations	0	0	1	1
methods	establish	0	0	0	0
	implement	0	1	4	5
	increase or decrease	0	0	0	0
	reform	0	0	0	0
	not mentioned	0	0	0	0

Conclusion

This paper presents the findings from Phase I consultations with the public sector in Ireland. Table 6 provides an overview of the frequency with which issues were referenced by respondents and the interaction of references to these issues.

Table 6: Overview of frequency and interaction of references to broad themes

		actors				issues					methods					total relational references	average
		international	national	local	other	frameworks	knowledge	risk	money	relations	establish	implement	increase or decrease	reform	not mentioned		
actors	international		3	5	7	4	6	3	3	10	2	7	2	3	1	56	4.3
	national	3		4	4	1	6	4	0	8	0	4	2	2	1	39	3.0
	local	5	4		5	2	11	9	3	15	0	6	1	3	2	66	5.1
	other	7	4	5		12	14	6	10	18	1	15	3	7	1	103	7.9
issues	frameworks	4	1	2	12		7	0	3	2	1	12	1	2	0	47	3.6
	knowledge	6	6	11	14	7		13	4	10	4	14	5	7	4	105	8.1
	risk	3	4	9	6	0	13		6	8	2	5	4	3	3	66	5.1
	money	3	0	3	10	3	4	6		9	0	4	4	6	0	52	4.0
	relations	10	8	15	18	2	10	8	9		1	11	5	12	4	113	8.7
methods	establish	2	0	0	1	1	4	2	0	1		2	1	0	1	15	1.2
	implement	7	4	6	15	12	14	5	4	11	2		1	3	0	84	6.5
	increase or decrease	2	2	1	3	1	5	4	4	5	1	1		5	0	34	2.6
	reform	3	2	3	7	2	7	3	6	12	0	3	5		0	53	4.1
	not mentioned	1	1	2	1	0	4	3	0	4	1	0	0	0		17	1.3
total individual references		15	13	26	44	29	54	31	26	44	5	33	13	19	7		
average		5	4	7	11	5	11	7	6	11	1	8	3	5	2		

As can be seen in Table 6 the most commonly referenced issues mentioned by the NGO respondents are as follows:

- Knowledge (54)
- Relations (44)
- Other actors (44)
- Implement (33)

The greatest number of interactions occurs between the following issues:

- Relations and other actors (18)

- Implement and other actors (15)
- Relations and local actors (15)

Based on the analysis conducted in the paper a number of issues have been identified from the responses that can be further addressed in Phase 2 of the Irish consultative process ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit. The proposals generally reflect the role of the participants as either a donor to humanitarian action or a contributor to peacekeeping missions. Some of the proposals are addressed to the Irish humanitarian sector while others are addressed to the global humanitarian system as a whole.

A number of ideas concerning how the needs of people living in conflict affected environments can best be served and how the deteriorating humanitarian environment in conflict situations can be addressed were raised by the public sector participants. These include the following:

- Further awareness-raising ought to be conducted concerning the principles and their implementation – programming and reporting should address the principles. Incentives should be provided for raising awareness concerning the principles among other actors;
- Funding should be provided to local civil society actors in a more systematic manner;
- Gender-based violence prevention and response ought to be further promoted;
- Pre-positioning of supplies (shelter items, food, non-food items etc.) can enhance preparedness;
- Mapping of agency presence can support preparedness for conflict-related crises;
- Preparedness can also benefit from prior agreement on land issues;
- The establishment of safe zones can better address conflict-induced displacement;
- Support for national and regional early warning systems for conflict ought to be promoted;

Concerning the tackling of recurrent and protracted crises in a coherent way and the provision for disaster risk reduction and resilience initiatives, the participants provided the following suggestions:

- It should be ensured that funding is provided in a flexible manner based on the context;
- Political empowerment and representation around responding to early warnings, the use of technology, and the capacity development of institutions and local NGOs, CBOs and regional organisations ought to be promoted;
- Effective participation of populations, especially urban populations, in preparedness planning should be promoted.

Localising humanitarian response and making people the prime agents of response also featured as a general theme and several proposals were provided by the participants:

- Humanitarian response and risk reduction over the longer term can be localised through agile and adaptable financing mechanisms;
- Resourcing of local actors, in particular in relation to protracted emergency settings, ought to be increased;
- Coordination mechanisms ought to appropriately reflect the capacity of the local government;
- There is a need for further promotion of south-south collaboration and experience sharing of municipalities and civil society;
- Further support for research and innovation is required, including investment in innovative early warning systems, infrastructure development, adaptation and retro-fitting;
- Effective participation of populations, in particular urban populations, ought to be promoted in risk assessment, hazard mapping, safe shelter awareness and preparedness planning.

In relation to the key issue concerning the emergence of a new generation of disasters as well as innovation and change in the humanitarian system, the following issues can be identified:

- There is an opportunity to streamline global financial mechanisms through pooled funding and consortia;
- There is a need for more predictable leadership within the global humanitarian system;
- Budgets should address longer-term resilience funding gaps;
- It is important to improve digital data collection and standardisation of data gathering to enhance needs assessments and other assessments (collaboration with ICT sector is required);
- Fora for scaling up innovation in humanitarian action ought to be established that allow for cooperation among competitive actors (e.g. NGOs, private sector companies);
- There is a need to link humanitarian/DRR financing with longer-term development financing;
- The evidence base for the cost effectiveness of particular aspects of humanitarian action (DRR over response; the relevance of humanitarian action to development gains) ought to be developed;
- Urban risk ought to be addressed through further support to local municipalities and civil society;
- Methodologies for anticipatory responses ought to be further developed;
- Coordination and division of labour of humanitarian actors according to comparative advantage and national/thematic interest ought to be promoted.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

WHS Theme 1: Humanitarian Effectiveness

Working with and accountability to affected people and governments:

- 1.1 What changes are required to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to make it more accountable to people and governments in need?
- 1.2 How can humanitarian action contribute to national priorities while bearing in mind that in some contexts, these may not directly match with the needs or expectations that affected people have and might convey to international humanitarian actors?

Building upon local and national responses to emergencies:

- 1.3 How can local actors and affected communities themselves be better assisted in responding to the disaster (as opposed to relying on external/international humanitarian aid)?

Models for engagement in different contexts:

- 1.4 Many guidelines, standards, and codes of conduct exist for actors in the international humanitarian system. Should guidelines and standards better take into account the specific context of emergencies including type of emergency and the capacity and enabling environment of the host government?

Mechanisms to support better inter-operability among actors engaged in humanitarian action:

- 1.5 How can we incentivise different actors to engage in complementary actions?
- 1.6 How can each group leverage and complement the capacities of others to meet the needs of affected people in more coordinated and coherent ways, while making sure humanitarian assistance is best meeting the needs of people?

The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence:

- 1.7 How can we operationalise the humanitarian principles to make humanitarian action more effective in different contexts?
- 1.8 How might awareness of the meaning of these principles be raised both within the international humanitarian system and with other actors?

Humanitarian financing:

- 1.9 How can humanitarian financing mechanisms assist in making humanitarian action more effective?
- 1.10 How can we safeguard the humanitarian budget as part of the overall development budget?

- 1.11 How can the humanitarian community make better use of organizing data so that it can be used efficiently for actors to respond to people's needs?

WHS Theme 2: Reducing Vulnerability and Managing Risk

Understanding risk, vulnerability and future threats:

- 2.1 What are the major threats and challenges faced in the future and what are the implications of this for humanitarian preparedness and response?
- 2.2 How can we improve the understanding and anticipation of the changing nature of risk and vulnerability?

Managing recurrent and predictable shocks:

- 2.3 How can countries and communities better manage predictable and recurrent shocks by themselves?
- 2.4 How can we strengthen our resilience programming to help mitigate risks and tackle the underlying causes of poverty?
- 2.5 How can the gap between early warning and response be closed?
- 2.6 How can the silos between humanitarian and development assistance be broken down?

Managing future uncertainties and unprecedented shocks:

- 2.7 What role do you play in helping at risk countries deal with recurrent shocks?
- 2.8 What behavioural and investment changes are needed by governments, donors and agencies?

Preparedness for resilience in conflict:

- 2.9 How can countries more effectively be prepared for and manage conflict-induced displacement?
- 2.10 How can people better cope and adapt to the recurrent shocks faced in protracted, conflict-affected settings?

Rising risk in urban areas:

- 2.11 How can municipalities and civil society be better supported to address the rising risk of humanitarian need in urban areas?

Preparedness and risk financing:

- 2.12 What changes to current financing mechanisms are required to enhance preparedness and risk management? How can there be greater links with climate change adaptation finance?

WHS Theme 3: Transformation through Innovation

- 3.1 Why is innovation important and necessary for the humanitarian sector?
- 3.2 What are the priority areas for innovation?

- 3.3 How should various actors organize to support innovation to go to scale?
- 3.4 What ethical standards and principles are needed for humanitarian innovation?
- 3.5 How can the humanitarian community assist affected communities to create new ways of managing disaster risk and building their resilience?

WHS Theme 4: Serving the Needs of People in Conflict

- 4.1 What are the particular needs of people affected by conflicts?
- 4.2 What principles and professional standards must guide humanitarian action in conflict?
- 4.3 How should humanitarian aid be delivered in conflict settings in order to ensure those most in need are served?

Appendix 2: Coding of questions and coding key

			Actors				Issues						Methods					
Theme	Subtheme	Question	International	National	Local	Other	Frameworks	Knowledge	Challenges	Risk	Money	Relations	Establish	Implement	Increase /decrease	Reform	Not mentioned	
1. Effectiveness	1.1	1.1																
		1.2																
	1.2	1.3																
		1.4																
	1.4	1.5																
		1.6																
	1.5	1.7																
		1.8																
	1.6	1.9																
		1.10																
	1.7	1.1																
2. Reducing Vulnerability and Managing Risk	2.1	2.1																
		2.2																
	2.2	2.3																
		2.4																
		2.5																
		2.6																
	2.3	2.7																
		2.8																
	2.4	2.9																
		2.10																
	2.5	2.1																
2.6	2.1																	
3. Innovation	3.1	3.1																
		3.2																
		3.3																
		3.4																
		3.5																
4. Conflict	4.1	4.1																
		4.2																
		4.3																

overall level **secondary level**

tertiary level

actors	international	aid workers, donors, generic, NGOs, other, UN
	national	civil society, generic, government, other
	local	civil society, generic, government, other
	other	academia, business, diaspora, generic, governments, media, military, politicians, students, the public
issues	frameworks	legal, non-legal, principles
	knowledge	education, research
	risk	analysis, DRR, LRRD/silos, mitigation and prevention, preparedness, social protection
	money	funding, incentive structures, salaries
	relations	changing power dynamics, developing new relations, working together
methods	establish	establish
	implement	implement
	increase or decrease	increase or decrease
	reform	reform
	not mentioned	not mentioned