



## WEBINAR SUMMARY

### Humanitarian Development Nexus: What is the New Way of Working?

#### Part 1

26 April 2017

#### Panellists

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The majority of humanitarian operations around the world are protracted, with humanitarian appeals lasting for 7 years on average. Humanitarian emergencies can no longer be viewed as isolated short-term events, as they are often manifestations of structural and complex socio-economic developments. In addressing these situations, the linkages between humanitarian and development plans and operations are often weak or absent. For example, humanitarian planning cycles are typically annual and do not easily fit with longer-term development planning processes. The World Humanitarian Summit has emphasised the need to “move beyond the comfort of traditional silos” (SG report) to bridge the gap between humanitarian relief and development. With this in mind, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) generated the “New Way of Working” (NWoW) which aims to address the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. But, concretely, what is the “New Way of Working”? Is it just a new label or is it a game changer that will bridge the divide and ensure that humanitarian and development action are mutually reinforcing? This is a summary of the webinar on the New Way of Working Part 1.



**Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu**

Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator, Crisis Response Unit, UNDP

### QUESTION: What is the New Way of Working?

Humanitarian and development actors, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the private sector have been progressively working better together to meet the needs of affected people. While the divide between humanitarian and development action has been previously recognised and attempts at bridging these gaps exist, the NWoW is different in that it understands the need for collective outcomes to reduce vulnerabilities and risks that cause humanitarian crises in the first place. The NWoW offers a concrete path to remove unnecessary barriers to such collaboration in order to enable meaningful progress. The NWoW can be described as working over multiple years, as opposed to on an annual basis, based on the comparative advantage of diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system (who may have different mandate-driven expertise, capabilities, and resources), towards collective outcomes.

Although the NWoW is context specific, it typically entails:

- ◆ **A joint analysis** to identify priorities and to form a joint problem-statement based on collective data. In Burkina Faso, the team innovatively incorporated data from the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) into the Common Country Assessment to inform a joint analysis.
- ◆ **A joint vision.** When all actors in an operation, including NGOs, jointly partake in risk and vulnerabilities assessment, a shared vision can be reached. In Burkina Faso, the team is now able to identify very concrete and measurable collective outcomes that can be aligned to the National Development Plan, as well as to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
- ◆ **A joined-up planning and programming.** In Sudan, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) are aligning their multiyear humanitarian response plans to the UNDAF with the intention of conducting joined-up planning and programming. In this regard, the country team is reviewing existing coordination mechanisms to adapt to the new context and is also looking at what new or additional financing modalities will be needed. In Lebanon, work is being done to develop the Refugee Response Plan in coherence with the multi United Nations Strategic Framework.
- ◆ **An empowered leadership and coordination.** Humanitarian leaders are responsible for facilitating joint analysis, shared problem statements, and collective planning, programming and implementation of collective outcomes. Additionally, they are tasked with supporting connectivity between all actors and capacities available in country to contribute to said outcomes. To fulfil these functions, the RC/HC must be supported by adequate capacity and resources, and collective and individual accountability of actors contributing to this approach would need to be strengthened.
- ◆ **New modalities of financing.** Bridging existing humanitarian and development gaps in an operation may require surging staff with particular expertise. Especially in protracted crises, financing must include a broader range of flexible and predictable multi-year programming and diversified funding tools that are aligned to enable layering of short-, medium- and long-term programs.

**QUESTION: From a field leadership perspective, what practical steps should Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators take to address the Humanitarian-Development Nexus?**

1. **Aligning of planning cycles.** Recent efforts to make the HRP a multi-year one instead of an annual one gives a unique opportunity to understand the coherence between the HRP and the UNDAF and to put forward a more sustainable solution for affected communities' problems.
2. **Encouraging coordination and dialogue between the HCT and UNCT.** In many countries, the HCT and UNCT do not have a sustained and consistent dialogue around analysis and planning, even though many UN agencies sit in the HCT and UNCT. Encouraging dialogue is important in enabling analysis that is truly joined-up, as only joint analysis and shared problem statements can lead to joint collective outcomes. In Ethiopia, Yemen, and Somalia, humanitarian leaders have led initiatives to bring relevant actors around the same table. Furthermore, the RC/HC in Yemen invited World Bank colleagues to UNCT/HCT meetings in view of aligning the financing elements necessary for the NWoW.
2. **Leveraging the Grand Bargain** at country level. The Grand Bargain includes a series of proposed changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations. It commits donors and aid organisations to provide 25% of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response. Humanitarian leaders in field operations should leverage the Grand Bargain commitments to initiate dialogue with donors present in the operation as well as in capitals.
3. **Requesting human resources and political support if necessary.** Headquarters often receive requests from field operations for human resources support in implementing NWoW. The "People Pipeline" project aims to develop a pool and roster of humanitarian-development professionals from across the UN system who are familiar with the NWoW and who have the capacity to facilitate and engage in complex, system wide processes of Nexus issues. Additionally, UNDP, OCHA, and the IASC can provide and/or strengthen the political support required by humanitarian leaders in field operations to roll out the NWoW.

**QUESTION: In contexts where not all national territories are under government control, is it feasible to work with local authorities in non-government controlled areas?**

A joined-up way of working between humanitarian and development actors may not always be possible. The need to protect humanitarian space may contradict, diverge from, or simply not contribute, to the calls to work on sustainable development solutions. Especially when working with authorities in non-government controlled areas, special care should be taken to ensure that humanitarian collaboration with development actors and mechanisms is principled and rights-based at all times.

Humanitarian and development actors can begin by conducting joint analyses to arrive at a shared understanding of challenges specific to the context. Then, humanitarian and development actors, with the help of local NGOs and communities, can decide whether collective outcomes are appropriate and feasible during the planning and programming phases.

**QUESTION: Where can practitioners go for help and support on Nexus issues?**

UNDP's Crisis Response Unit can be a first point of contact who can refer requests to relevant actors. If requests refer to insufficient expertise in the Resident Coordinator Office and amongst humanitarian-development advisors both in terms of theoretical understanding of Nexus issues and more technical capacities (such as being able to conduct integrated analysis), the Crisis Response Unit can be of assistance. If requests are more technical in nature, for example in terms of an operation wishing to reach out to development colleagues or to change their types of assessment framework, high-level advisory groups created by the Peacebuilding Support Office can be of more targeted help.



**Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie**  
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ethiopia

**QUESTION: As the RC/HC in Ethiopia, what steps did you take to bring closer the humanitarian short-term and development longer-term support to affected people?**

1. **Understand the development context** in which the humanitarian operation was taking place. This has, in turn, led to the important understanding that humanitarian work, especially in Ethiopia, must protect development investments and gains made in the country in the last few years in order to ensure minimal needs for humanitarian relief in the future.
2. **Promote joint analysis, vision shaping, messaging, and advocacy between humanitarian and development partners** through, for example, organising joint retreats between actors on both sides of the divide in which joint messaging are developed for advocacy activities with the government, national authorities, and donor community. The team in Ethiopia asked for additional human resources from headquarters in terms of a Nexus advisor that would facilitate discussions and assist the planning of joint initiatives.
3. **Maximise opportunities for complementary humanitarian and development programming.** In Ethiopia, food insecurity meant high malnutrition rate. Humanitarians needed to understand how national health systems work so as to identify opportunities for collaboration (instead of creating parallel systems of response). This approach is not about shifting development resources to deal with humanitarian needs, but to bring together efforts in a complementary manner to ensure the achievement of collective outcomes.
4. **Bring humanitarian and development partners around the same table** can promote cross-pollination of ideas and expertise. In achieving this, coordination structures in the country may need to be re-thought. For example, in Ethiopia the RC/HC made sure humanitarian issues were a standing agenda item in the Development Assistant Group monthly meeting, as well as ensured that there is participation of development actors in the HCT to improve shared problem analysis.
5. **Ensure that there are balanced and well-informed humanitarian leaders in the field.** Humanitarian Cluster Coordinators should have sound and deep knowledge of the local development context, as well as not have a purely humanitarian or emergency background. With support from OCHA and UNDP, ensure also that advisors are appropriately trained prior to being surged or are given crash courses on the NWoW.

## QUESTION: What are the lessons learnt on the NWoW that can be helpful for other operations?

1. **National leadership and ownership.** Use existing national systems, when available, to respond to humanitarian needs. This is crucial for gaining trust and achieving impact.
2. **Think creatively and design appropriate structures.** A Strategic Risk Management Forum will be created that will include actors across the divide to look at how to respond to risks before they turn into emergencies. The platform will also be useful for Nexus discussions.
3. **Consider innovative funding options that support the Nexus.** The innovative solution of reaching out to the Ethiopian diaspora and increasing engagement with the private sector was identified. During the El Nino crisis, the private sector helped with satellite images to determine where to find water. Private sector companies and other organisations may have resources, technologies, and capacities that can complement our own.
4. **Crises often generate opportunities and momentum to improve existing response systems.** In the past, parallel system led to inefficiencies. A 'One UN team' with integrated programming was implemented at field level, which reduced resources required thanks to increased efficiency.

## QUESTION: To what extent were gender issues included in the New Way of Working?

In Ethiopia, UN Women has worked extensively on gender programming within the Nexus framework. A handbook has been developed and is currently being tested. More discussion will follow.

This summary is a combination of presentations from the webinar and broader learning from the STAIT team. To listen to the full webinar and to access recordings of past webinars, visit the STAIT website: <http://www.deliveraidbetter.org/>