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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**

{SEC(2007) 781}  
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# COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

## Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

### 1. HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Humanitarian action has a centuries-long tradition of solidarity rooted in people working to aid victims of crises. The objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives and to provide immediate relief for people facing severe crisis whether as a result of natural disaster or of conflict. Over the last thirty years there has been increased emphasis on principles, quality and professionalism in the provision of international humanitarian aid.

However, humanitarian actors today face a number of specific challenges. Humanitarian crises happen with greater frequency and severity in impact, linked to climate change, the changing nature of conflict, increasing competition for access to energy and natural resources, extreme poverty, poor governance and failed states. The main victims are civilians, most of them living in developing countries. There has been an increasing tendency for humanitarian and international law to be ignored or blatantly violated. Encroachment of the 'humanitarian space'<sup>1</sup> adversely affects access to vulnerable populations and the safety and security of humanitarian workers, two essential preconditions for humanitarian action and for the EU and its partners to be able to continue to get assistance to crisis-hit people.

Humanitarian aid is one of the EU's main external policies. The EU collectively is the leading humanitarian donor in the world and Europeans are strongly committed to supporting humanitarian action. This places particular responsibility and expectations on the EU. It is time to bolster European humanitarian action in the face of these developments by setting out an explicit EU Consensus on the common values and principles that underpin EU humanitarian action. It is also opportune to look at practical ways to reinforce complementarity between Member States' and Community humanitarian action to enhance the effectiveness of the EU aid effort. The European Consensus on humanitarian aid should promote a more coherent, consistent and comprehensive approach to humanitarian aid. A clear commitment to good donorship practice and a definition of the roles of the respective actors is essential to help preserve the humanitarian space and therefore our ability to continue to deliver aid to people in need. The consensus on humanitarian aid would therefore be distinct from and complementary to the European Consensus on Development of December 2005<sup>2</sup>.

In developing this Communication, the European Commission reviewed lessons learnt in its responses to crises<sup>3</sup>, and conducted an intensive consultation process of

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<sup>1</sup> For all underlined terms, please refer to definitions in the glossary in annex.

<sup>2</sup> "The European Consensus" (OJ C 46, 24.2.2006).

<sup>3</sup> See linked Commission Staff Working Paper SEC(2007) 781: Responses to crises.

its humanitarian partners, which showed considerable consensus on the challenges faced by humanitarians<sup>4</sup>, including on the “responsibility to protect” and “human security”.

## **2. A COMMON VISION**

### **2.1. VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND COHERENCE**

Humanitarian action is a moral imperative and a fundamental expression of the value of solidarity of European citizens with people suffering. In a world of more frequent and severe natural disasters and where human suffering as a result of conflict persists, with the severest impacts on the poorest people, EU actors must work together to ensure effective delivery of aid to the victims of humanitarian crisis and to reduce vulnerability.

As an external action instrument, humanitarian aid is part of the continuum of EU external actions. While it actively contributes to the protection and empowerment of victims of disasters, humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool: the EU has a firm commitment to the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. This principled approach is essential to the acceptance and ability of the EU to deliver aid to the victims of crisis in often complex political and security contexts. The perception of the EU and its commitment to neutrality and independence in humanitarian action are clearly linked to behaviour and engagement on the ground. All EU actors involved in crisis response must work in coherence with these principles.

Humanitarian aid differs from other types of assistance in that its sole objective is to provide an emergency response that specifically aims to save and preserve life and to prevent and relieve human suffering wherever the need arises if local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act. Preparedness and local response to crisis are key to saving lives. While the principles and modalities that apply to humanitarian aid are specific and distinct from other forms of aid, coherence with other policy instruments, in particular those related to crisis management and development cooperation must be ensured.

Regrettably, global experience in recent years has demonstrated a persistent lack of respect for International Law, including International Humanitarian Law. The EU agreed in 2005 operational guidelines on the promotion of compliance by third States and where appropriate non-state actors with International Humanitarian Law (IHL)<sup>5</sup>. These cover a variety of actions, from assessment and reporting, political dialogue and restrictive measures to crisis management operations and the fight against impunity. The European Commission underlines the importance of a proactive approach to preserving the conditions necessary for humanitarian action.

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<sup>4</sup> See linked Commission Staff Working Paper SEC(2007) 782: Report on the consultation on a Consensus on European Humanitarian Aid policy.

<sup>5</sup> European Union Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (OJ C 327, 23.12.2005, p. 4).

### **Committed and principled action**

The EU should:

- uphold and promote the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence; and thereby contribute to preserving the humanitarian space and the ability to deliver aid;
- advocate strongly and consistently for the respect of international law;
- ensure policy coherence, complementarity and effectiveness by using its tools and influence to address the root causes and prevention of humanitarian crisis.

## **2.2. THE EU AND HUMANITARIAN AID**

In 2006 the EU collectively was the biggest donor of official humanitarian aid, contributing over € 2 billion of aid for humanitarian response, that is over 40% of officially-reported overall international humanitarian assistance<sup>6</sup>. In 2006 humanitarian aid from the EC alone reached 75 countries and an estimated 100 million people<sup>7</sup> helping to save many lives around the world, notably in the so-called forgotten crises. The EU's contribution is composed of Community humanitarian aid (managed by the Commission) and the provision of considerable levels of bilateral humanitarian aid directly by EU Member States, with shared competence.

The effectiveness and impact of the provision of humanitarian aid by the EU could be considerably enhanced by strengthening the co-ordination reflex and practice and sharing experience actively. This would enable all Member States to improve the quality of the overall humanitarian response. Coordinating positions in humanitarian fora and for advocacy makes the EU voice stronger. The EC's extensive humanitarian field presence is a valuable asset that provides a natural focal point for EU representatives working together in emergency response and preparedness, linking coherently into international humanitarian efforts and coordination approaches ('the Cluster System').

### **The aim of enhanced EU coordination is**

- to act in a concerted way to strengthen and optimise the overall humanitarian response;
- to promote and support well-organised aid delivery strategies ;
- to share understanding on needs and appropriate responses;
- to identify gaps and ensure strong arrangements are in place to react before a crisis occurs.

<sup>6</sup> As registered by the UN Financial Tracking system (UN-OCHA).

<sup>7</sup> Catchment population : population that benefits directly and indirectly of EC funded humanitarian assistance.

### 2.3. GOOD DONORSHIP

Principled donor practice must be firmly embedded in international efforts. The Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (GHD) launched in June 2003 provides a useful basis, including a definition of humanitarian aid, a firm commitment to upholding the fundamental humanitarian principles, and guidance on good donor practice. The EC considers that it is time for the EU as a whole to commit more actively to the substance of what constitutes good donorship and how this is translated into practice. This work should be linked to a broader Partnership approach. Building on the GHD initiative and on other existing standards and processes<sup>8</sup>, the EU should support an inclusive approach to promoting best practice in humanitarian action through 'Good Humanitarian Partnership' that brings together Donors ("traditional" and "emerging") and Partners (international and local actors).

The EU should:

- confirm its commitment to, and jointly assess its implementation of humanitarian aid in the framework of the existing 'Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles and Best Practice';
- support an ambitious international approach that brings together donors and partners to review principles, standards and best practice for humanitarian action ('Good Humanitarian Partnership').

## 3. TRANSLATING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

### 3.1. APPROPRIATE AND EQUITABLE AID, BASED ON NEEDS AND STANDARDS

Since the perception of a shortfall of humanitarian aid funding persists despite a commitment to higher levels of Official Development Aid (ODA), the EU should analyse both the quantity and effectiveness of funding. This funding should be based on agreed minimum standards of assistance and protection.

In addition, humanitarian aid must be transparently allocated on the basis of needs. Currently there is no single framework or agreed approach to needs-assessment. The EC applies a specific global needs assessment methodology linked to its annual programming strategy, and conducts an annual 'Forgotten Crises Assessment'. Results are shared with all interested parties. Detailed needs assessments are conducted by a large network of ECHO field experts and desks in close consultation with other Commission services and Member States.

Whenever possible best practice in aid-effectiveness means that aid in kind should draw on local and regional resources and procurements and pre-positioned stocks to avoid undue environmental and financial extra-cost of shipping aid from Europe over long distances. Naturally, decisions on where to purchase aid must remain context

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<sup>8</sup> Notably the 'Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes' (1994) and the SPHERE 'Humanitarian Charter' and Minimum Standards.

specific. Other ‘innovative’ modalities for aid delivery, including non-commodity based approaches (such as cash and vouchers) should also be considered.

### **Providing effective aid**

The EU should:

- commit to adequate provision of humanitarian aid, in line with its commitment to increase ODA;
- base this on agreed minimum standards of assistance and protection;
- seek to establish a common framework for assessment of needs and sharing of expert analysis;
- ensure an overall balanced response with a special focus on 'forgotten crises' and neglected needs; and to crises facing serious funding shortfalls where need is clearly demonstrated.

## **3.2. PARTNERSHIP**

Partnership is key to the effective provision of humanitarian aid. EU donors work through multiple implementing partners: the European and local NGOs, the UN and the Red Cross movement, all of whom have essential and complementary roles. Delivery of humanitarian aid in challenging circumstances demands quality, professionalism, experience and co-operation with others. All Partners of EU donors should adhere to international standards and guidelines applicable to the provision of aid, and should be transparent and accountable to the recipients, as well as to those providing funding.

The EU recognises and fully supports the central role of the United Nations - spearheaded by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) - in promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises and welcomes the concerted efforts made to reform the humanitarian system. Good coordination between partners and with donors particularly in the field, building upon broad participation in and flexible use of ‘the Cluster Approach,’ is essential for an effective humanitarian response.

### **Diversity and Quality in Partnership**

The EU should:

- underline its intrinsic support for a plurality of implementing Partners - the NGOs, the UN and the Red Cross Movement;
- acknowledge that each has comparative advantages in responding to certain situations or circumstances;
- support the central coordinating role of the UN in advancing reforms aimed at improving the overall international humanitarian response.

The defining criteria for selection of implementing partners should be:

- professionalism;
- capacity to respond to identified need (including presence and access);
- adherence to the humanitarian principles, international guidelines and best practice in delivery of aid;

- specialist knowledge or mandate;
- cost-efficiency;
- local partnership and context;
- accountability, including reporting transparently on results.

### **3.3. EFFECTIVENESS, QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Speed and quality are both critical in delivering humanitarian aid. We have a clear responsibility as donors to ensure that aid delivered represents the best available option and does the job it is intended to do. Aid must be suitably adapted to the specific circumstances of a particular humanitarian crisis. Qualitative input and performance indicators, cost effectiveness criteria (eg overheads in proportion to aid going to recipients), and partnership with local populations in managing response particularly in protracted crises, are all elements that the European Union needs to consider carefully to ensure its humanitarian aid is implemented effectively to best serve people in need. A quality approach demands a high-level of assurance from implementing partners through the application of partner eligibility criteria and performance monitoring. The EC experience shows that it is possible and necessary to combine rapid response and efficiency in humanitarian aid with strict accountability policy<sup>9</sup>, through partner-accreditation systems and financial control measures. This is an integral part of ensuring accountability to the European public and to recipients of aid.

### **3.4. CAPACITIES TO RESPOND RAPIDLY**

Significant gaps in the global response capacity of the humanitarian community were highlighted in the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, some of which are being addressed through humanitarian system reform. The EU needs to increase its crisis response capacities in a way that helps fill the remaining gaps. Its role is to support international efforts to identify and plug capacity gaps at a global level (eg on logistics and pre-positioning), ensuring that these capacities are available to a full range of partners. This would include contributing to regional hubs and to arrangements for additional surge capacities in the case of major crisis, for example for transport or assessment teams.

Long-term capacity building measures, including early-warning systems at local, national and regional level, joint training and information systems, also need to be reinforced. Support for local capacity-building, particularly in areas of prolonged or recurrent crises, should focus on quality and sustainability with the clear aim of increasing capability for local independent humanitarian action.

EU capacities could be strengthened by applying a flexible but systematic operational approach to ensure timely EU donor co-ordination and to provide additional recourse to available capabilities, assets and expertise. Practical measures are also needed to ensure complementarity with existing emergency rosters/deployment teams. The European Commission making full use of its

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, European Court of Auditors, Special Report 3/2006, concerning the European Commission humanitarian aid response to the tsunami.

permanent field presence should facilitate a rapid quality EU co-ordinated field level humanitarian response anchored in international relief efforts.

### **3.5. USE OF CIVIL PROTECTION AND MILITARY ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES**

European humanitarian aid is a policy that draws on various Community and Member States' instruments, including civil protection resources coordinated via the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in liaison with the EU Presidency or dispatched bilaterally; such resources have many applications besides forming part of a response to humanitarian disasters<sup>10</sup>. Increasingly, Member States use their civil protection capacities in disaster responses outside Europe, reflecting their citizens' desire to use available capacities for the purpose of international solidarity. In a humanitarian response proper coordination between different European actors and instruments is essential to maximise their complementarity and coherence.

Civil protection resources can provide an important contribution to humanitarian actions based on humanitarian needs assessments and their comparative advantages in terms of speed, sector expertise, efficiency and effectiveness especially in the early phase of relief response. When acting in a humanitarian context outside the EU, it is important that such resources support and complement the humanitarian actors in line with agreed international principles and guidelines – in particular in relation to neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Civil protection resources and assets cover a wide range of state-owned assets, both military and civilian. Such assets are used in response to a formal request from the affected state; which in countries at war or fragile states, would almost certainly amount to acting upon the invitation of a warring party. This in turn risks compromising the perception of the neutrality and impartiality of the relief effort and can result in exposing relief workers as well as the affected population to attacks from warring parties, and in being denied access to the affected population not only in the current, but also in future emergencies. These risks need to be carefully weighed against the immediacy of the needs of the population and the need for civil protection resources to cover them. Recourse to state-owned civil protection assets in complex emergencies is therefore rather the exception. Where civil protection is used in complex emergencies, it should be under the guidance of the UN and humanitarian organisations. A distinction should be made here between humanitarian interventions and an EU crisis management operation.

As it is vital to ensure the neutrality of humanitarian action, any blurring of lines between humanitarian and military tasks should be avoided. Therefore, military forces and assets should only be used as a "last resort" in humanitarian operations in line with international guidelines.

#### **Building on Comparative strengths in response to humanitarian situations**

The EU should:

- commit to underpinning international efforts to map and plug identified gaps in

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<sup>10</sup> Council Decision 2001/792/EC established the Community Mechanism for interventions inside and outside the EU.

capacities, in particular related to transport, communications, logistics and surge-arrangements for responding rapidly to disaster;

- examine ways to strengthen its own rapid response capacity by working together building on existing comparative strengths;
- adhere to and promote the Military and Civil Defence Assets and Oslo guidelines;
- reaffirm that Military and Civil defence/protection capabilities must be deployed in a way which complements and supports the work of humanitarian organisations, according to need/context for specialist tasks and support

#### **4. A JOINED-UP APPROACH TO AID**

##### **4.1. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION - INCREASING PREPAREDNESS**

Given the increased frequency and recurrence of natural disasters notably due to the effects of climate change, affecting the most vulnerable groups most severely, the promotion of disaster risk reduction strategies and preparedness activities is essential. Depending on the instrument used, this should be done at local, regional and national level in developing countries. Following the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Hyogo (Japan) in January 2005, there has been renewed international mobilisation to develop more effective strategies for disaster risk reduction and mitigation. The EU clearly recognises this and is shaping its aid approach accordingly: through stand-alone support for community-based preparedness activities, such as the EC's DIPECHO programme; through mainstreaming of this dimension into EU humanitarian and development aid, which is reflected in the commitment of the EU Development Consensus to support disaster prevention and preparedness; and through advocacy.

##### **Promoting Disaster Preparedness**

The EU should:

- promote international efforts within the Hyogo Framework for Action to increase coping capacities at local, regional and national level through strategic planning and action;
- mainstream disaster risk reduction in humanitarian and development operations and ensure that adequate EU funding is made available for disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities;
- establish an overall EU policy approach to support action in this area.

##### **4.2. LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The recovery and reconstruction of countries in the aftermath of a disaster is a major challenge, which requires structural and development action beyond immediate emergency aid. Although the necessity of effectively linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) thereby contributing to poverty reduction, food security

and sustainable development, is a well-recognised and crucial objective<sup>11</sup>, making this happen in practice necessitates flexible and innovative transition strategies on the part of all aid actors. Development and humanitarian actors are increasingly present in parallel for longer periods, with the phasing out of humanitarian aid varying according to sector or region. Increasing mutual awareness of the differing modalities, instruments and approaches is critical to aid effectiveness and ensuring a smooth transition. With the introduction of new EC financing instruments from 2007, in particular the Development and Cooperation Instrument and the Stability Instrument, the EC has a renewed opportunity to tackle the LRRD challenge by applying a policy mix in states emerging from crisis that includes early engagement of development programming and instruments that support early recovery alongside carefully planned exit strategies for humanitarian aid, thus ensuring a smooth hand-over to more structural programmes. Considering the EU collective experience in dealing with countries in transitional contexts, there is a case for developing a more systemic policy in addressing LRRD situations.

#### **Reinforcing the link to other aid instruments**

- The EU should work together on a framework for advancing practical approaches to LRRD, based on experiences and lessons learnt;
- identify a number of LRRD pilot countries for trialling implementation of case-specific joint EU approaches;
- improve cooperation between humanitarian and development agencies and other assistance actors, particularly at field level and in situations of complex crisis and state fragility.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY HUMANITARIAN AID**

EC humanitarian aid is governed by Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996, which provides a clear mandate to provide relief and protection to people facing humanitarian crises.

The Commission seeks to add value to the effectiveness of the overall EU aid effort by:

- putting good donorship into practice itself and encouraging others to do so;
- promoting quality needs-based responses that draw upon acquired operational experience and lessons learnt from previous crises;
- developing and disseminating best practice and sectoral guidance;
- facilitating policy dialogue and exchange of operational information ;
- striving continually to improve performance and professionalism in the delivery of aid as a learning organisation; and
- facilitating EU coordinated efforts to contribute to effective humanitarian response, including LRRD.

<sup>11</sup> The European Consensus on Development commits the EU to linking emergency aid, rehabilitation and long-term development.

The EC is committed to maintaining both a high quality response and its ability to react quickly. In order to do this it is reinforcing its pre-crisis readiness, including situational assessments and analysis of capacities to respond, as well as its own surge capacity linking to that of Partners. It is in this context that the reinforcement of DG ECHO's experts' network is taking place and that 6 regional EC Delegations' crisis response capacities will be strengthened.

The Commission, in close partnership with those who implement humanitarian aid on the ground, should maintain its role as an active 'reference donor' and humanitarian player through its dedicated humanitarian DG. It must remain a strong voice on issues affecting humanitarian action, building upon the foundations of DG ECHO's operational experience, added-value and international recognition. This implies a reinforcement of capacity to work closely with others, and at the centre of the EU humanitarian effort. Some specific measures to reinforce rapid reaction and flexibility are currently under review.

At a Community level a number of policy areas link closely to humanitarian aid, which include: crisis management, food security, development policy, the promotion of human rights and human security, public health. The EC is committed to ensuring that policy coherence and complementarity are translated consistently into coordinated operational implementation for the delivery of aid. There is a need to build on synergies and avoid potential confusion or duplication of effort<sup>12</sup>.

## **6. A EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN AID**

The European Commission invites the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to:

- adopt a joint declaration on the "European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid", based on the principles and approaches to active donorship outlined in this Communication;
- reaffirm the EU/EC commitment to working together in a co-ordinated, coherent and complementary way to ensure that this consensus is translated effectively into practice.

On the basis of a European Consensus, the European Commission stands ready to propose a roadmap of specific implementing measures to be taken forward by the EU.

By working together on a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its practical implementation, our objective is to enhance the EU contribution to the global humanitarian response in partnership with others. In so doing we reaffirm our commitment to providing assistance to people in need as a fundamental expression of EU solidarity.

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This is line with the objectives set out in the Commission's communication "Europe in the world : Some Practical Proposals for Greater Coherence, Effectiveness and Visibility" - COM(2006) 278, 8.6.2006.

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## **ANNEX**

### **GLOSSARY**

#### **FORGOTTEN CRISES**

The EC's Forgotten Crisis Assessment methodology defines "forgotten crises" as crises that receive little or no media attention and whose victims receive relatively little or no international assistance.

#### **GOOD HUMANITARIAN DONORSHIP INITIATIVE (GHD)**

The GHD Initiative outlines principles and good practice of humanitarian donorship and was endorsed in Stockholm in 2003 by Germany, Australia, Belgium, Canada, the European Commission, Denmark, the United States, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland. Since then, Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain have also joined the initiative, which through peer review, dialogue and exchange of experience seeks to advance implementation of good donorship in practice.

#### **HUMAN SECURITY**

General Assembly Resolution 60/1 of 24 October 2005 recognizes "that all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. To this end, we commit ourselves to discussing and defining the notion of human security in the General Assembly". The emphasis on freedom from want and freedom from fear is meant to ensure that the most vulnerable are empowered to manage their own security.

#### **HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES**

The definition of the principles can be found in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief and in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182. They are derived from the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, particularly principles I (humanity), II (impartiality), III (neutrality) and IV (independence).

#### **Humanity**

The principle of humanity means that humankind shall be treated humanely in all circumstances by saving lives and alleviating suffering, while ensuring respect for the individual. It is the fundamental principle of humanitarian response.

## **Impartiality**

Provision of humanitarian assistance must be impartial and not based on nationality, race, religion, or political point of view. It must be based on need alone.

## **Independence**

Humanitarian agencies must formulate and implement their own policies independently of (other) government policies or actions.

## **Neutrality**

Neutrality means not taking sides in hostilities or engaging at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 lists the principle of neutrality, along side the principles of humanity and impartiality in its annex as a guide to the provision of humanitarian assistance.

## **HUMANITARIAN SPACE**

The operating environment which humanitarian actors need on the ground in order to have full access to victims to be able to deliver assistance and to offer protection, without endangering the safety and security of aid workers.

## **HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

In January 2005, at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan), 168 Governments adopted a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) is a global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts during the next decade. Its goal is by 2015 to reduce substantially disaster losses – in terms of lives, and in the social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries.

## **LRRD**

Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development is a concept that strives to ensure that the exit and entry strategies of different aid actors/instruments join each other to cover the so-called "grey zone" between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation programmes in such a way that there is no assistance gap. Successful LRRD requires assistance planning from the earliest stages (early recovery) to take into account later stages in the process with development instruments dovetailing with the emergency relief instruments and the rehabilitation phase.

## **OSLO AND MCDA GUIDELINES**

The Oslo and MCDA guidelines are international guidelines designed to ensure that the impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian activities are preserved when Military

or Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) are used in support of humanitarian operations. Their main aim is to establish the basic framework for formalizing and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of foreign military and civil defence assets in international disaster relief operations.

The **Oslo Guidelines** concern the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to support United Nations humanitarian activities in natural disasters. In contrast, the **MCDA Guidelines** deal with the use of **military** and **civil defence assets** to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies (i.e. conflict zones).

## **RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

General Assembly Resolution 60/1 of 24 October 2005 stipulates that "Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". It further provides that "the international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapter VI and VII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". It also makes reference to the use of Chapter VII of the Charter, if peaceful means are inadequate.