Annex D: Context Analysis

Executive summary

The humanitarian context is characterised by increasing humanitarian needs in more diverse and complex contexts requiring multisectoral, integrated responses. At the same time the levels of funding are not increasing at a rate comparable to needs, resulting in a growing resource gap. Limitations on humanitarian access in an increasing number of settings present a growing challenge to humanitarian response and require new ways of working.

The number of humanitarian actors continues to increase and their ways of working to diversify. National governments increasingly assert their sovereignty and thus control of humanitarian response in their countries. This can challenge the international system, which is less well designed to play a complementary role, and sometimes results in tensions with humanitarian principles. The private sector is an increasingly important player with roles beyond that of a donor. Understanding between the private and humanitarian sectors and working together to overcome 'cultural' differences are still at an early stage. Civil society is playing an important role in humanitarian responses in conflict and disaster settings since it is often the first responder. This presents a means to straddle response, preparedness and recovery phases. However, investment in local civil society is limited, constraining its effectiveness. New donors are playing important roles in humanitarian responses and bringing new experiences and perspectives to global discussions as well as resources.

Key developments in the humanitarian context include the rising number of people in urban environments and the potential of new technology, which present both the need for, and possibility of, new ways of working to meet humanitarian needs and reduce risk and vulnerability. Resilience approaches offer a tailored way to meet humanitarian needs and reduce risk but they are not without their challenges, given their need for high levels of analytical skills and a long-term and flexible approach.

The international humanitarian system is working to adapt to the changes in its working environment and become more effective. The UN-led Transformative Agenda aims to improve coordination, leadership and accountability in humanitarian responses. Preparations under way for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and WHS in 2016 are key processes that will shape humanitarian frameworks and policies for the future. They present opportunities to develop a more inclusive and flexible humanitarian system.

Developments in the humanitarian context have implications for Danida's future strategy and its role as donor, influencer and partner. These include:

- the need for tough decisions about which humanitarian needs to meet in the future and how;
- increased choice in the range of types of partners to work with from different sectors;
- the need for key choices to maximise Danida's role in supporting and encouraging more integrated, flexible and coordinated ways of working, which also support increased capacity at country level to reduce risk and vulnerability and meet humanitarian needs.

Introduction

Danida will develop a new five-year Humanitarian Assistance Strategy in 2016. This Context Analysis is part of an evaluation of Danida's Strategy from 2010 to 2015 and aims to provide an overview of some of the main developments in the humanitarian context in which Danida operates. The purpose is to support both the evaluation of the current Strategy and, by identifying key challenges that have emerged since the Strategy was launched, to support its revision. It is intended to serve as a literature review and background paper.

This Context Analysis is written at a time (2014) when the sector is gearing up towards a number of significant events that will shape future humanitarian policy and programming. These include the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. At the same time, significant processes are under way which seek to improve the international humanitarian system, in particular the Transformative Agenda (TA) led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The processes and some of their implications for Danida are discussed here.

A recurrent theme in humanitarian dialogue is that humanitarian needs are changing and the international system needs to adapt to be effective and relevant.[1] There is a vast range of relevant trends, themes, issues and upcoming opportunities of significance to Danida's Strategy. Therefore, covered in this annex are the priorities of the current Danida Strategy as well as a valuable discussion during the stakeholder workshop in the inception phase on the key issues with which Danida and its partners are grappling and foresee for the future guided the selection of issues. The list is by no means exhaustive and likely to be most useful if maintained and kept 'live'. As such, the annex provides a snapshot of some of the key factors of relevance to Danida that are observable in 2014.

The annex is organised as follows:

- Chapter 1 discusses some of the main trends and characteristics of current humanitarian crises and international response.
- Chapter 2 considers the humanitarian 'architecture', i.e. humanitarian actors and ways of organising and working in the international humanitarian system, with a focus on developments in leadership and coordination.
- Chapter 3 considers some of the key themes in current humanitarian programmes and policy discussions and focuses on resilience, urbanisation and new technology. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the main issues that have emerged from initial consultations for the WHS.

Each chapter includes consideration of these issues for Danida's future strategy and these are discussed collectively in the concluding chapter.

1   Trends in humanitarian crises

## 1.1   Humanitarian crises and needs

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled over the past decade and is expected to keep rising (OCHA 2014: 4). In 2014, UN OCHA identified that 102 million people were

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[1] See, for example, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment; http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/has2013.shtml. Also http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/events/humanitarian-symposium-2013

in need of humanitarian aid up from 81 million in 2013 (OCHA 2014a). The priority needs relate to displacement, chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. The main factors driving these needs are multi-hazard environments characterised by insecurity, disasters associated with natural hazards, climatic variation and environmental degradation, extreme chronic poverty and political instability (ibid). The global nature of humanitarian crises was starkly apparent in 2014 with, for example, the Ebola epidemic and conflicts in Syria and Iraq catalysing humanitarian needs in the affected countries and wider region, but also with implications for the Global North.

The overall picture under these headline statistics is complex. In terms of sudden-onset disasters, the total number of disasters decreased from 2010-13 and the number of people affected also declined as shown in the graphic below.

Figure A: Trends in disaster occurrence and victims
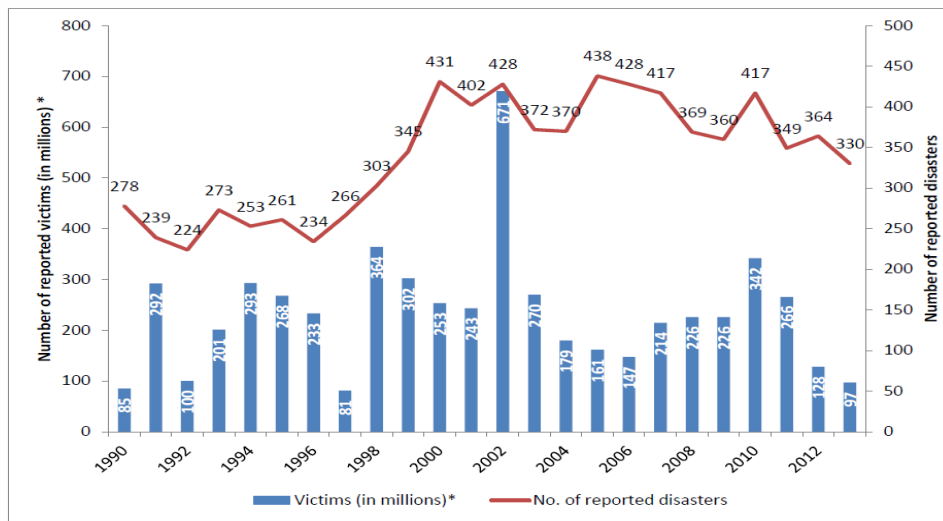
Victims : Sum of deaths and total affected

Source: CRED 2014

A total of 552 disaster events were reported worldwide in 2012, 364 of them categorised as natural disasters and 188 as technological disasters.[2] Floods were the most frequent category making up 141 of the disasters recorded. Asia consistently hosts the largest numbers of people affected, nearly 90,000 in 2012 – down from a high of 292,000 in 2010.

The figures collated by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) suggest that the number of deaths caused by sudden-onset disasters is reducing though numbers of people affected remain very high, consistently much higher than numbers affected in the 1990s (CRED 2014). These figures suggest that some of the preparedness measures taken by countries have been effective in reducing casualties. This was seen, for example, in the Philippines where early evacuation and early warning systems are likely to have reduced the numbers killed by Typhoon Haiyan – one of the strongest ever recorded. Yet huge numbers of people remain affected by disasters, with over 300 million affected each year since 2010, which is far higher than numbers recorded in previous decades.

The trend in natural disasters continues to be characterised by occasional large-scale, sudden-onset disasters, regular middle-size disasters – particularly flooding, with high frequency in Asia – and also continued slow-onset crises such as in East Africa (2010-12) and Sahel (2012). In addition, medium,

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[2] IFRC (2014) World Disaster Report 2013 Micro site, citing Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED).

small-scale and even local disasters continue to cause many crises for communities and data for this is not always captured. The linkage between these patterns and climate change has been increasingly scrutinised over the time period of Danida's Strategy, leading to more inter-action between humanitarian, development and climate change communities in policy discussions, for example, in preparations for the development of Hyogo Framework Two and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conflict

Compared to the period right after the end of the Cold War, when there were over 50 active conflicts, armed conflicts have now declined by almost 40%.[3] The number of active conflicts in the world has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years, fluctuating between 31 and 37, though there has been growth in intra-state conflict in recent years (CRED 2014). Asia is affected by the highest percentage of conflicts of any single region.[4] Secession, autonomy issues, elections, competition over resources, social manifestations related to flawed policies and development strategies, and controversies involving religious groups or disputes along ethnic lines are some of the factors that have triggered conflicts in this region, often in the same place and affecting the same communities already affected by natural disasters.

The humanitarian results of current conflicts are clear with growing humanitarian needs that are increasingly difficult to meet. UNHCR reported that there were 51.2 million people forcibly displaced by the end of 2013 (UNHCR 2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, refugee numbers have increased consistently for four years from 2010 to 2013, standing at 2.9 million by 2013. Notable crises contributing to the numbers are Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Mali. Pakistan has consistently been the country hosting the highest number of refugees, mainly from Afghanistan (1.6 million in 2013). Chad, ranked third in this list, is a reminder of the huge burden that low-income countries carry for neighbouring countries' crises and thus the significance of a regional response to any emergency.

Figure B: Global forced displacement 1993–2013
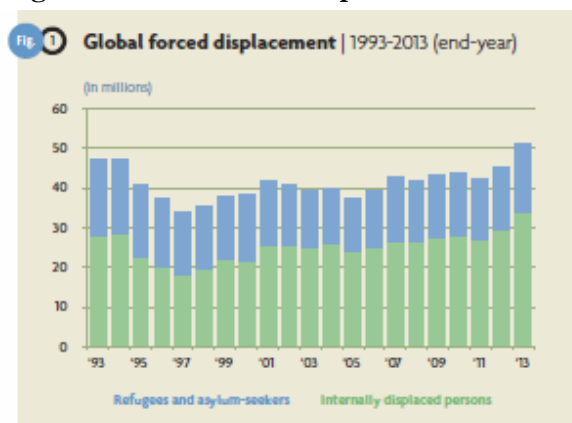
Source: UNHCR 2013: 6

For the humanitarian sector, the rapid scale-up and sustained nature of conflict in Syria has had a massive impact since 2013, being the source of the most refugees in the world. As Lebanon shoulders much of the burden of hosting refugees, as in Pakistan, this raises the issue of middle-income countries

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[3] http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2014/02
[4] WHS Briefing Paper, Asia Regional Consultation Paper, July 2014 serving the needs of people affected by conflict.

requiring humanitarian assistance. By the end of 2013, Lebanon hosted 178 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants; the highest burden a country has been exposed to since 1980.

1.2 Humanitarian funding

The time period of Danida's current Humanitarian Assistance Strategy has been characterised by two phases in global humanitarian funding: first, a decrease in global funding over the 2010 to 2012 period and then a rapid increase in funding in 2013, notably in response to the Syria crisis and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, but also accompanied by a growing gap between funds and needs. Funding of the UN appeals had been at a relatively consistent level since 2010, hovering at an average of 63%. However, despite the growth in funding in absolute terms in 2012 and 2013, the gap between funding requested and received has increased significantly. Figures up to mid-year 2014, characterised by a rapid surge in requested funding for the Syria crisis response, suggest that this growing gap is unlikely to change.

Figure C: Funding trends 2004-14
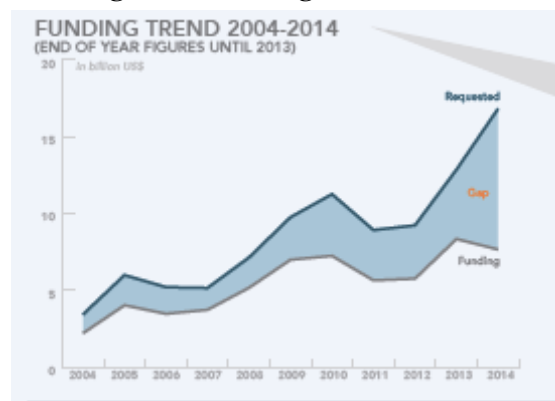
Source: OCHA 2014b[5]

In 2014, partly in response to the growing gap, the UN introduced a new approach to its appeals for funding. The overview of Global Humanitarian Assistance replaced the previous consolidated appeal. Most countries' plans are now based on a Strategic Response Plan developed in line with the humanitarian programme cycle. An innovation over 2013-14 was the introduction of three-year planning in some countries following a successful Somalia pilot in 2012. In 2014, occupied Palestinian Territories (oPT), South Sudan and Yemen developed three-year plans.

The overall financial flows of humanitarian assistance are complex. Large volumes of funds flow through the UN appeals system and an increasing number of countries are contributing to these appeals. An average of 59 contributing countries in 2000-02 has grown to 84 in 2011-13. At the same time, large, and perhaps increasing, proportions of funding are being allocated through alternative channels. Recent work by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) identifies a range of models reflecting ways in which the humanitarian system works. These also show differing channels for funding. Places where the international system plays a more 'complementary' role (i.e. countries with strong national emergency response structures) tend to see only 15% of funds allocated via the UN system. This matches recent estimates of the Haiyan response, which calculated that the international response channelled through the Strategic Response Plan was at most 16% of the overall response, with the private sector, government, diaspora and organisations working outside of

[5] Figures for 2014 reflect only funding received at a mid-year point.

this system making up the majority of funding to meet needs (Hanley et al. 2014). Even in crises where the international response is more comprehensive, it is estimated that only 25-50% of funds are transferred through the UN appeal system (Mitchell 2014). These trends also resonate with work by OCHA on humanitarian effectiveness, which refers to the increasing number of '*humanitarian systems*' rather than the singular humanitarian system; the UN coordinated system is just one of these.[6] The growth in the number of humanitarian actors, with new government, private sector and civil society donors is likely to be contributing to this trend.

The consistent production of UN appeals that are only partially covered raises questions about the system. Consistent under-funding of appeals causes operational problems for humanitarian staff struggling to implement plans and programmes. It can undermine the strategic prioritisation of how best to meet needs and use resources. There are also widespread criticisms of humanitarian funding systems as being slow, inflexible and not suited to emergency situations; for example, in relation to the recent Ebola crisis in 2014 and in 2010 to the slow-onset drought in East Africa, where emergency assistance was slow to scale up and respond to warnings of the scale of the potential crisis. The growing gap between humanitarian funds requested and received through the UN systems suggests the need for much greater targeting of responses in the future, in order to fit within available resources, and also more engagement with the range of organisations allocating their funding through different channels.

The growing diversity of funding channels, growth in need and increasing funding gap raise critical questions for donors regarding how best to use their funds to meet humanitarian needs most effectively in future crises.

1.3   Challenges to humanitarian action

Unmet requests in UN-led appeals are one cause of unmet needs. However, studies suggest a more in-depth analysis is required. A recent MSF study found that factors other than lack of funding seemed to be contributing to needs going unmet, including risk aversion of agencies, the triple role of UN agencies as coordinator, implementer and donor causing bureaucratic blockages, and a lack of appropriate technical capacities (Healy and Tiller 2014: 19).

A key trend has been growing insecurity for aid workers. Over the last decade aid worker casualties tripled, reaching over 100 deaths per year (Egeland et al. 2011). From 2005 onwards, the largest number of violent attacks on humanitarian personnel has been concentrated in a small number of countries representing the most difficult and volatile operating environments. Attacks in some of these settings have also grown more lethal and sophisticated and the number of kidnappings has risen dramatically. As a result, the humanitarian footprint has shrunk in some conflict areas where violence has surged in recent years, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia. The dangers have continued and 2013 set a new record for violence against civilian aid operations, with 251 separate attacks affecting 460 aid workers (Humanitarian Outcomes 2014).

Aid agencies have struggled to find ways to work in these contexts. While it is widely acknowledged that humanitarian actors face a trade-off between public advocacy and continued access in sensitive conflict situations, there has been strong criticism of the UN, in particular, for failing to advocate more strongly in the face of security and humanitarian access restrictions (ibid: 54). Analysts have argued that political actors, including the UN, have created unfavourable conditions for the forging of secure humanitarian access by letting considerations other than humanitarian need take precedence in decision making in some of the most critical humanitarian operations (ibid: 48). In turn, some aid agencies have

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[6] Personal communication with J. Alexander, OCHA in July 2014 relating to the Humanitarian Effectiveness Project.

not advocated strongly enough for respect for independent humanitarian action. This undermining of humanitarian principles creates practical impediments to access, acceptance and security for humanitarian operations.

Humanitarian needs and funding trends: implications

⇨ Humanitarian needs are likely to continue to grow, outstripping available resources. Without significant change, inter-agency coordinated planning is likely to continue to be based on unrealistic expectations of resources that may undermine strategic prioritisation of need. Donors need to consider how they can contribute to a more efficient system and have criteria for which humanitarian needs they aim to meet.

⇨ Areas affected by humanitarian crises are becoming increasingly diverse, including middle-income as well as low-income countries, and areas affected by multiple inter-linked factors contributing to vulnerability. Others are increasingly inaccessible. This range of contexts suggests the need for a tailored approach and ways of working to fit with each context by both donors and implementing organisations.

⇨ The increasing number of donors and humanitarian actors, often acting outside of the traditional coordinated channels, presents challenges for coordinated humanitarian action but also presents significant opportunities to meet humanitarian needs.

2   Humanitarian architecture

There have been significant developments in the humanitarian architecture in the past decade which have implications for humanitarian action and policy development in the future. Noteworthy among these is the increase in number and diversification of type of humanitarian actors. Also, the international humanitarian community has initiated processes for humanitarian reform that seek to address acknowledged weaknesses within the system, including in coordination and leadership. Some key elements of these developments and their implications are discussed below.

2.1   Humanitarian actors

The increasing range of actors involved in humanitarian action is making for a more complex arena in which to coordinate but does bring additional resources, experience and new perspectives to humanitarian responses. As discussed below, key actors, such as national governments, civil society, private sector and regional organisations, are taking on new roles in humanitarian action.

2.1.1 National governments

A number of governments of countries vulnerable to natural disasters have sought to build their capacity in disaster management, e.g. the Philippines, Mozambique, El Salvador, Kenya and Indonesia. With increased capacity and global political shifts, governments are increasingly asserting their sovereignty in disaster response through their national disaster management agencies. This has been seen in humanitarian responses such as in India, which has repeatedly turned down offers of international humanitarian assistance since the 2004 tsunami. It has also been the case in the Philippines 2013-14, where the government led the response and recovery process. This included a unilateral decision on the declaration of the end of the humanitarian phase in July 2014. The international system has often been criticised for its ineffective ways of working with national

governments in natural disasters and struggles to establish effective ways to work alongside more muscular national governments in disaster response (Walker et al. 2011).

Some important initiatives are under way to support improvements in the international system's cooperation with host governments, such as the Disaster Response Dialogue, which is facilitating discussions on this subject in advance of the WHS in 2016. Past studies have shown that key measures that have helped to improve the relationship between the international and national government disaster response systems include joint preparatory work (e.g. on simulations and planning for co-leadership of responses) that have also helped establish trust and institutional working relationships (ibid). This suggests the need for donors to orient their preparedness plans towards strengthening national capacity, including that of middle-income countries, and encouraging joint capacity strengthening initiatives between national and international actors. Some commentators have also called for support for civil society advocacy that can advocate for strong disaster management capacity in country (Harkey 2014).

National governments have always, in theory, been at the centre of humanitarian assistance for disaster response but their role in conflict-affected areas is more complex, given that the state can be a key participant in the conflict and seek to constrain access. In these contexts, the relationship between humanitarian aid agencies and the host government can be a sensitive one. Some impose host-state security arrangements that interfere with neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian operations, such as in the current Syria crisis.

The international system has to a large extent bypassed governments, citing humanitarian principles (particularly neutrality) and the humanitarian imperative and ability to meet needs. However, as access and security become more complex for agencies in a greater number of situations, agencies have increasingly been confronted with the need to engage with both governments and also other parties active in conflicts. In addition, the changing composition of humanitarian actors and new donors that give more weight to state sovereignty may be beginning to change the dynamic between international aid agencies and governments (Binder and Meier 2011). The overall implication is that humanitarian agencies need a wide range of options on how to engage with governments but also maintain humanitarian principles in programmes.

2.1.2 National civil society

National civil society – including religious groups and local and national NGOs – are most often the first responders to communities affected by disasters even though they may face challenges with being able to work to the scale required or lack of some skills required in large-scale disasters. In conflict-affected areas, they have greater access to communities than international organisations. The significance of local NGOs' role is acknowledged and rhetoric supporting partnership with civil society has continued to grow at the global level. National NGOs are now being included in some coordination mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Country Teams for Turkey (Syria crisis) and the Philippines.

Studies consistently show the effectiveness of partnerships with national NGOs, for instance, in response to Typhoon Haiyan, where an inter-agency study identified that the proximity to, and knowledge of, communities that national NGOs brought to partnerships strengthened the relevance of humanitarian assistance. The study found that partnerships worked best when international NGOs had invested in national NGO humanitarian consortia and these partnerships contributed to a timely and relevant response (Hanley et al. 2014).

However, investment in national civil society capacity remains under-funded in the international system. A recent report makes a strong argument for changes in the ways that national NGOs are supported, arguing that international financing for national NGOs is '*not fit for purpose. It is unpredictable, volatile, difficult to access, insufficient and it is not sufficiently enabling to support the strengthening and capacity development of national NGOs that is central to improving preparedness, standing response capacity and resilience to disasters*' (Caritas 2013).

In conflict-related crises, when there are security issues, there is a tendency for national NGOs to be used as contractors and for security risks to be transferred from donor partners. However, they do not always receive the associated security training provided to international counterparts. Given the vital role that national actors play in humanitarian action, including as partners of international organisations, investment in their capacity and safety is increasingly crucial for pragmatic reasons as well as the moral arguments for partnership to be based on principles of equality and respect.

2.1.3 Private sector

The private sector role in humanitarian action has expanded well beyond that of a donor or a contractor providing services. Studies have estimated that private funding as a share of the total humanitarian response grew from 17% in 2006 to 32% in 2010, totalling USD 5.8 billion (Stoianova 2012). A recent study in Indonesia found increased private sector involvement in preparedness and resilience building as well as response measures (Pearson 2013). The private sector also has a key role in the current DRR agenda with, for instance, UNISDR facilitating and encouraging greater private sector participation in national DRR frameworks and regional forums developing DRR policy. There is increased attention to the potential private sector role in supporting innovation as well.[7] The role of some private sector agencies is prescribed in some countries' national disaster management policies, e.g. for telecommunications agencies to provide support to responses in the Caribbean.

There is an overall shift from the private sector being seen purely as a provider of resources to being a partner in humanitarian action. Initiatives include OCHA's establishment of a private sector unit, partnership between humanitarian actors and the World Economic Forum, preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit, and the provision of the first private sector advisor to the Typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines in 2013-14. The Global Shelter Cluster Strategy 2013-17 cites increased partnership with the private sector as a priority and agencies such as the WFP are making efforts to develop strategic relationships and increased dialogue, which is encouraging. Finding ways to work with the private sector, which is driven by different priorities and characterised by a different organisational culture, remains a challenge for humanitarian organisations but one that will need to be addressed.

2.1.4 Donors

New donors from around the world are now taking part in global humanitarian action, ending the Global Northern and Western dominance of humanitarian forums. Non-western countries such as Saudi Arabia, China, Brazil and Turkey are playing major roles in global humanitarian action, and also new European donors such as Poland and other Eastern European states, which were previously recipients of assistance.

The implications of this development are still emerging. So far, research that included India and Saudi Arabia found that, contrary to some 'traditional' Western donors' fears, the new donors accepted humanitarian principles, especially impartiality and neutrality, as key to their humanitarian approaches (Binder and Meier 2011).

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[7] For example, at the Oxford Innovation Conference in July 2014, where a key theme was the role of the private sector in innovation for humanitarian effectiveness.

An important difference in priorities is that 'new donors' are more inclined to respect the sovereignty of states and therefore fund via the state in natural disasters. They see the relationship as one between equals and thus one of humanitarian cooperation rather than assistance. Perhaps linked to this perspective, research found evidence among new donors of some preference for funding natural disasters and specific sectors, notably food and health, which may prove to be a challenge to efforts to support a more integrated, multisectoral approach to humanitarian response. In conflict areas, these donors were more likely to fund multilaterally to specific emergencies in their region (Binder and Meier 2011).

Studies point to reluctance among some new donors to fund protection because it is seen as being a more political statement about the host government. This may be significant if it becomes a long-term trend (ibid). 'New' donors also tend not to distinguish between short-term and long-term humanitarian and development projects in long-term crises and indeed were critical of the distinction made by Western donors.

Significantly, 'new' donors are often absent from existing global coordination forums, though Brazil and South Korea have joined the GHD initiative and Mexico chaired the GHD group in 2013-14. Their absence will have implications for humanitarian actors seeking to ensure consistent and harmonised approaches to humanitarian responses. However, there are also encouraging signs of proactive efforts to engage these donors in discussions to shape the future humanitarian architecture/system, such as in WHS consultation processes.

2.1.5 Regional bodies

Regional bodies are emerging as new brokers of relationships between international assistance and crisis-affected states. A number of regional bodies have increased their capacity to engage directly with, and mediate international assistance to, crisis-affected states. For example, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation established a humanitarian department in 2008 and opened an office in Mogadishu in 2011 to coordinate the relief efforts of its members; the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) opened a coordination centre for regional humanitarian assistance in Jakarta in 2008; and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is developing a humanitarian policy (Binder and Meier 2011). ASEAN played a pivotal role in the response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008 in Myanmar, brokering a Tri-partite Core Group which included the UN and Myanmar government, and which was instrumental in negotiating access and organising a joint assessment (Creac'h and Fan 2008). Regional bodies have also developed experience as convening and managing entities for sovereign disaster risk insurance pools, which have been supported by international donors in the development and set-up phases, in the Caribbean, Pacific and in Africa.

Currently regional organisations have variable levels of commitment and capacity to engage with humanitarian issues and they are rarely sources of financing in their own right, relying on the same international sources of financing as many other humanitarian actors. However, they may have particular comparative advantages and some may be well positioned to engage on trans-boundary issues, such as climate change and migration, and with a typically high level of respect for sovereignty, may be politically acceptable from the perspective of national states (Zyck 2013).

2.2   Transformative agenda

2.2.1 Overview

The Emergency Relief Coordinator and IASC launched a humanitarian reform process in 2005 to improve the effectiveness of international humanitarian response. This has led to the Transformative

Agenda (TA), which aims to address acknowledged weaknesses in multilateral humanitarian responses and build more effective leadership, coordination and accountability. Following the agreement of the Transformative Agenda in December 2011, the IASC Principals agreed the 'TA Protocols', which set the parameters for improved collective action in humanitarian emergencies.[8] A key tool introduced in the TA is the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, which aims to create a *process* that redefines the way in which international humanitarian actors engage – with each other, with national and local authorities, and with people affected by crises – to achieve more effective, efficient, predictable and transparent outcomes. The Humanitarian Programme Cycle includes a set of tools to support this: a multi-sector needs assessment, creation of a Strategic Response Plan (replacing the consolidated appeal), an operational peer review, periodic monitoring of outputs and outcomes against the strategic response plan objectives, and also an inter-agency humanitarian evaluation process for major emergencies (Level 3) within 12 months of their occurrence. Other key elements include a commitment to accountability to affected populations and empowered leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The TA process was mainly a headquarters-based process until 2014 when the protocols and tools began to be rolled out to the field. The first new-style inter-agency humanitarian evaluations are under way or planned for 2014 to evaluate the Typhoon Haiyan response and South Sudan emergencies. These should identify if the new tools and guidance are making a difference. Key elements of the TA relating to leadership and coordination are discussed below.

2.2.2 Leadership

OCHA is leading a major initiative to support the development of more effective leadership in the international humanitarian system. It developed a strategy in 2009, endorsed by the IASC, which is now being implemented. Work is under way on three levels:

a) Individual – This focuses on ensuring that the right people are available at the right time. OCHA is supporting the development of a pool of humanitarian leaders who can fulfil humanitarian coordinator positions. So far this has tended to focus on identifying people already in the system that are potential Humanitarian Coordinators. The future direction will focus more on grooming and growing the next generation of humanitarian leaders for the international system.[9] As of June 2014, 99 people had been identified for the pool though the gender balance remains uneven with only 24% being female. In the future, OCHA's intention is to increase the number of women and leaders from the Global South. A particular weakness in the pool of current personnel is individuals' lack of cross-agency and combined humanitarian and development expertise. Of the current 128 resident coordinators, 94% have experience in **only** humanitarian **or** development, and two-thirds have only experience in one UN agency. In order to cope with future complex contexts and demands in humanitarian responses, there is a need for people with a broad range of experiences and skills from across agencies, from across humanitarian and development agendas, and who are able to negotiate the complex demands of managing often conflicting, multiple agendas with key stakeholders including governments, donors and others.

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[8] The TA Protocols include:
   1   Concept Paper on 'Empowered Leadership';
   2   Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Activation: definition and procedures;
   3   Responding to Level 3 Emergencies: What 'Empowered Leadership' looks like in practice;
   4   Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level;
   5   Responding to Level 3 Emergencies: The Humanitarian Programme Cycle;
   6   Concept paper on the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism;
   7   Common Framework for Capacity Development for Emergency Preparedness; and
   8   Operational Framework for Accountability to Affected Populations.
[9] Interview with Claire Messina, Senior Coordinator, Humanitarian Leadership Strengthening Unit, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 21 July 2014.

b) Management and support – A performance management system has been developed with monthly performance discussions and an end-of-year appraisal carried out by the IASC Emergency Directors Group. The inter-agency nature of this is a major effort to develop a collective commitment to build leadership for the system beyond individual agencies' own processes to develop their own leadership.

c) Environment in which the Humanitarian Coordinator works – There is now a push to ensure more of a collective approach to leadership, with a particular focus on the humanitarian country team (HCT), which may help to address the perennial competition between UN agencies for funds. This area is less developed but increasingly significant with the growth in numbers of humanitarian actors and the growing gap between needs and funds available. There are changes already in the HCTs as they shift from mainly comprising UN agencies, to include more international and also national NGOs, e.g. in Turkey and the Philippines. The Humanitarian Coordinator continues to have no formal authority over the HCT but more emphasis is being put on their role as a facilitative leader of an entity that should see itself as a collective group. This is a major challenge given the tendency for agency heads to focus on their own agency priorities, which undermines collective, needs-based decision making. The reward systems of many agencies can work against such collective work, e.g. if agency heads are rewarded for raising funds, it is difficult for them to prioritise the work of other agencies.

Other organisations are also working to improve their leadership pool: for example, the IFRC has developed a pilot core leadership group of individuals on core contracts who can be deployed at short notice to major humanitarian crises. In between crises, they contribute to other key processes such as the development of standard operating procedures and training and mentoring other future leaders. Another initiative is the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, hosted by Save the Children and supported by DFID, among others. It aims to 'train the next generation of humanitarian leaders and responders especially those located in vulnerable crisis-affected countries and communities'. It has initiated plans for the implementation of four academy centres in the Philippines, Kenya, Indonesia and the UK.

2.2.3 Coordination

Denmark is a strong supporter of the UN's role in coordination. However, the emergence of new humanitarian actors, particularly local NGOs and the private sector, is a challenge to the (often) international nature of existing coordination structures. The growing demand from affected country governments to play the leading role in coordinating humanitarian aid can also be a challenge for international coordination structures, which may need new ways of working that complement and support national leadership. However, maintaining humanitarian independence is also important if government-led coordination mechanisms are not underpinned by the humanitarian principles.

The Transformative Agenda promotes the cluster system as a key coordination model and its functions have been more clearly defined through the protocols (IASC 2012). 'Traditional' humanitarian actors have largely accepted this sector-based system but it has struggled with the growth in the number of humanitarian actors active in responses. Not all of the new actors wish to coordinate or abide by the range of functions ascribed to clusters, which means that they are often reduced to an information-sharing system.

A notable recurrent criticism of the cluster system is of inadequate inter-sectoral coordination because clusters focus on their own sectors. If the HCT does not work in an integrated, multisector way, it can be a struggle to ensure progress of the objectives of a response as a whole, as opposed to individual agency aims and priorities. The development of strategic response plans with multisector objectives based on a multisector rapid assessment is one mechanism that aims to address this problem, along with empowered leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The second weakness of the current coordination system is its inability to transition and plan for hand-over, exit or shift to recovery and/or long-term humanitarian response planning. The introduction of three-year plans in some humanitarian emergencies including Somalia, oPT, South Sudan and Yemen over 2013 and 2014 are an effort to address this, which some donors are supporting.

A third significant challenge for the international coordination mechanisms is how best to engage with increasingly strong, nationally led coordination mechanisms – whether to merge, work alongside or coordinate.

Changes in the humanitarian architecture: Implications

⇨ Humanitarian dialogue processes need to ensure that new humanitarian actors are fully part of discussions around the future humanitarian framework, policies and ways of working. National and international NGOs now have more opportunities to participate in coordinating mechanisms like the cluster system. However, these can have high transaction costs. Danida can consider how it supports the role of partners to contribute to effective coordination but also challenge the costs (in terms of time and other transaction costs) of these.

⇨ New humanitarian actors provide potential new partners for actors such as Danida. It might be useful to undertake a full review of what the different actors can contribute to Danida's Strategy and the opportunities and challenges of working with different types of actors.

⇨ Danida may need to review whether its systems are appropriate, for example, for financing national NGOs.

⇨ Donors can provide incentives for inter-agency cooperation, coordination and collective leadership, e.g. by ensuring that they assess partner performance by measuring their contribution to the collective results of inter-agency responses at country level as well as fulfilment of their own mandates.

3 Key themes

3.1 Resilience

A recurrent topic in humanitarian discourse is the potential of approaches based on the concept of resilience as a bridge between humanitarian and development approaches.[10] Although this is not a new idea, challenge or discussion, there are some signs of change.[11] For example, the UN strategic response plan process is introducing longer-term planning in some protracted crises and donors are increasingly willing to support longer-term approaches within humanitarian settings (OECD 2013: 51). Such longer-term approaches tend to place an emphasis on risk reduction, recovery and building resilience as well as meeting immediate humanitarian needs.[12] This focus on resilience is in part due to the multi-hazard

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[10] For example, it was the focus of DFID's Humanitarian Emergency Response Review; it is prominent in the key themes of the World Humanitarian Summit agenda for 2016; resilience and resilient nations is at the heart of UNDP's strategy and resilience was a focus at the Inter Action Forum in 2013.

[11] Discussions on linking relief and development go back at least to the 1980s, e.g. see Adams, M. (1986) *Merging Relief and Development: The Case of Turkana*, Development Policy Review, Vol. 4 No. 4 and Ross, J., S. Maxwell and M. Buchanan-Smith (1994) *Linking Relief and Development*, IDS Discussion Paper No. 344. IDS.

[12] See, for example, the summary of the Global Humanitarian Policy Forum, 2013 http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/events/humanitarian-symposium-2013

environments in which many humanitarian crises are now taking place and the associated complexity of meeting them (OCHA 2014b). Key humanitarian actors are making strong arguments for a fundamental change in humanitarian action to be more based on risk management and building resilience. OCHA's flagship report *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow* put forward the case based on assumptions of increasing humanitarian needs driven by inter-connective challenges including population growth, climate change, water scarcity and environmental degradation (OCHA 2014). The authors argue the need for a response that draws on experience from across humanitarian and development spheres and that goes beyond meeting immediate needs to reduce future risk.

An advantage of the concept of resilience is that it enables the coming together of the humanitarian, development and climate change communities. This has the potential to build more coherence between the policy frameworks of these different sectors. The first preparatory conference for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan 14-18 March 2015, emphasised the need for coherence and mutual reinforcement between the post-2015 international framework on sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change. The discussions recognised that the political consensus and the policy foundation for coherence and mutual reinforcement already existed but could be bolstered by the post-2015 framework. Resilience is a recurrent theme also in preparatory discussions for the WHS.

Some donors have actively taken up the resilience agenda such as the UK government, which announced that resilience will be central to its humanitarian response (DFID 2011a: 8-9). DFID has developed an approach that focuses on disaster resilience by considering economic, physical, social, environmental and national aspects of resilience. Interestingly, it announced that this would require a step change in development work as well as humanitarian approaches. Work is currently under way to embed disaster resilience in country office strategies and plans as a key first step.

A focus on resilience in conflict settings is more recent. Analysis to date has often focused on the linkage between conflict and disasters (Harris et al. 2013). Recently, the seeming consensus that a focus on resilience was 'a good thing' has been challenged, notably by MSF, which has argued that the focus on longer-term capacity building and systems development has been at the cost of meeting immediate humanitarian needs.[13] MSF has also questioned the appropriateness of building resilience, which some commentators have tended to equate with building state capacity, when the state is an active partner in a conflict.

Other organisations such as Christian Aid have focused on building resilience at community level in unstable contexts rather than building state capacities (Hanley 2014). At community level, it is important for agencies to undertake a thorough analysis of local power dynamics and also wider politics. The highly developed analytical skills required for this are often in short supply in these contexts (Levine and Mosel 2014). Christian Aid's experience in its work with partners has highlighted the importance of flexibility in both funding approaches to partners and implementation approaches in order to build resilience in unstable situations. This is a challenge for implementing organisations and suggests the need for significant changes in programme management systems as well as donors' funding approaches.

Some of the challenges that a resilience-focused approach present are:

- difficult choices about whose capacity should be built – such a choice, always political, will be intensified when there is an ongoing conflict;

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[13] http://www.msf.org.uk/article/opinion-and-debate-building-resilience-deconstructing-humanitarian-aid

- a need to protect humanitarian principles and ensure that humanitarian action remains needs-based when linking with longer-term strategies that seek to build the capacity of the state or other actors that may be party to a conflict;
- decisions regarding what framework should drive choices when making trade-offs between short-term and long-term aims and results, and how development and humanitarian principles are incorporated into this;
- the need for innovative approaches to build flexibility into funding and partnership to enable and support organisations to consider resilience in their programmes particularly in unstable contexts;
- longer-term commitment that requires tying up resources and so may limit capacity for humanitarian responsiveness.

Resilience approaches in conflict areas will continue to face difficult choices. What is required is not a blueprint approach but rather one that is tailored on a case-by-case basis at country level. Such customisation will need to be based on an analysis of risks and opportunities as well as a sound analysis of the political and wider context.

3.2 Urbanisation

In recent decades, there has been a huge increase in the number of people living in cities who are vulnerable to disasters or conflict (IFRC 2010). The scale of this unprecedented growth in the urban population is predicted to continue. By 2030, the global population will stand at 9 billion, and the global urban population will account for up to 60% of this figure (Knox-Clarke and Ramalingam 2014).

Figure D: Urban and rural populations, 1950–2050
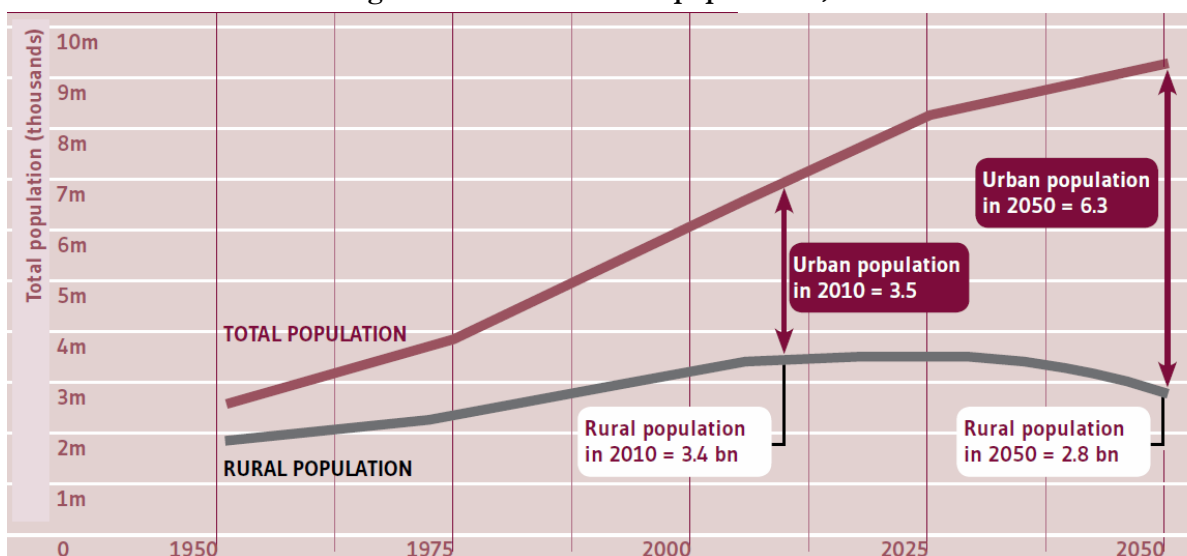
Source: Knox-Clarke and Ramalingam (2014) citing UNDESA data

UN-Habitat predicts that most of this urban growth will be in small and medium-sized cities rather than megacities, with about half of the world's urban population residing in cities of 500,000 people or less (ibid). In terms of numbers, Asia will continue to house the largest number of people in its towns and cities. Africa, although the least urbanised continent today, will become home to 1.2 billion urban dwellers by 2050, with a significant youth majority.

There are wide gaps in the sector's knowledge of urban risk with very little high-quality data on urban risk in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to relatively good data available in South and South-East Asia.

The Disasters Emergency Committee has suggested that in the next 10 years there will probably be another three to five big urban disasters (Clermont et al. 2011). The experience of disasters such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 (triggered by a tsunami) and the 2013 Jakarta floods highlight the complex risks faced by urban central hubs. In Jakarta, for example, poor city drainage systems, highly polluted river channels, land clearance in high altitude areas surrounding Jakarta and inappropriate mitigation infrastructure all contributed to the disaster (Pearson 2013). With potential future sea level rises and ongoing urban environmental problems, Indonesia's crisis context is set to continue to threaten communities and businesses. However, small but more frequent events may, collectively, be more harmful to local populations than megadisasters, particularly as they tend to be overlooked.[14]

Urban disasters differ in important ways from rural disasters, and force the humanitarian community to rethink fundamental tools, approaches and assumptions when deciding how best to respond (Knox-Clarke and Ramalingam 2014; OCHA 2014). Apart from the numbers affected, one reason for this is the role of the government, which is likely to have more developed governance in cities. This may mean that the international community will play much more of a support role rather than one of substituting for government capacity (though the 2010 Haiti earthquake also illustrated the vulnerability of national governance to a major disaster). The diversity of an urban population means that targeting approaches that focus on networks rather than geographical communities will tend to be more effective. The dynamics of a city mean that the population is more mobile, which has implications for communication with affected populations. The range of actors, issues of space, the importance of commerce and trade, services, infrastructure and sheer concentrations of people require new ways of working compared to rural contexts.

The trends in urbanisation have stimulated a number of initiatives within the humanitarian sector, particularly in relation to disaster risk reduction. For example, UNISDR has launched an initiative on Making Cities Resilient.[15] Also, there are new technologies being developed, e.g. for mapping populations in urban settings and in understanding the dimensions of risk affecting different sized towns and cities in Africa.[16]

Urban environments often attract, and can offer a setting that is conducive for, IDPs to rebuild their lives. In 2011, IDPs were living in urban areas in 47 out of 50 countries monitored by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC 2012). However, this presents significant challenges to the humanitarian community because, when living outside of camps, IDPs can be difficult to identify, protect and assist (Brookings-LSE 2013).

The high levels of chronic poverty and conflict in many urban environments create difficulties in classifying what is, and what is not, a humanitarian emergency. While intra- and inter-state conflict is decreasing, acute violence by armed groups is affecting large numbers of people, and those in urban contexts are exposed to extreme and shocking levels of vulnerability as a result (Knox-Clarke and Ramalingam 2014). The increasing prevalence of this form of violence means that humanitarians may be required to re-categorise undeclared urban conflict and work to address its humanitarian consequences. Some work is already occurring in this area. The protection clusters in Nairobi and Bogota have developed innovative approaches to provide protection against localised violence from armed actors, gangs, drug cartels and crime syndicates.[17]

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[14] DFID-ESRC research project http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Urbanisation%20and%20Risk%20Stream%201_tcm8–26477.pdf
[15] http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/
[16] DFID-ESRC research project (2013) http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Urbanisation%20and%20Risk%20Stream%201_tcm8–26477.pdf
[17]http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/field_protection_clusters/Colombia/files/Colombia_IASC_Workshop_Report_2010_EN.pdf

Research into cities in fragile states has emphasised the need to understand the politics of the city to be able to work effectively.[18] New donors such as China, Turkey and Iran also bring with them experience of dealing with urban disasters in their own countries which can be a significant contribution to the development of approaches to humanitarian crises in these contexts (Binder and Meier 2011).

3.3   Technology and innovation

Interest in innovation in humanitarian action is on the rise; for example, the WHS has 'Transformation through Innovation' as one of its four themes. A Humanitarian Innovation Conference was held in Oxford, UK in July 2014, attended by many UN agencies, some donors and private sector and international NGO representatives. A stimulus to this interest is the potential that new technology offers with, for instance, communication technology being used for tasks as diverse as mapping population movements, transmitting health awareness and assistance messages to affected populations, and transferring cash to affected people. It also is driven by the humanitarian community's recognition of the need for a new way of doing things in challenging environments, such as urban contexts and insecure environments where aid agencies may be working through remote management and can use new communication technology for monitoring purposes.

Support for innovation is a Danida strategic priority. Other agencies have also increased their attention to innovation with, for example, departments focused on innovation in OCHA and UNHCR, through initiatives such as the Humanitarian Innovation Fund supported by DFID and initiatives in international NGOs, including Plan International and Oxfam.

However, thinking and work on innovation is still at a very early stage in the humanitarian system. The term is being used in different ways to mean different things. While there is a plethora of small-scale trials, particularly in large-scale humanitarian responses where funding may be available to pilot approaches, there is a growing recognition of the lack of support to scale up innovations (Itad 2014). Scale-up is hindered by a growing risk aversion in the sector exacerbated by some donor practices of payment by results and focusing on value for money. Given that the sector as a whole is often slow to change (for example, cash responses are over 15 years old but still considered an innovation in some settings), these are not characteristics that encourage and support innovation.

Increased interest in the potential of innovation and new technologies present the potential for much more collaboration between organisations to address challenges such as scaling up. There have been discussions among some like-minded organisations interested in supporting more systematic approaches to innovation. These include UNHCR, WFP, ECHO, USAID and OCHA. Such groupings provide opportunities to support the scale-up of funding for innovation and of innovations themselves.

3.4   Issues emerging from World Humanitarian Summit consultations

Following initial regional, thematic and online consultations for the WHS in 2014, the secretariat has started to identify emerging issues, which it will test in further consultations in 2015 (OCHA 2014). These are as follows:

- **Prioritising people most vulnerable to or suffering from acute humanitarian distress** to help them better cope, adapt and recover quickly from shocks, and to do so in dignity.

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[18] See, for example, the work of Beal et al at the LSE Crisis States Research Centre: http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/Policy%20Directions/Cities%20and%20Fragile%20States.pdf

- **Localising preparedness and response**. There has been a strong call from the first three regional consultations for countries, communities and the local private sector to manage natural disaster risk and response by themselves, building on their own knowledge and expertise. This requires shifting finance to regional, national and local organisations to support preparedness and response, while also meeting donor accountability requirements. This should increasingly come from investment from the post-2015 development and disaster risk processes, and climate finance. This should allow the international humanitarian community to adopt exit strategies for all but the most catastrophic events.
- **Building resilience to protracted crises in fragile and conflict-affected environments.**
- **Reinforcing humanitarian action in situations of conflict** to ensure respect for international humanitarian law.
- **Being financially fit and agile**. This requires: diversifying the humanitarian finance base; channelling funding more directly to actors best placed to provide assistance, particularly local actors; increasing the speed and scale of resources to meet megadisasters; minimising the extent to which humanitarian assistance is being used to address predictable and recurrent shocks; investing more in preparedness; and minimising blocks to finance or setting any conditions that compromise the independence of humanitarian agencies in conflict zones and their ability to operate.
- **Making the international humanitarian system more adaptable and better suited for the new generation of crises.**

The secretariat and thematic teams will continue to refine the issues in order to undertake a global consultation in the last quarter of 2015. The final set of key issues will form the basis of the Secretary-General's report for the summit.

Developments in humanitarian contexts and approaches: Implications

⇨ The challenges and complexity of a resilience approach in humanitarian action, particularly in conflict settings, require tailored approaches in each context. It will be essential for Danida to have planning processes that analyse the opportunities, challenges and any risks to building linkage between development and humanitarian approaches in a specific context in order to guide decision making.

⇨ The analytical skills for resilience approaches that link relief and development are much needed in the international humanitarian system. Danida could consider how it will support the development and availability of these skills in Danida, partners and the humanitarian system more widely in order to support the design and implementation of humanitarian programmes that incorporate resilience.

⇨ Flexibility in resilience approaches in conflict settings is vital. Appropriate funding and monitoring systems are important enablers of the required flexibility for partners and other implementing organisations.

⇨ Urban environments are likely to be the context for an increasing number of humanitarian crises, whether caused by natural disasters, violence, population movements, war, or a combination of these. The humanitarian system needs capacities to understand risk, assess needs and design responses for urban settings. Danida may need to consider who are the appropriate partners to work within these environments and how to build their capacities to be able to respond to urban crises.

⇨ Innovation will be needed to find ways to meet the increasing humanitarian needs with

limited resources. Danida can build on its existing work to consider ways to create an environment that is conducive to innovation. This includes engaging with the private sector to enable scale-up and bring in expertise.