



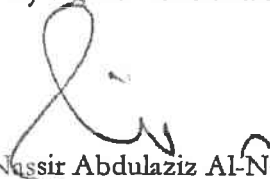
THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10 April, 2012

Excellency,

I have the honour to forward you the attached letter by H.E. Mr. Marten Grunditz, Permanent Representative of Sweden and H.E. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, as Co-Chairs of the Informal Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership. The letter includes a Co-Chair's Summary and an invitation to a general briefing on the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership to be held on April 16, 2012 at 3:00-4:30 pm, in Conference room 5 (NLB).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser

All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers  
To the United Nations  
New York



Excellency,

An informal Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership, convened by Sweden and Brazil, has since last year exchanged views on relevant humanitarian policy and operational issues. The meetings have been called at ambassadorial level among Australia, Bahamas, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Qatar, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Turkey and with the participation of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The aim of the group is to promote a common understanding on responses to critical humanitarian challenges.

The following topics have so far been discussed:

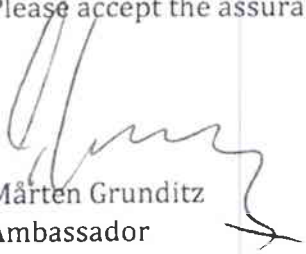
1. Strengthening operational response in humanitarian emergencies
2. Building national and local capacity and resilience
3. Bridging the divide between humanitarian and development work
4. Reaffirming greater respect for humanitarian principles
5. Strengthening new partnerships

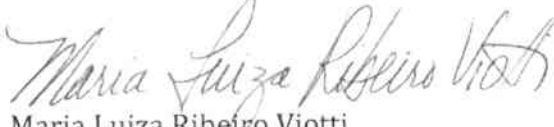
Please find enclosed the Co-Chairs' Summary of the key observations during these discussions.

We would like to, through you, invite the membership to a general briefing on the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership to be held on April 16, 2012, at 3.00 - 4.30 pm, in Conference room 5 (NLB).

We would appreciate if you could circulate this information to the Membership.

Please accept the assurances of our highest regards,

  
Mårten Grunditz  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative  
of Sweden to the United Nations

  
Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of  
Brazil to the United Nations

# DIALOGUE ON HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP IN A CHANGING WORLD: SYNTHESIS OF CHAIRS SUMMARIES

**April - September 2011**

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*"The Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership in a Changing World" was initiated and chaired by the Permanent Missions of Brazil and Sweden in New York in 2011. The aim of the dialogue was to establish a platform for informal cross-regional discussions on key topics on the humanitarian agenda. The following is an attempt to summarize some of the key suggestions and observations from the rich deliberations within the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership. Our hope is that these points can stimulate further debates in the membership, and in the long term contribute to more innovative approaches to future humanitarian challenges.*

## **1. STRENGTHENING OPERATIONAL RESPONSE IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES**

- International humanitarian efforts **require strong leadership**, which necessitates having the right people in the field. Humanitarian Coordinators need to demonstrate leadership skills, knowledge of the operating context, adequate seniority and experience of engagement with national authorities. Greater weight should therefore be placed on the recruitment of skilled humanitarian leaders in the Resident /Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) position in disaster-prone countries.
- More **innovative approaches** are needed to find candidates for UN humanitarian leadership positions from outside the UN system. Member states can assist in identification of top-quality candidates and engaging expertise from developing countries.
- The **leadership of the national government** of the affected State is vital. In order to ensure both national leadership and international cooperation at the same time during a humanitarian crisis, close relations between each Member State which can potentially become an affected State and the UN, shall be sought and/or maintained. Authorities from affected states should be consulted before, during and after emergencies, so as to ensure national ownership. A balance must be sought between ensuring immediate and quick response on the one hand, and on the other hand ensuring appropriate levels of contacts and capacity-building measures for national leadership. Efforts

should be made to coordinate through national institutions, and to strengthen partnerships with national authorities at local and national levels.

- More efforts are needed to ensure **accountability towards affected populations**, and making sure that the people who suffer are centre-stage in international humanitarian response. Participatory mechanisms are essential to guaranteeing that the real needs of people are addressed, and for giving affected populations a voice in the design and evaluation of humanitarian response.
- The accountability to national and local authorities was also highlighted, as a means to promote **national ownership**.
- IASC agencies should be held **accountable for the collective results** of humanitarian response, under the leadership of the ERC.
- Successful coordination and response based on needs requires awareness and **willingness to engage with coordination mechanisms**. Coordinating bilateral actors and donors could prove difficult at times when domestic political situations called for immediate action.
- Coordination of an **overwhelming amount of civil society actors** and the increased number of NGOs with varying levels of humanitarian expertise is posing a challenge to effective national and international response, and is an issue that would require more reflection from Member States.
- The flow of UN information regarding its activities in disaster-stricken countries to affected communities and national authorities can be improved in order to enhance accountability, as well as to **ensure two-way communication**.
- **Secondment of UN humanitarian staff** to national and local institutions of affected countries, in order to promote capacity and better integrate national and local priorities into international response is an option that should be explored.

## 2. BUILDING NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE

- Governments need to give increased priority to preparedness efforts. A challenge pertains to the fact that successful preparedness work often goes unnoticed. A **political push is needed** to champion the preparedness agenda and promote greater recognition of the fact that good preparedness work saves lives and money.

- The responsibility to build better preparedness lies with the national government. Preparatory action should take place at the local level, which represents the first line of response. Making local government structures part of the response is vital to **leveraging local knowledge**.
- Further clarity is needed regarding **who does what** in supporting Member States' capacity building for response, as well as a shared ownership of the preparedness agenda among UNDP, OCHA, ISDR and the World Bank.
- Similarly, improved identification and coordination of **existing early warning mechanisms** and "pre-disaster risk assessments" would be beneficial for increasing levels of preparedness.
- There is need for **greater investment** in long-term preparedness. Greater clarity on appropriate funding mechanisms, in particular at the international level, would be welcomed.
- **Mainstreaming preparedness** measures in development agendas is needed as a more integrated approach would likely have long-term positive impact on vulnerability levels.
- The **3<sup>rd</sup> Global Platform** for Disaster Risk Reduction yielded useful results and recommendations. More effort are needed to ensure these are followed through.

### 3. BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT WORK

- Humanitarian emergency assistance should take into account a long-term **sustainable development perspective**, through inter alia enhanced planning, dialogue and building partnerships, and it should be provided in ways that are supportive of recovery and development. Similarly, development actors have an instrumental role in reducing vulnerability and building resilience.
- Promoting the **active participation** of affected populations is an important element of a development-supportive approach to humanitarian assistance. The most vulnerable segments of populations seldom had a voice in setting development priorities and investments, which in turn tended to increase their vulnerability further.
- Effective recovery work builds on and leverages local knowledge. International efforts should **complement rather than replace** local and national capacities.

- Early recovery efforts need to be better integrated into sectorial approaches and development actors often need to arrive sooner. A frequent **delay in funding for early recovery** and development efforts risks resulting in humanitarian actors staying for longer periods than necessary - thereby carrying too much of the burden. Early recovery in humanitarian assistance remains one of the most underfunded areas, and more innovative ways of funding is required.

#### 4. REAFFIRMING GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

- Humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence are the **foundations of humanitarian assistance**, and also carry **operational relevance**. Acceptance for humanitarian action, humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian actors and operations depend on adherence to the principles. Compromising on humanitarian principles could jeopardize humanitarian operations and can have long-term effects on the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver life saving humanitarian assistance.
- **Political activities** of the UN and others on the ground can in some cases have an impact on the perception of its humanitarian actors.
- Taking into account the civilian character of humanitarian assistance, **better civil-military coordination** remains critical for the provision of humanitarian assistance according to the humanitarian principles. In this context, involvement of regional organizations or frameworks in civil-military coordination might be useful.
- Not all crises receive the same focus and funding, which can partly be explained by the so called "CNN effect". This leads to some "**forgotten crises**", which in turn compromises the **needs-based approach**. Humanitarian assistance must be provided on the basis of need, and need alone. The objectivity and accuracy of the information on humanitarian situation as an important precondition for adequate decision-making by the international community is of great importance.
- The **affected country and the UN have a central role** in promoting humanitarian principles both on the ground and at the international level.

#### 5. STRENGTHENING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- A **broadened humanitarian partnership** and the need for traditional actors to engage with the emerging actors is crucial, for numerous reasons. New actors

have a legitimate demand for greater say in the way the humanitarian response system works. Improved buy-in could increase political support for humanitarian actors, thus contributing to a more effective response.

- Efforts to engage new partners in the humanitarian system should be accelerated. To achieve this, broadened policy dialogue, including joint missions to the field, and more regular briefings on humanitarian matters to a broadened group of member states should be promoted.
- New partnerships should not be reduced to financial contributions, but rather focus should be on sharing knowledge and experience on humanitarian affairs. Since many of the so called “new actors” are already deeply involved in disaster response, in fact often the “first responders” – local communities and authorities, as well as the affected State government – must be included.
- South-South and triangular cooperation should be developed in the humanitarian field, and innovative financing initiatives that engage civil society and the private sector in support of government response efforts should be explored.